

**PROTESTANT
MODERNISM: OR,
RELIGIOUS THINKING FOR
THINKING MEN**

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Protestant Modernism: Or, Religious Thinking for Thinking Men by David C. Torrey

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RELIGIOUS THINKING FOR THINKING MEN

BY

DAVID C. TORREY

MINISTER IN

BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

AUTHOR'S EDITION

1910

Phil 8599.14

TO THE MEMORY OF
MY FATHER,
JASON EPHRAIM TORREY
WHO TAUGHT ME TO THINK FREELY,
THIS BOOK IS
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

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PREFACE

Ways of thinking have a history. The paternal grandfather of the author of this book was tried for heresy, and expelled from the Baptist church in Williamstown, Mass., known as "the stone church." One result was that the author's father was estranged from all churches, but was accustomed to discussions of theology as his daily intellectual exercise. The discussions led to wide reading and much thinking, to a devout spirit and an untrammelled mind. The author's mother led him early to the Methodist church, and he was reared in its theological atmosphere. When he decided to prepare for the ministry, his father, then suffering from mortal disease, placed upon him one simple injunction, that he should never teach anything which he had not investigated for himself, and which he was not convinced was reasonable. The injunction

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was accompanied with the statement by his father, that his own lifetime of study and thinking had led him to the conclusion that the greater part of the doctrine of the Christian church had no authority in scripture, and was not true in fact; and by the earnest hope that his son should never fall into the way of teaching anything simply because the church believed it, or because any men believed it.

The author selected Harvard University as the place for his preparation for the ministry, because he expected to find there the largest freedom in religious thinking and expression. Holding faithfully to his allegiance to the evangelical church, he opened his mind fully to hear and faithfully to consider to the extent of his ability all so-called progressive and liberal ideas presented in the university and out of it. The procedure resulted in the shaking of his early religious convictions, and in a strain of mind often incident to the process. Another outcome of the years of strenuous study was the

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exhaustion of nerve force, and the clouds of despondency closed about him. When light again broke in, the whole structure of faith had disappeared so completely that his own recognition of himself was as an atom floating in space. Soon he found other atoms like himself demanding recognition, and gradually the whole world of created things came back as realities to be accounted for. Such an accounting compelled a return of religious faith. As the train of former beliefs came back, each under critical examination as to its reasonableness, many of them were rejected altogether, and others were made to stand aside and await their proving before they were given a place. The ideas reasonably admitted formed a working constitution for living, established peace and joy, and were put back with a reasonableness which carried conviction that they were to stay as long as reason should sit on the throne.

The author gladly found that his simplified tenets of faith were in general accord with