

## CHAPTER IX.

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The New Zealanders, according to Rutherford, have neither priests, nor places of worship, nor any religion except their superstitious dread of the Atua.

To an uneducated man, coming from a Christian country, the entire absence of all regular religious observances among these savages would very naturally give such an impression. Cook ascertained that they had no "morais"\* or temples, like some of the other tribes of the South Seas; but he met with persons who evidently bore what we should call the priestly character.

The New Zealanders are certainly not without some notions of religion; and, in many particulars, they are a remarkably superstitious people. During the whole course of their lives, the imagined presence of the unseen and supernatural crosses them at every step. What has been already stated respecting the "taboo" may give some idea of how submissive and habitual is their sense of the power of the Divinity, and how entirely they conceive themselves to be in his hands; as well as what a

\*Marae. With Maoris and Samoans the word means an open space in a village; in the Tahitian, Mangaian, and Paumotan languages it means a temple, or a place where rites were performed.