

## A SERMON, &c.

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GENESIS, XXVIII. 16, 17.

And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not. And he was afraid and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God and this is the gate of Heaven.

IN contemplating the motives and principles which influence the actions of men and the lower animals, we observe this distinguishing characteristic trait between them. While they have no religious or moral feelings, no sense of a Deity, and no idea of any being of superior power or attributes to man, he is by his constitution a religious being. Religion is implanted in his mind by the author of our nature, and its exercise and gratification are as natural to him as is the indulgence of any one principle or affection that he possesses. That it is an innate principle of the mind, as much so as any feeling or propensity of our nature, and will be called into exercise whenever objects fitted to awaken its energies are presented to us, we conclude not only from our own feelings, but because all men as well in the rudest as in the most polished ages of the world have never been without religion in some form or other.—Hence religion considered simply as a feeling, and abstracted from all connection with particular articles of belief or modes of worship, may be viewed as an instinctive property of our nature.

This cannot be more finely illustrated than in the fondness and intense interest that children manifest for that Book in which is recorded the history of the Saviour of the World. This book is usually the first that