

THE IMPORTANT OFFICE OF THE RELIGIOUS TEACHER.

WHEN asked to contribute something to the Paper to be published by the Theological students of our College at Pine Hill, my mind turned very naturally to the work that these young men have before them, and the desire arose to say something that might stir them up, with Paul, to glorify their ministry. I is the office of the religious teacher to teach religion. But religion is not an accidental thing, a luxury, a form of culture, something which men can do with or without at pleasure. It belongs, rather, to the requirements of man as man, and must be recognized and guided by every leader of human progress. Communion with God is as much a need of humanity as bread or light or heat. Homer said: "All men hunger after the gods." Max Müller adopts Cicero's definition of religion, from *re-legere*, making it signify what is brooded over, and holds that it is the necessary result of all sound thinking about the universe. Nations are never atheists. No tribe is so small but it contains some prophet who can see God. The microcosm without and the microcosm within are full of voices of the night, that speak of sorrow and whisper hope in some God beyond the darkness. Scientific men sometimes get befogged for a little, as Ruskin said that "Huxley and Tyndall were not sure there was a God because they had never found him in a bottle anywhere," but "further study," as Bacon said, "always leads back to God." The world is full of thought, and thought involves a thinker, hence Nature has always been a parable of the Divine. The same result is reached by profound students of human life. The theme of the great poems, the epics, of the nations, is the mystery of the sorrows of man's experience, and the movement of their thinking is towards help in God. This is seen in the Book of Job, the epic of the Hebrews, the Iliad, the epic of the Greeks, and in the Italian, English and German epics of Dante, Milton, and Goethe. The philosopher Kant said that "all deep meditation about man and his destiny revolves around the three postulates of God, Free Will, and Immortality," all of which are religious themes. Thus it will be seen that the young man who looks to the calling of religious teacher must put himself face to face with the most funda-