

**THE FEMALE TEACHER:  
IDEAS SUGGESTIVE OF  
HER QUALIFICATIONS  
AND DUTIES**

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The Female Teacher: Ideas Suggestive of Her Qualifications and Duties by Louisa Octavia Hope

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**LOUISA OCTAVIA HOPE**

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# THE FEMALE TEACHER:

IN A SERIES OF  
LECTURES

HER QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES.

BY

LOUISA OCTAVIA HOPE.

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# THE FEMALE TEACHER.

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## LETTER I.

### PERSONAL PIETY NECESSARY IN A TEACHER.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

Let me distinctly state, that the object I have in view in these letters, is not to lay before you any definite theory or system, either of Education or of Theology. It would be wholly out of place were I to do so. The ministers of God are your proper theological teachers; and men who have made education the business of their lives, are the best expositors of educational systems. My object is rather to supplement what you hear from the pulpit or the desk, by such homely and familiar remarks, upon the peculiar duties of *female* teachers, as cannot be entered upon by the minister or the lecturer.

Thus, the question how far personal piety is necessary in a teacher, may seem one above and beyond my province. At the same time, it is impossible for any one to leave it out who has the opportunity of acquiring an influence over your minds. That which must form the whole basis of your usefulness as teachers, must also be the basis of mine. Nay, rather, my only doubt might have been, whether, just because personal religion is to



be the groundwork of all my addresses to you, it is not needless to make it the subject of any separate address. At all events, let it not be understood by my doing so, that I have any leaning to the object so aimed at by the inglorious minority of the educationists of the present day,—namely, the separation of religious from secular instruction.

With this explanation, I shall dwell at length, in my first letter, upon that which I shall incidentally refer to in every succeeding letter,—viz., the necessity of personal religion in a teacher.

The necessity of it for your own salvation, I shall not dwell upon. It is the office of those who are “ambassadors for Christ” in the work of the ministry, to “beseech you to be reconciled to God.”

I shall confine myself to the question, which some of you may be inclined to ask, Why is it peculiarly necessary for us, as *teachers*, to be pious? Is it not as necessary for any other class of young women whom you address?

Certainly, it is quite as necessary for themselves; but you have not your own souls only, but the souls of many others, put directly under your charge by God; and if you have never inquired, and do not understand exactly, how matters stand between your own soul and your God, how can you attempt to guide others to come to a conclusion on this point?

It was once said to me by a teacher, “I do not pretend to be serious; I have no fear of not being steady and respectable, and that is enough. Although I am a schoolmistress, why should I be stricter about religion than other young women? At any rate, I make no profession of being so.” I

answer now to any such remark as I did then,—that in assuming the office of a teacher, you do pretend that you are serious ; you do make a profession of being pious ; and if you are not so in your heart, you are *inconsistent and dishonest* in assuming that office. You do so under false colours. As our Scottish schools are—God be thanked—pre-eminently BIBLE SCHOOLS, we expect a teacher of the Bible to be a lover of the Bible, and one who walks by its rule.

The question, then, that I am going to press upon you at present is this,—Do you feel that the elementary truths of the Gospel, which you teach your scholars as a necessary part of their school routine, are necessary for yourself? Or, are you living careless and indifferent to the very same truths which you tell your scholars are of the first importance to them? I am not supposing that this careless living is immoral living,—I would fain suppose that this could never be the case with any of you ;—but I mean the careless living of not being interested, in your heart and life, with those truths which occupy your head or tongue while you are teaching.

For instance, while teaching the doctrine of the entire corruption of the natural heart, do you know, by observation and self-examination, that out of *your* heart proceed thoughts that sin against God and man every day of your life? Again, when you are teaching that nothing but Christ's sacrifice of Himself for sin could atone to God for this heinous corruption, do you never feel it necessary yourself to apply to that sacrifice? Or, do you rather trust, in a vague way, to God's mercy, not to pardon,—for you do not really think you have much

need of pardon,—but to overlook your sins? Again, when you are teaching, that no strength but that supplied by the Spirit of God can avail to keep down sin, and make your heart clean and pure within, if you think that by a little more painstaking, (were you once to settle down to give it,) you could make yourself a good deal better, you act contrary to what you teach.

Do you think that it is only children and uninformed minds that need to have their attention directed to these first principles of the doctrine of Christ; but that, as for you, you learnt all these truths long ago, and have no need of them now; and think of them only as bygone studies of your youth, necessary for you to have learned once for all, but no longer applicable to you?

There is not one of us wise enough to do without the wisdom of God; therefore hear what inspired wisdom enforces with solemn sounds: “Thou therefore *which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?*” Let us glance over the whole passage, (which you will find in Romans ii. 16.) It opens with the most solemn adjuration and appeal: “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men. Behold, thou art called” one of God’s people, “and makest thy boast of God, and knowest His will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;” (how descriptive of a well-informed teacher!) “and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes,” (how descriptive of the different characters in a large school!) “which hast the form