

**LETTERS TO A CLERGYMAN, ON  
THE BEST MEANS OF EMPLOYING  
FUNDS FOR THE RELIGIOUS AND  
MORAL EDUCATION OF THE  
LOWER ORDERS**

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Letters to a Clergyman, on the Best Means of Employing Funds for the Religious and Moral Education of the Lower Orders by Mrs. Hippiisley Tuckfield

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**MRS. HIPPISEY TUCKFIELD**

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## LETTERS TO A CLERGYMAN,

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### LETTER I.

My dear Friend,

I SHALL willingly comply with your request, and shall be happy if I can render you any assistance in the important duty which you are called upon to perform. You are placed in a situation of great responsibility, large educational funds being at your sole disposal. But by attending strictly to the terms of the will, and by applying these funds "*For discovering the best means of promoting the religious and moral education of the lower orders,*" you may, I trust, gradually throw some important light on subjects which, at this moment, appear to agitate and perplex the public mind.

The words of the will are very remarkable. No notice is taken of what we are now pleased to call *secular* education. But was that necessary? Would that education be religious and moral, which left a



man destitute of the knowledge needful to enable him to get his own living, and to make himself useful to himself and others, and thereby to do his duty in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call him? The more we abound in true knowledge and wisdom, the better, surely, we shall be enabled to do our duty in our respective callings. The more freely we have received, the more freely we shall be able to give. Indeed, I have ever found it impossible to conceive how intellectual culture can be separated from religious and moral training. All knowledge, properly so called, whether it unfolds to us some of the wonderful works of God by which we are surrounded—whether it relates to the world which we inhabit, or to man, the lord of that world—whether it strengthens the powers and faculties which the Almighty has given us, or opens to us those varied sources of enjoyment, which, by the use of those faculties, he has enabled us to experience—all knowledge, I say, communicated in the right manner, in due degree, and at fit times, is but the handmaid to religion and virtue; and, on the other hand, it will also most certainly be found, that in proportion as the mind is purified and elevated by true religious principles and feelings, the natural healthy appetite for knowledge will be increased, and the soil prepared for

its reception. Vain, indeed, would be the attempt to separate intellectual, religious and moral training. These, and also physical training, are as closely connected, as indissolubly interwoven, as are the head, the heart, the bodily organs of man.\*

The first decided opinion which I will venture to offer, is, that you would not be assisted in the *discovery* which you are directed to make, by any master placed at the head of very large schools. It is quite impossible for such a master to establish that confidence and attachment between himself and his pupils which is indispensable, if the formation of religious and moral character is the object in view.

To this remark I am aware that you may reply, by reminding me that you are directed to discover the best means of giving religious and moral education to *the lower orders*: that cheap education can only be given in large schools; that though the funds at your disposal are sufficiently ample to admit of many experimental schools on a small scale, yet that few instances of such unfettered bequests are likely to occur. You may therefore naturally be disposed to inquire, whether you would not be carrying out the views of the testator by developing such plans as promise to afford instruction to the great masses of

\* See Education for the People, p. 35.

the community, rather than by trying to invent a system of education, which, for want of requisite funds, would be generally impracticable.

I am aware of the grand dilemma to which we are apparently reduced by the necessity of devising the means of giving economical education; and before I fully unfold to you those plans which appear to me adapted to further our grand object, with respect to the masses of our uneducated population, I will at once broadly avow one conclusion at which I am arrived, which appears to me in some degree to meet this dilemma, and which, if acted upon, may, I hope, assist us in giving at once cheap and efficient religious and moral education to the lower orders. It is this, *that we ought to intrust not only the entire education of females to females, but also that boys and girls, till they are ten years old, may with advantage be educated together by females.*

In a future letter I will return to this point; and I will explain to you my reasons for arriving at this conclusion, and also the means by which, as I conceive, women ought to be prepared to perform those duties, and to fill that important station in society which I would thus assign to them, and for which Providence has pre-eminently qualified them.

In the remainder of my present letter, I would limit