

versy again only with the purpose of laying before our readers once more the important ethical principles involved in the problem of State interference with the schools.

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In another paper we propose to examine in detail the nature of the State, its end, and its powers commensurate with the attainment of that end. Let it suffice to say for the present that the end of the State is to provide for the higher good of the community in so far as its attainment is beyond the capacity of individuals or families. Whatever powers the State possesses must be commensurate with that end, and it has no right whatever to arrogate to itself powers beyond those postulated by its end. Now, education is a part of the process of rearing children: by rearing is meant the training of the child both in body and mind, and education is that part which relates to the mind. The rearing of children is the duty, not of the State but of the parents; and consequently education is a duty which primarily devolves on the parents. We are aware that our legislators have forgotten God, and that they act as if they were convinced that a future life were a delusion and the sanction of the Divine Law a superstition. It is a lamentable fact, but it is a fact. In all its works and pomps the Government of New Zealand is frankly on the side of Antichrist, and neither religion or morality seems to have the slightest influence on our legislators. But parents have not forgotten God; they know that they, and not the State, are responsible to Him for the souls of the children; and because they know that they are becoming every day more determined that a Government of unprincipled men shall not pervert the children. If the parents by combination among families were able to provide completely for the education of the young, to found schools and draw up programmes of education, they have full authority under every sane law to do so. The State could only interfere if it were clear that children were not being really educated—just as it could interfere if children were not being fed and clothed; also the State might require, for the common good, that the standard of education was up to a certain height. It would be, moreover, the duty of the State to help parents—and as a consequence to help such schools—to maintain such a standard of efficiency as would be judged essential for the common weal. As a rule parents cannot and do not equip such private schools; and they have a right to call upon the State to provide the opportunities which are beyond their own means. The churches, which are analogous to such unions of families, are, however, able to institute their own schools. What we have said of the limits of State interference applies to Church, or denominational, schools; to them also applies what we have said regarding State aid. The important principle is that the first right and the final responsibility rests on the parents, and that the function of the State is to supplement the efforts of the parents. The State has absolutely no authority for ignoring the parents' wishes in the matter of education. It acts tyrannically if it attempts to impose on children a system of education unacceptable to the parents or contrary to their conscientious convictions.

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As a reason for the justification of State interference it is commonly alleged that as the good of society depends so much on education it is the duty of the State to interfere. We have already pointed out that the State has, in view of the common good, certain rights; beyond these it must not proceed; it must respect the higher rights of parents on whom the duty of educating their children is laid by the natural law, and who are responsible to God for the fulfilment of that duty. Moreover, no sane man would grant to the State the right of interference in every department through which the general good is influenced. The State often encroaches on higher rights in such matters, and the tendency to encroach is becoming more and more pronounced. The State is liable to forget—when it has forgotten God as it has in New Zealand—that

there are higher rights than it can claim, and that the sanctity of individual and family life are things above and beyond its province. The State is daily tending towards unbearable despotism; the Servile State is daily coming nearer. If the Democracy is foolish enough to tolerate it we can see clearly in the future a system of despotism in comparison of which the worst evils attributed to Prussianism are insignificant. Many writers have ridiculed the idea of unlimited State interference, drawing humorous pictures of Ministers engaged in such novel duties as are suggested by some of their speeches already. We may not live to see the day when a successor of Mr. Hanan will conceive it his duty to dictate what sort of tooth-powder school children shall use, or how often they shall take Becham's Pills; or when in the interests of economy a Minister of Finance may rule that no man shall shave, or that every man shall emulate the ladies in their present efforts to reduce the quantity of their apparel to a minimum not always regulated by decency. But we may be perfectly sure that meddling and incompetent politicians and professors will, if we allow them, pass laws with the object of lowering to a still lower depth of immorality the standard of New Zealand. As far as we Catholics are concerned, we are not going to tolerate that. It is a hopeful sign that with the exception of a few ranters of the Elliott type clergymen of all denominations are beginning to realise the necessity of saving the Dominion in the only way in which it can be saved—namely, by schools like our own into which no atheistic meddlers shall ever enter, and where the writ of the Minister of Education runs so far as we allow it and no further.

## .. NOTES ..

### The Youth of the Dead

"Whom the gods love die young," says the old Greek proverb; and we may add that they who die young remain young eternally. Death fixes their age: they never grow older. Though long years will pass the young wife whom he has mourned will be always young to the husband, and the boy or girl whom she lost will be always boy or girl to the mother. Tennyson made one attempt to write in Irish dialect. As Irish dialect it was a sorry thing; as a poem hardly any better; but it had one true, tragic, pathetic note: the girl whose lover was prevented by death from keeping tryst grew to be an old woman whose brain grief had turned, but for her the lover that never came and for whom she waited by the stream was always "the young man, Denny Magee."

### "In Brevi Explevit Multa"

This saying is sometimes applied to the great poets and thinkers whose span on earth was short. It is remarkable how brief were the lives of some of the greatest, and how much they accomplished in a little while. Byron, Shelley, Leopardi, Heine, Keats: all died comparatively young. St. Thomas Aquinas, who accomplished infinitely more than any of them, was also in the flower of his years when he went to his reward. Our Lord Himself had not, in the common opinion, reached the *mezzo cammino* when His great work of Redemption was accomplished. On the other hand how many people who live the allotted span of three score and ten die without doing anything at all. Life is action according to the Greek philosopher whom Dante calls the master of all scholars; and if so it were truer to say of many men that they vegetated so many years rather than that they lived. Small is the proportion who take to heart Longfellow's warning:—

"Act, act in the living present,  
Heart within and God o'erhead."