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The Lourdes Story: A Grain of Wheat

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in supernatural matters proves at the most that the State must *respect* the rights of the Church and *allow* her full freedom to carry out her divine mission. In no wise do they conclusively prove the *jurisdiction* of the Church over the State. To cite, for example, the fact that the Church at times excommunicated emperors and kings for their public crimes as proof of such jurisdiction is to push the conclusion beyond the limits of the premise. Such actions, to be sure, were well within the competence of the Church. But they only reveal that in the punishment of sin, the Church was no mere respecter of persons, and that the morality of the Christian prince, acting as a prince, was subject to the Church's scrutiny just as much as the morality of a shoemaker, acting as a shoemaker, is subject to the Church's scrutiny.

Unfortunately one looks in vain for some of the most interesting recent literature in this field. Neither in the bibliography nor in the text does the smallest reference appear to the articles of Vialatoux, Aubert, Congar, Murray, Meigel and Rouquette. One early work of Maritain is listed, but his more important contributions are somehow omitted, especially his *Raison et raisons*, synthesized in English under the title: *Man and the State*. Even works favorable to the author's own view, such as the discourse of Cardinal Ottaviani on the rights of a Catholic State (2 March 1953), are nowhere mentioned.

A thorough discussion of recent controversy on this subject would remove the impression that solutions are arrived at too easily; and a greater attention to the historical approach would have added even more lustre to this competent analysis of Church-State relations.

SAMUEL R. WILEY

THE LOURDES STORY

A GRAIN OF WHEAT. The Story of Saint Bernadette of Lourdes. By Margaret Trouncer. London. Hutchinson. Pp. 240. 15/net

THE centenary of the apparition of Our Lady of Lourdes has been the occasion of a goodly number of Lives of St. Bernadette. The title of the present volume, which at first might seem some-

what remote from its subject, was thought suitable by the author for describing the life of the poor miller's daughter, who had been favored with heavenly visions and during her last days was crushed like wheat under the millstone of exquisite suffering.

Few who read this book will agree with what was said at the time of her canonization, that St. Bernadette did nothing out of the common and was in no way remarkable for austerities. For she did have true visions—eighteen of them and more—and she was remarkable, if not for self-imposed austerities, at least for her cheerful endurance of the systematic humiliations to which she was subjected by those well meaning persons who could not understand how a poor peasant girl could have been so favored from on high. And then there was the silence with which she bore the torments of a horrible ulcer as long as she could, until at the last stage the heroic patience and fortitude with which she endured her long drawn out agony excited the admiration of the doctors and attendants, who could only look on with helpless pity.

A study of previous Lives, a good knowledge of Lourdes and environs and a protracted stay at the convent of Nevers prepared the author for her chosen task. As a novelist with a dozen works to her credit, she can make the Soubirous family live again in the single room on the ground floor of what had been a jail, cheerful and religious in their dire poverty. The accounts of how the visions took place, of the crowds of curious spectators at the grotto, of the opposition, cajoling and threatening of the police, of the prudential aloofness of the Clergy, of the final approbation of Ecclesiastical Authority and of the religious life during which Bernadette reached the goal of sainthood, are all well told and will be read with pleasure and profit.

HENRY A. COFFEY

SHORTER NOTICES

TALAMBUHAY NG MGA SANTO. Sinulat ni Padre Abriol.
Catholic Trade School, Manila 1957 Pp. xx, 434. Cloth ₱4.95
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