

up, and not to take yourself too seriously, if you really set out to become detached. Spiritual writers, he says, will let you down by explaining away the general—or very common—lack of rigorous bodily penances. We have grown soft and need to revise our ideas of what is allowable to one who loves God wholeheartedly.

It is all rather discouraging at first glance, but it is extraordinarily difficult to refute, taking it as a whole. Many readers will put the book down with a hope that 'there is another way of saying these things.' Indeed there is. St John of the Cross does not say things in exactly the same way as St Philip Neri. The present reviewer prefers the 'carriage and pair' method, but one cannot deny that a good dose of this holy charitable severity is a tonic at the least and a medicine at the best.

The subject—need one say it?—is holiness, holiness in all things, all along the line. The forty-six short chapters are on the usual retreat subjects: prayer, the cross, Mass, detachment, the theological virtues, perfection. Titles such as 'Prayer and Art' and 'Works in Particular' indicate the personal and original style in which these changeless ideals are presented.

G. M. CORR, O.S.M.

A CEDAR OF LEBANON. By Fr Paul Daher, O.L.M. (Browne and Nolan; 15s.)

This life of Father Charbel Makhlof, Lebanese Maronite monk (1828-1898), is full of miracle and presents to this 'scientific' age a challenge which must bring many converts to the Church and harden the hearts of many who will turn aside. It makes one think of our Lord's words: 'Greater things than these shall you do'.

Father Makhlof lived a simple life as a monk. In this he is very like St Thérèse of Lisieux. But it is the life almost of a Father of the Desert. The spirit of the ancient abbots of the primitive age of monasticism is clearly as much alive today in Lebanon as the spirit of St Ignatius is alive in London. But this is not the miracle. The miracle is that after nearly sixty years the holy body of Father Makhlof is as supple and fresh as if he had just died, that a mysterious liquid flows from his side, and has done so for all these years, and this in circumstances and conditions which exclude all possibility of fake or illusion. With the usual reservations about the final judgment of the Church on the matter, one may say that this phenomenon is one of the outstanding supernatural manifestations of this century. Many other wonders are narrated, and with good evidence, but this central one is so impressive and so well and vividly narrated that it sticks in the memory long after the book has been put down. Reading this book is quite an experience.

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