

FIRST STEPS IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE. By Bernard Kelly, C.S.Sp. (Mercier Press; 8s.6d.)

This book comprises a number of conferences on the Religious Life, and is primarily intended for novices. Of course, it is the author's hope that religious other than novices will read it, and with profit. What Fr Bernard Kelly says (he deliberately maintains not a literary but an oral form of expression) is clear and to the point. Indeed, the chapters have already been tested by being actually preached, at least in part. There are a number of advantages that accrue when an author keeps to the style of the spoken word in his work; e.g. there is a directness of approach and appeal, the theme or argument under consideration is expounded with patient clearness. But for the reader there is also one distinct disadvantage, viz. over-much repetition. This may not be so noticeable when matter is being preached, when the congregation depend on hearing and understanding the word as it is uttered. In a book, however, the call for repetition is not so great: the reader can always refer back and retrace what has previously been expounded.

Fr Kelly's treatment of Religious Life is not directly concerned with elucidating and developing the principles that underlie and inspire it. Rather has he set himself the task of dealing with Religious Life from a practical angle, to set forth in elementary form the practice of that life. Principles are taken for granted, or implied. In the counsel he proffers there is much that is worthy of attention.

TERENCE NETHERWAY, O.P.

WHERE IS THY GOD? By Father James, O.F.M.Cap. (Mercier Press; 10s.6d.)

The quest in life is the quest for Life, for him who is Way, Life and Truth, who alone can satisfy the longings of man's heart. Christ came to give men life that was superabounding, and in his book Fr James gives a series of prayerful meditations on the Incarnation and its significance for mankind. Incorporated are chapters on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, our Lady and St Francis. We welcome this, the third edition of the work, a reprint that is timely and opportune.

T.N.

MARGARET OF CORTONA. By Francois Mauriac, tr. by Barbara Wall. (Burns Oates; 9s. 6d.)

This is the unusual biography of an unusual Saint. As the author tells us in his Preface, it was written during the enforced leisure of the years of the occupation of France, and some of the strain of that period has passed into the book—not to its disadvantage, for the 13th century Saint Margaret of Cortona was pre-eminently a Penitent Saint, and as such her character, even in her later years, lacked that serenity and peacefulness which we normally associate