

THE CHURCH AND THE BIBLE. By the Abbot of Downside. (Helicon Press; 8s. 6d.)

This short book contains three lectures given by Abbot Butler at the Lauriston Hall in 1958. The idea behind the Lauriston lectures has been thus far to provide a Catholic 'shop window' in Edinburgh. The lectures of several other well-known personalities will also appear in print in due course, so that a wider audience may have the benefit of these statements of the Catholic position in various fields. One can judge, on the strength of these three talks of Abbot Butler, that the audience at Lauriston was expected to contain a good number of non-Catholics, although this is more apparent in the subjects chosen than in the manner in which they are put across. The tone of the lectures is preponderantly that of someone who is more used to thinking in terms of how the insider, rather than the outsider, will think and react. But it is of course the impressions of the non-Catholic reviewers that will really help to assess how much the lectures make their point in print. One feels at least that the lecturer has got the wavelength right for Edinburgh when, in his introductory talk ('A View from Outside'), he presents our Lord in a positively reforming light. And the point about the gospel being written for the benefit of a Church already in existence, rather than a Church founded four-square on the good book, seems absolutely right in the vicinity of St Giles'. The second lecture, on inspiration and criticism, deals with the problems of finding the meaning of scripture through the literary genres and conventions that the sacred authors use. The third, entitled 'The Bible and Christ', is possibly the best of the three, and is certainly one that will be of the greatest value to Catholics. So often one finds, inside the fold, an absolute lack of any sort of interest (even a positive anticipation of boredom) in the old testament, and that over-familiarity with stock quotations from our Lord's words that virtually robs them of meaning. As Abbot Butler demonstrates, it is precisely through discovering the Jewishness of our Lord's message, the terms in which he presented himself, the types in which he saw himself, that we find the whole of the old testament summed up in the person of Christ, and therefore of extreme importance.

GEOFFREY WEBB

SEEKING GOD. By Bruno S. James. (Darton, Longman and Todd; 6s.)

In reviewing this little volume of Fr Bruno's, I feel somewhat nervous, because it would seem to be directed at me. In his Preface, he says: 'It has been written especially for those monks and nuns and men and women of almost every country of Europe who have at one time or another come to the author for advice and help on matters of