

Reviews

THE THEOLOGY OF DIETRICH BONHOEFFER. By John D. Godsey; S.C.M. Press, 25s.

The name of Dietrich Bonhoeffer is becoming increasingly widely coupled with that of other great theologians of the twentieth century, notably with that of Karl Barth. The number of studies devoted to Bonhoeffer is growing steadily; Mr Godsey has assembled an impressive list of them in his (by no means complete) bibliography. The time has clearly come for Bonhoeffer to rise from his martyr's grave to new life in the pages and footnotes of doctoral theses. Not that Mr Godsey's book is in any way typical of this *genre*; it is far too clear, too readable, notwithstanding his scholarly thoroughness and the somewhat scholastic style of his divisions and subdivisions. The exposition appears to be both complete, balanced and occasionally penetrating. And yet, there is something elusively and curiously unconvincing and artificial about it. The reason for this is not that Mr Godsey's book is inadequate to its subject. It is rather that its subject does not lend itself to academic treatment of this kind; or, at any rate, that Bonhoeffer does not lend himself to academic treatment without being removed from the dimension in which his greatness lies.

Even the most theological of his writings are unmistakably a personal testimony. They are born from the need to re-examine the foundations of his hope and faith in the face of the widespread readiness of Christians to come to terms with the 'world'—in Bonhoeffer's case, with the world of Hitler's Germany. His death in the concentration camp at Flossenbürg in 1945 clinched a career to which, in retrospect, it seemed the logical conclusion. His theological writings are woven closely into the fabric of his life. They are always the concrete, personal reflections of a man living through trial and crisis, both shaping his response to his experience and being shaped by it. In them we encounter a man in search of the 'wholeness' required of a Christian, a wholeness which is perhaps one of the most distinctive and most fundamental conceptions of his theology. To consider the theology in abstraction from the life is inevitably to do it grave injustice; for Bonhoeffer was not great enough as a theologian to justify such treatment, and he was too great a man in other ways to be caught in the meshes of so scholarly and abstract a net.

R. A. MARKUS

THE EUCHARIST IN CATHOLIC LIFE. By Lawrence G. Lovasik, s.v.d.; New York—The Macmillan Company; 31s. 6d.

The publishers announce that 'At once a compendium of information and a devotional manual, this unusual book is a complete guide to all that is known on the great Sacrament of the Eucharist'; no wonder we find the dedication is to