

importance. As Père Henry writes on the last page of the volume: 'Ultimately, the strength and quality of theology depends not upon the techniques utilised, but upon the depth and religious vitality of the mind which is at work upon the mystery of God.' And the vitality of the minds here at work will surely not fail to awaken and to nourish a similar vitality in the minds of their readers. R. A. MARKUS

LIFE OF CHRIST. By Giuseppe Ricciotti. (Popular Edition.) (Mercier Press; 21s.)

Those who know about Abbot Ricciotti's work in general will know what to expect when they turn to his *Life of Christ*, and they will not be disappointed with this abridged 'Popular Edition'—at least as regards the narrative. Abbot Ricciotti is a scholar without an ounce of pedantry and well able to use his knowledge to throw an ever-helpful light on the gospel narratives. In this work the gospel narratives are admirably woven together and in great part speak for themselves, or are reverently explained and paraphrased. The actual life of Christ is prefaced by a Critical Introduction covering such subjects as The Place and Time, The Roman Procurators, Jewish Beliefs and Practices, The Sources, etc. The essential notions are compactly and clearly put.

The whole work is thus a very attractive life of Christ which is more manageable than some of the classic 'lives' or studies of modern times, and for that reason alone should appeal to a wider English-speaking public.

Unfortunately Abbot Ricciotti's admirable work has in some aspects been ill-served by this particular edition, which is a photographic reproduction of that published by the Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee (1952). Because it is a photographic edition, it has naturally not been possible to make adaptations for English or Irish readers, who will scarcely be helped by being told that Palestine is the size of Vermont or that 300 denarii is more than 80 dollars. Unfortunate too is some of the language, as e.g., when we are told (p. 254) that Judas 'has become hopelessly calloused', or (p. 322), at the Last Supper 'their positions might be diagrammed as follows'.

Most unfortunate has been the reproduction of the maps and plans (especially pp. 72 and 210). The results are obscure, and, if anything, misleading. In these days when such works as the *Westminster Historical Atlas* are available, it seems a pity that Ricciotti's *Life of Christ* cannot be given clear and helpful illustrations, maps, plans, etc.—all of which should show, as far as possible, the real character of the Holy Land, with its sun and light as well as many stark contrasts.

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.