

THE SCHOLAR AND THE CROSS. The Life and Work of Edith Stein. By Hilda C. Graef. (Longmans; 18s.)

Miss Graef more than once speaks of 'the general type of devotional biography', examples of which are to be found among Edith Stein's writings. It is clear, then, that she has explicit standards for such biographical writing; and it is certainly true that her own biography of Edith Stein demands more critical attention than a great deal of the religious biography with which we are familiar.

If I were to attempt a brief characterization of Miss Graef's approach, I should call it *typological*. The title of the book perhaps sufficiently indicates this; but Miss Graef is also concerned with two other major themes worked out in Edith Stein's life and death: the Vocation of Woman, and the Redemption of Israel. The consequence of this typological approach is that too often the person of Edith Stein tends to be less immediately apprehended, by both reader and biographer, than the themes illustrated: Miss Graef seems only to warm to her subject when an event of the life exhibits typological significance. The Redemption of Israel theme is naturally the most successfully demonstrated; and the closing pages of Miss Graef's study most movingly integrate eye-witness accounts, sympathetic apprehension and reflective Christian insight. But the other themes don't seem so happily treated. The Prologue on Woman, and the development, in the body of the work, of the theme so stated, are a little off-key; and the discussion of the philosophical writings fails to engage the intellectual interest of at least this reader, largely, one is tempted to suppose, because the writings don't themselves fully engage the interests of the biographer. By way of representing the inadequacy here, why 'Scholar' in the title? (Except for the alliteration). Edith Stein seems to have been, on Miss Graef's own showing, highly unscholarly, though intensely a philosopher. 'Scholarship', 'philosophy', 'theology', 'spirituality' don't lead sufficiently differentiated lives in Miss Graef's text.

These criticisms are offered because they seemed to be invited by the overt intentions of the book. To have set such high standards is in itself something which requires appropriate recognition, a recognition involving, need it be said, an appreciation of the conscientious intelligence of Miss Graef's study.

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ABBÉ PIERRE AND THE RAGPICKERS. By Boris Simon. (Harvill Press; 15s.)

It is a terrible thing that a little baby should die for want of the basic necessities of life in a large city in this atomic age which promises us the moon in twenty-five years. And it is to the credit of the French people that they were deeply shocked by the tragedy and quickly stirred to