

A Galaxy of Questions

By Father John S. Kennedy

William E. Brown and Andrew M. Greeley have joined forces to provide an answer to the very important question posed in the title of their book, "Can Catholic Schools Survive?" (Sheed and Ward. \$6).

Mr. Brown is an attorney, now retired, who has served as a member of the Task Force on Education of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Father Greeley—well, since he turns out a book at least every six months, there is no need of identifying him.

Not to keep anyone in suspense, Mr. Brown and Father Greeley strongly believe not only that Catholic schools can survive, but also that they must survive. Good! But how is this to be done?

The matter of money is one of the most critical factors. Mr. Brown's assignment includes dealing with that. He declares that enough money can be raised not just to keep in operation the schools which already exist, but to provide a place in a Catholic school for every Catholic child.

He rules out public aid altogether. To accept this, he maintains, is to lose control of our schools and endanger their character. He also rules out tuition. There is to be none of that.

He contends that the Catholic people would contribute enough money to finance our schools, were they only properly informed and motivated.

There is a kind of reversal of the field at the end of Mr. Brown's section of the book. There he bids Catholics to achieve administrative efficiency and educational excellence in their schools and thereby they will persuade the general public to give Catholic schools financial support without compromising the religious character of our schools.

There is no doubting the co-authors' earnest commitment to Catholic schools, and their strong desire to come up with a workable method of preserving them. They are quite hard on, and at times unfair to, those whose view of the problem and its solution does not coincide with theirs. They offer some interesting ideas, but they do not prove the practicability of the case which they present.

Eugene C. Kennedy says of his new book, "A Time for Love" (Doubleday. \$4.95), that "it casts a vote for man and his possibilities when he can be opened to the source of all love, God himself. But that love is worked out, not on the mountaintop of retreat, but in the everyday round where lovers find the real meaning of life."

The everyday round consists mostly of personal relationships, good and bad. And it is with personal relationships that Father Kennedy deals: friendship, the sharing in man-woman relationships, marriage, the relationships between parents and children, etc.

His treatment of these draws on the behavioral sciences and on the Gospel. He is equally at home in both, hence brings rich resources to the consideration of problems which plague almost everyone in our sad and troubled time.

Thus, he takes the attributes of love as St. Paul catalogues them in his letter to the Corinthians, and shows what they mean in terms of contemporary knowledge and needs. In doing so, he does not dilute, much less pervert, the scriptural wisdom, but he brings it to bear enliveningly on our predicaments.

John Giles Millhaven's "Toward a New Catholic Morality" (Doubleday. \$5.95) is a more speculative and more difficult book. It comprises articles which, at various times, he wrote for various publications.

But there is a theme running through all the pieces.

Oversimplified, it is this: that Catholic morality must take greater account of, and, in fact, in some quarters is taking greater account of, the data of human, pragmatic, empirical experience. It cannot be worked out from a set of abstract principles, but must searchingly consider what the behavioral sciences, and the insights which come from living, have to offer. Indeed, Christian ethics should "see in them the main source of light for the involute obscurity of many moral problems."

The full force, and the refinements, of this argument can be tested only by a reading of the book, which is well worthwhile. The thesis is certainly not a conventional one, but the author is certainly responsible.

Did Merton Foresee His Own Death?



CATHOLIC PRESS FEATURES

New York — Thomas Merton, the famed monk known for his spiritual writings, eerily forecast the manner of his death, suggests a longtime friend.

Edward Rice, former editor of Jubilee magazine and now a freelance photographer, tells of the forecast in *The Man in the Sycamore Tree* — *The Good Times and Hard Life* of Thomas Merton, a new book.

Merton died in 1968 while attending a conference on Eastern mysticism in Bangkok, where one night he was accidentally electrocuted by a fixture.

Then, referring to Merton's classic autobiography about his days at Columbia University

(where Rice first met him), his conversation and his decision to become a Trappist at Gethsemani Monastery in Kentucky, Rice notes:

"I wonder how many people have gone back to The Seven Storey Mountain? The last few pages are particularly interesting, where Merton concludes with a fine meditative passage, in which he imagines God speaking to him about his long journey and then his dying, first in the spirit and then in the flesh.

"And when you have been praised a little and loved a little I will take away all your gifts and all your love and all your praise and you will be utterly forgotten and abandoned and you will be nothing, a dead thing, a rejection.

"And in that day you shall possess the solitude you have so long desired. And your solitude shall bear immense fruit in the souls of men you will never see on earth.

"Do not ask when it will be or where it will be or how it will be: On a mountain or in a prison, in a desert or in a concentration camp or in a hospital or at Gethsemani. It does not matter. So do not ask me, because I am not going to tell you. You will not know until you are in it."

Rice goes on:

"And then there is that final, devastating line:

"That you may become the brother of God and learn to know the Christ of the burnt men."



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