

This section concludes as follows (p 644): "The way in which the New Testament has given specific form to the four structural elements ... is doubtless bound up with the views of life current in the ancient world, the historical mediations and specific possibilities of the time ... And precisely because they are historically conditioned they are not directly a norm for today's *memoria Jesu*, even if they are models for the way in which we, in a different historical setting and with different possibilities, can add a chapter here and now to the history of Jesus, the living one".

The fourth and final section of the book, extending to some 200 pages, is a first outline of such a chapter. The starting point is *suffering*: "suffering becomes a problem only for the man who believes in God" (p 672). Surveying first various religious and philosophical attitudes to suffering, in which Thomas Aquinas appears as a touchstone of good sense (pp 728-9), and then offering a rapid critical summary of contemporary theologians such as Karl Rahner, Metz, the Latin American liberation theologians and others, Schillebeeckx returns to the New Testament accounts of the death and resurrection of Jesus in his final moving and convincing affirmation of Christian faith (p 837): "What history tells us about Jesus, what the church tells and indeed *promises* us about Jesus is that in this way of life which is in conformity with the message of Jesus and the kingdom of God, we are shown the *real possibility* of an experience

of God ... However, what final possibilities are contained in the eschatological consummation of this saving presence of God, which we celebrate and give thanks for in the liturgy, is God's mystery ... Furthermore, we know from the same history of and about Jesus that the promise of the inward presence of God rests on the futility and the historical failure of this way of life, as on the cross". In the end, we are justified freely through faith by grace (p 838): "Real redemption or salvation always passes over into mysticism: only here can the tension between action and contemplation be sustained - existing for others and thus for that Other, the wholly intimate and near yet 'transcendent God' with whom Jesus has made us familiar".

The whole concept of this book could not be more remote from the metaphysical Christology of Galot, Patfoort and others of that persuasion. This does not mean, on the other hand, as this review has sought to show, that the work of Edward Schillebeeckx may be boiled down either to fashionable liberation theology or even worse to warmed-up liberal Protestantism (charges that have been made). Theological work of this quality, with the questions it raises as well as the learning it communicates and the faith it so manifestly displays, is a rare gift.

FERGUS KERR O P

**THE FATE OF THE ANGLICAN CLERGY** by Robert Towler and A P M Coxon  
*Macmillan, 1979. pp x + 248. £15.*

This is an important and readable study of the sociology of ministerial training in the Church of England. Both Dr Towler and Professor Coxon were students at the Anglican Hostel of the Resurrection at Leeds, and were intending ordinands. The research on which the book is based began in 1961, with Coxon's project on the social recruitment, selection and professional socialization of Anglican ordinands (Leeds, 1965). This was followed by Towler's thesis on the sociological analysis of pro-

fessional socialization of Anglican ordinands, (Leeds, 1970). According to Towler, most of the original material has been discarded and fresh research undertaken, the whole being completely rewritten for publication in the present form.

Surveys were carried out in 1962, 1966, and 1967, covering, respectively, a 30% sample of all Anglican ordinands in English colleges, one year's intake into St Chad's Durham, Oak Hill, Queen's Birmingham, Mirfield and Westcott House,

and a 50% sample of ordinands (including non-Anglicans) in Cambridge. It is relevant to note that these were the years of the 'new' theology, the so-called Cambridge/South Bank axis. They were also my own years as an ordinand in training.

The authors make much of the concept of marginality. As religious institutions, those of the Church of England in particular, have become less central to the structure of English society (the meaning, for them, of 'secularization'), so the clergy of the Church of England have become marginal to society. Their response is interesting. Some quit the ministry; others 'professionalize' themselves; others again retreat into becoming ghetto priests; a few, very few, "allow the waves of marginality to break over them". And yet, say the authors (in a rare excursion into homily) "there would be much to be said for just that course of action.... and much is lost by the scarcity of men who are to be found taking it" (p 54).

The authors study the various 'brands' of Anglicanism, broadly described as catholic, modernist, and evangelical, and are able to confirm, without difficulty, most instinctive judgments about the kind of attitudes towards the ministry to be found in each. The pattern of professional socialization taking place within colleges is illuminatingly discussed, the evangelical

college providing a contrast at nearly every point to developments within the catholic and modernist establishments.

In a final chapter, "Becoming Marginal", the authors' own convictions become once again apparent. They detect and deplore a growing rift between the radical minority (mostly clergy), and the conservative majority in the church. Because, however, they are of the opinion that a third process of secularization is in operation, the future lies not with the conservatives but with the radicals, who set the task of making "the religious vision of the Christian tradition accessible to those outside the narrow confines of the Church" (p 205).

There is much to be learnt from this book, whether or not one agrees with its final appeal. If, however, we are genuinely in a period when 'marginalization' is the fate of the clergy, then the sooner we cease using the terms, 'sect' and 'sectarian', as pejoratives the better. Christians have absolutely no guarantee that the Christian church will not be a very small entity in a largely hostile society; in which case they will be a sect, whether they like it or not, and despite any universalist convictions they may continue to entertain.

S W SYKES