

that whatever has a beginning has a cause. But if the universe had a beginning and if everything that begins to exist has a cause it still does not follow that everything that comprised the universe at its beginning has one and the same cause. It looks in fact as if the *kalām* argument as Craig presents it allows for a pantheon of deities. Craig might reply that this is not so since the universe at its beginning was one thing. But he provides no argument for such a view. He might also say that Ockham's razor makes it reasonable to believe in one God rather than a collection of gods. But again he does not argue the matter. Nor (astonishingly) does he give any reason for supposing that the God to which he concludes is not now defunct. For he moves without demur from 'the universe was caused to exist' to 'what caused the universe to exist now exists'. At best, therefore, Craig has shown that the universe was brought about intentionally.

To take matters further, however, I doubt whether he has shown even this. The above use of 'intentionally' is meant to latch on to Craig's assertion that if the universe was caused to exist then the cause of the universe must have been personal. But why should one accept this assertion? Craig appeals to the principle that when two different states of affairs are possible

and when one of them comes about it must be that the realization of the one possibility rather than the other is due to a personal agent who freely chooses one possibility rather than another. But (passing over the difficulties involved in the notion of an agent choosing among possibilities in the absence of the universe) this principle is clearly debatable taken simply as a premise of an argument for God. It is equally possible either that I will die of cancer or that I will not (though things would, of course, be different if we substitute 'probable' for 'possible'). But if I do die of cancer why should anyone believe that my death is caused by a personal agent who freely chooses that I shall die of cancer? To take another example, when the Titanic began its last journey it was equally possible either that it would sink or that it would arrive at its destination. As we know, the Titanic sank, and it seems perfectly in order to say that the sinking of the Titanic was caused by an ice-berg. At present I presume that ice-børgs do not choose to sink ships, that they are in no sense personal agents. But possibly someone is writing a thesis to the contrary even now. Maybe their conclusions will throw light on divine impassibility.

BRIAN DAVIES O. P.

THE DISSUADERS by D. W. D. Shaw SCM 1978 pp 87 £1.10

This slim volume, subtitled *Three Explanations of Religion*, is a most lucid essay in apologetics. The author notes the general vague assumption among Modern People that religion has been explained away by Modern Science. He sets out to show that neither Freud nor Marx nor Durkheim, who for different reasons saw religious consciousness as false consciousness, can be said to have succeeded in explaining religion away.

Freud, Marx and Durkheim have a chapter each. The formula is the same for each chapter: the thinker's attitude to the phenomenon of religion is presented in outline, and is seen to be a reductionist one (people may think they're worshipping their heavenly Father, etc. . .); the presuppositions and assumptions of each

such attitude are discussed and found to fall short in some ways (e.g. religion is not always the sanctification of the status quo: what about Amos and Co?); but then the positive lessons which can be learned from the critique in question are outlined (e.g. if we understand, with Durkheim, how closely religion and society are intertwined, then we will realise that 'unless the theological vocabulary is related to society's own vocabulary, it will not communicate'. p. 75).

I have two criticisms of this otherwise admirable tract. One is that it seems to presuppose this kind of a picture: there's a given, fairly clear-cut phenomenon called religion (usually, in this book, the Christian religion) on the one hand; and a new, potentially threatening and partly help-

ful ideology on the other hand; in the light of the criticisms of each particular ideology, religion needs to acknowledge a few of its failures in the past, pull its socks up in the present, and carry on in the confidence that it has drawn the sting of the criticism. But is this an adequate model? Not entirely: if we call Professor Shaw's an 'Adjustment' model, we could propose a more creative 'enlightenment' model. Christians (and I think the writer would be happy to read Christianity for Religion) believe that all truth is God's truth; therefore new insights are to be welcomed as shedding more light on a world which is God's world: where the insights constitute a critique of Christian practice, they have the salutary function of prophecy. Where they claim to say everything, they obscure the light and can reasonably be asked to move over. The difference between the adjustment and the enlightenment model is that the latter is more confident about new insights.

The other criticism, which Professor Shaw partly acknowledges, is that his technique works well enough with Freud and Durkheim, but is inadequate as a response to Marx. It is interesting that he subtitled the three chapters on Freud, Marx and Durkheim, a psychological explanation; the Marxist explanation; a sociological explanation. One may presume that he considered titling the chapter on Marx: 'An Economic Explanation', but realised that that failed to do justice to Marx's scope – to the fact that Marx's thought provides a horizon within which a whole range of thinking about the human condition may take place. Amongst other things, Marx *did* provide a critique of religion. Amongst other things, Christianity *can* provide a critique of many styles of religious consciousness. It would be worthwhile to investigate more fully the extent to which the Christian and the Marxist horizons coincide.

COLIN CARR O. P.