CHAPTER - III

THE GROWTH OF SECULARISM IN THE WEST

The term secularism, says Edwin E. Aubury is in danger. It is a word used without precise definition. It is a convenient slogan for rallying the mind of a group. It has included a formidable list of objects which has been attacked in the contemporary scene. The term has been coined by George Jacob Holyoake (1817-1906) in the middle of the 19th century from the Latin word 'Seculum' which meant originally age or generation.

The growth and development of secularism was a result of that period when science and religion were considered to be poles apart. It conceived that just as mathematics, physics and chemistry were 'secular' science so it would be possible on the same line to establish a secular theory of the conduct and welfare of life. Secularism was essentially a protestant movement. Through the study of the


history of secularism it is clear that certain religious, social and political movements, revolutions and personalities played a major role in the development of secularism. Therefore it is essential to discuss in brief the historical background of secularism stage by stage from Renaissance and Reformation up to the 20th century.

The period of Renaissance and Reformation can roughly be extended from the 14th to 16th century. This era is considerably important in the history of the development of secularism. During this period a gradual shift and transition took place from the dogmatic to the empirical and from the religious to the secular. The various social, political, economic and intellectual forces contributed in one way or other to the development of secularism and provided a new impetus to the secular temper. The movement of Renaissance and Reformation came as a growing revolt against the abuse of medieval church. The idea prevailed in the medieval period that the church by virtue of its exclusive guardianship over the internal welfare of man was entitled to priority over the state and that the state regulated merely his

transitory existence on this earth. The scholars and philosophers of the Italian Renaissance were interested in the manifold phenomena of the immediate world of nature and of man. The two universal movements emerged during this period. One is Humanism and the other is Protestantism. These two movements created in the people a general consciousness and determination to rise above the narrow ideas of the church and to develop a sense of loyalty to the state and nation. The humanist movement was initiated by the individuals like Petrarch in Italy, Erasmus in Holland, Thomas Elyot and Francis Bacon in England. It became a popular movement and embraced a major part of Europe. In religious circles it was first initiated by the great protestant reformer Martin Luther. The movement of Humanism brought a change in the outlook towards man and his nature. The advance of secularism was due to the fact that Reformation put an end to the difference which had always been made between the Clergy and Layman in religion. In this way Reformation developed a social and moral consciousness in the people. It was essentially a religious movement, but it had some characteristics of social movement and left a great impact on social institutions in 17th and 18th centuries.

4. Ibid
The 17th and 18th centuries witnessed a considerable development of secularism. This period is regarded as a period of 'methodical doubt' and there was great development almost in all spheres of human life: social, economic, political and intellectual. The comprehensive metaphysical systems of Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza and Leibnitz represented the first sustained attempt to construct a rational picture of the universe on the basis of scientifically established knowledge. In perpetuating and amplifying this type of enquiry the 18th century gradually shifted the emphasis of secularism from explanation in metaphysical terms of universal ultimates to a more empiric and intensive quest of knowledge in its concrete practical manifestations.

This striving to push back inch by inch the limits of knowledge found its fullest expression not so much in a comprehensive system as in the encyclopaedia of Diderot and D'Alembert. The distinction drawn up by the scholarships between faith and knowledge, while it left room for revealed theology was also capable of eventuating in a type of philosophical or natural theology, which placed its chief emphasis

on the truths perceptible by the human reason a broad category which subsumed only all physical knowledge but even the metaphysical knowledge of God.

The distinction between faith and knowledge was given a new and even stronger emphasis by the Protestant reformer Luther. In accordance with his connection of faith as an immediate relation between the individual seeker and God as revealed in Christ, he rigidly excluded all supernatural matters and all metaphysical rational knowledge of God. Kant probably completed the task of separating the spheres of knowledge and faith. 6

An outstanding contribution to the social and secular morality was made by Rousseau, who rejected the medieval doctrine in connection with the original Fall of Man. He professed that man was born noble and if he is brought up in a natural society governed by natural laws, he would develop into a noble human being. 7

Locke and others envisaged a natural state and Rousseau gave the concept of natural man.

7. Ibid.
The tremendous changes and developments in the field of religion, science, social, political, economic, intellectual spheres which took place during these two centuries exercised a far reaching influence on education. The Newtonian concept of world machine, the rationalism and materialism of Hobbes, Voltaire and Rame the naturalism of Rousseau the political theories of Locke and Godwin, economic theories of Malthus and Adam Smith contributed much to establish a new outlook towards human nature and the problems of human life. This new outlook was essentially secular.

The social, political and economic climate of the 19th century was governed mainly by the current forces of nationalism, liberalism and democracy and Industrialism. The spirit of nationalism which had already emerged during the time of Reformation and enlightenment received a new impetus under the influence of industrial Revolution in the 19th century. In the 19th century there were two types of socialism - utopian socialism and Marxism or Scientific socialism. Utopian socialism advocated an ideal society in which all might lead a happy and prosperous life. It envisaged a democratic and secular state and through its spirit of rationalism, humanitarianism and its hostility to church...
and religion. Utopian socialism contributed a great deal to the secular temper. Marxism as a philosophy is thoroughly and consistent by materialistic and anti clerical is secular both in theory and practice. It is basically humanistic. Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, Thomas Huxley, Stanly Hall and other contributed a great deal in strengthening, the secular temper of the 19th century. It touched education also.

The current century is sometimes called the 'age of suspicion' and 'uncertainty' the atomic age has certain characteristics of its own and in some respects finds no parallel in the whole of human history. The liberal forces of the 20th century have made secularism a common feature of government and social organisation in different countries the world. In the communist countries like the Soviet Union and China secularism gives practically no connection to religion while in other countries like U.S.A. the United Kingdom and France secularism tolerates the existence of church and religion. The differences are there, practically almost all of the countries have embraced the doctrine of secularism as the sole guiding principle in politics and education. The values are secular the methods are secular.

Ibid.
and life has become secular. As a whole the 20th century has come the age of secularism.\textsuperscript{10}

Secularism brings man and society in the forefront. It seeks human progress through rational means and holds the view that these material means are one more proximate, more adequate for achieving the desired ends, human welfare, happiness and progress.

For a secularist the aims of education are human and social, his subject matter is humanistic and utilitarian, his approach to different problems is rational and scientific and his method is experimentation. The secularist has a totally different outlook towards the whole system of education.\textsuperscript{11}

G.J. Holyoake, who is the father of secularism started propagating the movement in 1846 and laid down its principle in his two books (1) \textit{Principles of Secularism} and (2) \textit{The Origin and Nature of Secularism}. He formed a society in London and he popularised the movement. Holyoake defined secularism as follows:

'Secularism is that which seeks the development of the physical, moral and intellectual nature of man to the

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\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{11} Cf. Text Book for Secular of India, pp. 2-15.
highest possible point as the immediate duty of life which
inculcates the practical sufficiency of natural morality
apart from atheism, theism, or the Bible which selects as
its methods of procedures the promotion of human improvement
by material means alone'.

Holyoake himself described his philosophy as a
system of ethical principles based on four foundations —
(a) Primary emphasis on the material and cultural improve-
ment of human being, (b) Respect for and search for all truth,
whatever be its source which can be tested in experience as
leading to human betterment, (c) Concern for this world and
its improvement and not for any other world, (d) An independ-
dent rational morality which does not base itself on faith
in divine commandment.12

He came into contact with Charles Bradlaugh in 1858
and in following years they 'coined the term secularism'.
In 1868 Bradlaugh succeeded Holyoake as the president of
the society. It was a form of free thought and its fundamental
tenet was that what was best for humanity would command the
approval of the author of humanity.13 The best way of arri-
ving at truth was to repose full confidence in human reason.14

12. James Hasting: An encyclopædia of Religion and
Ethics, Secularism, pp. 348-349, Vol. II. Edinburgh,
1920.
13. quoted in the Seminar 67 on Secularism.
14. Ibid.
Only such moral principles were valid which would appeal to reason and to the consciousness of enlightened men. The principal aim of secularism was the establishment of a code of morality which was of secular in nature. So far Christianity is moral secularism has common ground with it. The reason for being moral were not Christian religion. Secularism seeks it in conduct. It holds the view that whatever the consequences enquiry should be end in truth.

According to Bradlaugh secularism is hostile to religion. It has no place and toleration for religion. He considered that secularism was bound to contest theistic belief and that human progress through material means was impossible so long as religion and superstition exercised a powerful influence on human life. He maintained that either of the two secularism or religion should survive. Its influence was strongest in the middle of the 19th century and it coincided with a period of definitely anti-religious propaganda. It was not long before the movement rapidly decayed and disappeared from independent existence. The attempt to ignore religion is impracticable as religion embraces both secular and spiritual concerns. Religion

15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
denies the secular conception of life and that conception cannot establish itself without defeating the claim of religion to control life. It was this reason that secularism which did not include a definitely anti-religious theory was bound to fail.²⁰ It has lost its independent existence and got merged into larger materialistic movements existing in Europe. The spirit of secularism manifests itself in various forms and through various ideologies and movements. Consequently secularism has been a subject of stringent criticism among many the Stockholm conference (1925) the universal Christian conference on life and work (1957) held at Oxford, the World Conference on Faith and Order (1937) held at Edinburgh and Assembly of World Council of Churches (1948) held at Amsterdam all condemned secularism.²¹

Further secularism being materialistic and exclusive of religion is hardly compatible with the tradition of some countries which are deeply religious.²²

The first amendment of the constitution of America that 'congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof' has been called the greatest achievement ever made in the cause

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²⁰ Every man's encyclopaedia. quoted in the seminar 67 on secularism.
²¹ Aubrey, op. cit., pp. 17-23
²² Seminar 67 secularism the monthly symposium Post box 338, New Delhi - 1.
of human progress because it marks the total and final separation of church and state. It is arguable that the first amendment does not actually accomplish complete separation, between church and state and American constitution is an important landmark in the history of secularism.23

An American apologist of the constitution has claimed that the experiment of complete separation of church and states is best for church and best for state and secures freedom for both. The freedom of religion in a secular state may not be valued in societies where the power of religion is on the wane. The constitution as the safeguard for private faith the first amendment is a model for all states.24

Again in England the established church is no more a check on religious freedom than its monarchy is a check on democracy. The Anglican church does not ask for disestablishment because as its commission of 1949 said the "unique relationship between church and state in England is regarded as a sign that the country has preserved a continuous Christian tradition. Secondly, the established church is no source of anxiety to Parliament when it can reject its proposals by a majority as it did in (1927-28) when the House


24. Ibid.
of Commons refused legal authority to the church to worship God in the manner its bishops clergy and laity thought most fitting.

Again this secular control of the church does not reduce religious liberty because its members is free to quit it and worship God in his own way.25

There is an encouraging instance of the increasing influence of secularism in the modern world. Israel is a Jewish state in name and it is not a theocracy. There are found strong elements in Israel parliament (Knesset) favouring a secular approach to religious matters. It is true that even in the early fifties an Israeli newspaper was fined for working its printing press on the Sabbath. There are many instances of it. The religious block has revised that religious courts are anachronistic in modern state. This progressive secularisation of the state was promised by Ben Gurion when he said 'Freedom of conscience and of religion will serve the government as a loadstar in all its activities'.26

The principles of secularism have been put in practice in France for last twenty years. In 1886, the 40th

25. Ibid.
edition of the first years course of instruction —moral and civic in accordance with the law of the 28th March 1882, 'Children are taught.' As you grow older you become more serious. Consider what your duties are, you have duties towards yourselves, that is to say towards your bodies and towards your souls.

Again extracts from the French Laws against bad and dissipated persons are added to enforce this teaching. In this new bible the pupil is told to resolve. "I will not do to another what I would not that he should do to me ...... I will do him no wrong. I will love him, be grateful exact, discreet and charitable ...... I will do to all what I would that they should do to me". 27

Webster's universal Dictionary gives the meaning of the term secularism in these words. "Supreme or exclusive attention to the affairs of this life, specially an ethical system founded on natural morality, which seeks the development of the physical, moral and intellectual nature of man to the highest possible point as the immediate duty of life, advocating the practical sufficiency of morality apart from theism or religion and choosing as its method of procedure the promotion of human improvement by material means. This

may be said a fairly satisfactory description of the mentality of one who would call himself a secularist.

Again Webster's New International Dictionary of the English language for example gives two meanings of the word. (a) A system of social ethics based upon doctrine advanced by G.J. Holyoake that ethical standards and conduct should be determined exclusively with reference to the present life and social well being,²⁸ (b) Any view of life, education etc. or any policy or programme referring to such based on the promise that religion and religious consideration as of god and future life should be ignored or excluded.²⁹ Secularism is not a complete system of social ethics in the sense utilitarianism or positivism is although with both it has relation, secondly he observes that it is not a system advanced by Holyoake although with both it has a relation secondly he observes that it is not a system advanced by Holyoake although he invented the word just as Jeremy Bentham cannot be said to have advanced a theory of internationalism although he was the first to use the word. Thirdly secularism does not necessarily exclude or even ignore religion. Because those who value secularism as a liberal principle and desire its promotion as an instrument of human progress must now begin to realise that:

²⁸ The article secularism and social order, pp. 71-72.
²⁹ Ibid.
(1) It is not an entire ethical system,
(2) It is older than Huxley's enunciation of it in his principle of secularism,
(3) It is not inherently atheistical. 30

Secularism is not more a system than liberalism is a system. It is not tenable to expose it as a complete theory of life. Flint, Scottish philosopher observed that secularism is a theory of life or conduct which flows from the theory of life or conduct which flows from the theory of belief or knowledge that constitutes the substance of positivism. He adds that secularism is not as elaborate and comprehensive a doctrine as positivism or utilitarianism is when Comte French philosopher says that the scientific spirit is the only principles of intellectual organisation he is a secularist. Bentham's radicalism is also a secular in approach. 31

An Owenist 32 is as much of a secularist as a disciple of Thomas paine. But no one has presented a system which can be recognised as an entire philosophy of life. 33

Secularism has been misunderstood because it has been artificially inflated into a system. It is neither a system

30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Robert Owen (1771-1858) in England a number of attempts were made in America to establish communitarian settlements on purely secular basis. (Ferms Encyclopaedia, p. 188. New York. 1915.
33. Ibid., p. 72.
nor a creed nor a church which needs to be founded. As an intellectual venture it is as old as the rise of rationalism in the west. The worldliness which Burckhardt discovered in the intellectual temper of the middle ages and which led to the emergence of humanism is essentially a form of secularism. The revival of antiquity during the Renaissance was part of a movement towards a secular view of life, an affirmation of the primacy of the human concern in all intellectual endeavour. The ancient Greeks had no fixed creed or established church. But the Greek culture was recognised as the product of a mentality which we now associate with secularism. Culture without established boundaries or dogmatic laws offered to the Greeks assistance to their imagination unhindered by the fear of punishment. 35 When Thomas Moore decided not to enter a monastery but to work in society he was a secularist although he is as medieval rather than modern, when he decreed death penalty for a person who denied the immortality of the soul in his utopia. 36 Machiavelli the chief architect has been called 'an extraordinary event' which set the tone for one of the main themes of modern history 'the secularisation of life and thought'.

34. John Lewis Burckhardt Traveller in the East, 1794-1817.
35. Ibid. p. 74.
36. Ibid.
Again Hobbes’s plea for an 
Christian church and his 
justification of the supremacy of the state demanded a 
secularist argument. Locke continued the work of Hobbes in 
liberating political theory from theology. Therefore, what 
Machiavelli Hobbes and Locke achieved in the field of state-
craft and political philosophy, Boyle achieved in historiogra-
phy by freeing it from the chain of religion. For Howard 
Robinson the profanation of sacred history is no less impor-
tant in the history of the secularisation of knowledge than 
the work of Galileo in Physics. Rousseau secularised theo-
dicy itself. Kant’s agnosticism and his emphasis on the 
ethical categorical imperative are the foundation for his 
human and non-theological approach to individual and social 
life. The secularist mentality is much older than secularism 
and has been an important element in the western intellectual 
tradition. Sometimes it is understood as atheistic. For this 
use of atheism and secularism as synonymous there is no 
justification in the history of secularist thought. When 
Holyoake was thinking of a appropriate word for his doctrine

37. Boyle Robert: British Physicist and Chemist. He was the author of Moral and Religious Essays. By his will be founded Boyle lecturers for defence of Christianity against unbeliever.

38. Agnosticism: It is vastly ancient phase of religious thought. Prof. Huxley introduced the term to the English speaking world about 1865 (Forlong’s Myth of man, Vol. I, p. 8, London, 1908.)
he rejected 'atheism' in favour of 'secularism'. He intended to keep it apart from Bradlaugh's atheism. He wrote in the Reasoner that "we are not infidels if that term implies rejection of Christian truth, since all we reject is Christian error".

He reaffirmed it when he said: "To ignore it is not to deny. To go one way is not to deny that there may be to other persons another way. To travel by land is not to deny the water. The chemist ignores architecture but he does not deny it. The secularist is concerned with this world without denying or discussing any other world, either the origin of this or the existence of that." 39

In an extremely well argued treatise on secularism Horace M. Kallen has said that secularism accepts the God of every communion as that communion defines its God, but projects no definition of its own. Its concern is not what God means to anyone but with how that meaning affects one's way with his neighbour who gives God a different meaning. It should follow that there can be a secularist view of God and that the secularist does not repudiate religion as something necessarily destructive of secularism. 40 There can be secularist who has no faith in God and there can be one who has.

39. Ibid., p. 73
40. Ibid.
It concludes that what makes him a secularist is his concern with human life or this earth and its improvement through the human source. The recent Christian movement has made its terms with the secularist ideal of the age. A distinguished professor of theology has remarked that the attempt to set the church over against the secular order has been accompanied by the acknowledgment that secular forces have crept into the church, its life and its thinking. This is however generally regarded as a confession of weakness and steps are urged to extirpate these alien influences. The entrance of the secular into the life and thought of the church is not only historically inevitable but a creative advance of the faith itself. The church takes the task which relates to the secular concern of life. 41 The non-conformist Christian considers social work as more important than his private redemption.

In America the teaching of Col. Ingersoll has been much the same. 42 He says that secularism embraces everything that is of any real interest or value to the human race. That mind of man is incapable of finding a nobler incentive to action than this which embraces the broadest and fullest human love. That secularism represents a religion that has

41. Ibid.
been always and everywhere practised. But science and secularism are naturally opposed by prejudices and habit, by heredity and the prepossessions of childhood. The Canadian secularist union of Toronto published their principles and explanations as follows: that we have real knowledge of this life, that reason aided by experience is the best guide of conduct. Our chief duty is to promote the general well being of society. For this object human effort is based on knowledge and justice is the only reliable means. We can judge only by results: that conduces to general well being is right and the reverse is wrong. Science is our providence and on it we should rely in time of need.

What secularism is Not:

There was a time in the evolution of human society, when there was no need for differentiation between the religious and secular because religion pervaded the whole of life. When a religion emerges as a discipline of life the question arises how much of that life it must control and how much of it can be left to the reason of the individual. The secularist demands that the authority of religion or the individual must not extend beyond his spiritual concerns and

44. Published in Sept., 1888.
45. Ibid.
would therefore oppose any kind of social organisation or
government which could cover the whole of life. It follows
that secularism is opposed to theocracy such as Josephs
defined for the Hebrews with whom the mosaic-creed was not
merely the state. It was the state itself. If theocracy is
not secularism forced worship of man too is repugnant to it.
It was in Rome that refusal to worship Caesar was a greater
blasphemy than refusal to worship Jupiter. The secularist
would support the Jews who actually refused to worship the
emperor on religious grounds. Similarly, he would call the
Christians good citizens when Trajan[^46] and his successors
persecute the atheists and anarchists. He is opposed to the
supremacy of the church. Thomas Aquinas said that the highest
aim of mankind is eternal happiness. To this chief aim of
mankind all earthly aims must be subordinated. This chief
aim cannot be realised through human direction alone but
must obtain divine assistance which is only to be obtained
through the church. Therefore, the state through which ear-
thly aims are obtained must be subordinated to the church.[^47]

[^46]: Trajan - Roman emperor early began as soldier,
conduct successful wars against Armenians and
Parthians. Died on return in Sicilia.

[^47]: Ibid.
cally it has clashed with religion because through establi-
shed church and creed it has denied this freedom to the
individual. Therefore, on principle it has no quarrel with
religion so long as it does not interfere with the life of
those who do not care for it. Secularism has emerged as an
intellectual principle governing man's thought and action
in religion to himself, and that enforced authority of
institution or dogma is a danger to that civilization. It
usually encourages criticism to promote creativeness. It
sustains non-conformity to prevent the death of reason. It
denies the sanctify of an established creed. Lastly it urges
freedom of conscience because it desires free growth of the
human mind as the only means of human progress. Secularism
is an active principle. It makes the state neutral in respect
of religion or individual opinion. Only a secular state can
give full scope to man's infinite faculty for in such a state
government does not coerce conscience or inhibit thought.

When princes and governments disavow coercion of
conscience it is great gain for secularism. When James II\(^48\)
declared that "conscience ought not to be constrained nor
people forced in matters of religion" he made an important
contribution to the growth of secularism in England.\(^49\)

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49. Ibid., p. 77.
It includes a formidable list of objects in contemporary scene, scientific humanism, naturalism and materialism, agnosticism and positivism, intellectualism, rationalism existentialism and philosophy, nationalism and totalitarianism democratic faith and communism utopian idealism optimism and the idea of progress, moralism and amoralism, ethical relativism and nihilism, the industrial revolution modern education in separation from religion, historical method when applied to biblical revelation, mass atheism and the depersonalisation of man.  

It is one of those things which is difficult to be defined. There is new meaning of secularisation which has not been found in the dictionary. It is discernible in the writings of students of comparative religion and mystical philosophers. Professor David Baily Harned Chairman of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia, U.S.A. says that the quest for the holy has become diffused beyond the normal precincts of the sacred or the religious. The dominance of functional norms and development of institutional autonomy in the public realm and on the other hand, the proliferation of private forms of religiosity testify that this sort of secularisation is a pervasive phenomenon in the modern west. Professor Harned goes on to say that this kind

50. Secularism a myth, p. 25.
of diffusion holds great and various dangers for the Christian tradition, because it may end up in a denial of the basic dogmas of Christian theology. He says that diffusion is quite consonant with the tradition and largely inspired by it. He concludes:\[51] 'In the precise sense of the diffusion of the quest for ecstasy beyond the realm of conventionally sacred or religious secularisation is a proper and important product of Christianity'. He maintains that 'religion' suggests something dynamic is really static that something protean is really uniform. He would prefer to discard the confusing distinctions between sacred and profane and between religious and secular to replace them by the categories of the holy and the human. Here two contrasting moralities are mentioned that of the man of sanctity concerned primarily with redeeming the times and contributing to the work of God and that of the secular man concerned primarily with building new and imaginary worlds for the delight of human sensibility. The conclusion is drawn that the man of sanctity and the secular man may have equal title to be called Christian.\[52]

The meaning of secularisation is implied in Khalil Gibran’s imaginative account of the life of Jesus Christ. This connotation which restricts itself to the purely

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51. Ibid., p. 136
52. Ibid., p. 99
spiritual life of man as distinguished from conformity to a given theological system is regarded as the secularisation of the inner life to distinguish it from the negative secularism. This kind of secularisation which is spiritualisation is at the root of all mysticism which is the art or science of the spiritual life. There is another meaning of 'secularisation' that it can suggest that there is no longer a thirst for any sort of ekstasis. That intellectual and aesthetic activities were gradually liberated from the early domination of religion.

There is secular music, art, architecture, secular plays and secular education. The idealistic thought movements of the 20th century are endeavouring to orient the word "secularisation" in a third direction.

"The diffusion of the quest for ecstasy or for the holy beyond the normal precincts of the sacred or the religious and into the region of the most ordinary experience of life with a metaphysical structure which varies from one school to another". The education literature and the fine arts gradually became secularised in Great Britain during the last few centuries. The word secularisation means institutional autonomy also under the impact of modernisation or technological advance segment of the social structure liberate themselves from the domination of religion. The
economic and political systems seek justification entirely in terms of their own functional logic. The individual do not any longer seek an ultimate meaning in this roles and functions. 53

This institutional phenomenon leaves individuals free to turn towards the private sphere of family life and introspection in their quest for ultimate meanings and norms. The gradual differentiation between the secular and the private or religious aspect has become the leading feature of all advanced countries in the world. It has been anticipated that there is probably more of secularisation in British society. 54 Larry G. Shiner’s essay, “The concept of secularisation in empirical research” provides a starting point of the historical development of the concept as well, as a survey of different ways it has been used by contemporary sociologists. He does offer some suggestion to clarify the term. He explains that once branded the enemy has suddenly become the darling of protestant theology and there are strong indications that some Roman catholic theologians are softening. He explains what is the index of secularisation. It is church attendance, belief in immortality, the private prayer, the number of scientists who

53. Ibid., p. 100.
54. Ibid., p. 101.
believe in God. The following analysis is an attempt to bring the concept of secularisation its use in empirical research and its weakness as an analytical tool and some possible alternatives beginning with Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch "secularisation" was used as a descriptive and analytical term and it was soon picked up by historians. It designated a militant force to be combatted. There has been increasing number of theologians since the second world war. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Friedrich Gogarten are the most significant of those who have argued that secularisation is not only a part of a result of Christian faith but it demanded all areas of life. Gogarten says that the independence of science and culture from the supposed Christian world view is the logical appropriate out come of God having turned the world over to man's responsibility.

Many of the theologians are not ready to go as far as Bonhoeffer and Gogarten in celebrating the autonomy of man as the positive of development of secularisation. For

55. Larry E. Shinar is associate Professor of Philosophy at Sangamon State University, Illinois and is the author of secularisation of history, 1966.

56. Gogarten's fullest statement to this position is to be found in Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzzeit, 1963.
example this includes catholic progressives. Many of the moderate catholic and protestant thinker are transformationists who believe that secular society ought to be grased with the sacred and it is clear that for them secularisation is no longer a term of approbium, but rather an instrument of description and analysis. 57

The decline of religion and the culmination of secularisation would result in a religion less society. J. Milton Yinger terms secularisation the process in which traditional religious symbols and forms have lost force and appeal. Gloek and Stark's Religion and Society in tension which makes a doctrinal version of the decline theory. 58

The other studies have measured the decrease in clerical prestige, the number of marriages before clergyman, the amount of prayer, church attendance or the number of the paintings with secular theme. 59 Some like Pitirim A. Sorokin have put together a collection of such variables relating to belief and practices and developed a general theory of decline. 60

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57. For discussion of the main theological attempts to come to grips with the problem of secularisation see Larry Shiner "Towards a theology of secularisation" Journal of Religion Oct., 1965, pp. 279-295.


59. Ibid., pp. 116-120.

The question arises when and where we are to find the supposedly religious age from which decline has commenced. Even David Martin has remarked that secularists tend to take a utopian view of medieval religious life. 61

Gabriel Le Bros says that in the "de christianized" France there are practicing catholics who participate voluntarily, faithfully and with an understanding of what they are doing than there were before 1789. 62 Clock and Starks study was a considerable improvement over part measures of belief and although the refinements developed by Fichte Lenski, Fukuyama have contributed much it cannot be said that such deviation from tradition is necessarily a decline.

The part of the difficulty in measuring the decline of religion is the definition of religion itself. 63 The religious group or the religiously informed society turns its attention from the supernatural and becomes more interested in this world. The culmination of secularisation would be a society absorbed with the pragmatic tasks of the

present and a religious group indistinguishable from the rest of the society. Harold W. Pfantz has defined secularisation as the tendency of sectarian religious movements to become both part of and like the world. 64

Society separates itself from the religious understanding which has previously informed it in order to constitute itself an autonomous reality and consequently to limit religion to the sphere of private life. The culmination of this kind of secularisation would be a religion of a purely inward character influencing neither institutions nor corporate action and a society in which religion made no appearance outside the sphere of the religious group. Hannah Arendt defines secularisation "as the first of all simply the separation of religion and politics". The French theologian and social analyst Roger Mehl has described secularisation as the historical process which tends to contest the public role of religion. To substitute other forms of authority for religious authority and finally is to relegate religion to the private sector of human existence. 65

The knowledge patterns of behaviour and institutional arrangements which are once understood as grounded

64. Harold Pfantz: Christian Science, Social Forces - 34.
65. Roger Mehl "De La Secularisation", p. 70, 1966 a'latheism "Fokstvies".
in divine power are transformed into phenomena of purely human creation and responsibility. The culmination of this kind of secularisation process would be a totally anthropopolized religion and a society which had taken over all the functions previously accruing to the religious institutions. Adalbert Klempt speaks of secularisation as the "transformation of conception and modes of thought which were originally developed by Christian salvation belief and its theology into ones of a world based outlook". 66

The world is gradually deprived of its sacred character as man and nature become the object of rational causal explanation and manipulation. The culmination of secularisation would be completely "rational" world society in which the phenomenon of the supernatural or mystery would play no part. Historian Eric Kahler writes that secularisation means "that man become independent of religion and lived by reason face to face with objectified physical nature". 67

Among the contemporary writers Mircea Eliade has given the most sensitive evocation of the loss of the sense of the sacred. Eliade finds the root of desacralization in science which has so neutralized nature and human life that

no point can have "a unique ontological status" which inte-
grates the whole. Some apparently feel that it will one day
complete itself and religion will disappear. Again others
hold that man is incurably religious and the sense of the
sacred has been pushed into the unconscious for the time
being or it is in the process of finding new forms of expre-
sion. This is the general concept of social change emphasizing
multiple variable through several stages. Howard Becker says
that the culmination of secularisation would be a society in
which all decisions are based on rational and utilitarian
considerations and there is complete acceptance of change.68
The theological version of this type of secularisation con-
cept has been developed by Bernard Meland who defines secu-
larisation as the "movement away from traditionally accepted
norms and sensibilities in the life interests and habits of
a people."69 He adds that secularisations does not refer
merely to religious phenomena but to any traditional norms
and perceptions.70

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   p. 3.
70. Ibid., p. 9.
The range of phenomena which has been considered religious is so varied that no single definition of the 'essence' of religion can embrace them all. After examining some of the various ways of defining the polarity, David Martin concludes that it is impossible to develop criteria for distinguishing between the religious and the secular since it would be "an obvious absurdity" to combine the metaphysical and mytho-poetic modes of thought, the acceptance of miracle belief in historical purpose, rejection of material benefits, and lack of confidence towards the world under the common rubric of religion. Paul Tillich has suggested that the existence of a religion as opposed to secular realm in human experience is an expression of "the tragic estrangement of man's spiritual life from its own ground and depth". The notion of religion as a separate part of culture presupposes an advanced stage of differentiation and rejects an attitude contrary to the way in which at least some of the adherents understand their own tradition. Niyazi Berkes has pointed out that the usual dichotomy is based on the western model of "church" and "state", which presupposes an institutionalized religion distinct from the political order. When we apply this "spiritual temporal" polarity to non-western situations where such differentiations did not originally

exist we falsify the data.  

The secular religious polarity easily encourages the assumption that an increase of activity in the so-called secular sphere must mean a corresponding decline in the religious area. J. H. Hexter has remarked of this particular intellectual trap, there is considerable evidence that in some period of history the 18th century is one both aspects of society rose to higher levels of intensity. 73

The secular religious polarity simply compounds the deception in the idea that religion is an entity of some kind. If one does not begin by defining religion or the religions in terms of institutional or behavioural traits there will be no need to find a polar opposite. When "religions is used to designate a certain quality of life or dimension of individual and social experience which concerns the whole man and the whole of society this dimension may be as much in play in certain activities, conventionally levelled 'secular' as it is not in play in some that are conventionally levelled 'religious'. The development of the term secularisation has often faced controversy. 74 Martin has gone so far as to

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73.  Ibid.
74.  William M. New Men : Social meaning of religion, p. 320.
suggest that it has been a "tool of counter religious ideologies" which define the 'real' basis of religion and claim that religion so defined is in a process of irreversible decline. Martin believes the motives behind this are partly "the aesthetic satisfactions found in such notions and partly as a psychological boost to the movements with which they are associated".  

Boschenberg even suggests that the concept of secularisation has been a tool of those theological clerics who went to impugn the legitimacy of the modern world. What Herberg calls a secularisation of society is actually the triumph of "religion" where as the legitimate outcome of faith would be the secularisation of society in the sense of materialising conventional religiosity. Bonhoeffer and Gogarten do not style themselves 'secular' theologians the recent rash of books proclaiming 'the secular meaning of the gospel' or a 'secular christianity' or praising the 'secularality' as the solely authentic place of Christian existence have made 'secularisation' once again an ecclesiastical battle slogan by stinging traditionalists and conservatives into a counter attack on this secularisation of Christianity.  

75. David Martin, op.cit., p. 176.  

are the contradictory connotations. The term secularisation is designated by different processes and phenomena. This Weber could employ it not only for dis-enchantment but also for transpositions (spirit of capitalism) at times even in the sense of becoming 'worldly' as when he speaks of the "secularising influence of wealth" or monasticism. The terms can be employed such as the transposition or differentiation which are both more descriptive and neutral. 77

The processes above could be embraced significantly by the term 'secularisation' since they are not contradictory but they are complementary. 'Desacri-lization differentiation and transposition — these are emphasised in western religious history. The sacrfication of nature and history generally preceded political and social differentiation and the former was not accomplished all at once. Transposition cannot take place without the prior or concomitant occurrence of differentiation. However the careless differentiation and partisan use of 'secularisation' is so general that its polemical connotations will continue to cling to it despite the social, scientific efforts to neutralise it. 78 There was no basic antagonism between church and state once they had

78. Cf. The social meaning of Religion', the article concept of secularisation it empirical research, p. 322.
learnt to co-exist. They would co-exist because they were similar in nature.