

irrotetaan kokonaan ontologiasta ja metafysiikasta, voidaan uskontotieteessä silloin yhtä hyvin ottaa jumalat ja muut ei-naturalistiset tekijät selittäviksi tekijöiksi. Vaikka tieteellisen tutkimuksen pitää olla metafysisiltä oletuksiltaan mahdollisimman avointa, vaatii minimaalisestakin naturalismista luopuminen erittäin hyviä perusteluja.

Nämä kriittiset huomiot eivät kuitenkaan vie arvoa Visalan kirjalta, jossa tekijä tiivistää usein taitavasti laajasta aineistosta erilaisia näkemyksiä ja esittää oivaltavia huomioita. Kirjan loppuosan keskustelua teismien ja kognitiivisen uskontotieteen suhteesta voi lukea myös erillisenä analyysinä. Sen sijaan selittämisen ja metafysiikan väliseen suhteeseen – ja samalla naturalismin määrittelyyn – lukija toivoisi enemmän selkeyttä.

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STEVE BRUCE
Secularization. Oxford:
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Aberdeen sociology professor Steve Bruce's book that defends the thesis or paradigm of secularization was first published in hardback in 2011. Nowhere on the cover of the paperback version does it display the subtitle found on the inside title page: "In Defence of an Unfashionable Theory". This is curious as a matter of academic reference, but probably a wise marketing move. There is certainly a fair amount of academic momentum against such a theory, but you can't really sell it so effectively by labelling it up front as the product no one wants to buy anymore.

Bruce credits Jürgen Habermas with popularizing talk of "post-sec-

ular Europe" (p. 203) – a term which clearly grates Bruce's ear. In the preface he readily admits that his "grumpy old man" reason for writing the work in question is that he has grown dreadfully weary of "the same ill-informed arguments from young scholars who have read no further back than the work of their supervisors" (p. vi) on the subject. As Bruce sees it, secularism is not dead, it is merely gravely misunderstood. The multitude of recent studies on contemporary religious trends, when properly understood, merely prove secularization's point. In this regard *Secularization* has a great deal in common with the works of Christian apologists, like William Lane Craig, who say that God really isn't dead and that science, rather than disproving the existence of God, when properly understood, actually reinforces theism.

Bruce starts out defending the secularization thesis – from his perspective as "ever more of an old-fashioned positivist" (p. vi) – by distancing himself from the old-fashioned positivism of Comte, Marx, Freud and (without saying so) Nietzsche: "[W]hile the nineteenth-century founding fathers of sociology may have thought that secularization was inevitable, no modern sociologist has taken this view, and it forms no part of my approach" (p. 4). This moves the goal posts for the theory a fair distance to start with. Bruce takes this even further by declaring that secularization "is an exercise in historical explanation and has no application to the future." In other words not only was Comte's original paradigm of secularization substantially flawed, but in reformulating this paradigm theorists of secularization are strictly limiting themselves to the clear vision of hindsight – not stretching themselves to make any particular predictions about the future.

So what does the new form of this "unfashionable theory" consist of then? Basically it is a theoretical

understanding of a complex web of causes and effects in the history of western society that begins with monotheism, finds a major turning point in the Protestant Reformation, and ends up with religion becoming relativized, compartmentalized and privatized in the modern world. In between the Reformation and these ending points Bruce itemizes eighteen significant factors, which have brought about such developments in western European societies in particular. This forms the bulk of chapter 2, which is essentially the core of his argument. Chapter 1 sets out to clarify the terminology he intends to use, and chapters 3–10 are defensive arguments against various critiques of his basic thesis. Bruce claims no significant originality in these concepts other than in "sidestepping the issue of the origins of religion and treating the related question of what purposes religion serves as secondary" (p. 25), a point worth coming back to.

His narrative basically begins with the claim that worshipping the distant high God of the Jews required a less magical and more rational perspective than did polytheistic religions. Rather than tricking or cajoling the deities into helping us out, we needed to make a point of understanding His divine laws, set out according to rational principles. This rational aspect was further reinforced by the Protestant Reformation, which also inadvertently reduced the communal aspect of religion by focusing more on the individual's standing before God, and democratized spirituality by making it as much the property of peasants and tradesmen as monks and nuns.

The Protestant emphasis on everyday work that serves as a form of worship, in line with Weber's famous theory, eventually led to industrial capitalism, economic advancement, scientific and technological thought, greater professional specialization, market-oriented thinking, major class divisions with-

in society, and counter-reactions to these class divisions. Through these processes religion became less of a cultural requirement for membership in society and more a matter of personal choice. As schisms and sects brought more alternatives "on-to the market" the process of making rational choices between religious alternatives further increased in importance. Meanwhile citizenship in a liberal democracy came to be seen as more important than religious identity as such, and this started to force people's now more private religious identities into the closet, so to speak. Religious institutions thus lost the authority to claim that their teachings needed to be obeyed on a "thus sayeth the LORD" basis; they became just one set of relativized moral claims to be evaluated among all of the other competing alternatives. Then as people began to feel that they are the technological masters of their own fates, and as no one was authoritatively telling them what they had to believe any more, religious perspectives "seeking help from above" have progressively become less and less popular.

This trend is presented as nearly universal wherever these background factors of modernization apply, yet this paradigm cannot be completely universalized, or seen as having predictive value, because people today are still "quite capable of believing nonsense" (p. 43). Thus, contrary to Comte and Marx's perspectives, some people will always continue to be religious, regardless of "better information" being available – just in more private and trivial ways. The factor, which Bruce believes will make this trend irreversible, is the ethic of freedom and individual rights. Stating his case bluntly, Bruce claims that "shared belief systems require coercion. The survival of any particular religion requires that individuals be subordinated to the community" (p. 55). And since our modern under-

standing of human rights precludes such coercion, Bruce sees religion as a culturally dominant factor as doomed. And without the force of social coercion to reinforce it, private religion as well is likely to continue dwindling and fading.

One important argument in the sociology of religion that Bruce, perhaps for reasons of brevity, fails to address at all is that fundamentalism, like secularization, is a religious response to modernity. Rather than reducing and relativizing their faith, many religious groups confront the gap between their traditional world views and "modernized" perspectives by developing a siege mentality of sorts and withdrawing from modern society – attacking whatever institutions they see as a threat to their faith as the basis of their new existential purpose in life. It is hard to consider any defence of secularization complete without a more adequate consideration of this factor.

More critically, however, in sidestepping the issue of the "origins and purposes" of religion, Bruce allows himself to make some rather problematic assumptions as to what is essential and what is peripheral to religious experience in general and to Christianity in particular. As he sees it, coerced uniformity is essential, whereas personal peace with oneself and one's fellow humans is peripheral. In a section of chapter 2 entitled "Retarding Tendencies" Bruce says, "However, because most proponents [of secularization] are fully aware of the many settings in which religion has prospered in modernizing societies, they would add an important qualification: except where religion finds or retains work to do other than relating individuals to the supernatural" (p. 49). From there he goes on to argue that "therapeutic" purposes of building self-worth through loving God and seeing oneself as being made in the divine image, or providing a basis for culturally relating to one's neighbor in a more inclu-

sive way, are not really factors that "relate to the supernatural" in the same sense as praying for a good harvest or recognizing the divine right of kings. In other words, Bruce considers the magical and Machiavellian applications of Christianity to be more essential to the faith than the Twin Commandment of Love. What's wrong with this picture?

It should be said in his defence, however, that in defending the theory of secularization, Bruce sets out neither to debunk religion nor to promote atheism per se. On the contrary, he claims the openly believing Christian sociologist Peter Berger as one of his primary influences in the field, and he describes himself as someone raised as a traditional Presbyterian, who has since become "agnostic with a bad back," thus getting less pleasure out of prayer meetings than his more devout peers. His goal is merely to defend the integrity of a paradigm used in historical analysis in which he has a great deal of intellectual capital invested, and he does so in a professional manner that, at the very least, does much to clarify the grounds of the current debate. Thus, for instance, his book provides me with an important theoretical background perspective for my own research analyzing religious influences in contemporary political processes.

In spite of its flaws Bruce's book well lives up to the claim made in the last line of the back cover blurb: "Bruce presents a robust defence of the secularization paradigm, clarifying its arguments for the benefit of all sides of the debate." On that basis at least I can heartily recommend it to other scholars in the field.

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