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February 25, 2012: Reasons for Confidence in the Future

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Title: Reasons for Confidence in the Future

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2/25/2012—Some great things are on display at the Third (not Second) Annual Religious Legal Theory Conference. For one thing, I heard David Opderbeck (Seton Hall) give a talk about the religious implications of intellectual property law that was absolutely inspiring. I can imagine newly resurgent Christian thinking, on both the left and right, providing energy and imagination to American society to help us address the fundamental problems of late capitalism. This is a theme I will touch on in my talk today. On the other hand, I also got to hear and get to know Austin Dacey, whose name has appeared a number of times on this blog. Dacey is the well-known secularist activist and author of *The Secular Conscience*. Dacey spoke about his upcoming book, *The Future of Blasphemy: Speaking of the Sacred in an Age of Human Rights* (due out next month). When have you heard a secularist willing to even indulge the term, “the Sacred”? Dacey gives me hope that secularism will become open to all the spiritual possibilities of human life. And the willingness of such a well-known secularist to speak at a religious legal theory conference, and the willingness of the organizers to have him, (and me), bespeaks real change. Maybe the motif of two sides is beginning to break down just a bit.