

Theology and Man's Future

My title, Theology and Man's Future, is to be understood within the context of a slightly intricate theorem. It has been observed ~~xxx~~ that human knowledge not only is increasing but that it has been doing so at an ever increasing rate. It has been argued that increasing knowledge produces social and cultural change, and that an acceleration of the rate of increase of knowledge results in an acceleration in the rate of social and cultural change

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The title of this address is somewhat elliptical and, I feel, a very brief explanation is needed. I would not wish anyone to fancy that I have gazed into some crystal ball and am about to predict both man's future and the future utility ~~or futility of theology. Rather I have read the sesquicentennial brochure, Knowledge and the Future of Man, put out by St. Louis University, in which it is pointed out that the vast processes of social and cultural change that are going forward~~ or futility of theology. On the contrary, as in the sesquicentennial brochure, Knowledge and the Future of Man, the word, future, is employed to liberate us from timeless abstractions, to turn us, at least momentarily, away from a study of the past for its own sake, and to direct our attention to what already is going forward. Our time is one of vast social and cultural change. For the continuity and the pace of that change constantly increasing human knowledge would seem to be an important ^{causal} factor. It is appropriate, then, for a university to commemorate its foundation by asking ^{both} about the relative roles of the disciplines it teaches and develops and about their significance in the city of man. I shall speak, accordingly, first of the influence of other disciplines on theology and, secondly, of the possible relevance of theology to the questions asked and the problems raised in other disciplines. In this way, I hope, there will emerge some evidence concerning the role of theology in the academic world and, by the same ~~stroke~~ ^{concerning} stroke, some evidence of the role of the academic world in the city of man.

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The title of my address needs ~~some~~ explanation. For my concern is not to predict man's future or to sketch the future usefulness or uselessness of theology. Rather it is to acknowledge the vast processes of social and cultural change that are going forward, to recognize in these processes the large role played by ever increasing knowledge, and to ask about the place and function of theology amidst the many other disciplines that, each in their way, affect the city of man.