

## Book Review

**Gregg Caruso, ed. *Science and Religion: 5 Questions*. New York: Automatic Press/VIP, 2014, 264pp., ISBN 13: 978-87-92130-51-8**

and helpful questions to pose. Each personal narrative, however brief as some of them are, is a helpful window into the personal worlds that they came to inhabit, and simultaneously a perspective on the wider academic and cultural forces that have shaped their careers. One may get surprised (but shouldn't be) at the frequency of scientists and philosophers with appreciative religious backgrounds, and the number of theologians with sound scientific credentials. Opportunities to understand the unique intellectual journeys that profound thinkers have taken, spoken in the first person while still among the living, are regrettably infrequent nowadays.

intelligent design are so bold, perhaps because they need scientific information to get started. The religious incompatibilists instead tend to take science as a comprehensive worldview (such as materialism or naturalism), and point out alleged ways that this scientific worldview must be inadequate or hostile to the fulfilment of human potential and the moral progress of civilization. Most of the straightforward incompatibilists are almost entirely among the severe skeptics and staunch atheists, but there is lingering disagreement even there. Some depict religion as essentially about quasi-scientific hypotheses which dramatically fail at empirical confirmation. Others portray religion as an odd collection of immature imaginative notions that were destined to be replaced by the first discoveries of empirical science.

The fifth and final question is perhaps the most revealing of all: “What are the most important open questions, problems, or challenges confronting the relationship between science and religion, and what are the prospects for progress?” Among science’s defenders, answers vary widely. Some provide lists of scientific inquiries to undertake for eventually justifying naturalism’s pre-eminence. Others have little to say here. Dennett’s lone open question ponders how long we must wait for religion’s retreat in complete surren-

der. Krauss can’t offer any important open questions; religion is too unreliable to participate in reputable inquiries. Religion’s defenders display little uniformity, either. Some need science to back down and naturalism to back off before productive dialogue between religion and science can make progress. Others are hopeful that more and more sound science can only assist religious worldviews develop towards the comprehensiveness they need for flourishing in coming decades and centuries. The most common suggestion raised by both camps urges an intense interest in the cognitive and neurosciences for comprehending why and how the human mind can be religious and prone to profound experiences.

*Science and Religion: 5 Questions* is an accessible volume equally at home with a book discussion club or an undergraduate course. Advanced students and scholars can confidently recommend this book as an efficient way for anyone to get up to speed on both the breadth and depth to the important questions aroused by the intersections of science and religion. At a time when what counts as the “right” answers to those questions appears to only be narrowing and rigidifying, an eye-opening collection like this one could only be useful and timely.