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978-1-108-49107-5 — Taking God Seriously
Brian Davies , Michael Ruse
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TAKING GOD SERIOUSLY

Is debate on issues related to faith and reason still possible when dialogue between believers and nonbelievers has collapsed? *Taking God Seriously* not only proves that it is possible, but also demonstrates that such dialogue produces fruitful results. Here, Brian Davies, a Dominican priest and leading scholar of Thomas Aquinas, and Michael Ruse, a philosopher of science and well-known non-believer, offer an extended discussion on the nature and plausibility of belief in God and Christianity. They explore key topics in the study of religion, notably the nature of faith, the place of reason in discussions about religion, proofs for the existence of God, the problem of evil, and the problem of multiple competing religious systems, as well as the core concepts of Christian belief including the Trinity and the justification of morality. Written in a jargon-free manner, avoiding the extremes of evangelical literalism and New Atheism prejudice, *Taking God Seriously* does not compromise integrity or shy away from discussing important or difficult issues.

BRIAN DAVIES is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Fordham University. He specializes in philosophy of religion and medieval philosophy and theology. His published books include, *The Reality of God and the Problem of Evil*, *Thomas Aquinas's "Summa theologiae": A Guide and Commentary*, *Thomas Aquinas's "Summa contra Gentiles": A Guide and Commentary*, and *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*.

MICHAEL RUSE is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada, and was the Lucyle T. Werkmeister Professor of Philosophy at Florida State University. He is a historian and philosopher of science specializing in Charles Darwin and the revolution associated with his name. Ruse has been a Guggenheim Fellow and a Gifford Lecturer. He has been awarded four honorary degrees, and has won several honours including a PROSE award for *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Darwin and Evolutionary Thought*. He is the author or editor of more than sixty books and was the founding editor of *Biology and Philosophy*.

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Taking God Seriously

Two Different Voices

BRIAN DAVIES
Fordham University

MICHAEL RUSE
University of Guelph

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Preface

Michael Ruse and Brian Davies are both English-born and were educated at the University of Bristol, in the southwest of that country. They are now professors of philosophy in the United States: Ruse at Florida State University in Tallahassee (now retired), and Davies at Fordham University, the Jesuit university in New York City. There the similarities end.

Ruse was raised a Quaker, but around the age of twenty his faith started to fade and since then he has been a nonbeliever, more agnostic than atheist. A philosopher of science, he is nevertheless much appreciative of his Christian childhood. Intellectually, he has been led to work on the science–religion relationship, and so, somewhat naturally, he has spent much time and effort trying to understand the work and influence of the nineteenth-century naturalist Charles Darwin, author of the 1859 evolutionary work *On the Origin of Species*.

Davies was raised Roman Catholic and, around the age of twenty-six, decided to train for the priesthood and joined the Dominican Order. Intellectually interested in philosophical questions on and around religion, equally naturally he has spent much time and effort trying to understand the work and influence of the thirteenth-century theologian and philosopher St. Thomas Aquinas, author of the *Summa theologiae* and of many other writings.

Ruse and Davies are friends of increasingly long-standing, and while they have very different world pictures (Ruse much influenced by Darwinism and Davies by Aquinas), they have nonetheless found their interactions highly stimulating and fruitful. These interactions have led to the present book, which lays out our differences. We have deliberately restricted our discussion, most pertinently to Christianity rather than to religion in general. This is partly a function of personal interests and partly a function of competence. We have still found much to discuss.

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As we began work on this project, we agreed that there were a number of topics that had to be discussed, and we have structured the book accordingly. There are seven chapters. Each has one half written by Ruse and one half written by Davies. The contributions in each chapter match, but for the first six chapters we wrote independently. Realizing that this is an ongoing dialogue, in the final chapter we respond to each other directly. No significance should be read into the fact that Ruse's contribution leads each chapter. We decided the order simply on the principle of "age before beauty." The reader should feel free to read the contributions in the sequence that they prefer.

We are philosophers. We know that there is never a last word on any subject. The journey is as important as the destination. There are always old problems to be rethought and new problems to be tackled. We have found this interaction enjoyable, stimulating, and enlightening. We very much hope that you will too.

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