

Institutional Reviews of Overman Case Trilogy

A Case for the Divinity of Jesus: Examining the Earliest Evidence

Publisher's Weekly, November 17, 2009

"The divinity of Jesus Christ has been a matter of fervent dispute since the Galilean made his appearance on the human stage. Following his death and resurrection, numerous schools of thought arose to try to explain who this man was and why he mattered. Overman, former Templeton scholar at Oxford University who studied religion at Princeton and Harvard, brings his considerable talents to this question, focusing on the scholarly evidence for early belief in the divinity of Jesus. This is the third in a series of studies from his able pen, including a volume examining the case for the existence of God. He spares no effort in dissecting and analyzing early liturgical practices and documentary bases. His examination of Gnosticism and its impact on Christian belief is nothing short of masterful; his reflections about a resurrected messiah among the Jews are thoughtful and pointed. Some may find his approach over analytical and a bit dry. But he maintains a level of readability such that any student of Christianity and its leader will benefit from Overman's thorough examination."

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A Case for the Existence of God

Booklist Starred Review

"What would St. Anselm think? Centuries after the medieval saint framed his famous proof for the existence of a deity, a philosophically minded attorney offers a far more compelling and scientifically sophisticated argument for belief in God. Drawing on modern cosmology and information theory, Overman exposes fallacies that have infested skeptics' thinking since Hume and Kant. Clearer reasoning establishes an astonishing harmony between quantum physics and religious orthodoxy, so providing a credible defense for free will and moral judgment. Still, readers looking for certainty will not find it here: Overman acknowledges that the believer must make a leap of faith. But consistent analysis demonstrates that atheists likewise must embrace unprovable premises, albeit premises barren of hope and meaning. Willing to challenge the logic of unbelievers such as Dawkins and Dennett, Overman goes far beyond such logic, insisting that those searching for religious truth must remain open to non-rational modes of knowledge. After all, God beckons the perplexed as a loving person, not a merely intellectual precept. The intensely personal character of spiritual conversion emerges in the lives of the nine remarkable believers—including St. Augustine and Pascal, Dostoevsky and Weil—whose testimonies resonate with passionate conviction. A book for readers willing to wrestle with the largest questions."

[Booklist is the 100 year old journal that reviews books for public libraries and schools and recommends books for librarians to buy with a "starred review."]

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A Case Against Accident and Self-Organization

First Things, January 1999

Philip E. Johnson is a very smart lawyer who writes about evolutionary biology. Another very smart lawyer, Dean L. Overman, has written a book that covers biology and also mathematics, particle astrophysics, probability theory, and philosophical logic. Both justify their poaching on academic territory because as lawyers, they are trained to sniff out when evidence will not hold up under scrutiny, and the scientific evidence does not indicate that life is merely an accident. Overman's "brief" finds implausible the claims that life evolved from nonlife by chance and that the conditions for life in the universe are without cause. Expert scientific witnesses from Harvard, Princeton, and Cambridge find his arguments convincing. The verdict? Scientists who address these subjects tend to beg the question, generating implausible scenarios as a result. As clear and straightforward an argument as one can find."