the end of his career, concluded that religion and mathematics should not mix at all (136). Cohen’s three subjects all left behind a wealth of evidence on these questions, and he skilfully assembles it into a lively and informative story.

Though many mathematicians in Victorian Britain professed membership in the Anglican church, many treated the question of religious belief as a private matter. We may never know their true religious affinities or how these affected their motivations. A mathematical leader such as Arthur Cayley, for example, was a regular church attendee, but his vast corpus of almost a thousand mathematical papers makes no reference to religion at all. Practically the only clue to his real feelings about religion were in the offhand reference made by his friend J. J. Sylvester to his liking for “complete apostasy” (Sylvester Papers, 22 Feb. 1856, St. John’s College, Cambridge). Sylvester himself, although wounded by religious intolerance to the extent of being debarred from admittance to a Cambridge degree, was loyal to his Jewish faith. On the other hand William Thomson signed the Thirty-Nine Articles to qualify for his Cambridge degree—though some said he was a Presbyterian in Glasgow and an Anglican in Cambridge. Some mathematicians, albeit minor figures, were actually ministers of religion, whether Anglican priests or of a Dissenting persuasion. A few were declared atheists, like W. K. Clifford, whom Cohen perceives as a modern. One can hardly imagine Clifford accepting that mathematics was “once loudly declared by its practitioners to be the pursuit of God’s equations” (181).

Certainly this study is important. Victorians of the “upper ten thousand” who went to Cambridge (not Oxford) in the 1840s were funnelled through mathematics. But there was no conflict of mathematics and religion in the way there was with Victorian science; there was no prospect of a mathematician being exposed to Bishop Wilberforce’s intimidating debating style. Mathematicians operated under the counter, active in their task but no threat to the religious establishment. Even scientists thrust them and their mathematics to the top of a mountain remote from the real business of science. Cohen’s mathematicians are not prominent in the fierce Victorian scientific controversies because they espoused Christian belief and saw in mathematics the handiwork of God.

Equations from God is well researched and stylishly written, and Cohen effectively marshals the available primary sources. It is a most welcome addition to the growing literature in the history of mathematics.

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“Literary criticism should arise out of a debt of love,” wrote George Steiner at the start of a book (Tolstoy or Dostoevsky [1959]) published just as George Levine was entering the profession. Almost half a century later, now in retirement, Levine has written a debt-discharging book about Charles Darwin. Whether or not you agree that Darwin loves you, there is little doubt that Levine loves Darwin—loves reading him, thinking about him, thinking with him, and introducing others to the delights of Darwin’s intellectual
company. Levine writes to communicate the force of what he calls the “secular epiphany” (272) he has experienced by reading Darwin. The key lesson to be learned from Darwin, it seems, is how to experience the organisms around us as thrilling to our reason, emotions, and imaginations. Let these thoroughly secular forms of wonder and enchantment shape our sensibilities, and, Levine implies, we will be immune to the fatal charms of fanatical religion and fanatical scientism. Although Levine never quite comes out and says it, *Darwin Loves You* is guided by the idea that people enchanted by a world run by natural selection are on the whole respectful of diversity (without which there would be no selection) and too imaginatively involved in differences to make war in their name.

The book is for the most part a record of Levine’s responses to the Darwiniana of scientists, historians, and philosophers, interspersed with close readings of Darwin’s own work. Levine’s main concerns are to show that the Darwinian perspective is not as uniformly disenchanting or illiberal as it is sometimes presented to be, and that one can honor Darwin’s insights without forgetting that he was very much the product of his unenlightened times. On the latter theme, Levine wonders whether Darwin’s “implication in the very texture of his culture” should in certain respects be understood not as a handicap but rather as “a helpful and creative condition of his work” (9). In the book’s best chapter, Levine confronts the cultural predicament of Darwin’s “other” theory, that of sexual selection. Darwin’s ideas about women were conventionally Victorian, not least his conviction that women were less intelligent than men. And yet sexual selection theory profoundly subverted convention in assigning a directive role to female intelligence. Levine argues that the theory subverted precisely because it was conventional, depending as it did on Darwin’s unselfconscious projection into animal minds of his own unselfconscious attraction to, in Darwin’s phrase, a “pretty woman.” The case for Levine’s *engagé* attitude to reading Darwin is nowhere more persuasive than in the remarks that conclude this discussion:

> Sexual selection is an amazingly inventive and productive idea. Following Darwin’s mode of argument, it is hard to think about (or feel) the world as bereft of feeling and value. Even if it is sexuality that does it, the biological world is invested with the beautiful and works by means of choice. The act of imaginative sympathy by which Darwin manages to construct his theory of sexual selection is itself thrilling, both historically, as it runs against the culture’s deep hostility to the idea of female choice, and aesthetically, as it finds precisely in the beautiful an explanation for the way things are. Intention comes back into the world, even if later thinkers try to lay over it the mindless model of an algorithm and it is intention driven by a strong feeling for the “pretty.” (200)

In a book so reflective about the interpretation of Darwin, Levine might have said more about his own “implication in the texture of his culture,” in particular the intellectual culture that educated his tastes. The start of his career coincided with the Darwin anniversary celebrations of 1959, amid great anxiety about bridging the gap between the “two cultures” of art and science. One book from this period was especially important in promoting a two-cultures Darwin: *Darwin’s Century* (1958), by Loren Eiseley, an anthropologist better known for his belles lettres (W. H. Auden became an admirer) than his scientific work. Levine’s allegiance to the now little-read Eiseley is
open. We learn, for instance, about “Eiseley’s version of the kind of scientist Darwin himself was, who still thrills to the richness and intricacy of nature, and has a ‘controlled sense of wonder,’” as opposed to reductionist scientists who feel nothing of life’s mystery. “He is right about Darwin’s Romanticism,” says Levine of Eiseley. “To represent that Darwin is one of the primary motives of this book” (96–97). How instructive it would have been to have Levine interrogate this preference, and to see how far he can now separate out his current judgment of Eiseley’s rightness about Darwin from—one guesses—the great pleasure of reading Eiseley the first time around, and encountering in his pages an image of Darwin that, at the other end of Levine’s career, and with a next big Darwin anniversary looming, still grips his imaginings.

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In 1854 Thomas Huxley began a savage review of the still anonymously authored tenth edition of Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation (1844) with a line from Macbeth: “time was, that when the brain was out the man would die,” implying, of course, that the “pretentious nonsense” espoused by the book should have been long dead. Huxley was especially creative and effective in his use of Shakespeare to disparage his opponents. Literature was part of his armoury as well as part of his theatrical, rhetorical effects. Gowan Dawson’s book shows us again and again that Huxley was not alone in his use of literary allusion as gunfire and cannon-shot.

The history of what one 1871 contributor to the Edinburgh Review described as the “storm of mingled wrath, wonder and admiration” created by Darwinism has been scrupulously documented. Books on the reception of Darwinism and its assimilation and transformation into various cultural forms now fill shelf after shelf of the history of science sections of great libraries. This makes it all the more remarkable that the terrain chosen by Dawson in Darwin, Literature and Victorian Respectability constitutes a dark and fascinating corner in the Darwin industry, one that is dimly lit if not unlit.

Dawson begins by examining the widely accepted claim that Darwinism, unlike some previous incarnations of transmutation, depended for its acceptance on the impeccable respectability of its principle exponents. Dawson doesn’t challenge this claim, but rather sheds new light on the great struggle that took place to establish and maintain that respectability. He documents the long-running campaigns to discredit Darwinism and other forms of materialism mobilised by a wide range of opponents, drawing on a broad range of sources including journalism, scientific books and lectures, sermons, radical pamphlets, aesthetic and comic verse, and even pornography.

Dawson reads the reception of Darwinism—and scientific naturalism more broadly, including the work of John Tyndall and W. K. Clifford—in new and interesting ways. He is concerned with strategies and boundaries, with the fashioning not of individuals but of intellectual respectability and its obverse. He asks about the strategies of Darwin’s opponents: how did they seek to discredit these big and bold new ideas? Which methods of discrediting