

despair which enveloped them. Half of the volume, for example, demonstrates how bitter public opinion, reflected in diaries, sermons, letters, and newspapers, affected the nature and results of the trials of such conspirators as Mary and John Surratt and the celebrated Dr. Samuel Mudd.

Woven throughout are fresh contributions to the historiography of the Lincoln assassination. Turner rightly scores historians for acting "as if the assassination occurred in a vacuum" (p. 252), and his attacks on the conclusions drawn by Otto Eisenschiml, Vaughn Shelton, and the sensationalistic *Lincoln Conspiracy* are clearly on target. In a revisionist spirit Turner defends the much-maligned Stanton, showing how the war secretary, given the prevailing shock and fear, performed both capably and judiciously. Likewise, he argues cogently for the appropriateness of military trials as the "best means of revealing the full extent of the conspiracy" (p. 251). Though his treatment of these controversial subjects often seems belabored, such grappling with the critical issues may compel historians to reconsider one of America's most painful moments.

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Abraham Lincoln: The Quest for Immortality. By Dwight G. Anderson. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982. Pp. viii, 271. Appendix, notes, index. \$16.95.)

Dwight G. Anderson, who teaches political science at San Diego State University, has undertaken a study of Abraham Lincoln with the objective of resolving the problem of the "two Lincolns." He also hopes to provide "not only a better understanding of the man, but a fuller appreciation of his impact on American political culture." The resulting product is one that is difficult to define or categorize, for it contains, among others, elements of political science, biography, historiography, intellectual history, literature, and psychohistory.

Dividing his volume into four chapters, each subdivided further into additional units of varying length, Anderson boldly and forcefully argues his position as he seeks to attain his stated objectives. He insists that previous scholars of Lincoln have not focused their attention closely enough on Parson Weems's *Life of Washington* or on Lincoln's Lyceum Address at Springfield, Illinois, of January 27, 1838. Both provide valuable and significant insights into Lincoln that have been largely minimized or neglected. Indeed, the text of the Lyceum Address

may be found in the appendix to his work, so crucial does Anderson believe it to be for a better and more accurate understanding of the Civil War leader.

Anderson examines Lincoln's religious beliefs and practices, his obsession with death and dying, his concern about immortality, and his moodiness. Little is offered that is new or has not previously been studied in greater depth. Similarly, the discussion of the United States as the new Israel breaks no new ground. What is fundamentally creative is Anderson's contention that a new Lincoln emerged from defeat, rejection, and despondency after 1854. The new or reborn Lincoln now sought to achieve immortality through a political career on the national level, an effort which, if successful, could establish a new political religion for the nation. This "new" Lincoln deliberately and calculatingly seized his opportunity with the development of the secession crisis and subsequent conflict. Thus, Anderson argues, Lincoln could now symbolically re-enact the Revolution and create the Constitution anew, thereby superceding even George Washington as a "father" of his country. Indeed, avers Anderson, Lincoln rather than Washington has served as the model for such modern presidents as the two Roosevelts, Woodrow Wilson, and John F. Kennedy.

Anderson's volume is certainly stimulating, provocative, and challenging, but it is not necessarily convincing. He supports his central thesis with a mass of evidence, as his copious notes readily confirm. Yet one's credulity is strained to accept the picture of Lincoln striving coolly and indefatigably to supplant Washington, to re-create the nation, and to overcome death. The persistence with which Anderson repeatedly pounds home his elemental idea creates suspicion about the plausibility of his position. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that Anderson's treatise reads like a legal brief, argumentative, overbearing, and on occasion stylistically infelicitous. Nevertheless, he has provided, perhaps, another piece for the Lincoln puzzle, one which present and future scholars will need to consider.

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