

*In Pursuit of Reason: The Life of Thomas Jefferson.* By Noble E. Cunningham, Jr. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987. Pp. xvi, 414. Illustrations, notes, bibliographical note, index. \$24.95.)

Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., set himself the prodigious task of writing the biography of Thomas Jefferson in 350 pages. This enterprise, requiring extensive knowledge of the sources, a sure grasp of the historical literature, and a firm understanding of the history encompassed by a life of eighty-three momentous years, has been fulfilled. *In Pursuit of Reason* chronicles Jefferson's achievements and shows his commitment to "the sufficiency of reason for the care of human affairs" (p. xv).

Cunningham includes the essentials, but the result is a life that is somewhat lifeless. The details that animate a story are too often missing, sacrificed to exigencies of space. This vagueness is especially true for the period of Jefferson's presidency, when the need to explain the history of the time leaves little space for personal matters. The specifics of presidential actions are not always clear. For example, though Cunningham says that in order to enforce the embargo the Jefferson administration was forced to carry out some arbitrary measures, he does not explain what those were. A similar sketchiness mars his description of Jefferson's years as governor of Virginia.

Cunningham's emphasis on Jefferson's love of reason shortchanges the Virginian's passions. Readers never see the man getting mad or having fun. Jefferson's pursuit of Aaron Burr and his feud with John Adams were not entirely reasonable. His fear of the Federalists, though founded on specific justifiable complaints, was also founded partly on irrational beliefs. A more direct confrontation of these issues would help the reader to understand several unexplained incidents in Jefferson's life. Jefferson's encouragement of prosecutions against Federalist editors, for example, is described simply as "surprising to read today," but further treatment of this issue might have thrown some light on the president's motives and beliefs. Cunningham had no room to deal separately with Jefferson's political thought except as it related specifically to the events of his political career. The reader, though, needs to have a better understanding of Jefferson's basic philosophy in order to appreciate that career.

Cunningham's treatment of the writing of the Declaration of Independence is a marvel of concision, providing in just a few choice phrases summaries of the mountains of material written on this important subject. Other especially successful sections clarify the confusing election of 1800 and recount the story of Jefferson's fight

to found the University of Virginia. This enterprise aptly fits the author's theme: Jefferson's commitment to make reason rule all aspects of human endeavor. Being only human, Jefferson failed to live up to his ideals, and it is this human side of Jefferson that Cunningham's biography unfortunately neglects. The care with which Cunningham has presented the events of Jefferson's public career, however, will make his book a much-consulted source.

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*Gamaliel Bailey and Antislavery Union.* By Stanley Harrold. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1986. Pp. xvi, 301. Illustration, notes, bibliography, index. \$28.00.)

The past generation has seen an outpouring of biographies of antislavery figures, some volumes pedestrian, some inspired, most somewhere in between. The best have not only illuminated their subjects but have served as vehicles for major reinterpretations or important new insights into antebellum reform. Gamaliel Bailey deserves full-length biographical treatment as much as any previous subject, and Stanley Harrold's work falls into the inspired category. It is impressively researched, is in discourse with the relevant secondary literature, and is conceptually coherent. It presents a solid account of Bailey's life and provides valuable, although not striking, insights into the larger antislavery movement.

Bailey (1807-1859) was born in New Jersey, studied medicine in Philadelphia, and edited a Methodist periodical there before settling in Cincinnati in 1832. Almost by chance he found himself attached to the faculty of Lane Seminary as a physiology instructor. The famous Lane debates of 1834 swept Bailey into the immediate abolitionist movement. Soon he found himself on the staff and later editor of the leading western abolitionist organ, the *Philanthropist*. Bailey made the periodical a voice for "moderate" abolition, Liberty party politics in Ohio and Indiana, and opposition to the radicalism of William Lloyd Garrison.

Late in 1846 Bailey moved to Washington, D. C., to edit the *National Era*, which under his leadership became the most widely read antislavery journal in the country. Bailey's greatest coup, albeit an unwitting one, came in 1851 when he began to serialize the hitherto unknown Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Bailey also served as a leading antislavery lobbyist in Washington and was an intimate of Salmon P. Chase, Joshua R. Giddings, and Charles Sumner. Ironically, even though Bailey gave early support to the organization of the Republican party, it was that party's absorption of antislavery politics that sent the *Era* into a slow decline.

Bailey's personal papers have been lost, so Harrold's book is necessarily a public biography. It places Bailey in the context of his times, analyzing his political and economic thought as well as