

Young Heber J. Grant's Years of Passage

As Heber J. Grant came of age, Mormonism was as much a part of the Utah landscape as the territory's dusty valleys and vaulting mountain walls. Young Heber met religion everywhere—in his Salt Lake City home and neighborhood, at the Tabernacle on Temple Square, in the offices of Church and civic leaders where he sometimes ventured, and certainly in his native Thirteenth Ward, one of the most innovative and organizationally developed Latter-day Saint congregations of the time. Slowly young Heber internalized his religious culture, but not before encountering the usual perils of adolescence and coming of age. The process tells not only a great deal about Heber himself, but also about the beliefs, rituals, and worship patterns of early Utah Mormons.

Heber J. Grant was a second-generation Mormon, born November 22, 1856, at Jedediah Grant's imposing Main Street home. His father, Brigham's counselor and Salt Lake City mayor, died nine days later. In Jedediah's stead, the boy was christened by Thirteenth Ward Bishop Edwin D. Woolley, who found the spirit of the occasion to be unusual. "I was only an instrument in the hands of his dead father . . . in blessing him," the bishop later remarked. That boy "is entitled [someday] to be one of the Apostles, and I know it"¹ (illus. 3-1).

There were other harbingers of the child's future. Once Rachel, his mother, took the boy to a formal dinner at the Heber C. Kimballs'. After the adults had finished dining, the children were invited to eat what remained. Excited, little Heber was thoroughly

enjoying himself when Brother Kimball suddenly lifted him atop a table and began prophesying about his future. The frightened child especially remembered the foreboding, coal black eyes of President Young's first counselor.² Moreover, there was the portentous Relief Society gathering held at William C. Staines's home, where Eliza R. Snow and Zina D. Young spoke and interpreted in the "unknown" tongue. Blessing each of the women present, they eventually turned to Rachel. Heber, who was playing on the floor, recalled hearing something about his becoming "a great big man." His mother's understanding, however, was more precise. "Behave yourself," Rachel knowingly told him as he grew to maturity, "and you will some day be one of the apostles in the Church."³

The Thirteenth Ward, the Grants' home congregation, made these auspicious predictions more likely. One of the largest and most culturally diverse wards in the territory, the Thirteenth Ward also boasted major human and economic resources. Among its members were some of the most prominent men in the territory, including General Authorities, prominent merchants, and land investors. These in turn brought a high level of prosperity. "The 13th Ward," observed one contemporary, "was richer than all the Saints at Kirtland when the Temple was built." Indeed, the Thirteenth Ward may have enjoyed the highest income level in the Church during the years when Heber J. Grant was growing up.⁴

Such a ward was an ideal setting for the beginning of the Church's Sunday School movement. While churchmen had earlier



Courtesy Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Illus. 3-1. Heber J. Grant as a baby, ca. 1858.

organized a few scattered and short-lived Sabbath schools, the Thirteenth Ward's was the first established after the city's bishops agreed, in a major policy decision, to counter the post-Civil War denominational academies with Mormon Sabbath schools.⁵ A typical Sunday might find the children meeting at the Thirteenth Ward assembly rooms, where they listened to short talks, sang, and recited inspirational prose and poetry. Leaders might also "catechize" the youth with questions drawn from the Bible, Book of Mormon, or Church history, liberally awarding prizes for both correct answers and proper conduct.

Heber took advantage of the ward's new school. In fact, the ambitious and assertive boy was often at front stage. Excelling at memorization, he quickly mastered the Articles of Faith; the first five pages of John Jaques's *Catechism*; and Joseph Smith's health revelation, the Word of Wisdom, a frequent Sunday School recitation: "You were our prize Sunday School boy," remembered a classmate. "Bros. [Milton] Musser and Mabin [John Maiben] predicted great things for you."⁶ On one occasion, Heber pitted his declamatory skills against Ort [Orson F.] Whitney, whose rendition of "Shamus O'Brien" proved superior to Heber's "The Martyrdom of the Prophet and Patriarch." But "Heber had another card up his sleeve," Orson Whitney recalled many years later. "He answered more questions from the *Catechism* than any other student in school, and won a prize equal to mine, which was the *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*."⁷

Yet Heber's confident façade concealed a desperate shyness. When first asked to pray publicly, he trembled "like a leaf" and feared imminent collapse.⁸ President Young's 1868 reconnoiter at the school had similar results. Unnerved, Heber stumbled badly in his recital of the Word of Wisdom, causing his classmates great merriment. Thoroughly confused, Heber had to begin his recitation anew. President Young later salvaged the incident by highly complimenting him. "I was my father's own son by not being discouraged [and quitting]," Heber remembered Brigham telling him, "but demonstrated a true spirit of determination to accomplish the task given me." Heber never forgot his embarrassment nor President Young's words of praise.⁹

As in Victorian England, Latter-day Saints used their Sabbath schools for both moral and social uplift. Children were taught

scripture study, Sabbath observance, honesty, family solidarity, observance of the Word of Wisdom, and, of course, general propriety. At times the instruction on propriety was specific. Boys were told to stop stealing peaches from neighborhood gardens and warned of “the evil consequences of such evil conduct.” Moreover, they should quit “throwing mud from the end of a stick which disfigured buildings that had cost a great deal.”¹⁰

Perhaps such a boyish misdeed almost drove Heber from the school. Angered by a reproof, the youth stormed from the assembly rooms, exclaiming that the school could go “plumb to hell.” “Being raised as an only child,” he later explained, “I was . . . rather . . . hot-headed . . . and I quit going.” After many entreaties to return, including those of George Goddard, his neighbor and a member of the school’s superintendency, Heber finally rejoined his classmates. Brother Goddard “kept me from going where I said the Sunday School could go,” Heber acknowledged.¹¹

Heber generally enjoyed the school and credited it as having a major shaping influence on his character. Clearly its impact went beyond rote learning and indoctrination. Goddard, Maiben, and school librarian F. A. Mitchell—who was always on hand to lend “good books to read”—were in fact role models that the fatherless boy desperately needed.¹² “Your integrity and devotion . . . has been an inspiration to me,” Heber wrote in mid-life to Maiben. “I look back with pleasure to the happy associations that I have had with you and Brother Goddard, Bishop Woolley and many other faithful Saints when I was a young man.”¹³

Heber’s youthful Thirteenth Ward experiences involved more than Sunday School exercises. The Thirteenth Ward held a plethora of meetings. Many of which, directly or indirectly, impacted on the growing boy. These included youth meetings, women’s meetings, men’s meetings, Quaker-type meetings that allowed broad-based participation, and preaching meetings that were held during the winter season as often as three times a week. Unlike most pioneer Mormons, who were chronically lax in their meeting attendance, Heber was often seated in a Thirteenth Ward pew. Indeed, some of his fondest memories centered on “going to meeting.” There were Brother Blythe’s interminable half-hour prayers and George Goddard’s sweetly (and often) sung rendition of “Who’s on the Lord’s Side?”¹⁴



Source: Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Illus. 3-2. Bishop Edwin D. Woolley (ca. 1854), bishop of the Salt Lake Thirteenth Ward, which Heber attended.

And then there was Bishop Edwin D. Woolley (illus. 3-2). Charitable, well-meaning, and firmly dedicated to his religion, Bishop Woolley could also be summary during a preaching meeting. During one worship service, he “spoke warmly” of those who accused him of failing to act “the part of a Father” and urged his critics to air their feelings. When William Capener did so, Bishop Woolley peremptorily cut him off from the Church. Members debated the action the following week, with half the congregation refusing to sustain the excommunication. Bishop Woolley, however, refused to budge. Railing

“about the whoredom and the wickedness” of the ward, the bishop vowed “by the help of the Lord and the brethern” to cleanse it.¹⁵

Heber's memory of Bishop Woolley focused on more prosaic things—the bishop's heavy emphasis on tithe paying or his control of speakers and meetings. Bishop Woolley didn't like meetings to last longer than two hours and invariably warned his preachers to limit their sermons to a single hour. Heber normally positioned himself in the northeast corner of the assembly rooms where, after the obligatory hour, he would periodically snap his watch crystal as a reminder of the hour's lateness. The act usually was unnecessary. From his vantage point, Heber could witness the bishop's surreptitious hand reach out and tug at a long-winded preacher's coattails. But Woolley's behavior was not automatic. A spellbinding speaker like John Morgan, fresh from his Southern States mission, received *carte blanche*. “Bishop Woolley knows whose coat to pull,” the boy thoughtfully observed.¹⁶

There were other speakers Heber remembered being drawn to. Young John Henry Smith, only eight years Grant's senior, seemed always to carry “the inspiration of the Lord.” Joseph F. Smith, nephew

of the founding Prophet and youthful counselor to President Young, also spoke impressively. Even “as a little child . . . before I could thoroughly comprehend the teaching of the authorities of the Church,” Heber recalled, President Smith’s Thirteenth Ward preaching would “thrill my very being.”¹⁷

Few speakers captivated him like President Young. Somewhat over five feet eight inches tall (above average for the time), Brigham Young carried himself with conscious presence. Observers who watched his delivery emphasized his lips, which “came together like the jaws of a bear trap” and conveyed “indomitable pluck.” While young Heber probably failed to detect them, Vermont provincialisms such as *leetle*, *beyend*, *disremember*, *ain’t you*, and *they was* gave color to Brigham’s remarks and punctuated his easy, conversational style.¹⁸ Both Church members and those outside the faith generally agreed on Brigham’s pulpit appeal.¹⁹

Heber was enthralled by Young’s “wonderful capacity to hold his audience” and his ability to inspire his listeners about “the principles of life and salvation.”²⁰ Whether behind a Thirteenth Ward pulpit or more frequently occupying the rostrum at Temple Square, President Young stated and restated his themes: build Zion; sacrifice time, talent, and means for the community; bear each other’s burdens; become the Lord’s steward; be self-sufficient; avoid Babylon; work hard; perform your duty; be obedient. So indelibly were they impressed on Heber’s young mind that Young’s themes became his own lifelong preaching texts.

Heber learned other lessons by attending the Thirteenth Ward’s preaching meetings. One elder never used a simple word when several larger ones might do. On one occasion after delivering a fulsome sermon, the elder using expansive words was followed to the speaker’s stand by the ungrammatical Millen Atwood. During the first sermon, Heber, who was studying English at the time, penciled on his removable cuff a long list of unfamiliar words that required study. Eyeing Atwood, he proposed to continue his self-improvement exercise by listing a few solecisms. “I did not write anything more after that first sentence—not a word,” Heber vividly remembered sixty-five years later. “When Millen Atwood stopped preaching, tears were rolling down my cheeks. . . . [Atwood’s] testimony made the first profound impression that was ever made

upon my heart and soul of the divine mission of the Prophet [Joseph Smith].”²¹

Heber's priesthood activity also helped mold him. Unlike young men in the Church today, he apparently was never asked to break and bless the sacramental bread.²² He did, however, serve as one of the ward's block teachers, whom Bishop Woolley admitted were not always the “best talents” or the “best men.” They were, in Woolley's mind, simply the best that would “work with him.”²³ This meant occasionally asking a youth like Heber to labor with an experienced companion like Hamilton G. Park. Heber's teaching activity was of more than passing importance. Park's faith was deep and visionary—he once announced that he had “seen the Savior and heard him speak.”²⁴ As the man and boy walked around the block occupied by the imposing Salt Lake Theatre, Brother Park plied his impressionable companion with faith-promoting stories, many involving his personal experiences as a missionary to Scotland. Such moments convinced Heber that Hamilton Park was “one of the best spirited men in the Church & one that would sacrifice Everything for his religion.”²⁵ At a time when few teenagers served as block teachers, Heber performed with uncommon diligence. In addition to his monthly teaching chores, he regularly attended the twice monthly bishops' report sessions at the Council House.²⁶ Every bishop, bishopric counselor, and teacher in the city was invited to these sessions, but leaders complained of “thin” and “woefully neglected” attendance. Typical meetings might find half of the city's bishops and only a handful of teachers present—Heber of course being one of them.²⁷

Commensurate with this activity, young Heber was ordained a seventy, nineteenth-century Mormonism's most common lay priesthood office. At the time, Heber was very much a sapling among mature men.²⁸ Most Thirteenth Ward priesthood bearers were in their middle or late thirties. Even the few who held the “Lesser,” or Aaronic, Priesthood were normally adults. In contrast, Heber was ordained and assigned to the Thirtieth Quorum of Seventy when he was about fifteen years old.²⁹

Lessons, meetings, and priesthood duties were not the only shaping forces in the young boy's life. Books also influenced him. He found Parley P. Pratt's *Autobiography* to be “intensely interesting” and was “thrilled” by Pratt's *Key to Theology*. The Thirteenth

Ward library furnished Dr. Paley's two works, *Evidences of Christianity* and *Natural Theology*, and Heber accounted David Nelson's work, *Infidelity*, as having made a "profound impression" on him. However, none of these affected him as much as Samuel Smiles's chapbooks, *Character, Thrift, and Self-Help*, which in the Victorian style of the time idealized the self-made man. Equally important were his *Wilson* and *National* school readers. Their firm biblical values made such a powerful impact on the boy that he quoted from these elementary readers for the rest of his life.³⁰

Then there was the Book of Mormon, which Anthony C. Ivins, Heber's uncle, first persuaded him to read. Pitting the fourteen-year-old Heber against his own son, Anthony Ivins promised the first boy to finish the book a pair of buckskin gloves, a wild frontier extravagance. After the first day, Heber's hopes were virtually dashed. Heber's young cousin had stayed up most of the night and read 150 pages, while Heber, who hoped to read the scriptures thoughtfully, had amassed only 25 pages. The incident, however, had a "Tortoise and the Hare" ending. "When I finished the book," Heber remembered, "I not only got a testimony [of it] but . . . the gloves as well." After his fast start, Heber's cousin never read another page.³¹

Young Heber, however, did not escape adolescence without its usual trials. By his late teens, he obviously prized his independence—even when dealing with the men whom he admired most. For example, when Bishop Woolley asked him to manage a ward social—a dance—Heber hesitated.

"I will do my best, but you need to agree to some conditions."

A bond had grown between the boy and his bishop that allowed such cheeky candor. Because of Heber's marble playing and perhaps his graver offense of ball-throwing against the Woolley barn, the bishop had labeled Heber "the laziest boy in the Thirteenth ward." But Heber had earnestly mounted a successful campaign to reclaim the bishop's confidence.³²

Heber made his first request. The dance would require a smooth dance floor, not the rough-hewn planks of the Thirteenth Ward assembly rooms. Whittling candle wax into the cracks could make the floor smooth. Bishop Woolley had long opposed the idea for safety reasons. But he agreed to Heber's terms.

"And you must agree to pay the loss if there is one. You cannot have the party in the Thirteenth ward and make any money," Heber complained. "The young people won't come any more. . . . You have got to have three waltzes."

Neighboring wards permitted at least three of the new "round dances" such as the waltz and polka each evening. But Bishop Woolley insisted on quadrilles and cotillions, where dancers discreetly grouped themselves in old-fashioned lines or squares instead of pairing off in couples.

For a moment Bishop Woolley weighed philosophy and values against the possibility of another unsuccessful dance. An earlier party had failed to raise money for the St. George Temple fund, and the ward's proud reputation for always being in the lead had been tarnished.

"Take the three waltzes," Bishop Woolley conceded.

As his last request, Heber argued that they must hire Olsen's Band—the only ensemble in town that played the "Blue Danube Waltz" to perfection. The problem lay with the band's flutist, whose drunkenness at an earlier ward engagement had caused a great deal of disorder. As a result, Bishop Woolley had strictly forbidden the band to return. But, once again, Heber won. "Take Olsen's Quadrille Band," the bishop said. "Take your three round dances. Wax the floor."

On the night of the dance, President Young himself came. "This is for the benefit of the St. George Temple, isn't it?" he asked Heber at the door. Squeezing a ten dollar gold piece into the young man's hand, he asked, "Is that enough to pay for my ticket?" and entered the well-decorated room.

That night the Thirteenth Ward raised \$80 for the new temple. No other ward earned half as much. "We scooped the town," Heber recalled years later, "and we had *four* round dances!"

When the unauthorized fourth round dance began, President Young instantly recognized the change in the program and protested, "They are waltzing."

"No," said Heber, only technically correct. "They are not waltzing; when they waltz they waltz all around the room. This is a quadrille."

Heber's sleight of hand brought a laugh from Brigham and the mild rejoinder, "You boys, you boys."³³

A short time later President Young played a central role in one of Heber's greatest trials of faith. The Church leader had called the seventeen-year-old into his office to discuss the future, and he quickly focused their talk. "I think it is about time some of . . . [Jedediah's] boys were putting on the harness," he told Heber. "Don't you want to go on a mission?"

"That is a splendid idea, and I approve of it," Heber later recalled saying, "but I have some brothers three years older than I, and I suggest that you call them first."

At length Brigham complied but found the Grant polygamous half-brothers to be even more hesitant than Heber. As a result, Rachel's son was once more summoned to the President's office, and this time Heber agreed to accept a mission call the following spring.³⁴

Actually, there were good reasons for his misgivings and mock resistance. He had left school at the age of sixteen to support his mother—and to fulfill his desire for a commercial career. His employers had promoted him rapidly, and now for the first time Rachel and her son enjoyed a measure of prosperity. But Heber's feelings were by no means consistent. Patriarch Perkins had promised him, while he was still an infant, that he would "begin the ministry when very young." Rachel and Heber had read and reread this blessing repeatedly. Now with President Young's call, the part about a youthful ministry seemed fulfilled. Excited, Heber began reading of the adventures of George Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith, and Erastus Snow—other teenaged missionaries—no doubt mentally comparing his skills and sinew with the young heroes who had preceded him.³⁵ Heber paid his debts and prepared for an immediate departure.

According to the custom of the time, formal missionary calls were announced during the official proceedings of general conference, and Heber entered the Tabernacle in April 1876 fully expecting to hear his name read. However, much to his bewilderment, the clerk failed to do so. Heber was devastated. During the next several days as he tried to complete his normal duties with Wells Fargo, he frequently wept in disappointment and perhaps in embarrassment.³⁶ Years later he would learn why no mission call had come. Erastus Snow and Daniel H. Wells had objected to his name when the list of prospective missionaries was submitted for General Authority

approval. The boy, they claimed, was already performing "a very splendid mission" in providing for his widowed mother.³⁷

The wound was slow to heal. Unbeknown to his closest friends and even to Rachel in whom he often confided such matters, during the next four or five years the episode haunted him. The problem, he believed, lay in the efficacy of Perkins's blessing—and in the larger question of religious revelation itself. Had not the patriarch erred? How "sure" was prophecy's "sure word"? "I was tempted seriously for several years to renounce my faith in the Gospel because this blessing was not fulfilled," he admitted. "The spirit would come over me . . . that the patriarch had lied to me, and that I should throw the whole business away."³⁸

The Word of Wisdom also challenged the young man's faith. While his Thirteenth Ward Sunday School tutors inveighed against coffee, tea, tobacco, and alcohol, the prohibition of these commodities was never made to be a religious test. Church members could be considered "good" Mormons and still occasionally imbibe. In fact, devout Rachel's boardinghouse first introduced Heber to the taste of coffee. He soon became addicted, and despite Rachel's gentle disapproval he found that he could not abandon it. Time after time he quit, only to find his appetite uncontrollable. Finally, "Aunt" Susan Grant, one of his father's plural wives, served him a cup of her special blend of creamed coffee. Heber demurred.

"Have you promised anybody that you would quit?"

"I have promised myself a number of times that I would quit," he allowed. But "now I have said I am going to take a cup of coffee whenever I want it and I haven't drank any for months."

"This is a fine cup to quit on," said the angelic Aunt Susan, who was entirely out of character as a temptress.

"All right, my dear aunt." Heber raised the cup to his lips, his mouth watering. But after a moment the full and undrunk cup returned to the table, and with that victory his craving for the beverage ceased.³⁹

The young man had an even greater difficulty with beer. Fearing an early death like his father's and convinced of the virtues of life insurance, Salt Lake City's youngest agent repeatedly sought coverage to protect his mother. Nineteenth-century actuarial tables, however, discriminated against slender girths and no company would

issue Heber a policy. Determined to gain weight, Heber sought out Dr. Benedict, who had an immediate solution. If Heber would drink four glasses of beer daily, which Dr. Benedict prescribed, within two years he would have the additional twenty pounds necessary for coverage.

At first Heber found beer "bitter and distasteful," like his mother's herbal "kinnikinnick" tea. But he quickly acquired both a business and a personal taste for it. Within a year, he secured the fire insurance business of most Salt Lake City saloons and Utah breweries, an additional ten pounds, and a growing relish for the savor of hops. His daily four-glass limit became five, and occasionally grew to six.

He warred with his acute sense of conscience. Rereading the Word of Wisdom, he resolved to abandon his drinking and place his health and his mother's future with the Lord, "insurance or no insurance." But resolutions were easier made than kept. "I wanted some [beer] so bad that I drank it again," he confessed. Finally, he found strength in the same formula he had used with coffee. By telling himself he was free to take a drink whenever he wished, he overcame his obsession and ceased drinking. Just as quickly, he lost his trade with the saloons and breweries of the territory.⁴⁰

During this time of personal struggle, Heber learned firsthand of the apparent fallibility of Church leaders. With Rachel in St. George, Utah, doing temple work, he and Frank Kimball kept "bachelor hall" at the Grant home. Frank Kimball, a moral but not an outwardly religious man, was summoned by the Fifteenth Ward bishopric and tried for his membership. After attempting in vain to testify for his friend, Heber perched himself on a fence pole outside an open window of the second-story hearing room. Kimball found it difficult to make a confession of faith, but pled for a year's probation to prepare himself. In response the bishopric, ignoring President Daniel H. Wells's counsel "to go slow" with the case, demanded guarantees about his future tithe paying and several other duties. Heber was outraged. "No, I wouldn't [agree], darn you," he found himself saying under his breath, still seated on his pole. Minutes later Frank Kimball was excommunicated, a judgment which, at least according to Grant's understanding, breached fairness and Christian kindness.⁴¹

Heber's several problems and scarring experiences gnawed at his spirit. Uncertain of his inherited faith, he attended at least one

meeting at the freethinking Liberal Institute, probably more in curiosity than in actual discontent.⁴² He also became "greatly interested" in the writings of Robert G. Ingersoll, nineteenth-century America's antichristian curmudgeon.⁴³ Accordingly, his network of friends reflected his growing religious ambivalence. Balancing the young man's many staunchly Mormon friends were others who he later came to regard as disreputable. They "smoked a little, and did things they ought not to do," Heber recalled, "but I liked them, they were jolly fellows."⁴⁴ He later considered his situation to be grave. "I stood as it were upon the brink of usefulness or upon the brink of making a failure of my life."⁴⁵

Heber credited the Thirteenth Ward for his salvation. Bringing his Sunday School experience to full circle, the twenty-one-year-old was appointed a teacher. As in the earlier days of Brothers Goddard, Maiben, and Musser, Heber now stood before a congregation of "scholars," teaching, catechizing, praying, and serving as a role model. He frequently asked questions drawn from the Book of Mormon or the "Little Learner" section of the *Juvenile Instructor*. After several years' service, his responsibilities were expanded to include assistant secretary and eventually secretary of the school.⁴⁶

The Church's first ward Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association [YMMIA] also allowed him to serve. The Thirteenth Ward YMMIA called Heber as a president's counselor at its initial meeting in 1875, and he continued in that capacity through a series of new presidencies for the rest of the decade.⁴⁷ The YMMIA's weekly sessions were first designed to give men in their late teens and early twenties the chance for self-study and speechifying, though exercises later included readings, essays, music, lectures, and answering questions on religious and cultural topics.

The Thirteenth Ward YMMIA meetings were often high toned, though once the men peremptorily refused a member's suggestion to take "the round dance pledge."⁴⁸ Gospel topics were the primary staple, with each youth expected to speak. Since fifteen or twenty men were usually present (out of an enrolled thirty-three), meetings theoretically could be long. In actuality, most participants talked briefly. "Bro. H. J. Grant said he like the rest who had spoke before him was unprepared," the minutes of one meeting recorded, "but according to the Book of Mormon he was satisfied that this was the Gospel of

Christ restored." On another occasion he was more loquacious. "If a person had any sense at all," Heber observed, "he could see that Tobacco and Whiskey was not good for the human system as nearly any one that used Tobacco had to make themselves sick the first time and[,] Second[,] how disgraceful an intoxicated person made himself."⁴⁹

Heber had other Mutual duties concurrent with his ward assignment. He acted as Salt Lake Stake YMMIA secretary and as a Mutual "missionary" in the emerging Churchwide youth organization. The latter calling required him to speak before various Utah congregations. Unlike his later forceful, machine-gun style delivery, his first effort was a halting, two- or three-minute affair, which no doubt drew beads of perspiration. Lastly, the April 1880 general conference sustained him as secretary to the General YMMIA Superintendency of the Church. He thereby became associated with Elders Wilford Woodruff, Joseph F. Smith, and Moses Thatcher, members of the new superintendency.⁵⁰

Grant's adult Sunday School and Mutual activities reinforced the values and faith of his heritage and permitted him to navigate successfully the difficult adolescent years of passage. No doubt he inflated the seriousness of his early crisis of belief. Bright and curious, he was subjected to a man's world when sixteen, yet his acts never trespassed pioneer Utah's basic religious norms (illus. 3-3). His gambling was with matchsticks; he permitted himself no Sunday baseball playing; and when friends offered him a sexual liaison, he fled with the rapidity of Joseph of Egypt.⁵¹ More than he knew, his religious feeling was inbred.

"You must know[,] and I am the only person who would tell you so," he wrote to a friend, "I have got to be a very good boy. I attend meetings Sunday, generally twice a day, [and] go to the Elders Quorum [and my] Youngmen's Mutual Improvement Asstn."⁵² While many of Zion's youth found it chic to renounce plural marriage, Heber wrote a long, impassioned defense. Whatever it lacked in grammar, orthography, and argument, this defense clearly set him apart among his contemporaries. "Shall we the sons and daughters of these men and women who have sacrificed so much for their religion resign any portion of that religion [viz., polygamy] to suit the notions and fancies of those who are our bitterest enemies?" He particularly scored his disbelieving friends who claimed they would never enter into its



George Church Archive, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Illus. 3-3. Heber as a young man.

practice. "Just stop and think for one minute what must be the feelings of a polygamist mother . . . [for] one of her children speaking lightly of an ordinance, by the practice of which they were born."⁵³ Rachel's influence was always close at hand.

Those who knew young Heber best understood his religious commitment. "He lives his religion," Richard Young reported, "but is seldom able to warm himself unto enthusiasm over a principle; his love is a practical, everyday, common-sense devotion to principles which from their superiority to all others, he chooses to believe are divine."⁵⁴

Bishop Woolley was less analytical. When Heber was called to preside over the Tooele Stake at age twenty-three (thereby fulfilling Patriarch Perkins's blessing in an unexpected way), Bishop Woolley made a point of being at the conference. He wanted to assure the people that they were "getting a man and not a boy." Later the bishop met John Henry Smith on a Salt Lake City street. Reaching up and placing his arms around the large Apostle's neck, Bishop Woolley became emotional. "John Henry . . . [Heber J. Grant] is worthy to be one of the Apostles, don't you forget him. . . . I can't remain here much longer, but when I am gone don't you forget Heber J. Grant."⁵⁵

Notes

This article was originally published in *BYU Studies* 24 (Spring 1984): 131-49.

1. Preston W. Parkinson, comp., *The Utah Woolley Family* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1967), 126; see also Heber J. Grant, Typed Diary, September 22, 1924, and February 2, 1938, Grant Papers, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. The christening is recorded in the Thirteenth Ward Papers, Church Archives. When citing material in the Grant collection, I have used box and folder numbers only when source identification cannot be established through the use of the collection's register.

2. Heber J. Grant to Helen Mar Monson, November 2, 1942, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 81:601, Grant Papers.

3. Heber J. Grant, "Testimony of Prophecy through the Gift of Tongues," *97th Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1927), 17-18.

4. Zerubbabel Snow, General Minutes of the Thirteenth Ward, 1854-68, May 12, 1863, Thirteenth Ward Papers; Leonard J. Arrington, *From Quaker to Latter-day Saint: Bishop Edwin D. Woolley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 325.

5. General Minutes of the Thirteenth Ward, March 30, 1867, Thirteenth Ward Papers.

6. Belle Whitney Sears to Heber J. Grant, February 20, 1919, General Correspondence, Grant Papers. For Articles of Faith and Jacques's *Catechism* respectively, see Grant, "Remarks at the Dedicatory Service of the Pocatello Institute," October 27, 1929, p. 1, Grant Papers; and Heber J. Grant to Wilford Owen Woodruff, September 19, 1922, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 59:753.

7. Orson F. Whitney, Minutes of Birthday Celebration, November 6, 1926, Grant Papers.

8. Heber J. Grant to Thomas G. Judd, May 10, 1926, General Correspondence.

9. Heber J. Grant, undated and loose diary sheet, box 177, fd. 5, Grant Papers.

10. Sunday School Minutes, August 23, 1868, Thirteenth Ward Papers. For the social ramifications of Victorian reform, see George Kitson Clark, *The Making of Victorian England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962), 147-205.

11. Heber J. Grant to A. G. Gowans, July 10, 1919, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 54:826; Heber J. Grant to Hyrum H. Goddard, December 8, 1937, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 75:930.

12. Heber J. Grant, Blessing of E. A. Mitchell, September 15, 1919, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 55:70.

13. Heber J. Grant to John Maiben, July 19, 1901, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 31:98 (inserted between pp. 680-81). See also Heber J. Grant, "Remarks at the Funeral Services of Franklin B. Platt," March 18, 1928, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 66:332.

14. W. S. Naylor to Heber J. Grant, November 22, 1940, Ephemera Material (Birthday Tributes), Grant Papers; Emily Wells Grant to Heber J. Grant, August 11, 1890, Family Correspondence, Grant Papers.

15. General Minutes, December 21 and 25, 1856, Thirteenth Ward Papers. According to Bishop Woolley, Capener had previously agreed that their long-standing dispute would be settled privately. The disgruntled communicant, however, had refused to come forth.

16. Heber J. Grant to Iva Hamblin, May 23, 1935, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 72:644. For Woolley's emphasis on tithe paying, see J. H. Midgley to Heber J. Grant, May 16, 1941, General Correspondence.

17. Heber J. Grant, "Remarks at the YMMIA Board Meeting," January 29, 1919, Grant Papers.

18. For these and other contemporary descriptions of Brigham Young's speaking, see sketch by S. A. Kenner in *History of the Bench and Bar of Utah*, ed. and comp. C. C. Goodwin (Salt Lake City: Interstate Press Association, 1913), 12; *Chicago Times*, report filed February 22, 1871, printed in Preston Nibley, *Brigham Young: The Man and His Work* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1936), 469; and "A 'Forty-Niner' Describes Brigham Young," in LeRoy R. and Ann W. Hafen, *Journals of Forty-Niners: Salt Lake to Los Angeles*, vol. 2 of *Far West and the Rockies* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur R. Clark, 1954), 276n.

19. Ronald W. Walker, "Raining Pitchforks: Brigham Young as Preacher," *Sunstone* 8 (May-June 1983): 4-9.

20. Heber J. Grant to Susa Young Gates, March 16, 1927, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 65:167.

21. Heber J. Grant, "The Spirit and the Letter," *Improvement Era* 42 (April 1939): 201. See also Heber J. Grant, *71st Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1901), 64; and Heber J. Grant, *Reminiscences of President Heber J. Grant*, n.d., p. 25, box 144, fd. 4, Grant Papers. Grant remembered the first speaker using such phrases as "We have indisputable and uncontrovertable evidences of the devine [*sic*] benignity."

22. Grant, Typed Diary, July 7, 1901.

23. Minutes of the Bishops' Meetings, April 29, 1869, and September 1, 1870, Presiding Bishopric Papers, Church Archives.

24. Anthon H. Lund, Journal, January 7, 1900, Church Archives.

25. Heber J. Grant, Manuscript Diary, May 29, 1881, Grant Papers; Heber J. Grant to the Family of Hamilton G. Park, May 3, 1912, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 45:343-44; and undated draft manuscript, p. 4, box 177, fd. 5, Grant Papers.

26. Heber J. Grant, "Sermon Delivered by President Heber J. Grant, 12 June 1921," draft in General Correspondence, Grant Papers; and Heber J. Grant, "Funeral Services for Edward W. Hunter," December 1, 1931, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 69:634.

27. Minutes of the Bishops' Meetings, esp. November 11, 1858; September 27, 1860; November 19, 1863; and July 7, 1870, Presiding Bishopric Papers.

28. A survey of ward priesthood officers in 1856, the last comprehensive Thirteenth Ward census, reveals that of the 130 boys and men over twelve years of age, fourteen held the Aaronic Priesthood (five deacons, three

teachers, and six priests) and sixty-seven held the Melchizedek Priesthood (eleven elders, forty-five seventies, and eleven high priests). Forty-nine were unordained. The average age for deacons, teachers, and priests was twenty, thirty-five, and twenty, respectively. For elders, seventies, and high priests, the average age was twenty-five, thirty-four, and sixty-eight. Only three minors were ordained to either of the priesthoods. Ordinance Records, 1856, Thirteenth Ward Papers. The paucity of Aaronic Priesthood bearers continued at least until the late 1870s when there were only 170 in the entire city—or about nine per ward. See Minutes of the Bishops' Meetings, August 31, 1877, Presiding Bishopric Papers.

29. Heber J. Grant to Edward H. Anderson, June 5, 1900, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 30:619; Grant, Typed Diary, December 16, 1930. Toward the end of Grant's life, several sources indicate that he had been earlier ordained an elder. Heber J. Grant himself never mentioned such an ordination, nor is it confirmed by extant ward records.

30. Pratt: Grant, Typed Diary, November 22, 1930; First Presidency Letterpress Copybook, 63:517, LDS First Presidency Papers, Church Archives. Paley: Heber J. Grant, "Draft of Remarks at Tabernacle," July 7, 1895, and January 26, 1896, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 21:38 and 33:28, Grant Papers. Nelson: Heber J. Grant, "Draft of B.Y.U. Centennial Address," October 16, 1925, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 63:548. Smiles: Heber J. Grant to Edward Anderson, June 5 and 6, 1900, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 30:619–20, 622. Readers: Heber J. Grant to Leo J. Muir, June 10, 1941, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 80:107.

31. Heber J. Grant, undated and untitled draft of reminiscences, box 144, fd. 4; Heber J. Grant to J. M. Shodahl, December 9, 1927, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 65:736.

32. Grant, Manuscript Diary, August 30, 1903.

33. Rachel Grant Taylor, "When Brigham Young Watched a Waltz," *Improvement Era* 44 (November 1941): 654, 678.

34. Heber J. Grant to Leland H. Merrill, June 14, 1938, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 76:611; Heber J. Grant, "Draft of Remarks on Brigham Young," June 1, 1924; Grant, Typed Diary, November 23, 1928.

35. The undated and unidentified blessing is found in box 176, fd. 23, Grant Papers. For its importance to Heber and Rachel, see Heber J. Grant to Edward H. Anderson, June 5, 1890, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 30:620; Heber J. Grant to Rachel Ridgway Grant, December 16, 1901, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 34:135; and Rachel Ridgway Grant to Heber J. Grant, May 23, 1905, Family Correspondence. For details of Heber's youthful missionary call and his reading of teenaged proselyting accounts, see Grant, "Reminiscences of President Heber J. Grant," 12, 17.

36. George H. Crosby, Jr., to Heber J. Grant, November 27, 1931, General Correspondence.

37. Heber J. Grant to Wilford Owen Woodruff, August 18, 1922, General Correspondence.

38. Heber J. Grant to Marian Cannon Bennion, March 2, 1935, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 72:284; Grant, "Reminiscences of President Heber J. Grant," 17-18.

39. Heber J. Grant to Leslie [Midgley], n.d., Grant Letterpress Copybook, 74:293-94.

40. Heber J. Grant, "Draft of Remarks Made at the Inglewood Stake Conference," February 4, 1940; Heber J. Grant to Leslie [Midgley], November 23, 1936, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 74:294; Heber J. Grant to Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Huiſh, April 20, 1936, General Correspondence.

41. Frank Kimball, the son of Mormon matriarch Sarah M. Kimball, refused to appeal the decision to the high council and remained out of the Church the rest of his life. Heber J. Grant to Heber M. Wells, April 8, 1937, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 75:246; Heber J. Grant to the family of Elder John Morgan, April 22, 1937, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 75:286-87; Grant, Typed Diary, October 11, 1940.

42. Grant to Henry C. Link, October 31, 1938, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 76:909.

43. Heber J. Grant to Fred [?], April 26, 1924, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 61:832; Grant, "Draft of B.Y.U. Centennial Address," 549.

44. Heber J. Grant to Thomas Judd, April 13, 1936, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 73:648; Heber J. Grant to Leona Walker, May 15, 1939, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 77:791.

45. Heber J. Grant, "Y.M.M.I.A. Annual Conference," *Contributor* 16 (August 1895): 640.

46. Sunday School Minutes, esp. May 27; August 5; December 23, 1877; January 13, March 10 and 17, May 19 and 26, July 21, August 18, October 13, November 3, 1878; April 13, 1879; Thirteenth Ward Papers. See also Grant, Manuscript Diary, January 3, 1886; Heber J. Grant to Thomas W. Sloan, August 15, 1905, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 40:50.

47. "Y.M.M.I.A.," Thirteenth Ward Manuscript History, n.d., Church Archives. From pioneer times youth "improvement" meetings were held in the ward, some as late as 1874, but its meetings of June 1875 are generally credited with being the beginning of the modern YMMIA movement. "Biographical Sketch," n.d., Grant Letterpress Copybook, 58:177, lists Heber J. Grant as having served as president, although no corroborating evidence is found in the sketchy official minutes.

48. Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association Minute Book, 1874-76, September 20, 1875, Thirteenth Ward Papers.

49. Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association Minute Book, 1874-76, September 17 and October 11, 1875.

50. Stake Secretary: Heber J. Grant to James N. Lambert, April 3, 1923, in Grant, Typed Diary, April 5, 1923, Grant Papers; Mutual Missionary: Heber J. Grant to Emil A. Berndt, July 16, 1920, General Correspondence; Church MIA Secretary: Edward H. Anderson, "The Past of Mutual Improvement," *Improvement Era* 1 (November 1897): 6.

51. Heber J. Grant to Leslie [Midgley], November 23, 1936; Heber J. Grant to Leona Walker, May 15, 1939, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 77:791; Heber J. Grant, "Sunday Baseball," 16 *Improvement Era* 16 (January 1913): 262.

52. Heber J. Grant to Fera[morz] Young, March 26, 1876, General Correspondence.

53. The address, which the nineteen-year-old apparently delivered before his seventies quorum particularly censured the disbelief of Mormondom's youth. Heber J. Grant, "Draft on Polygamy," February 12, 1876, Grant Papers.

54. Richard W. Young, Diary, 2:3-4, November 1882, Western Americana, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

55. Heber J. Grant to Orson Woolley, February 20, 1917, Grant Letterpress Copybook, 53:667.