

anchor. Brenda, a mainstream Mormon, who married Allen, the youngest of six Lafferty brothers, was dismayed as she gradually learned of her husband's right-wing beliefs and his brothers' intense fundamentalism. What might otherwise be a typical narrative of marital conflict—his refusal to stand up to his family, her refusal to acquiesce to them—crosses from the ordinary to the extreme when Ron and Dan Lafferty decide that God commands the ritual murder of Brenda and her baby daughter. Krakauer doesn't ask directly whether the culture of main-

stream Mormonism compounded the situation, whether someone could have foreseen the brothers' horrific actions, or how such tragedies might be prevented. Betty does. Readers will as well, and they should.

The flaws in *Under the Banner of Heaven* disappoint precisely because of its aspirations. Krakauer makes too many missteps. He also raises difficult questions that bear scrutiny, questions that seldom are asked this compellingly, questions that will persist rather than vanish. For that, his book merits careful reading.

## Not a Coveyesque Self-Help Book

Ronald W. Walker, *Qualities That Count: Heber J. Grant as Businessman, Missionary, and Apostle*. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2004; special issue of *BYU Studies* 43, no. 1; 299 pp. \$18.95.

*Reviewed by Mark T. Decker, assistant professor, Department of English and Philosophy, University of Wisconsin-Stout, in Menomonie*

Collections of scholarly articles often display their strengths in their parts rather than in their functioning as a unified whole. After all, the structure of such volumes invites readers to pick and choose and, if read linearly, present multiple repetitions and a narrative that is often, at best, digressive and tangential. Nevertheless, festschrifts and

other themed collections continue to be produced by university presses because, in their scattershot way, they meet the needs of specialists needing easy access to research generally related to their topics.

Ronald W. Walker sets himself quite a task, then, in *Qualities That Count: Heber J. Grant as Businessman, Missionary, and Apostle*. Walker, a senior research associate in the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History, had access to Grant's papers in the early years of this project. He has published on the sixth president of the Church and his family in venues that range from regional history journals to the *Ensign* to *Dialogue* and *Sunstone*. *Qualities That Count* is a lightly edited representation of those articles—along with one previously un-

published piece—complete with copious endnotes.

Yet in his introduction, Walker contends that the book functions as a broadly instructive biography of Grant's youth and early days as an apostle and attempts to package a collection of essays written (mostly) for serious students of Mormon history as an object deserving of being "made accessible to a general reader in a single volume" (xiv). Consequently, Walker's collection needs to be reviewed from two perspectives: as a resource for those intellectually interested in Grant and his role in Mormon history and as an improving biography for believing non-specialists, designed to instruct its readers about obtaining the "qualities that count."

As a collection of essays, *Qualities That Count* has much to recommend it to serious students of Mormon history, presenting its readers with responsible, though distinctly apologetic, assessments of Grant's early life and middle age. The Heber J. Grant that emerges from the pages is more fully human than the Grant that would emerge from a full-scale biography written for the general LDS reader. It is refreshing to read that the man who would one day become the head of the Mormon Church loved to drink beer (52) and read Ingersoll (53) when he was a young man, even though Walker is careful to document the mature Grant's repudiation of his youthful excesses.

The portrait of the Church that Walker gives his readers is also far from

hagiographic. For example, in "Grant's Watershed: Succession in the Presidency," the only essay that has not previously appeared in print, Walker gives a well-documented account of the tension in the Quorum of the Twelve during the twenty-one-month period between the death of John Taylor and the ascension of Wilford Woodruff. Readers learn of the bickering that occurred when George Q. Cannon assumed controlling interest in the Church's Bullion, Beck, and Champion silver mine and of Cannon's attempts to cover up the sordid personal life of his son John Q. But the circumspect Walker gives his audience little concrete information here.

This collection, obviously released to coincide with the use of Grant's writings as the manual for Melchizedek Priesthood quorums and Relief Society classes in 2004, is most timely in its re-presentation of the financial machinations that Grant was forced to employ to keep both the Church and himself solvent. With Martha Stewart and several CEOs making headlines recently for their financial sins and peccadilloes, it is interesting to read about an apostle who watered his stock in the Utah Sugar Company to raise funds for his mission. Walker also cogently explains how Grant was instrumental in forging ties between Wall Street financiers and the Church, largely through obtaining usurious short-term loans from men like John Claflin. Of course, Walker dismisses such activi-

ties with the not-unjustifiable argument that these were all standard business practices during the Gilded Age, but it is difficult to imagine Grant's actions in these matters cheerily referenced during an elders' quorum lesson.

Indeed, it is easy to wonder how well this book would serve a general LDS readership, unless that audience's tolerance for warts-and-all portrayal has increased markedly. Additionally, the annoyance of the general LDS reader may be heightened because Walker's introduction and the book's packaging promise something other than what is delivered. Despite the self-help subtext implied by the title, the qualities that count are not enumerated, nor do the various chapters help readers understand just what qualities are being presented. Consequently, readers seeking Coveyesque didacticism may become confused by chapters that reveal, for example, that Grant never did manage to learn any Japanese while presiding over the Church's mission in Japan.

This is not to say that a lay reader would not find uplifting material in Walker's book. If *Qualities That Count* resembles a self-help book, it would be the Horatio Alger novels Walker implies that Grant was fond of (82). Usually, Alger's novels featured a plucky poor boy who rises because of his own good character, a little luck, and some timely mentoring from kindly upper-class men. This is one of the narrative strands that *Qualities That Count* intermittently reconstructs, one which will probably mesh well with the

worldview of many of the general LDS readers this book reaches.

This narrative belies, however, strong implications in both the book's packaging and in Walker's introduction that the future apostle's qualities came from his early upbringing. According to the back cover, Grant's "single mother, Rachel Ivins Grant, gently fostered the tenacity, industry, and faith that permeated his life." Walker's introduction observes that Rachel was "brimming with social and cultural values that her son would inherit and then later transmit in Church service to the twentieth century" (xv). Yet the creature of nineteenth-century capitalism and nineteenth-century homosocial spaces that Walker so ably recreates owes much of his character development to male mentors, as the essay "Young Heber's Years of Passage" documents. While Rachel Ivins Grant has a chapter dedicated to her, those seeking the tale of a gifted leader who was the product of a plucky single mother will eventually be disappointed.

Yet ultimately, the strongest charge that can be brought against *Qualities That Count* is that it is being mismarketed. Walker's scholarship is sound, his writing is lively, and anyone with a serious interest in Heber J. Grant, the LDS Church, or even the history of the American West in the nineteenth century could benefit from reading this book. It may not, however, make an ideal birthday present for Grandpa Holdfast.