

In the long view infidelity seems to be becoming an increasing problem in the L.D.S. family, primarily because we are living in a larger culture where such activity is so frequently modeled and glamorized in our literature and entertainments as well as in the lives of many of those around us. And some of our people succumb, as they would to a flu epidemic, their own weaknesses combining with overexposure to the virus. The rationalizations for this behavior will include, "My wife has been so irritating, unloving, and nagging — I deserve something a little better," or "My husband just doesn't know how to treat me right, he exasperates me so. A little flirtation never hurt anybody," etc., etc.

What many young or even older married couples don't realize is that a good marriage, like anything else worthwhile, requires a lot of plain hard work, giving, overlooking, and forgiving. One special couple, who have one of the best marriages I've seen, explain the secret of their exhilarating relationship and great family by saying, "We worked our damn heads off."

No man ever satisfied all of his wife's needs and no woman ever understood and met all of her husband's desires. J. Golden

Kimball once expressed it this way, "Not one man in a thousand knows how to treat a woman right. And not one woman in a 100,000 knows when she's well enough off." And while all of this is certainly true there can be and is a lot of fun and good loving in a great many marriages; like a powerful cement this tides the couple over the difficult days which beset every marriage.

It has been said that there are four critical components in married love: friendship, romance, sexual fulfillment, and sacrifice. We need all, to some degree, but at least two, friendship and sexual fulfillment, are necessary for a relationship to survive. And while the mix can vary considerably from marriage to marriage, sex alone (for example) cannot by itself make a stable or enduring relationship. Friendship (with implied good communication) is very important, though even here something more is needed. I doubt that very few people have ever loved superbly, but perhaps the miracle is that so many marriages do survive, that so many husbands and wives do love each other despite their neuroses, pettiness, and shortcomings — this is still earth, not heaven.

A PECULIAR PEOPLE

The Ultimate Disgrace

Samuel W. Taylor

Samuel W. Taylor is a professional writer who writes often about his Mormon background and experience. His most recent book, NAUVOO AT NIGHTFALL (1971), combines fiction and history in an attempt to make the saints and sinners of Nauvoo live again.

After writing *Family Kingdom*, which was the story of my father and the great family of six wives and three dozen kids, I made a special effort to become acquainted with those of my brothers and sisters whom I had never met. The last one was Rhea, daughter of the first wife, May. Rhea had a small acreage east of Los Angeles where she kept a race horse and put on productions of her own composition with handicapped children.

She told me a story that certainly should have been in the book, because it pertained to the most serious aspect of my father's fall from grace.

A number of people had tried, with various degrees of tact, to dissuade me from writing the book. The biography of a former member of the Council of the Twelve who had been unchurched for taking wives after the Manifesto just wasn't, it had been suggested, inspiring subject matter. Then one man bluntly told me why I should forget it: "I simply can't understand why you persist in planning a biography of such a man," he said. "But I'll tell you this: if you write this book, it should be honest. And how would you like the world to know that your father *died in debt!*"

Now I knew the very worst thing.

He leaned forward across the desk. "After your father's death a committee of the brethren *had to compromise his debts for fifteen cents on the dollar!*" He leaned back. "How would *that* look in print?"

Perhaps only someone born in Utah can appreciate the close correlation between spirituality and worldly success. It had been perfectly proper for Apostle John W. Taylor to have plunged heavily into vast promotional projects — dams, land development, irrigation networks, mines, colonization, timber — anything big (his letterhead said, "Large Tracts Only"). During this period a number of his church associates had become financially over-extended. In fact, a favorite faith-promoting story of the very man who warned me against writing the book concerned his own predicament of being deeply in debt at the time he received a mission call, and how the Lord had shown him the way out, through stock manipulation, so that he could leave the mission solvent. I gathered that if John W. Taylor had passed away during one of his affluent periods (he made and lost several fortunes), perhaps everything else about his life would be acceptable biographical material; the disgrace was not going into debt, but dying that way.

Rhea cast light on this aspect of Father's life. She had been his secretary during the early years of the century, when he had offices at Salt Lake in the Judge building and was juggling big deals. But as Christmas approached, he was pressed for cash. He always liked to observe holidays, and how could he make this a memorable one for his family?

And then, just two days before Christmas, a deal went through. It wasn't a large one, but it meant \$5,000 in cash. This was hard money at a time when labor could be hired for a dollar and a half a day, and the income tax hadn't been thought of. Five thousand dollars was, in fact, a small fortune.

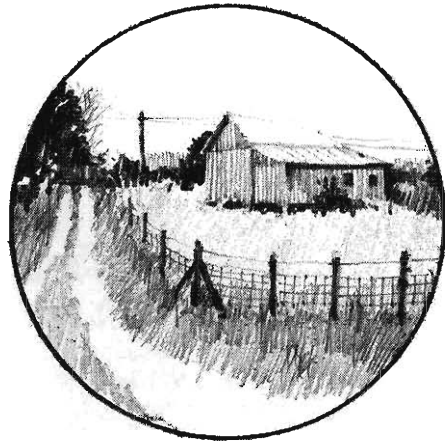
"First off," he told Rhea, "I want each of my wives to have a new dress for Christmas, and every child to be outfitted from top to toe."

As Rhea wrote checks to cover this, Brother Oldroyd arrived for an appointment. He had been a prosperous businessman who had fallen on ill health and hard times. Rhea was just closing the checkbook when Father came from the office with his visitor.

"While you're at it, Rhea, make a check for \$200 for Brother Oldroyd."

The next visitor was Sister Jones, a widow. Father had Rhea write her a check for \$85 to forestall threatened eviction by her landlord. All day long people came with hard-luck stories, and none went away empty-handed. The next day the stream of visitors continued. Late in the afternoon, Rhea and her father were getting ready to leave the office when Sister Sorenson arrived. Father talked to her briefly, then told Rhea to make a check for \$250.

"But, Father, we only have a balance of \$183.71."



Without an instant's hesitation, he said, "Well, then, make it for \$183.71."

"Yes, Father."

When Sister Sorenson had gone, Rhea and her father put on coats and hats, locked the office, and went down to the street. Darkness had fallen; the air was crisp and bitter. Iron tires of a passing carriage creaked on the dry snow.

"Perfect weather for Christmas Eve," he observed zestfully as they crossed to the tracks to wait for a street car. "We have indeed been blessed to be able to give all members of the family new outfits."

With an edge to her voice, Rhea said, "And it was a blessing to be able to help so many others."

"Yes, indeed!" he agreed heartily.

As a street car approached, he said, "This is yours, Rhea. Give my love to your mother and the family."

"Then you're not coming home with me?"

He shook his head. "No; it's Nellie's turn." He always tried to be impartial about such things.