

may not know is that the person who lives by these virtues has often achieved a life separate from the exploiter and by them is free of him. In this way Christianity is liberating. That Christianity in which one conforms, submits, is loyal to commands, conforms to the established, is blindly faithful to the given, heeds authority, finds security in law and order, is another kind of Christianity altogether: it is a trap. Radical Christianity is different in that it makes anarchic breaks with the past, the status quo, the inevitable, and it does so, not by regarding these virtues passively merely, or intellectually merely, or sentimentally merely, but by using them to actually change things for the better. They are active principles for breaking up the world. The New Testament, like the Old, is a manual for revolution.

The conventional argument I have heard all my life against extensive personal use of The Christian Break that I am trying to describe is the self-serving position that kind-

ness and forgiveness get smashed, that nice people get hurt, that Christian nations get beat. The position is both right and wrong-headed, since revolutionary Christianity has much more to do with dignity than with survival. Of course it is axiomatic that if someone cuts off your hand you don't give him your other hand if you want to play the piano. You don't stop bludgeoning a nation to death when it insults you and kicks you in the shins if you want to go on controlling the world. But then Christianity never did have very much to do with survival or with power, only with the *quality* of one's survival, the *quality* of one's life. And there it is revolutionary. To survive in the world one may unfortunately find it necessary to compromise with the world, help continue its rotten patterns, embody its stink, but to give it some quality, some meaning, one may have to break with it, even with oneself — Christianly. What else works?

A Peculiar People **Out of Limbo.**

SAMUEL W. TAYLOR

Particularly since he had been a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, loss of church membership was shattering to my father's professional, social and business affairs. One day John W. Taylor was revered as one of the Lord's anointed; the next, he found fair-weather friends crossing the street to avoid him. Business ventures collapsed; credit ceased. But what hurt most was that a man for whom the Church had been his entire life — he'd been an apostle since the age of twenty-five — now couldn't enter a chapel nor partake of the sacrament.

However, he made no complaints. In marrying plural wives after the Manifesto he had taken a calculated risk; he accepted without rancor the penalty for public exposure. And he remained serene about the ultimate verdict in the hereafter. "Things will be straightened out," he said, "over there."

Members of the family, however, were concerned about his status in limbo. Ten years after John W. Taylor's death my brother Raymond made inquiries as to what could be done to get him officially reinstated to Church membership. The reply offered the type of encouragement given by a doctor to someone with terminal cancer: there is always hope. Raymond received no intimation, however, that prospects for John W. Taylor's immortal soul to be delivered from Satan's buffetings could be realized in the foreseeable future.

A concerted effort by members of the great family might have created momentum; but the six widows and swarm of progeny were all

characterized by spirit, independence, and individuality. They could agree on nothing. (Even the simple matter of selecting a headstone involved a hassel that went on year after year while the temporary marker rotted away and it was distinctly possible that when the stone finally was placed it might be at the wrong grave).

One faction held firmly to the whispered rumor that John W. Taylor hadn't *really* been cut off at all (it was an empty form to appease the outside world). If this actually was the situation, Raymond felt it was high time for our father's name to be taken out of the shadows.

The ironical aspect of the whole thing was that John W. Taylor's troubles resulted from sheer bad luck. The matter of his plural wives became a *cause célèbre* during Senate hearings in the Smoot Investigation of 1904-1906. Except for this, he and his families would have lived quietly with nothing ever done about it. When I was a boy in Provo, everyone knew of plural families, the wives too young to have been married before the Manifesto; there were examples in every neighborhood. We knew the "old maids" who actually were secret plural wives. The Manifesto of 1890 had been interpreted in different ways. Actually there was not one but several, the last coming some fourteen years after the first. In 1910 the Salt Lake *Tribune* published a list of 220 men of standing in the Church who had taken wives after the 1890 date. John W. Taylor was only one of six members of the Quorum of the

Lives based on having are less free than lives based either on doing or on being.

— WILLIAM JAMES

Twelve on this list. Inasmuch as his fall was primarily a matter of bad luck, all the more reason to straighten things out.

Raymond never quit trying, and in the spring of 1965, thirty-nine years after he had begun the campaign, he wrote urging me to take up the matter of John W. Taylor's reinstatement with Church authorities. Now, he declared, the time was ripe. How he came by this conviction, I didn't know, nor why a letter from me would carry more klout than one from him. However, I wrote to Hugh B. Brown of the First Presidency, asking advice on steps that might be taken. Elder Brown phoned in reply, saying that President David O. McKay would like to talk to me on the matter. Since I was in Hollywood, I suggested that Raymond was nearby at Provo, available within the hour. "President McKay," Elder Brown said, "would like to talk to you."

At Salt Lake, I had a conference with Elder Brown, who advised me to make the interview brief because of the president's limited vitality; then in company with him and Nathan Eldon Tanner of the First Presidency I went to President McKay's office on the eighth floor of the Hotel Utah. The Prophet, Seer and Revelator was 91 years old, sitting tiny and frail at his desk with a plastic tube taped to a nostril while a pump throbbing by his chair supplied oxygen. The voice was a thin reed, but the mind was razor sharp. He even retained his sense of humor. When a nurse came in he said, "Looks like breakfast," as she rolled up his sleeve for a shot.

When she had gone, I was closeted with the First Presidency, and presented the case briefly.

"John W. Taylor was a good man," President McKay said. He remembered him well. "How do his wives feel about this?"

"It was my mother's greatest wish. She's gone, now. Only two of the wives are alive, May and Rhoda."

"Rhoda was one of the Welling girls, wasn't she? From up Centerville way."

"Yes, sir; Farmington. May lives in Los Angeles." Then I added, feeling that he'd like to know: "May is now just one hundred years old."

He nodded, smiling.

Elder Tanner quietly made a motion that my request for John W. Taylor's reinstatement be approved; this was done. "Write a letter for my signature," President McKay said. "I'm not as fast as I once was, but I'll sign it."

On a typewriter borrowed from Elder Brown's secretary I wrote the letter for approval by the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve. Ten days later, 21 May 1965, Raymond stood proxy in the Salt Lake Temple while John W. Taylor's priesthood and blessings were restored.

But that wasn't the end of the story. It took almost two years from that time before complications of the case were ironed out. Soon after the reinstatement a member of the Twelve asked Raymond for the name of the man who had performed John W. Taylor's last three marriages. Raymond suggested he ask the living witness, Aunt Rhoda.

"Would you do this for me?"

Raymond visited Aunt Rhoda. As he began talking about her marriage, she put a finger to her lips and gestured to the open door. Beyond, her middle-aged daughter, Young Rhoda, was watching T.V. "Please close the door, Raymond. This is a private matter." Such things weren't even for the ears of her own daughter. With the door closed, Raymond explained that a member of the Twelve had asked him to find out who had performed her marriage ceremony.

Aunt Rhoda considered awhile, then shook her head. "Please tell him that I would rather not talk about it."

It had been more than sixty years ago, yet Aunt Rhoda, like my mother and the other plural wives, had never really emerged from