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*The John Taylor Papers, Records of the Last Utah Pioneer*, vol. 1, *The Apostle* and vol. 2, *The President* by Samuel W. Taylor and Raymond W. Taylor

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SAMUEL W. TAYLOR and RAYMOND W. TAYLOR. *The John Taylor Papers, Records of the Last Utah Pioneer*. Redwood City, Calif.: Taylor Trust, 1984. Vol. 1, *The Apostle*. 363 pp. \$11.95. Vol. 2, *The President*. 553 pp. \$13.95.

Reviewed by Mark R. Grandstaff, a missile officer at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls, Montana.

In 1974, Samuel W. Taylor delivered a paper at the University of Utah rightly suggesting that his grandfather John Taylor was the "Forgotten Man of Mormonism." Only a casual perusal of current Mormon bibliography corroborates Taylor's assertion. There are no major scholarly biographies, few essays, and what is available has been written by his two grandsons.

Most Mormons recognize John Taylor as one of Joseph Smith's close friends and inner confidants. He joined the young church in 1836, was quickly appointed to the position of Apostle in 1838, and in 1839 served on a successful mission to England. In Nauvoo, Taylor was a member of the Council of Fifty, and served on the board of regents and the city council. With Joseph and Hyrum when they were murdered, he sustained severe gunshot wounds and barely survived. As a writer, John Taylor edited the last three volumes of the *Times and Seasons* and published the *Nauvoo Neighbor*. He was also instrumental in writing and circulating the first LDS periodicals in Germany and France (1851) as well as publishing the *Mormon*, a New York City newspaper (1852). In 1877, upon the death of Brigham Young, he became the third President of the Church and guided the Mormons for the next ten years through a period of intense political and social crises. Obviously, Taylor was a talented and complicated man who deserves an incisive treatment.

I suppose that is why *The John Taylor Papers* are such a disappointment. Instead of being a handy, well-annotated compilation of primary-source material, the work is polemical. The speculation that runs through the work does much to detract from its usefulness. For example, the interpretation of the ongoing feud between Brigham Young and John Taylor is based on an interview some fifty years after the fact. The authors perceive their grandfather as the final supporting brace for Mormon doctrinal integrity, for upon Taylor's demise the Church recanted polygamy and interweaved itself into the seamless web of American pluralism. Hence, as the authors claim, the pioneer period ended and modern Mormonism began. This is a well-worn thesis that has been dispelled by the recent writings of Jan Shipps, D. Michael Quinn, and Thomas G. Alexander.

While some of the chapters provide insight into John Taylor's life, others lack substance. Poor coverage is given to Taylor's monumental essay *The Mediation and the Atonement*. In the introduction, Samuel Taylor asserts that this monograph not only repudiated Brigham Young's Judaic theocracy in favor of a New Testament ideology, but completely eclipsed the Adam-God doctrine. Both of these perceptive points deserve further discussion and clarification. Unfortunately, except for one or two passing references in the second volume, the subject is not explored again. A better annotation of

President Taylor's reasoning processes and ideological development is needed.

Finally, standardized editorial procedures could have enhanced the usefulness of these two volumes. This editorial weakness, in combination with the aforementioned problems and the lack of any new and substantial source material, makes it difficult to compare this work with Dean Jessee's "John Taylor's Nauvoo Journal" (*BYU Studies* 23 [Summer 1983]: 1-105) or Jessee's volume on Joseph Smith's writings. In fact, *The John Taylor Papers* is more reminiscent of nineteenth-century biography than something produced for today's scholar.