

Bishops received men into fellowship without the proper credentials.

I remember an instance in point. When I was in charge of the House of the Lord in Salt Lake City many years ago, a gentlemanly-looking and somewhat venerable appearing man came to the House of the Lord one morning in February, I think. It was very stormy, and the roads were very bad. He reported to me that he had come from Millard county. He had traveled by team; but on account of the roads being so very bad and the weather so stormy, his team being thin and weak, it had given out a few miles south of the city, and he had been obliged to leave the team and wagon there, and a stranger had brought him and his wife to the House of the Lord. Unfortunately however, he said, through the hurry in trying to get there on time, they had left their recommends in the wagon. "Well," said I, "I am very sorry indeed; your case is really a pitiable one, and I hate to refuse you admittance into the House of the Lord, but it is my duty to do so without you bring with you a recommendation." At this he began to cry, appearing to feel exceedingly bad, and his wife shared in his sorrow, and they pleaded with me. They were poor; they had traveled all the way from Millard county in the stormy season of the year to get the blessings of the House of God, and it was a hardship for them to be denied, for they had not the means to keep them here another week, and they would be obliged to return before the next day for administering ordinances, which was a week later. After hearing this story and obtaining a solemn promise that he would forward to me immediately his letter of recommendation for himself and wife as soon as he could return to his wagon, I agreed to let him in. He got his blessings in the House of God, and went away; and I heard no more of him for months. The recommendation did not come. By and by I received a letter from President Callister, of the Millard Stake, inquiring if a man and woman, describing them, had been admitted into the Endowment House. He was answered, Yes. Then we were informed that they had been cut off the Church months before, and were not entitled to a letter of recommendation. They had lied themselves into the House of the Lord with tears in their eyes, they had deceived me, although I knew I did wrong in admitting them without a recommend; yet my sympathy overcame my judgment. If I had done my duty, I should have said to them, "No, you cannot enter here, except you come duly authorized by letters of standing from recognized authority in the Church." But I did not do my duty, and I committed a wrong. This is likely to happen anywhere and at any time through the cunning of designing persons, unless the discipline of the Church be observed and carried out to the letter. There never can be proper government or proper order in the House of God until the rules of the Church, from the least unto the greatest, shall be recognized and observed, not only by officers of the Church, but by every member thereof.

I want to say that the document that was read at the General Conference, bearing the signatures of the Presidency of the Church, the Twelve Apostles, the First Seven Presidents of the Seventies and the Presiding Bishopric, refers to

this principle of conformity to Church rules, and speaking of it in that respect, it applies not only to those who signed their names to it, but to every officer and member of the Church. It is not intended, however, to infringe upon the freedom of any citizen. As I said before, order in the church is the result of obedience to the laws of God; and there never can be order, either in earth or in heaven, without obedience to the laws of God. One of the laws of God to the Church is that members and officers shall comply with the order of the Priesthood as it has been revealed. If they will not comply with this order, or honor it, then they must bear the consequences.

What would an army be without the strictest of discipline? Would it be proper for subordinate officers in an army, either in time or peace or of war, to disregard the orders of their superior officers, or to obey them or ignore them as they willed? What condition would arise in the armies of the world if the orders of the superior officers were to be disregarded with impunity by the subordinate officers? You can see that confusion would result at once. An army under such circumstances, instead of being well regulated and capable of performing effective service, would be an unorganized rabble—a mob. Nothing can be done with an aggregation of men formed into an army unless the officers as well as the privates are obedient to the orders of their superior officers.

The organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is quite as perfect as any of the armies of the world. But some of us have been in the habit of paying but slight attention to the authority of the Priesthood; and we have come to think that to acknowledge that authority would be to stultify ourselves and to belittle ourselves in the eyes of men. I have for many years had the honor of being an Apostle in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and for some years I have been called to act as a Counselor, first to President Taylor and then to President Woodruff. In the ward in which I live, from time to time—not often, I am sorry to say—teachers come into my house to teach me. Perhaps one is an Elder in the Melchisedek Priesthood, and another is a Priest or a Teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood. Supposing, however, that the two Teachers who come to my house are really a Priest and a Teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood. They come to my house in the capacity of Teachers. What would be my duty there? Would it belittle me to take off my hat and bow to these Teachers; invite them and my family to sit down and hear what they had to say and hearken to their counsel? I ask you, would this belittle me because I am an Apostle, or because I am Counselor to the President of the Church? Or is it my duty to respect the Teacher when he comes into my house? Is it not a part of the discipline of the Church that the Teacher shall visit the houses of the Saints? Yes; then he has authority in my house, he visits me as a member of the Church, and he comes by authority. I tell you that the man who, because he is a High Priest, or a Seventy, or an Apostle, or a President, ignores the Teacher that comes to his house to teach him is devoid of a right conception of the discipline of the Church and of the order of the Priesthood; he is in ignorance of his

duty, and ought to be reprimanded or reprov'd, until he repents and acknowledges the right of the Teacher to visit his house to teach him whenever he is sent there. And let me tell you more: If an Apostle should ignore the Teacher that comes to teach him in his house, it would be perfectly proper for that Teacher to complain of his conduct to the Bishop, and it would be the right of the Bishop to summon him and try him on his fellowship as a member of the Church in that ward; and unless he repented and acknowledged the Lesser Priesthood just as much as though he were a lay member of the Church, the Bishop could withdraw the hand of fellowship from him. This is a part of the discipline of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. And I am not ashamed of it. It does not belittle me to listen to a Teacher, to obey his counsel and treat him respectfully. If I fail to do this, I prove myself unworthy of my calling and responsibility.

Now, to say that there are men who do not look at this principle as I do is only to state the truth. It is true that there are men who do not regard even the Presidency of the Church as having any right to direct them, except in spiritual matters—not in business nor in any engagements which will carry them away from the duties of their callings in the Church. I heard a man once say to President Young, "I recognize your authority to direct me in spiritual matters, but when it comes to handling my temporal affairs, I warn you to keep hands off, I am able to manage my own business." He may not have used exactly those words, but that was exactly the idea that was expressed. "Now," says one, "that is right; Brother Woodruff has a perfect right to counsel me in spiritual matters, but if it comes to counseling me in a way to affect my business affairs, hands off!" Well, this may be all very good for men who have a superabundance of manhood to sustain; but with all the manhood that ever I had—and some have thought that I had a little more than I needed—I have never yet felt that the President of the Church had no right to counsel me in spiritual matters in such a way only as not to affect my temporal affairs. But I have felt that if I had millions of dollars at stake, or if I had only a 160 acre farm that I was homesteading at stake, or if I had only a carpenter's bench or a blacksmith's forge—I have felt that it was not unmanly in me, when the President of the Church called me to go on a mission and leave my blacksmith's forge, or my carpenter's bench, or my store, or my bank, or whatever I was engaged in, to go and preach the Gospel, even to the sacrifice of my forge, or my carpenter's bench, or my 160 acres of land, or anything else.

I was called on a mission after I had served four years on a homestead and it was only necessary for me to remain one year more to prove up and get my title to the land; but President Young said he wanted me to go to Europe on a mission, to take charge of the mission there. I did not say to him, "Brother Brigham, I cannot go; I have got a homestead on my hands, and if I go I will forfeit it." I said to Brother Brigham, "All right, President Young; whenever you want me to go I will go; I am on hand to obey the call of my file leader." And I went. I lost the homestead, and yet I never complained about