

**CAUSES OF GRATITUDE—THE CHURCH ILLUSTRATED BY  
A VINE—PRIESTHOOD REPRESENTED BY THE  
BRANCHES—INDEPENDENCE—CASE OF LYMAN  
WIGHT—PRIESTHOOD ON THE EARTH AND IN THE  
SPIRIT WORLD.**

DISCOURSE BY APOSTLE F. D. RICHARDS, DELIVERED AT THE GENERAL CONFERENCE,  
SATURDAY MORNING, APRIL 7, 1883.

REPORTED BY JOHN IRVINE.

It is a very pleasing privilege that we have of meeting together in Conference assembled in this manner. I have been very much gratified, interested and instructed, as I am sure all the faithful have been, who have been present and shared or partaken of the spirit of this Conference. I hope and pray that while we shall remain together we may feel the spirit of inspiration resting upon us to guide our minds in our reflections and our speech into those channels of communication that shall be most profitable to the people.

We have this day extraordinary reason for gratitude and praise to God our Heavenly Father for the peculiar manifestation of His kindness and mercy to us during the past year; not only in granting that the earth should be fruitful in yielding abundantly for the returning wants of His people both for man and beast, but for the protection and deliverance of His people from the machinations and devices and the subtle plans of men high in authority, who have set themselves to ensnare us, and if it were possible, to hinder the work of God—men who have thought to destroy

or cripple the great cause which God has established in the earth for the redemption and exaltation of the human family, from degradation and sin to the realms of intelligence and glory in His kingdom. Surely all Saints who have been making "first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" their aim and study, cannot fail to have both seen and felt this. It is but another assurance from on high of his good pleasure in not only having given unto us the kingdom, but in preserving the rights, the powers and blessings thereof from encroachment or invasion and from injury by the hands of the wicked and ungodly.

I am reminded that the time at my disposal this morning is short, there being several yet to address the Conference. I will, therefore, proceed directly to call your attention to a passage of Scripture found in the 15th chapter of John:

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

"Now ye are clean through the