

from the roots through the vine to all the branches thereof. Jesus said in connection with this "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."

Let it be understood that the healthy, thrifty growth of the limbs, the leaves, the bloom and the fruit, all depends upon the close adherence of the "branches" to the "vine"—the body of Christ. And every man bearing the Holy Priesthood must be made conscious of this in his experience and observations at one time or another if he is of any use as a living branch in this Church.

To this vine, in our dispensation there are three branches—the First Presidency—who are closely allied to the powers behind the veil; and they are the first to receive the mind and will of God, and communicate the same to the Church. This is that Spirit of revelation, the sap that comes from the vine, that goes to all the branches. And not only do we see these three main branches next the trunk, but a little further along are twelve other branches, spreading out and each of them, shooting forth other branches, twigs, tendrils, leaves and fruit, if they abide in the vine.

Now if those branches by any means become injured, or are not in a healthful condition from any course—no matter what—so that the free flow of the sap from the trunk and main branches is arrested, or retarded, the consequence is that the lesser branches, the twigs, leaves and fruit depending for nourishment and life upon the injured or deadened limb, are more or less affected, hindered in their growth, dwarfed in their development, and must suf-

fer death unless relieved by a healthy pruning.

I wish now to call the attention of the Presidents of Stakes to the consideration of this fact.

It is the duty of every President of a Stake to attend the annual and semi-annual Conferences, which are held in this place so far as practicable, but if it should so happen that a President himself could not be present, then he should see that one or both of his Counselors come, or some faithful man of an excellent spirit from his Stake who shall be capable of receiving the instructions given, and who is able to communicate the same to his President and to the people. And such a person or persons should be men whose duty it shall be to stay until the Conference is over, attending every meeting, and paying the strictest attention to all instructions given and to all Church business transacted.

They should not come here in a hurry to get away before the business of the Conference is attended to; they should not feel as though they could leave before receiving all that the Presidency have to say to them; so that when they do return to their homes they may go laden with counsel and filled with the spirit of the Conference, ready to impart the same to the people of their several Stakes. The President who does this keeps alive the fire, the Spirit of the Lord in the hearts of his people. By attending such conferences he goes home with more efficient instructions to convey to the people at home, and at the half yearly or quarterly conference over which he presides, he is enabled to impart to all who were unable to attend, the spirit of this general conference.

I hold it, then, to be of the utmost importance that the Presidents