

workings of the Holy Spirit to bring about His purposes. There was neither unrighteousness in Rebekah nor in Jacob in this matter; but on the contrary, there was the wisdom of the Almighty, showing forth his providences in guiding them in such a manner as to bring about his purposes, in influencing Esau to transfer his birthright to Jacob, that He might ratify and confirm it upon the head of Jacob; knowing as He did that Jacob and his seed were, and would be, more deserving of the birthright, and would magnify it in its true spirit. While Esau did not sense nor appreciate his condition and birthright; he did not respect it as he should have done, neither did he hearken to the counsels of his father and mother. On the contrary, he went his own way with a stubborn will, and followed his own passions and inclinations and took to wife one of the daughters of the Canaanites whom the Lord had not blessed; and he therefore rendered himself unacceptable to God and to his father and mother. He gave himself to wild pursuits—to hunting, and to following the ways of the Canaanites, and displeased the Lord and his parents, and was not worthy of this right of seniority. The Lord therefore saw fit to take it from him, and the mother was moved upon to help the younger son to bring about the purpose of the Lord, in securing to himself the blessing through the legitimate channel of the Priesthood. And as you know, his father was induced to bless him and confirm this blessing upon him.

Now, whilst all these instances in Scripture recognize the right called the birthright, that has descended from the beginning, the same principle is exhibited in all those instances set forth in the revelation read by President Taylor—that none can hold these rights of the Priest-

hood except in connection with the powers of heaven, and cannot be exercised only on the principles of righteousness; and all who fail to exercise these rights on the principles of righteousness and in connection with the powers of heaven subject to its counsels and directions and laws, forfeit their birthright, and the right passes to another.

We have another instance of this kind in Reuben, the eldest of the twelve sons of Jacob. We find that the birthright passed from him. He committed a transgression which offended the Lord and offended his father, and it was of such a character that it could not be passed over with impunity; and the birthright was taken from him and given to the sons of Joseph. We find it explained in Chronicles, that because Reuben defiled his father's bed, the birthright was taken from him and given to the sons of Joseph; and the Priesthood was reckoned after that lineage, though Judah prevailed above his brethren to this extent, that through him came the Chief Ruler of Israel, while unto Ephraim, the son of Joseph, was given the keys of the Priesthood—or those rights that apply to the birthright. Of the two sons of Joseph—Ephraim and Manasseh, the Lord said, Manasseh shall be great, but Ephraim shall be greater than he; and he shall become a multitude in the earth. And when the patriarch was blessing Joseph's two sons, though he was blind, he was careful to cross his hands in blessing the boys. Joseph observing what his father was doing, informed him that he was putting his right hand on the head of the younger boy, but the old man replied, I know it, my son. The Spirit of the Lord prompted him to do as he did—to confer the greater blessing upon Ephraim, the younger brother. It