

office, to hold the keys of this priesthood, except he be a literal descendant and the firstborn of Aaron.

“But, as a high priest of the Melchizedek Priesthood has authority to officiate in all the lesser offices he may officiate in the office of bishop when no literal descendant of Aaron can be found, provided he is called and set apart and ordained unto this power, under the hands of the First Presidency of the Melchizedek Priesthood.

“And a literal descendant of Aaron, also, must be designated by this Presidency, and found worthy, and anointed, and ordained under the hands of this Presidency, otherwise they are not legally authorized to officiate in their priesthood.

“But, by virtue of the decree concerning their right to the priesthood descending from father to son, they may claim their anointing if at any time they can prove their lineage, or do ascertain it by revelation from the Lord under the hands of the above named Presidency.”

This is speaking more particularly in regard to the Bishops. I have not time, to-day, to enter into many details pertaining to this; but will simply draw your attention to one point, which is this: If we had among us a literal descendant of Aaron, who was the firstborn, he would have a right to the keys, or presiding authority of the Bishopric. But then he would have to be set apart and directed by the First Presidency, no matter what his or their claims might be, or how clear their proofs. The same would have to be acknowledged by the First Presidency. These claims of descent from Aaron would have to be acknowledged by the First Presidency, and, further, the claimant would have to be set apart to his Bishopric by them, the same as in the case of a

High Priest of the Melchizedek Priesthood called to fill the same office. Thus, in either case, as a literal descendant of Aaron, or as a High Priest, the right to officiate is held first by authority of the Priesthood, and by appointment and ordination as above stated.

And, then, here is another thing I desire briefly to mention. A Bishop of this kind, holding the keys of this Priesthood, must be set apart by the First Presidency, and, should occasion arise, must also be tried by the First Presidency. This, however, does not apply to all Bishops, for there are a variety of Bishops, as for instance Bishop Partridge, who presided over the Land of Zion, and whose duty was to purchase land and divide it among the people, as their inheritances, and to take charge of the temporal affairs of the Church, not only in Zion but throughout all the western country, and also to sit as a common judge in Israel, and to preside in the capacity of Bishop, not to act as President over a district of country that was then called Zion, but as a general Bishop. George Miller was afterward appointed to the same Bishopric. Newel K. Whitney was appointed also as a general Bishop, and presided over Kirtland and all the churches in the eastern country. The calling of these men, you will perceive, was very different from that of a Bishop over one of the Wards of a Stake, for he can only preside over his own Ward; outside of that he has no jurisdiction. While the calling of the former was general, that of the latter is local. And there were Bishops' agents appointed formerly. There was Sidney Gilbert; he was a Bishop's agent appointed to assist Bishop Partridge in his duties; and Bishop Whitney also had his assistants or