

who would submit to the ordinance of baptism. Or, in other words, to more clearly explain what I wish to, the sins of human beings up till the age at which they are baptized are recorded against them. If they are willing to submit to the ordinance of baptism by immersion, having faith in God, repenting of their sins, by one having authority, God gives them His promise that He will remit their sins; that all that have been committed in the past shall be blotted out from the book of His remembrance, and from that day forth they are free from the sins of the past. The ordinance of baptism, then, is not an ordinance to us of mere form, or something that is submitted to simply because it is an ordinance of the Church. On the contrary, it is positively essential to the salvation of the human family. Nicodemus, in times of old, came to Jesus upon this subject, and apparently asked Him the question, If there was some other possibly better method whereby man could enter the Kingdom of God, and he was told by the Redeemer, that “no man could enter the kingdom of God, except he had been born of the water and of the Spirit.” This is the law as it is laid down. If there is any difference of opinion upon the part of any single individual on this subject, it is not with me, but it is with the word of God, as given through His Son Jesus Christ—that except a man be born of the water and of the Spirit he can in no wise enter the Kingdom of God. The Latter-day Saints believe this, and act accordingly—that except a man be born again he could not even *see* the Kingdom of God, let alone *enter* therein. The ordinance of baptism for the remission of sins is, then, to Latter-day Saints a very important ordinance.

Paul speaks of another ordinance that he terms the “laying on of hands.” I have found in traveling in the midst of the Christian world, that very often Christian people would agree with me in relation to the principles of which I have spoken. They would say: “Yes, we believe that idea of faith is correct; we believe that idea of repentance is correct; we believe that idea of baptism even is correct;” but they were not strong enough apparently to believe in this principle called the “laying on of hands,” which Paul terms one of the doctrines of Christ. We find that this principle is practiced in the midst of the Latter-day Saints as also an essential ordinance—that except a man be baptized in water and born of the Spirit, by the laying on of hands, he can in no wise enter the Kingdom of God. This is the light, we are told, that is given to every soul that comes upon the earth; not to the Latter-day Saints alone, not to the former-day Saints alone, not to those alone who were baptized, but to every soul that cometh upon the earth. The ordinance of baptism for the remission of sins being essential, so is the ordinance of the laying on of hands, that men may receive the Holy Spirit; or, in other words, the laying on of hands is the medium that God has instituted for His children to be placed in communication with Himself, that they may receive the Spirit that leads and guides and directs unto all truth, that brings things past to our remembrance, that shows us things to come, that opens up the visions of heaven and makes known unto us the mind and will of God. I remember one minister with whom I had the privilege of conversing upon this principle. He stated that it looked reasonable; that he did not know really but what