tations analogous to the appearance of Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:2–4). Here the experience was no less objective than the deliverances of sense-experience. Several hundred experienced the outpouring of spiritual gifts in the KIRTLAND TEMPLE dedication (see Backman, pp. 284–309). Several thousand, including many children, witnessed the experience in Nauvoo when the “mantle” fell upon Brigham Young and he was providentially portrayed in Joseph Smith’s likeness (see SUCCESSION IN THE PRESIDENCY). Approximately 63,000 participated in the dedicatory sessions of the SALT LAKE TEMPLE, and many reported seeing visions and hearing heavenly music.

LDS journals are replete with testimonies that the Spirit of the Lord enlivens all of the senses—seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching—and that one is more physically alive and aware when spiritually quickened. This illumination is more than an aid to physical perception; it is a medium of comprehension. Latter-day Saints sometimes speak of a “sixth sense,” interrelated with the other senses, that apprehends spiritual things. All things “are revealed to our spirits precisely as though we had no bodies at all” (TPJS, p. 355). One may be lighted up “with the glory of [his] former home” (J. F. Smith, GD, p. 14) and be led to say with Eliza R. Snow, “I felt that I had wandered from a more exalted sphere” (“O My Father,” Hymns of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, no. 292, Salt Lake City, 1985).

Many Latter-day Saints record such experiences in the setting of TEMPLE ORDINANCES, sensing oneness with departed friends and relatives—“they are not far from us, and know and understand our thoughts, feelings, and motions, and are often pained therewith” (TPJS, p. 326)—and “seeming to see” and “seeming to hear” the realms of the spirit world (J. Grant, JD 4:134–36).

LDS spiritual experiences are often related to scripture study. One convert had mastered the entire Bible in Hebrew, German, and English. After receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, he found new meaning in familiar verses (O. Hyde, JD 8:23–24). Another who had memorized New Testament books found, after receiving the Holy Ghost, that “new light dawned upon” him in “bold relief,” which the Book of Mormon clarified and confirmed: “Truths were manifested to me that I had never heard of or read of, but which I afterwards heard preached by the servants of the Lord” (C. Penrose, JD 23:351). Still another, praying through his youth for some great manifestation, learned slowly and for a lifetime, “line upon line, precept upon precept,” until he felt his whole being was a testimony of the truth (J. F. Smith, GD, pp. 501–550).

Today, psychological, positivistic, and existential thought raises questions about religious awareness. There is much preoccupation with criteria of meaning and with the logic of religious discourse. The sum of LDS religious experience, however, suggests that anyone may appeal to the way of the prophets: Look and see.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

TRUMAN G. MADSEN

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
[Latter-day Saints have always been vigorous defenders of religious liberty and have frequently been the victims of religious persecution. For accounts of LDS beliefs concerning religious freedom see Church and State; Constitution of the United States; and Politics: Political Teachings. The history of the LDS struggle for freedom is summarized in Legal and Judicial History of the Church and in Politics: Political History. The efforts of the Church to be recognized and to enjoy religious liberty in new countries are explained in Diplomatic Relations. The underlying commitments to human liberty in LDS teaching are outlined in Freedom. Nephite traditions of religious liberty are described in Book of Mormon, Government and Legal History in.]

REMISSION OF SINS
“Remission of sins” is the scriptural phrase that describes the primary purpose of BAPTISM: to obtain God’s forgiveness for breaking his COMMANDMENTS and receive a newness of life. It is fundamental among the FIRST PRINCIPLES AND ORDINANCES OF THE GOSPEL: FAITH in the Lord JESUS CHRIST, REPENTANCE, BAPTISM by immersion for the remission of sins, and LAYING ON OF HANDS for the GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST. To grant pardon of sins is one manifestation of God’s mercy, made possible by the ATONEMENT. It is the blessing sought by those who fervently prayed, “O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that