our own conscience,” says Article of Faith 11, “and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship, how, where or what they may.”

A corollary of this statement is a declaration of belief regarding governments and law, adopted by the Church in 1835. It affirms that governments have no power to prescribe rules of worship to bind the consciences of men or to dictate forms for public or private devotion. In matters of religion, the declaration asserts, “men are amenable to God and to Him only for the exercise of their religious beliefs, unless their religious opinions prompt them to infringe upon the rights and liberties of others” (D&C 134). The Church has maintained these principles while accommodating to secular authority: “We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring and sustaining the law” (A of F 12; cf. D&C 134:1–12).

Related to this is a doctrine of primordial individual freedom. For Latter-day Saints agency is indestructible. All truth is “independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also” (D&C 93:30). The individual’s freedom to search for this truth should not be contravened, and in the last analysis it cannot be. Even God cannot coerce belief. The only power justified on earth or in heaven is loving persuasion (D&C 121:41).

Intolerance often arises from sectarian conviction. But contrary to stereotypes, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is neither a sect nor a cult. It has an extensive scriptural foundation, but no formalized creeds and no closed canon. As the Prophet Joseph Smith said to Stephen A. Douglas, Latter-day Saints are “ready to believe all true principles that exist, as they are manifest from time to time” (HC 5:215). They are taught to “gather all the good and true principles in the world and treasure them up” (TPJS p. 316). Commitment to truth in this inclusive sense is commitment to the view that all philosophies, religions, and ethical systems have elements of truth and that all persons have a portion of light. This is a buttress for tolerance, goodwill, and fellowship on a worldwide scale (see WORLD RELIGIONS [NON-CHRISTIAN] AND MORMONISM). “If ye will not embrace our religion,” Joseph Smith said, “embrace our hospitalities” (WJS 162).

The crucial need for tolerance has been impressed upon Latter-day Saints by the buffetttings, persecutions, and drivings of their own history. In various places in the world they have sometimes been denied civil and even survival rights.

The Church itself has a long history of forbearance. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that “the same principle that would trample upon the rights of the Latter-day Saints would trample upon the rights of the Roman Catholics, or of any other denomination. . . . If it has been demonstrated that I have been willing to die for a Mormon I am bold to declare before heaven that I am just as ready to die for a presbyterian, a baptist or any other denomination. It is a love of liberty which inspires my soul, civil and religious liberty. . . .” He added, “If I esteem mankind to be in error shall I bear them down? No. I will lift them up and in their own way, too, if I cannot persuade them my way is better” (TPJS, p. 313).

Within the Church two principles taught by Joseph Smith have prevailed: “I teach the people correct principles and they govern themselves” (JD 10:57–58), and, “It does not prove that a man is not a good man because he errs in doctrine” (HC 5:340).

Latter-day Saints today face the challenge of being a religious majority in some areas of the world and a minority in others. Tolerance is reinforced by its converts, who come from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds and by its hundreds of thousands of returned missionaries, who have, early in their lives, learned the languages, customs, and religious concerns of multiple cultures and peoples. Today as the Church grows in Latin America, Asia, and Africa, it faces new challenges to its commitment to tolerance and goodwill.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


GEORGE ROMNEY

TOPICAL GUIDE

The Latter-day Saint edition of the Bible, first published in 1979, includes a 598-page “Topical Guide with Selected Concordance and Index.” It is designed to aid SCRIPTURE STUDY and is considered by Latter-day Saints to be a major, unique reference tool.
The Topical Guide provides 3,495 categories citing about 50,000 verses from the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. By bringing together references from all four standard works, the Topical Guide enables readers to see the unity and harmony of all these scriptures. It also shows how latter-day revelations bring greater clarity to the understanding of the word of God.

A preliminary topical guide, listing the main supporting scriptures for over 600 topics, which were selected initially with seminary students and young missionaries in mind, was published in 1977. Scripture references at first were gathered by about one hundred teachers in the church educational system, along with the same number of returned missionaries at brigham young university, who were called to render this church service. The original number of scriptural topics grew to about 750, and over 2,500 other concordance or index categories were also added. Several committees then collated, evaluated, and selected entries to be included in the current version.

All entries are arranged alphabetically. Parenthetical cross-references to related entries and to the Bible Dictionary follow the heading in many entries.

Citations within entries are listed in the following order: Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price. Each citation gives the specific chapter and verse and a brief excerpt from the passage, with the key word italicized. If the key word is identical to the entry heading, only the initial letter appears. Each citation refers to a single verse, but readers are also alerted that surrounding verses may contribute to understanding.

After certain references, cross-references to other passages containing similar wording may appear in parentheses. This allows students to see relationships among similarly worded passages. If a student cannot find a citation in its expected sequence, it may be necessary to look back through earlier references for parenthetical cross-references. Some entries conclude with a brief list of additional passages.

As a concordance and index, the Topical Guide helps readers to locate specific verses on subjects of interest. (For people and places, the Topical Guide generally refers students to the Bible Dictionary.) The Topical Guide goes beyond standard concordances with its topical dimension, bringing together pertinent references on common topics of interest to Latter-day Saints (such as “Faith,” “Resurrection,” or “Jesus Christ, Atonement through”), whether or not the relevant passages share the same specific key word. For example, the entry “Prayer, Pray” contains 176 references not only to verses with variations of prayer and pray but also to passages with such words as call upon, inquire, ask, and seek; in addition, cross-references are given to entries on “Communication,” “Faith,” “God, Access to,” “Meditation,” and “Supplication,” as well as to the Bible Dictionary entry on prayer.

The Topical Guide is not exhaustive, however, either as a concordance or as a listing of all passages on given topics. Although by necessity it is selective and somewhat interpretive, its purpose is not to define or limit thinking but to stimulate scripture study and suggest profitable directions that study may take. It strives to offer not only a quick path to specific destinations but also a gateway to deeper acquaintance with the word of God.

The combined edition of the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price published in 1981 also contains an expanded index, constructed on principles similar to those governing the Topical Guide.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BRUCE T. HARPER

TRANSFIGURATION

Transfiguration for mortals consists of a temporary physical and spiritual change, allowing them not only to behold the glory of God but to enter his presence. It is characterized by illumination of countenance such as moises experienced (Moses 1:11; Ex. 34:29–35) and comes about by an infusion of God’s power (MD, p. 725). Because God is a being of transcendent glory, it is impossible for men and women to enter his presence without their physical bodies being spiritually “quickened.” The Prophet Joseph Smith explained that God “dwells in eternal fire; flesh and blood cannot...