

Thanking and Reflecting on Dialogue

Undoubtedly you receive many letters, email messages, or other, expressing appreciation for the contents of *Dialogue*. I just finished reading issues that were “handed down” and feel enriched and edified by the essays and articles, as well as moved by fiction and poetry. In one of your issues with research on the political views of the late apostle Ezra Taft Benson, I recalled my own experience with his political views at a devotional at Ricks in early 1976 when foreign students demonstratively stood up and left the devotional, offended by the remarks made by Benson. I recall how we talked about our frustrations with the Geography and World Affairs professor, who assured us that apostle Benson was talking more like a politician than like a general authority. We, the foreign students, felt that the audience (among them many preparing for missions) were being encouraged to adopt feelings far exceeding healthy patriotism. America and being an American citizen meant that one was superior and blessed above all other people and nations, and yes, of course, Communism was mentioned as the great evil. I recall how upset I felt when he mentioned “those poor lovely people of Yugoslavia.” I had spent quite some time there in 1971. In fact, my mother had begged me to read the *Book of Mormon* while I was there, and I was converted by reading it in July of 1971 in a small village north of Novi Sad in Vojvodina. Yugoslavia was dear to me, and I felt that under Tito, although not ideal, it was a place where people had a relatively good life. Then later on I wondered if Benson had indeed had a vision of what would happen to “those poor lovely people in Yugoslavia,” as

history sadly showed. Now, after September 11th, I wonder how he would have felt, knowing that not Godless Communism, but religious fanatics have proven to be the greatest enemy of the free world.

I just want to express my thanks for your efforts to select such professional documented material. I look forward to the forthcoming issues of this great periodical.

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Non-canonical Sources as Almost Conclusive Proof of LDS Religious Truth, Ancient Apostasy, and Joseph Smith's Divine Calling

Even if Nibley's alleged “paralelomania” might be a bit excessive—and there is insufficient evidence from Salmon's few, even if accurate, examples thereof to prove that point—we must nevertheless acclaim Nibley for his creative research and massively documented/footnoted corpus of writings. I can't wait to see Nibley's own rebuttal to Salmon.

My point here is narrow. Everyone must acknowledge Nibley's “almost conclusive” demonstration of (1) LDS religious truth, (2) ancient orthodox Christian apostasy, and (3) Joseph Smith's divine calling via Nibley's [anticipation of] newly discovered (by non-Mormon historian/paleographers) “Jesus Logia,” i.e. actual Sayings of Jesus Himself sometimes *not* contained in the Bible, discovered *only* after Joseph Smith's death, but nevertheless revealing ancient Jesus teachings uniquely revealed to Smith as part of Jesus' original Gospel. Some of these newly discovered ancient Christian textual parallels are utterly foreign

to orthodox Christianity [and] hence destructive of Christendom's official ancient creeds.

A "new" Jesus teaching revealed in these pristine Jesus Logia and taught in Christianity *only* in its Mormon, but not at all in its orthodox formulation, is the teaching of "human pre-existence," i.e. that *all* human beings existed individually in heaven as actual spirit children of Heavenly Father *before* their later human births to mortal parents here on earth below. Here are the presumptively genuine Jesus Logia now available on the internet and published inter alia by the "Jesus Project" which publishes the "Five Gospels," i.e. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Thomas. English translations from the Coptic below are from the original English edition (1959) as well as the later Nag Hammadi English translation (1977):

Logion 19:

"Jesus said: Blessed is he who was before he came into being. . . ." tr. Guillaumont, Puech, Quispel, Till, Al Masih, *The Gospel According to Thomas* (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1959), 13.

"Jesus said: Blessed is he who came into being before he came into being. . . ." tr. T. Lambdin, *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (N.Y. Harper & Row, 1977), 120.

Or, expressed in the Mormon Christian vernacular:

"Blessed is he who pre-existed in Heaven before s/he was born here below into earthly mortality." This doctrine of human pre-existence as children of God in heaven before mortal birth is precisely the understanding of the gospel Jesus had in John 10:34-35, which quotes verbatim Ps. 82:6 (bene elo-

him), and plainly speaks in terms of plural "Gods," during those "Gods'" (elohim) own Council in Heaven (82:1) before the earth was formed, articulating perfectly the Mormon-Christian concept of pre-existent Heavenly Parentage toward pre-existent individual human progressive salvation. Orthodox Christianity has never known such a Jesus teaching and suppressed these important, newly [re-]discovered Jesus Logia from the New Testament during its early formative period in favor of orthodoxy's own essentially Greek philosophical concept of monotheistic omnipotent deity (later Three-in-One trinitarianism).

Logion 49:

"Jesus said, 'Blessed are the solitary and elect, for you shall find the Kingdom; because you come from it, (and) you shall go there again.'" Guillaumont, Puech, Quispel, Till, Al Masih, *The Gospel According to Thomas*, 29.

"Blessed are the solitary and elect, for you will find the Kingdom. For you are from it, and to it you will return." Lambdin, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, 123.

Logion 50:

"Jesus said, If they say to you: 'From where have you originated?', say to them 'We have come from the Light, where the Light has originated through itself. It [stood] and it revealed itself in their image.' If they say to you: '(Who) are you?', say: 'We are His sons and we are the elect of the Living Father.' If they ask you: 'What is the sign of your Father in you?', say to them: 'It is a movement and a rest.' Guillaumont,

Puech, Quispel, Till, Al Masih, *The Gospel According to Thomas*, 29.

"Jesus said, 'If they say to you, "Where did you come from?", say to them, "We came from the light, the place where the light came into being on its own accord and established [itself] and became manifest through their image.' If they say to you, "Is it you?", say, "We are its children, and we are the elect of the Living Father." If they ask you, "What is the sign of your Father in you?", say to them, "It is a movement and repose.'" Lambdin, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, 123.

Logion 70:

"Jesus said: If you bring forth that within yourselves, that which you have will save you. If you do not have that within yourselves, that which you do not have will kill you." Guillaumont, Puech, Quispel, Till, Al Masih, *The Gospel According to Thomas*, 41.

"Jesus said. 'That which you have will save you if you bring it forth from yourselves. That which you do not have within you will kill you if you do not have it within you.'" Lambdin, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, 126.

Logion 83:

"Jesus said, The images are manifest to man and the Light which is within them is hidden in the Image of the Light of the Father. He will manifest himself and His Image is concealed by His Light." Guillaumont, Puech, Quispel, Till, Al Masih, *The Gospel According to Thomas*, 45.

"Jesus said, 'The images are manifest to man, but the light in them

remains concealed in the image of the light of the Father. He will become manifest, but his image will remain concealed by his light.'" Lambdin, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, 127.

Logion 84:

"Jesus said: When you see your likeness, you rejoice. But when you see your images which came into existence before you, (which) neither die nor are manifested, how much will you bear! Guillaumont, Puech, Quispel, Till, Al Masih, *The Gospel According to Thomas*, 45.

"Jesus said, 'When you see your likeness, you rejoice. But when you see your images which came into being before you, and which neither die nor become manifest, how much you will have to bear!'" Lambdin, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, 127.

"Jesus said, 'If you could see your real image, which came into being before you, then you would be willing to endure anything'" Hugh Nibley, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 8 (1973): 77.

I have included Nibley's own translation of Logion 84, above, to demonstrate a weakness undiscussed in Salmon's evaluation of Nibley's ostensible "parallelomania," i.e., Nibley's "better" translation of ancient texts precisely because of his correct understanding of Jesus's "fuller" (Mormon-Christian) Gospel, an understanding totally absent from all other orthodox Christian translations. Indeed, Logion 83, above, in its orthodox Christian translation makes no sense whatever until, as Logion 84 explains, "images" are correctly understood to

be pre-existent human beings born in heaven to our Heavenly Father.

It needs not be emphasized that if this important doctrine of "human pre-existence" had been properly understood by the earliest Catholic Fathers (and retained inside the then-forming New Testament), the official creeds of Christendom could not have formed at all. God would have been properly conceived without Greek metaphysics. Trinitarianism would have been unnecessary, and the "apostasy" of ancient Christianity might not have occurred. Alas, it was not to be! Hence, the necessity of "restoring" Jesus's original Gospel via Smith to again include many omitted "plain and most precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb" (1 Nephi 13:32), includ-

ing Jesus' important concept of "human pre-existence."

Smith, of course, could not possibly have derived this newly discovered Jesus teaching of human pre-existence from any known antecedent sources. There weren't any. Nibley's demonstration of the above "conclusive" evidence in favor of Smith, LDS theology, and orthodox Christian apostasy *alone* ranks Nibley as the greatest "Defender" of Mormon Christianity in the 21st century.

Nibley's parallelomania? Unproven. But in light of the above, who cares?

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