

# Of Nibley

What on earth have a man's name, degree, academic position, and, of all things, opinions, to do with whether a thing is true or not?

"New Look at the Pearl of Great Price" (January 1968): 22

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I began my second decade in Southern California as a compulsive reader, memorizing Shakespeare plays and aspiring to add something to the Bard's modest contribution. But English literature I soon found to be derivative, and so took to Old English to find what was behind it; what was behind it was Latin, and what was behind that was Greek.

"An Intellectual Autobiography," xx

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The book I happen to be reading is the important one.

"Nibley the Scholar," 4

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A true philosopher can no more pass by the open door of a free discussion than an alcoholic can pass by the open door of a saloon. Since my hosts have been kind enough to invite me to say what I think, the highest compliment I can pay to their tolerance and liberality will be to do just that.

This is not going to be a debate. I would be the most unteachable of mortals if at this stage of life I still believed that one could get anywhere arguing with a dialectician. One might as well attempt to pacify or intimidate a walrus by tossing sardines at him as to bait a philosopher with arguments. I have accepted your kind invitation because I think the subject is worth discussing.

"Do Religion and History Conflict?" *CWHN* 12:434

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I have always been furiously active in the Church, but I have also been a nonconformist and have never held any *office* of rank in anything; I have undertaken many assignments given me by the leaders, and much of the work has been anonymous: no rank, no recognition, no anything. While I have been commended for some things, they were never the things which I considered most important—that was entirely a little understanding between me and my Heavenly Father which I have thoroughly enjoyed, though no one else knows anything about it. . . . I would rather be a doorkeeper in the House of the Lord than mingle with the top brass in the tents of the wicked.

"The Best Possible Test," *CWHN* 12:535, 537

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I'm no expert. . . . I have to keep quoting documents all the time and letting them speak for me, because I don't know any of this stuff.

"Nibley the Scholar," 8

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I do not suppress the wild rumors that go around about these documents. Anytime you talk about such things, you get wild rumors, completely irresponsible and greatly exaggerated; but on these particular matters, for example, the Gnostic and Coptic texts, I don't think rumors should be suppressed; no matter how wild your story is, it can't be more fantastic than the truth. It goes way beyond what you could exaggerate, so go ahead and spread anything you want! It is better to be ignorant and interested than ignorant and not interested.

"Apocryphal Writings," *CWHN* 12:266

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I shall probably bore you tonight, but the subject shouldn't, because it's a very good one. I am not going to be bored at all. I love to talk about this stuff! I will get all excited, so don't pay any attention to me!

"Apocryphal Writings," *CWHN* 12:264

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"Rightly to be great," says Hamlet, "is not to stir without great argument, but greatly to find quarrel in a straw." I rejoice that some able young men have been willing to embrace the flimsiest of pretexts, to wit, my own achievement of senility, as the straw that stirs them to great argument.

"Some Reasons for the Restored Gospel," 1

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My first assignment—it was so typically Army you must hear about it: It was the eve of Thanksgiving, and I was scrubbing toilets out with a big brush, with a big scrubbing brush. I was busy scrubbing these latrines out and so forth, and an officer came to me and said, "Come with me and bring the brush." It was a huge pile of celery, they were preparing it for the officer's mess the next day. He says, "Clean this celery off." But I said, "But this brush, I just used it for cleaning toilets." "That doesn't make any difference, if it looks shiny and clean, that's the Army, that's all we want to know." So there I was cleaning that celery for the officers the next day for their Thanksgiving dinner with a toilet brush.

"The Faith of an Observer," 15-16

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I spent a week with Apostle Spencer W. Kimball visiting his home state in Arizona. We were gone ten days. We went by train in those early days. We came back to the old Los Angeles station, and in that part of Los Angeles, there were a lot of bookstores, which I knew very well. I bought a whole set, a very rare collection, of Alfonsus De Lingorio, the seventeenth-century Redemptorist writer on probabilism, a very valuable set of ten volumes. I barely made it back to the train by running across a lot. I jumped on the train, plunked down beside Brother Kimball, who was already on the train, and staggered into the drawing room, my arms full of the complete set, which I greatly valued.

As we sat talking about the books, Brother Kimball casually took an immaculate linen handkerchief from the breast pocket of his jacket, and, stooping over, vigorously dusted off my shoes and trousers. It was the most natural thing in the world, and we both took it completely for granted. After all, my shoes were dusty in the race for the train, and Brother Kimball had always told missionaries to keep themselves clean and proper. It was no great thing—*pas d'histoire*. Neither of us said a thing about it, but ever since, that has conditioned my attitude toward the Brethren. I truly believe they are chosen servants of God.

“Criticizing the Brethren,” 24

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Well, I have a testimony; I may be ignorant, but I am not lost.

“Do Religion and History Conflict?” CWHN 12:449