

Souvenirs from Lehi's
Jerusalem

About 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem there lay in Lehi's day the powerfully fortified city of Lachish, the strongest place in Judah outside of Jerusalem itself. Founded more than 3000 years before Christ, it came under Egyptian rule in the 14th century B.C., when its king was charged with conspiring with the newly-arrived Khabiri (Hebrews) against his Egyptian master. A later king of Lachish changed sides and fought against Joshua, when the Israelites took the city about 1220 B.C. After that David or Solomon fortified it strongly. Down through the years the Babylonian, Assyrian, Egyptian and Biblical records reflect the strategic importance of the place, which involved its rulers in a succession of intrigues, betrayals, sieges and disasters that make its story a typical Palestinian idyll. Its fall in the days of Jeremiah is dramatically set forth in a number of letters that were found there in 1935 and 1938 by the British Archaeologist R. A. Starkey. These original letters, actually written at the time, were turned up in the ruins of a guard-house that stood at the main gate of the city, though two of the 18 letters were found a foot beneath the paving of the street in front of it. The other 16 were piled together below a stone bench against the east wall, which had collapsed when a great bonfire was set against the wall from the outside. Why a bonfire, you ask?

The fire was set by the soldiers of Nebuchadnezzar because they wanted to bring down the wall.

They wanted to bring it down because it enclosed the gate to the city.

They had to take the city because it was the strongest fortress in Israel and controlled all of western Judah, and lay astride the road to Egypt. Jeremiah tells us that it and another fortified place, Azekah, were the last to fall to the invaders. (Jer.34:7), and an ominous passage from Lachish Letter no. IV: 12-13, reports that the writer could no longer see the signal-fires of Azekah--that means

1. H. Torczyner, The Lachish Letters, Lachish I (Oxford Univ. Press, 1933). Page numbers throughout the article refer to this source when not otherwise indicated.

that Lachish itself was the last to go. So down came the guardhouse in flames.

The letters survived the heat because they were written on potsherds.

They were written on potsherds because the usual papyrus was unobtainable.

It was unobtainable because the supply from Egypt was cut off.

The supply was cut off because of the war.

The letters were in the guardhouse because they were being kept as evidence in the pending trial of a military commander whose name was Hoshahyaku.

He was being court-marshalled because he was suspected of treason.

He was suspected of treason because someone had been reading top-secret dispatches sent from the court at Jerusalem to the commander at Lachish, whose name was Yaush.

Hoshahyahu was a likely suspect because all the mail had to pass through his hands.

It had to pass through his hands because he was in command of a fortified town on the road between Jerusalem and Lachish, probably Qiryat Ye'arim. His duty among other things was to forward the King's mail--not to read it.

That the confidential letters had been read was apparent because somebody had tipped off a certain prophet that he was in danger.

He was in danger because the King's soldiers had been put on his trail.

They were on his trail because he was fleeing to Egypt.

He was fleeing because he was wanted by the police in Jerusalem.

He was wanted by the police because he and other prophets were considered by the King's supporters to be subversives.

They were considered subversives because they were opposing the official policy and undermining morale by their preaching. As Jeremiah puts it: The sacram--the important people--said unto the King: "We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the man of war that remain

in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them..." (Jer.38:4). As Lachish Letter No. VI,6 puts it: "...the words of the (prophet) are not good (and liable) to loosen the hands..." As the Book of Mormon puts it: "...and in that same year there came many prophets, prophesying unto the people that they must repent, or the great city of Jerusalem must be destroyed," (I Ne.1:4)--disheartening news, indeed.

The Lachish Letters may be dated with considerable accuracy owing to the discovery in 1935 of another layer of ashes beneath them to match the one in which they were found. The two layers represent the destructions of 597 (three years after Lehi left) and the final burning in 588--the Letters come between those two dates; comparison of names and potsherds shows that they were all written at the same time, "not long before the final destruction...in 588" (p.68).

The prophet who was tipped off "was surely Uriah of Qir-yat-Ye'arim," according to Troczyner. Jeremiah tells us his story:

Jer. 26:20 And there was also a man...Urijah the son of Semaiah of Kirjathjearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah. 21. And when Jehoiakim the king...heard his words, the king sought to put him to death: but when Uriah heard it, he was afraid, and fled, and went into Egypt. 22. And Jehoiakim the king sent men into Egypt, Elnathan the son of Akhbor... 23. And they fetched forth Uriah out of Egypt, and brought him unto Jehoiakim...who slew him...

In Lachish Letter No. 3, lines 13-18 Hoshah'yahu says that it was reported to him that "the commander of the army (Yi)khabaryahu the son of Elnathan went down to Egypt" to fetch *and other men were sent, and there was a letter of* Elnathan son of Akhbor was an important man, very much in on the action (Jer.36:12, 36:25, 26:22). What is the likelihood of another high military commander by the name of Akhbar son of Elnathan being sent on an identical mission to Egypt? The Bible story and the Lachish Letters are full of such striking coincidences, e.g., when Letter IV, 6-7 tells of a man having the same peculiar name as Uriah's father, Shema^Cyahu going up from Uriah's village to Jerusalem on urgent business

accompanied by the Chief inspector of military outposts. On what business? Perhaps, Torcziner suggests "to use his influence with the king" in behalf of his son. (p.86).

If Akhbor's name was got backwards by the scribe of Jeremiah, it would not be his only or even most serious slip in the matter. He keeps assigning the Uriah episode to the time of Jehoiakim (608-597) but scholars are now agreed on the evidence of Jer. 27:1-3, that the scribe has mistakenly put things in the reign of Jehoiakim which rightfully belong to the reign of Zedekiah (p. 69). Scribes do those things.

In Letter No. IV Hosh'a'yahu assures his superior in Lachish that he has carried out his written orders to the letter--"According to whatever my lord has sent, so has thy servant done," and furthermore "I have written down in the deleth whatever my lord has sent (=written) me." (IV:3-4). Plainly he copied it down for the official record. Though "the Bible throughout speaks of rolls of writing," meaning papyrus or, more rarely, parchment rolls (p.16), Letter IV specifically uses the rare word deleth for the form in which Hosh'a'yahu copied down or registered his official correspondence. Torczyner assumed that deleth must refer to a "papyrus sheet," or "page" asking what else would they write on, since a deleth is not a roll and is certainly not a potsherd. The answer is, that they would write on a deleth, which is by all accounts, etymological and contextual, a tablet or plate of solid material. (p.80).

Even without the archaeological situs, the setting and situation in which the letters were written could be determined by their style as well as their content. They contain "90 lines of clear writing, beautiful language and highly important contents" (p.15). The language is pure Hebrew most closely resembling that of the Books of Jeremiah and of Kings (p.17). They show to everyone's surprise that in 600 B.C. "writing was almost common knowledge, and not a secret art known only to a few." (p.15). But they also show that the Egyptians scribal tradition was at that particular time exerted a major influence in the

official recording throughout the Near East. With the Kings who attacked Jerusalem from the east at that time "every expedition has two scribes," writes A. T. Olmstead, "the chief with his stylus and tablets, his assistant with a papyrus roll or parchment and Egyptian pen."² The assistant was needed not so much for his skill with Egyptian writing materials, which had been introduced quite recently in the time of Tiglath-Pileser III and which anyone could learn to handle, but for the same reason "the court found it necessary to possess an Aramaic scribe," namely to deal with the language.³ So substantial and widespread was the Egyptian tradition of record-keeping at the time. Would the Egyptian scribes of a Babylonian or Assyrian ^{king} employ their skill to write in cuneiform or any other language but Egyptian? ^{There were plenty of native scribes for that.} Though a wealth of cuneiform writings on clay have been found in Egypt, cuneiform writings on papyrus are not known in the East.

Even more than the language and style of the letters, the proper names they contain in abundance place them in a neat and narrow segment of the time-spectrum. They are peculiar names, characteristic of just one period in Jewish history, and likewise peculiar to the B.M. First of all, however we should take note of the most frequently occurring name in the Letters, that of Yaush, the high commander of Lachish, which Torczyner anglicizes as Jaush. The name is not found in the Bible, but it is found in the Book of Mormon, where Josh is a high military officer commanding a force of 10,000 troops (Mor.6:14). Needless to say, critics of the Book of Mormon have made merry in citing it as another example of Smith's naive ^ahyseed mentality--Josh indeed!

More important from the Book of Mormon point-of-view is the peculiar type of names turning up in the Lachish Letters. They are characteristic of just one period in the history of Judah, namely the days of Lehi.

²A.T. Olmstead, History of Assyria (U. of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 583.
³Ib. pp. 581-2

among the people that they must repent or that the great city of Jerusalem must be destroyed." (1:4) This was the very message ("not good!") that "caused the hands to sink even the hands of (those in) the city and the country" according to the Lachish Letters. (VI, 6-7)

The proper names in the Lachish Letters and the Book of Mormon belong to one particular period in Jewish history—the same period. Seven of the nine proper names in Letter No. I end in -Yahu (Jehovah), and in all the letters there are no Baal names and no El names--the lack of which was once thought to be a serious defect in the Book of Mormon. Most important Torczyner finds to be "the spelling of the names compounded with -iah," the -Yahu endings also found about a century later among the Jews in Elephantine, who were "perhaps the descendants of those Jews who after the fall of the Judaeen kingdom went down to Egypt, taking with them the prophet Jeremiah." (27) Here we have another control over the Lehi story. For the discovery of the Elephantine documents in 1925 showed that colonies of Jews actually did flee to the desert in the manner of Lehi, during his lifetime, and for the same reasons; arriving in their new home far up the Nile, they proceeded to build a replica of Solomon's Temple, exactly as Lehi did upon landing in the New World. Both of these oddities, and especially the latter, were once considered damning refutations of the Book of Mormon. The -yahu endings of personal names abound at Elephantine, but in a more abbreviated form, -iah, than at Lachish (-yahu), of a hundred years earlier. Both forms are found in the Book of Mormon, e.g. the Lachish name Mattanyahu appears at Elephantine as Mtn⁽ⁱ⁾ and in the Book of Mormon both as Mathonihah and Mathoni. Of the two names in Letter No. I not ending in -yahu, the one Tb-Shim (which Torczyner renders Tobshilem) suggest Book of Mormon Shilom and Shelem, while the other Hgb (T. Hagab) resembles Book of Mormon Hagoth. The Book of Mormon has both long and short forms in

the names Amalickiah, Amaleki and Amlici, Cf. Elephantine MLKih. (24) The Assyrian inscriptions show that the final "h" was dropped in the Hebrew spelling after Lehi left, when the Jews "lost their pronunciation of the consonant "H" under the influence of the Babylonian language." (25)

More significant are the indications that the -Yahu names are "certainly a token of a changed inner-Judaeen relationship to Yahwh. Such reformations, Torczyner suggests, "in some way parallel . . . the first reformation by Moses"; what we have in the predominance of Yahu names reflects "the act of general reformation inaugurated by King Josiah (Yoshiahu) (2 Kings 22:23)." (29) Another interesting coincidence: A Book of Mormon king 450 years after Lehi undertook a general reformation of the national constitution and revival of the religious life of the people. He and his brothers had been stringently trained by their father, King Benjamin, "in all the language of his fathers that thereby they might become men of understanding," familiar with the writings of the ancient prophets and also "concerning the records which were engraven on the plates of brass," without which records, he tells them, even our fathers would have dwindled in unbelief. . . ." "And now my sons I would that ye should remember to search them diligently that ye may profit there by . . ." etc. (Mosiah 1) Fittingly, this king named his eldest son, the great reforming king, Mosiah, suggesting both the early reform of Moses and its later imitation by Josiah. This would be altogether too much of a coincidence were it not that the book of Mosiah supplies the information that fully accounts for the resemblances when it explains just how Nephite names and customs were preserved intact in the transplanting of cultures from the Old World to the New. Lehi's ties to the Yahvist tradition are reflected in the only female name given in his history, that of his wife, Sariah; a special but not unparalleled example since in the normal female -iah names from Elephantine the Yahu element usually comes first. (T. 28)

The action of the Lachish Letters centers around the activities of the prophets in the land who are causing grave concern to the government. On

such a note the Book of Mormon opens: ". . . and in that same year there came many prophets, prophesying unto the people that they must repent, or the great city of Jerusalem must be destroyed." (1:4) The identity of all but two of these prophets has now been lost, but it is clear from both the Lachish Letters and the Book of Mormon that there were more of them. "It must certainly be admitted," writes Torczyner, that there was more than one prophet at this time." (65) The central figure is of course Jeremiah, but it is only by chance that we know even about him, for he is not even mentioned in the Book of Kings--it is the prophetess Huldah, "an otherwise quite unknown figure," whom Josiah consults. (7) Jeremiah in turn happens to mention the prophet Uriah "in only a few passages", and his name turns up nowhere else, though Uriah's "religious influence must have been of great extent and long standing!" (70) Uriah "prophesied against this city according to the words of Jeremiah." (Jer. 26:4) The words of such prophets were dangerously undermining morale both of the military and the people. Lachish Letter VI, 5-6: "Behold the words of the . . . are not good, to weaken the hands . . . the hands of the country and the city." (64) This passage is cited intact by Jeremiah 38:4.

And so to the Book of Mormon. Lehi was one of those distressed and discouraged by the preaching of the "many prophets." As he went forth," apparently on a business journey, for he was a rich merchant, he "prayed unto the Lord, yea even with all his heart, in behalf of his people." (1:5) In reply to his prayer he received a vision which sent him out to join the prophets: "And my father . . . went forth among the people, and began to prophesy and to declare unto them. . . ." (1:18) He indeed was teaching "in the spirit of Jeremiah," for Nephi explicitly links him to the prophet's vicissitudes: ". . . for behold they have rejected the prophets, and Jeremiah have they cast into prison. And they have sought to take away the life of my father, insomuch that they have driven him out of the land." (1 Ne. 7:14)

Torczyner suggests that Uriah "may have hidden in the hills of western Judah for a long time" (70), and we find Lehi doing the same thing. Indeed, as Torczyner points out, what we are dealing with here is a type of thing, Uriah's story being told "only as parallel to Jeremiah's not less dangerous position. . . ." (69) To their number we may add Lehi, whose story has every mark of authenticity.

~~[The peculiar epithet applied to the prophet in Letter III, ha-piqceah, means "the open-eyed, the man whose eyes God has opened to see." This is suggested by 2 Kings 6:29 where Elisha asks the Lord to open the eyes of certain men (themselves by no means prophets) so that they could see otherwise invisible horses and chariots. In the same way the uncooperative brothers of Nephi hiding out with him in a cave in the Judaeen wilderness had their eyes opened so they could see "an angel of the Lord" while he was reprimanding them. (3:29, 7:10)]~~

As the Book of Mormon leads us into a world of Rekhabites and sectaries of the desert so the Lachish Letters give us "for the first time . . . authentic and intimate reports from Jews faithfully following their God (and) about their inner political and religious struggle. . . ." Torczyner sees in the -Yahu names a sure indication of "a loyal reformist faction which included even the highest military officers--" Ya-ush and his men are the prophet's followers (66) even though they are necessarily the king's defenders. We see Uriah hiding out in the hills "where he had friends and followers, for a long time." (70) The Dead Sea Scrolls have put flesh on these sectarian bones showing how from the earliest times communities of the faithful would withdraw from Jerusalem to bide their time in the wilderness. Lehi's activities were not confined to the city, he was in the desert when he received the manifestation that sent him hurrying back to his house in Jerusalem, from which later he "went forth

from among the people" as a prophet. (1:18) Badly received, he was warned in a dream that his life was in danger (2:1) and ordered to go into the wilderness and leave all his worldly things behind. (2:2) It was the idea behind the Rekhabites (Jer. 35) and the people of Qumran: Nephi, inviting a new recruit to come and "have place with us," points out to him that only so could he "be a freeman like unto us," and that to "go down into the wilderness" was the only way to "be diligent in keeping the commandments of the Lord." (1 Ne. 4:33-34) So Zoram duly takes an oath and joins the pious company. (4:35)

One important aspect of Lehi's account has surfaced very recently in the light of what Klaus Koch calls the rediscovery of Apocalyptic. It seems that almost every ancient patriarch, prophet and apostle is credited with having left behind a "Testament" or "Apocalypse" bearing his name. Some of these stories are very old, and a consistent pattern emerges from the telling of them, widely scattered though they are in space and time. Briefly summed up, the general plot is this: a righteous man, sorely distressed by the depravity of the world or of Israel, prays fervidly for light and knowledge, and in due time receives a divine manifestation, when a heavenly messenger comes to teach him and takes him on a celestial journey, climaxing in a theophany, after which he returns to earth and reports his experience to family and friends--often this is just before he dies, bestowing a patriarchal blessing upon his sons. Often also he goes forth to preach to the people, who reject his message with scorn, whereupon he departs into the wilderness, with his faithful followers to establish a more righteous if tentative order of things in the desert, a sort of "church of anticipation." All of which things Lehi also does in due and proper order; the first part of Nephi's writing, he says, is but an abridgement of his father's record, which may properly be called the Testament or Apocalypse of Lehi.

They are especially disgruntled at having to defer to a quality in their father for which the Lachish Letters have a particular expression, characterizing the man of prophetic calling as ha-piqqeah, which Torczyner finds to mean "the open-eyed or visionary man," (53) "the seer", "the man whose eyes God has opened to see", (65) i.e. things that other people do not see. For the followers of a prophet the term was the highest of praise; for his critics a label of derision:

. . . they did murmur in many things against their father, because he was a visionary man, and had led them out of the land of Jerusalem, to leave the land of their inheritance, and their gold, and their silver, and their precious things. And this they said he had done because of their foolish imaginations of his heart. (2:11)

They make fun of their father for being a piqqeah, a "visionary man." Torczyner explains the word by referring to the instance in 2 Kings 6:20, where Elisha asks the Lord to open the eyes of certain ordinary men so they could see realities, horses and chariots, which otherwise only he could see. In the same way the uncooperative brothers of Nephi hiding out with him in a cave in the Judaeen wilderness had their eyes opened so they could see "an angel of the Lord" while he was reprimanding them. (1 Ne. 3:29, 7:10)

If the Lachish Letters reflect "the mind, the struggles, sorrows, and feelings of ancient Judah in the last days of the Kingdom" (18), so to an even greater extent does the Book of Nephi, where families split along political lines in a tragic conflict of loyalties. And if the situation of Uriah parallels that of Jeremiah, as Torczyner points out, even more closely does it parallel that of Lehi when we learn from the Letters of "a warning from the prophet to one of his friends, who is apparently in the same danger as he, himself. It is, therefore, a prophet fleeing from his home and his friends, a prophet wanted by the military authorities." (64)

The ^{sender of nearly all} ~~leading~~ character of the Letters is a high military officer suspected by one party of treachery to the king in aiding the prophet, and by the other

of betraying the prophet by revealing the contents of his warning letter to the king. (113) Likewise his superior officer Yaush, who has been ordered to investigate him "appears to be on the best of terms with the king. But still both men respect the prophet and believe in him in spite of the king's attitude towards him, and their hearts ache that they should be responsible for his destruction." (113) The same tragic confusion as in the Lehi story. This is borne out in the relationship of the actors in both dramas to the Egyptians. Though Lehi supports the anti-Egyptian party, his sons have Egyptian names and Egyptian educations and they keep their records after the Egyptian manner. Moreover, the party flees toward Egyptian territory. The same anomaly confronts us in the Lachish Letters, which tell of a certain general sent down to Egypt to fetch a prophet back to Jerusalem for execution. (63) But why on earth, asks Torczyner, would the good man flee to Egypt of all places, when his crime was supporting Jeremiah in calling "for peace with Babylonia?" Our informant finds "this astonishing fact" that he fled towards Egypt instead of Babylonia, quite inexplicable. (T. 67)

As the main actors in the Lachish drama are high military officers, so also in the Book of Mormon the key figure in the Jerusalem episode is another high military officer. This was Laban, whose official position resembles that of Yaush in Lachish very closely. "Thus Yaush must be the military governor of Lachish . . . this greatest fortress of Judah . . ." (87 LL 4); along with that " . . . 'Lord Yaush' may have been Governor of the city, whose archives would probably have been housed in the region of the palace-fort or keep, or perhaps he was only the senior military officer." (12) All of which applies with equal force to Laban, the military governor of Jerusalem, "a mighty man who commands fifty", in his garrison (1 Ne. 3:31) and "his tens of thousands" in the field." (4:1) Where is the king in all this? In both stories he appears as a rather weak character in the background. As for Yaush "the king

destroy us." (4:35) Even so we see in the Lachish Letters "a prophet fleeing from his home and friends, a prophet wanted by the military authorities."

(LL 64) Zoram was carried along by force, but was persuaded that it was in his own interest to join a pious escape-troup in the desert, and duly exchanged oaths with his captors, his conscience not overly bothered by the change of sides: displaying the same ^{and divided} hesitant spirit as the various partisans in the Lachish Letters. The military correspondence of the Lachish Letters with its grim suspicions of disloyalty and double-dealing; fervid denials, charges, investigations, and reports, reminds one of the much later Bar Kokhba letters (discovered in 1966), which in turn present truly astonishing parallels to some of the military correspondence in the Book of Mormon.

One peculiar situation in the Lachish Letters casts a good deal of light on an equally peculiar and highly significant episode in the Book of Mormon. "The prophet's warning letter . . . could have been sent while the prophet was still near his home town, through a little boy, most suited as an unsuspected messenger," in view of the fact that little boys performed such offices in the time of David (2 Sam. 15:36; 17:17-21), and that "such small boys are used also today in Palestine, often for quite responsible missions. . . ." (68) What suggests the idea to Torczyner is the mention of one "Nedabyahu the NKD of the King" who delivered a letter from the prophet to one SHLM warning him of the danger he was in (LL III, 19-21) What, the king's own grandson bearing letters for the prophet? There is a Nedabiah, grandson of King Jehoiakim in I Chron. 3:18, and Torczyner finds it "possible and even probable" that he is the very one named here. The exact meaning of NKD is "unfortunately . . . not definitely established" so that the king referred to may be "either Jehoiakim . . . or, less likely, Jeconiah, or Zedekiah. . . ." (61) It is not a direct line of descent, Jeconiah being not the father but the nephew of Zedekiah; but

since most scholars maintain, along with the LXX, that NKD simply means offspring or descendant, "it would be quite possible . . . to call somebody the 'grandson' [NKD] of his grandfather's brother" i.e. in this case of Zedekiah. ". . . the Hebrew necedh may certainly be used at least for grandnephew as well as for grandson." (61) This Nadabiah, whose title "may equally well mean the grandson of Jehoiakim as the grandnephew of Zedekiah," was quite young, "one would prefer the age of 10-13 to that of 5 years" (69), carrying dangerous letters between the towns and camps for the prophet's people. Since he was carrying letters of warning to people ready to decamp to save their lives at a moment's notice, he could surely count on escaping with them. When news reached them that the royal family would be wiped out only one course of action was open to the child (as survivor) and his friends. Where would they go? Torczyner suggests "the date of 590-588," for this episode. According to the Book of Mormon, 11 years after Lehi left Jerusalem, i.e. in 589, a company escaped from the land of Jerusalem bearing with them the youngest son of Zedekiah, the only member of the family not put to death when Jerusalem was taken. From the descendants of these people, arrived in the New World, the Nephites learned that Jerusalem actually did fall as prophesied: ". . . will ye dispute that Jerusalem was destroyed? Will ye say that the sons of Zedekiah were not slain all except it were Mulek? Yea, do ye not behold that the seed of Zedekiah are with us, and that they were driven out of the land of Jerusalem?" (Hel. 8:21). By an interesting coincidence the LXX translates the word NKD by which Nadabياهو is designated in Hebrew, simply as "seed" (61), as apparently does the Book of Mormon: "the seed of Zedekiah". The land north where they settled in the New World "was called Mulek which was after the son of Zedekiah, for the Lord did bring Mulek into the land north. . . ." (Hel. 3:10) Nowhere are we told that Mulek was the leader of the company, and indeed at his age

that would be unthinkable. But as the sole survivor of the royal family and heir presumptive to the throne he was certainly the most important person in the company, a source of legitimate pride to the group. The name tells everything--"Mulek" is not found anywhere in the Bible, but any student of Semitic languages will instantly recognize it as the best-known form of diminutive or caritative, a term of affection and endearment meaning "little King." What could they call the uncrowned child, last of his line, but their Little King? And what could they call themselves but Mulekiyah or Mulekitas?

ii. Christ Among the Ruins

The great boldness and originality of writings attributed to Joseph Smith are displayed in their full scope and splendor in the account, contained in what is called the Book of Third Nephi in the Book of Mormon, of how the Lord Jesus Christ after his resurrection visited some of his "other sheep" in the New World and set up his church among them. It would be hard to imagine a project more dangerous to life and limb or perilous to the soul than that of authoring and recommending to the Christian world as holy scripture writings purporting to contain an accurate account of the deeds of the Lord among men after his resurrection, including lengthy transcripts of the very words he spoke. Nothing short of absolute integrity could stand up to the consequences of such daring in the 19th-Century America. We know exactly how his neighbors reacted to the claims of Joseph Smith, and it was not with the complacent or sympathetic tolerance of "Yorkers" to whom such things were everyday experience: nothing could equal their indignation and rage.

And yet the particular part of the Book of Mormon to which we refer, the post-resurrectional mission of Christ in the New World, has not been singled out for condemnation; it has in fact met with surprisingly little criticism-- Why is that? Experience has shown, for one thing, that the tone and content of this particular history are so elevated and profoundly sincere as to silence and abash the would-be critic. When the austere Dean of the Harvard Divinity School can take Third Nephi seriously as a religious outpouring, who can laugh at it? More to the point, the story of Christ's ministry among men

during the 40 days following his return from the tomb is one to which the Churchmen have always given a wide berth, frankly disapproving of the crass literalism of Luke's almost clinical accounts. What can one say about events for which, as one scholar puts it, "no metaphysical or psychological explanation can be given?" What controls does one have for testing matters that lie totally beyond our experience?

Of recent years the discovery & re-discovery of a wealth of very early Christian writings suggests at least one type of control over the illusive history of the Forty Days. For with surprising frequency the oldest of these texts purport to contain "The Secret Teachings of our Lord to His Disciples" after his return from the dead, or titles to that effect. Since this is the theme of the history in Third Nephi, ordinary curiosity prompts us to ask how that document compares with the ancient ones in form and content. That question in turn waits on the prior necessity of comparing the older writings with each other to see whether, taken all together, they tell anything like a consistent story. When this writer brought a number of the "Forty Day" texts together some years ago (the amount of available material has grown considerably since then) it became at once apparent that they do have certain themes and episodes in common.¹ At that time nothing could have been farther from this person's mind than the Book of Mormon, and yet if we set those findings over against the long account of Nephi, the latter takes its place in the bona fide apocalyptic library so easily and naturally that with the title removed any scholar would be hard put to it to detect its irregular origin. That is only our opinion, but fortunately Books of Mormon are not hard to come by in our society, and the reader is free to control the whole thing for himself. Permit me to run down the list of common features in the Forty-Day writings in the order in which we presented them in the article referred to.

1. H. Nibley, "Evangelium Quadragesima Dierum" in Vigilize Christianae 38 (1966), pp. 1-24. Also in When the Lights went Out (SLC: Desert Book, 1970), pp. 33-54.

First we noted that the large literature of the Forty-Day Mission of the Lord was early lost from sight by the Christian world because it was never very popular, and that for a number of reasons. In almost all the accounts, for example, the Apostles, who are about to go forth and establish the church throughout the world, anxiously ask the Lord what the future of that church is to be, and are given a surprisingly pessimistic answer: the Church will fall prey to the machinations of evil and after two generations will pass away. "The Apostles protest, as we do today: Is this a time for speaking of death and disaster? . . . But Jesus remains unyielding." A strangely negative message for the Church, understandably unacceptable to the conventional Christianity of later times. One would hardly expect such a thing in the Book of Mormon, but there it is, the same paradox: the glad message of the resurrection and the glorious unifying of the Saints is saddened, dampened by the forthright declaration that the church is only to survive for a limited time. To speak of the world in negative terms is permissible--but the Church?

3 Ne. 27:30. And now, behold, my joy is great, even unto fulness, because of you, and also this generation . . . for none of them are lost.

31. Behold, I would that ye should understand; for I mean them who are now alive of this generation . . .

32. But behold, it sorroweth me because of the fourth generation [in the Old World it was the second generation] from this generation, for they are led away captive by him even as was the son of perdition; for they will sell themselves for silver and for gold . . . And in that day will I visit them, even in the turning of their works upon their own heads. (cf 17:14; Chs. 21-23)

On both hemispheres the people of the church were only too willing to forget such disturbing prophecies, and insist that God would never desert his church.

The loss of the Forty-Day literature was clearly hastened by the secrecy with which the various writings were guarded. The usual title or instruction

to the texts specifies that "these are the Secret teachings" of the risen Lord, and as such they were treasured and guarded by the communities possessing them. This secrecy made possible all sorts of sectarian misrepresentations, forgeries, and Gnostic aberrations, which flourished throughout the Christian world of the second century, and served to bring the final discredit and oblivion on the writings and the sects that exploited them. The Apocryphal literature contains no better explanation of the original observance of secrecy than the book of Third Nephi itself:

26:6. And now there cannot be written in this book even a hundredth part of the things which Jesus did truly teach unto the people.

10. And if . . . they will not believe these things, then shall the greater things be withheld from them, unto their condemnation.

11. Behold, I was about to write them all . . . but the Lord forbade me, saying: I will try the faith of my people.

27:23. Write the things which ye have seen and heard, save it be those which are forbidden.

Besides things which should not be recorded were those which by their nature could not be:

17:17. And no tongue can speak, neither can be written by any man . . . so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak . . .

19:32. And tongue cannot speak the words which he prayed, neither can be written by man the words which he prayed.

34. . . . so great and marvelous were the words which he prayed that they cannot be written, neither can they be uttered by man.

Peculiar to the "Forty-Day Literature" is the emphasis on certain teachings neglected or vigorously opposed by the intellectual churchmen of later Christianity. Whether or not one chooses to accept them as authentic, it is their presence in the preachings of the risen Lord in Third Nephi which interests us here. One aspect of his activity which does not receive particular attention in Luke's accounts is the world-wide circulation of the Savior among his servants in the apocalyptic versions. Luke has the Lord come and go with great freedom and frequency among his people in Judaea, but in the "Forty-Day

Literature" he appears to them in all parts of the world. So also in the Book of Mormon:

3 Ne. 16:1. . . . I have other sheep which are not of this land, neither of the land of Jerusalem, neither in any parts of that land round about whither I have been to minister.

2. . . . they . . . have not as yet heard my voice

3. But . . . I shall go unto them, and . . . they shall hear my voice, and shall be numbered among my sheep (Cf. 15:14-24; 17:4; 27:2).

In the early Christian texts, the teaching of the risen Lord is prophetic and apocalyptic, reviewing the history of God's dealings with men on earth from the beginning*and carrying it down to its glorious culmination at the parousia; the story is usually presented in a series of "dispensations", alternating periods of light and darkness through which the world and the saints must pass. The Third Nephi version faithfully follows the pattern in a long exposition which goes back to the beginning of the law, its presence among peoples scattered in divers places, not in just one place (Ch. 15); its future among them and its spread throughout the world among the Gentiles (Ch. 16), with the vicissitudes through which both Israel and the Gentiles must pass (ib.). Chapter 20 carries the coming history of Israel and especially of the Nephites themselves right through to the end, including the climactic events of our own day, as Chapter 21 sets forth God's dealings to come with the people on this hemisphere until the establishing of the New Jerusalem.

The most natural questions to ask anyone returning to earth after being away would be, Where did you go and what did you see? These questions, put by the disciples in the Old World accounts, lead to discussions of the Descensus and the Kerygma, i.e. the Savior's descent to the Prison-house to preach to those spirits who were disobedient in the days of Noah (I Peter 3:19-20). This theme became the subject of the "Harrowing of Hell" drama of the Gospel of Nicodemus and the Medieval mystery plays. The Book of Mormon version is even

more dramatic. There the hosts that sit in darkness are the Nephites themselves, exhausted and in utter despair and desolation after three days of destruction followed by total darkness, and awful lamentations followed by even more awful silence. The Lord descends to them as a figure of light

"descending out of heaven clothed in a white robe" exactly as he does to the spirits in Hell in the Old World writings; announcing to them "I am the light and the life of the world" (11:11) who has come directly from the agony of the "Bitter cup" to bring light and deliverance to them. And they accepted him as such as "the whole multitude fell to the earth" (11:12); then he identified himself to them and announced his mission, "and . . . they did cry out with one accord, saying: Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God! And they did fall down at the feet of Jesus, and did worship him." (11:17) For they knew that he had come to lead them out of their prison. The first thing he did, was to insist that they all be baptized--exactly as in the "Descensus" accounts, ^{where} he must give the "Seal" of baptism to all to whom he preaches in the underworld before they can follow him out of darkness up into his kingdom. Jesus puts it to them as an act of deliverance. 11:32: "And this is my doctrine . . . that the Father commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent and believe in me"--we are all disobedient spirits in prison! Then the Lord says a striking thing to the Nephites, 11:39. "Verily, verily; . . . this is my doctrine, and whoso buildeth upon this buildeth upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them. 11:40. And whoso shall declare more or less than this . . . the gates of hell stand open to receive such when the floods come and the winds beat upon them." He has come to deliver them from the Gates of Hell that hold them in bondage--it is the "Harrowing of Hell" motif all the way through.

To show his people that he is really a resurrected being and not a spirit, both in the New Testament account, and in the apocryphal version, Jesus calls

for food--real food--and insists that they share it with him in a sacred meal. The meal ususally follows the baptism, putting its seal upon the initiation and the union of those who follow the lord. In Third Nephi the sacral meal with the risen Lord, repeated more than once, is an event of transcendant importance, to which we shall refer below.

Most scholars and theologicans have seen the purpose of the Forty-Days to be the laying of a firm foundation for the sending out of the disciples into all the world to lay a foundation for the Church. At the time of the Crucifixion they were utterly demoralized and scattered, in no condition to go forth as powerful ambassadors of the Lord into all the world. The Forty-Day teaching has the object of preparing them for their missions. This is exactly the case in the Book of Mormon. After the founding of the Church among the people, come two chapters⁽²⁷⁻²⁸⁾ dealing exclusively with the preparation of the chosen disciples for their special missions into the world.

As might be expected, the appearances of the Lord to the astonished multitude as well as his departures from them, are events of celestial splendor, nowhere more movingly described than in the 11th chapter of Third Nephi. The utter glory of his presence among the people or with the disciples is a constant theme in both the Book of Mormon and the other sources. And yet it is combined with a feeling of the closest and most loving intimacy, especially moving in the Book of Mormon accounts of his dealings with the children.

The comings and goings of God himself, moving between heaven and earth must needs be surrounded by an aura of mystery and excitement. Can such things really be? Luke in his meticulous, almost clinically exact and factual reports, wants us to know once for all that they really can be. The wonder of it quickens the reader's pulse, but how could we describe the state of mind of those who actually experienced it? The Apocryphal writings go all out to make us feel with them, but it is Third Nephi who really catches the spirit:

19:1. . . . when Jesus had ascended into heaven, the multitude did disperse, and every man did take his wife and his children and did return to his own home. 2. And it was noised abroad among the people, immediatly, before it was yet dark, that the multitude had seen Jesus . . . and that he would also show himself on the morrow unto the multitude. 3. Yea, and even all that night it was noised abroad concerning Jesus; and insomuch did they send forth unto the people that . . . an exceeding great number did labor exceedingly all that night, that they might be on the morrow in the place where Jesus should show himself unto the multitude."

Nothing could convey the atmosphere of the electrifying "Forty-Day" message better than that.

But now it is time to turn to a particular text. When E. Revillout announced the discovery of a Coptic manuscript of the Gospel of the Twelve Apostles in 1904 he declared it to be the text which Origen and Jerome "considered . . . to be perhaps earlier than Saint Luke and referred to by him in his prologue," a work esteemed by the Church Fathers as of "capital importance," uniquely free of any hint of heresy, carrying the tradition of Christ's visits to earth beyond the scope of Luke--even to an event fifteen years later.² German scholarship promptly and routinely minimized the claims of Revillout, and went too far in the process. If the fragments of the Coptic Gospel of the Twelve Apostles do not necessarily occur in the order in which Revillout arranged them (the order which we will follow), subsequent discoveries make it clear that they really are connected part of a single--and typical--Forty-Day manuscript, and that they belong to the earliest stratum of early Christian writing. Revillout's arrangement does not follow quite the same order as Third Nephi, either, but a comparison of the two may be instructive.

The Lord's condescension: he came and ate with them:

Ev. XII; Aps. Frg. 2 PO 2:132

. . . friends: Have you ever seen, Brethren, such a loving lord, promising his apostles his own kingdom? where they would eat and drink

3 Ne. 10:18. And it came to pass that in the ending of the thirty and fourth year, behold, I will show unto you that the people of Nephi who were spared, and also those who had been called Lamanites,

2. E. Revillout, *Les Apocryphes Coptes, I^{re} partie, Les Evangiles des douze Apotres et de Saint Barthelemy* (Paris: Didot, 1904), in *Patrologia Orientalis*, Tomo II, Fasciculus 2

with him upon a heavenly table even as he had eaten with them on earth at an earthly table.

Thereby he put them in mind of the heavenly table, considering the things of this world (kosmos) as nothing.

who had been spared, did have great favors shown unto them, and great blessings poured out upon their heads, insomuch that soon after the ascension of Christ into heaven he did truly manifest himself unto them--

19. showing his body unto them, and ministering unto them; and an account of his ministry shall be given hereafter.

3 Ne. 26:13. Therefore, I would that ye should behold that the Lord truly did teach the people, for the space of three days; and after that he did show himself unto them oft, and did break bread oft, and bless it, and give it unto them.

To make them one with him and with each other:

If you really want to know, listen and I will tell you. Did not God feel an equal love for all his Apostles? Listen to John the Evangelist, testifying p. 133, how the Christ used to plead with (sops) his Father on their behalf, even that they become One even as we are one."

Do you want to know the truth about that? It is that he chose the Twelve * * * *

"Listen to John the Evangelist testifying."
[On this matter he refers them back to the testimony of John.]

3 Ne. 19:23. . . . that they may believe in me, that I may in them as thou, Father, art in me, that we may be one.

29. Father, I pray . . . for those whom thou hast given me out of the world . . . that they may be purified in me, that I may be in them as thou, Father, art in me, that we may be one, that I may be glorified in them.

3 Ne. 28:6. In another matter also he refers the disciples back to John:
" . . . I know your thoughts, and ye have desired the thing which John, my beloved . . . desired of me."

The Loaves and Fishes:

* * * upon them, saying, I feel concerned (pity) for this multitude; for behold they have been with me for three days, and (now) they have nothing to eat. I don't want to let them leave here hungry, lest they faint by the wayside.

3 Ne. 17:6. And he said unto them: Behold, my bowels are filled with compassion towards you.

3 Ne. 8:23. ". . . for the space of three days" preceding all had been deprived. The place was now desolate.

Andrew said to him, My Lord, where will we find bread in this wilderness? *****

Jesus said to Thomas: Go to a certain (pei) man who has with him five loaves of barley bread and two fishes, and bring them to me here.

Andrew said to him, Lord, how far would five loaves with such a huge crowd?

Jesus saith to him: Bring them to me and there will be enough.

[While they go for the food Jesus talks with a little child.]

And so they sent [for the food]. A small child was brought to Jesus and straightway he began to worship him.

The small child said to Jesus, Lord I have suffered much because of these [i.e. at the hands of people. The puzzled scribe connects this with the loaves: the child has suffered because of them, as if the child had been sent to fetch them] Jesus saith to the child, Give me the five loaves which have been entrusted to you.

Thou hast not saved (rescued) this multitude in time of need, but it is the oikonomia (arrangement, ordinance, divine intent) that (they) behold a marvelous thing, the remembrance of which shall never pass away, nor the food with which they are filled.

[Note here the strange precocity of the child and the sacramental (memorial) nature of the meal.]

3 Ne. 20:6. Now, there had been no bread, neither wine, brought by the disciples, neither by the multitude;

3 Ne. 18:2. And while they were gone for bread and wine, he commanded the multitude that they should sit themselves down upon the earth. (This was later the same day).

3 Ne. 17:11. And it came to pass that he commanded that their little children should be brought.

3 Ne. 17:12. So they brought their little children and set them down upon the ground round about him, and Jesus stood in the midst; and the multitude gave way till they had all been brought unto him.

3 Ne. 26:14. And it came to pass that he did teach and minister unto the children of the multitude of whom hath been spoken, and he did loose their tongues, and they did speak unto their fathers great and marvelous things, even greater than he had revealed unto the people; and he loosed their tongues that they could utter.

3 Ne. 18:5. And when the multitude had eaten and were filled, he said unto his disciples . . .

7. This ye shall do in remembrance of my body, which I have shown unto you . . . that ye do always remember

me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my spirit to be with you.

7. And this shall ye do in remembrance of my body, which I have shown unto you. And it shall be a testimony unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you.

11. And this shall ye always do to those who repent and are baptized in my name; and ye shall do it in remembrance of my blood, which I have shed for you, that ye may witness unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my spirit to be with you.

The Sacrament administered:

And Jesus (1) took the loaves

and (3) blessed them (gave thanks over them)

and (2) divided them

and (4) gave them to the Apostles

(5) that they might bear them to the multitude.

The Sacrament withheld:

For Judas (had been) the last to partake of the loaves (Refers back to the Last Supper, to illustrate a principle).

Andrew said to Jesus, O Master (sah), Judas did not receive a kleronomia (of) loaves . * . to bear to the multitude. * * * (such as) * * we were to give to them * *

3 Ne. 18:3. And when the disciples were come with bread and wine he (1) took of the bread

and (2) brake

and (3) blessed it

and (4) gave unto the disciples

and commanded that they should eat.

4. And when they had eaten and were filled, he commanded that (5) they should give unto the multitude.

3 Ne. 18:28. And now behold, this is the commandment which I give unto you, that ye shall not suffer any one knowingly to partake of my flesh and blood unworthily, when ye shall minister it;

29. For whoso eateth and drinketh my flesh and blood unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to his soul; therefore if ye know that a man is unworthy to eat and drink of my flesh and blood ye shall forbid him.

* * That is because he to whom I did NOT give a share of the loaves from my hands was not worthy of a part (share) of my flesh.

Neither did he care to share with the poor, but thought only of the glosogomon (finance)

The Sacramental Prayer:

It is a mystery of my Father . . .
** which con(cerns) . . . the partaking (dividing) of my flesh.

And forthwith*he blessed them, saying, O my Father, root (source) of all good, I ask thee to bless these five barley loaves that all these (multitude) may be filled, that thy son may be glorified in thee; and that those whom thou hast drawn to thee out of the world might hearken to (after, obey) him.

And straightway his word came to pass in exousia (authority, as requested). His blessing fell upon (shope) on the bread in the apostles' hands.

And all the people ate and were filled. They gave praise to God.

Jesus prays three times:

You have seen, O my beloved ones, what love Jesus had toward his Apostles, insomuch that he kept (hid) nothing from them of any of the things touching upon his godhead (relationship to God).

(1) the first time while blessing the five loaves of barley-bread.

The actual words of the prayer (Moro. 4:1-2) are given by Moroni, 4:3:

O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee In the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it; that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son . . . and always remember him, and keep his commandments which he has given them, that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.

Moroni 5:2. . . . wine . . . that they do always remember him, that they may have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.

3 Ne. 20:9. Now, when the multitude had all eaten and drunk, behold, they were filled with the Spirit; and they did cry out with one voice, and gave glory to Jesus, whom they both saw and heard.

3 Ne. 28:13. And behold, the heavens were opened, and they were caught up into heaven, and saw and heard unspeakable things.

14. And it was forbidden them that they should utter; neither was it given unto them power that they could utter the things which they saw.

(1) 3 Ne. 19:19. And it came to pass Jesus departed out of the midst of them, and went a little way off from them and bowed himself to the earth, and he said:

20. Father I THANK thee, that thou hast given the Holy Ghost unto these whom I have chosen . . . OUT of the world.

24. . . . when Jesus had thus prayed . . . he came unto his disciples, and . . . 25 . . . blessed them as they did pray unto him . . . and behold they were as white as the countenance and also the garment of Jesus.

(2) The second time in his giving thanks to his Father.

(2) 3 Ne. 19:28. Father, I THANK thee that thou hast purified those whom I have chosen . . . and also for them who shall believe on their words

29. Father I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me OUT of the world.

30. And Jesus . . . came again unto his disciples . . . and behold they were white even as Jesus.

(3) The third time in giving thanks for the seven loaves

(3) 3 Ne. 19:31. And . . . he went again a little way off and prayed unto the Father.

32. And tongue cannot speak . . . neither can be written by man the words which he prayed.

33. And the multitude did hear and do bear record; and their hearts were opened and they did understand in their hearts the words which he prayed.

The Lord invites the disciples to ask for higher things:

Have you seen (considered) O my beloved ones, the love of Jesus towards his Apostles? Insomuch that he did not conceal anything from them, even all the things concerning his godhead:

3 Ne. 27:2. And Jesus again showed himself unto them, for they were praying unto the Father in his name; and Jesus came and stood in the midst of them, and said unto them: What will ye that I shall give unto you?

They are Abashed and have to be encouraged:

Jesus saith to Thomas: Thomas my friend, you and your brethren are free to ask me whatsoever you please, and I will keep nothing back from you. Insomuch that you may see, and feel (palpitate) and be convinced in your heart. If you want to see those in their tombs revived, you

3 Ne. 28:1. And it came to pass when Jesus had said these words, he spake unto his disciples, one by one, saying unto them: What is it that ye desire of me, after that I am gone to the Father?

6. And he said unto them: Behold, I know your thoughts and ye have

do well to ask for a sign of the Resurrection. For it was I myself who said to you, "I am the Resurrection, and the life." And also "If the ear of wheat does not die, there will be no yield (karpos). And if you yourselves do not see with your eyes (Jn. 1: your heart will not be confirmed in this.

Thomas wept and said to Jesus: Thou hast taken all this trouble to come to the tomb because of my incredulity. Let thy will be done and this tomb receive me until the day of the Resurrection.*

Jesus said: Thomas, be not afflicted; that which I do you know not . . . I told you to move the Stone so that a witness of the Resurrection might appear in the tomb of death.

You likewise, if you do not see with your eyes will not be strengthened in your hearts.

Have I not told you: More blessed are ye who have not seen and have believed than ye who have seen and not believed.

Ye had seen how many wonders and miracles I did in the presence of the Jews, and they believed not on me.

have desired the thing which John, my beloved, who was with me in my ministry, before that I was lifted up by the Jews, desired of me.

3. And he said unto them: Blessed are ye because ye desired this thing of me; therefore, after that ye are seventy and two years old ye shall come unto me in my kingdom; and with me ye shall find rest.

4. . . . he turned himself unto the three, and said unto them: What will ye that I should do unto you when I am gone unto the Father?

5. And they sorrowed in their hearts, for they durst not speak unto him the thing which they desired.

6. And he said unto them: Behold, I know your thoughts, ye have desired the thing which John . . . desired of me.

3 Ne. 19:35. And it came to pass that when Jesus had made an end of praying he came again to the disciples, and said unto them: So great faith have I never seen among all the Jews; wherefore I could not show unto them so great miracles, because of their unbelief.

36. Verily I say unto you, there are none of them that have seen so great things as ye had seen: neither have they heard so great things as ye have heard.

The disciples are understandably embarrassed at having to ask questions which argue a lack of faith ~~which should not be~~ in the very presence of the Resurrection. Here was the living Jesus before them, risen from the dead; and yet he knows that they are still unsettled in their minds. For how could they be sure that this guaranteed their own resurrection? After all, Jesus was the ^{a special case,} Son of God; but the men, women, and children he raised from the dead all had to die again. What about us? Are there levels and degrees of immortality? Is there a transition zone between the living and the dead? On these questions

both of our sources at this point launch into earnest discussions. For the type of the human who is dead but not dead, raised from the dead but still not resurrected, the Gospel of the XII Apostles gives us Lazarus, while the Book of Mormon discusses the same matters as represented by the strange case of the Three Nephites.

Thomas said to Jesus: My Lord, behold thou has granted us every favor in thy goodness. There is just one thing which we would like you to bestow on us. We want to see, O Lord those people who were dead and buried, whom you revived (raised up), as a sign of thy resurrection which is to take place for us.

We know, Lord, that thou didst raise up the son of the widow of Nain. But we are thinking of another kind of miracle, for you met with that multitude going along the road. What we want to see is the bones that have fallen apart in the tombs and are able to join together so that they can speak on the spot.

Thomas boldly (took heart) said to him: My Lord, how shall we go to him since the Jews are seeking to stone thee?

He said this because he was worried by the things which Jesus had said about Lazarus and did not want to go.

Dydyme (Thomas), come with me, let us go to Bethany, so that I can show you the TYPE of the Resurrection at the Last Day in the grave.

that your heart may be strengthened that I am the Resurrection and the Life.

Come with me O Dydymus, and I will show you the bones that have come apart in the tomb uniting themselves together again. I will show you the hollow putrified eye-sockets devoid

3 Ne. 28:7. Therefore more blessed are ye, for ye shall never taste of death . . .

8. Ye shall never endure the pains of death; but . . . ye shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye from mortality to immortality; and then ye shall be blessed in the kingdom of my Father.

3 Ne. 28:13. . . . and they (all the Disciples) were caught up into heaven.

15. And whether they were in the body or out of the body, they could not tell; for it did seem unto them

of light . . . the tongue of Lazarus, rotted away, which will speak again with thee:

see that which the worm have eaten coming forth at my voice when I call

Thou seekest a sign of the Resurrection, Thomas, come and I will show it to you at the tomb of Lazarus.

You have asked about the stretched out hands; come and I will show you the hands of Lazarus wrapped in their bandages, tight in their shroud, which will be raised up as they come out of the tomb.

Didymus my friend, come with me to the tomb of Lazarus, for my mouth desires what thou hast thought.

Jesus said to him: Didymus, he who walks in the LIGHT trembleth not (or, is not offended) Jesus said this to Thomas to console him when he saw that he was afflicted because of the death of Lazarus.

And these are the things which Jesus said to his Apostles.

Jesus cried out, saying: My Father, My Father, root of all goodness, I pray unto thee, for the moment has come to give glory to thy Son, that all may know that it is Thou who hast sent me for this. Glory unto thee unto the eternity of the eternities. Amen.

We may well ask, What impostor with no text or precedent to guide him, could hope to venture into the unexplored morass of the 40-Day mysteries, where to this day the student finds no solid foothold, without quickly coming to grief? The calm unhesitating deliberation with which the author of Third Nephi proceeds where scholars and poets have feared to tread, has been explained as an example of the jaunty and unabashed impudence of Joseph Smith--a desperate argument, for what could more quickly and surely lead to disaster than such rash folly joined to total ignorance. There must be some other explanation.

like a transfiguration . . . changed from this body into an immortal state.

17. Now whether they were mortal or immortal from the day of their transfiguration, I know not

37. . . . there was a change wrought upon their bodies.

39. Now this change was not equal to that which shall take place at the last day; but there was a change wrought upon them . . .

3 Ne. 28:6. I know your thoughts . . .

3. Blessed are ye because ye desired this thing of me.

3 Ne. 18:16. And as I have prayed among you even so shall ye pray in my church, among my people who do repent and are baptized in my name. Behold I am the light; I have set an example for you.

3 Ne. 19:29. Father, I pray . . . for those whom thou hast given me . . . that I may be in them as thou, Father, art in me, that we may be one, that I may be glorified in them.