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CHI-BM

Christ among the Ruins

REPRINT

13. The conflicting ideologies--practical vs. religious, materialist vs. spiritual--emerge in two views of the religious leader or prophet as a piqqeah, "a visionary man," a term either of praise or of contempt--an impractical dreamer.

14. For some unexplained reason, the anti-king parties both flee not towards Babylon but towards Egypt, "the broken reed."

15. The offices and doings of Laban and Jaush present a complex parallel, indicative of a special military type and calling not found in the Bible.

16. Almost casual references to certain doings by night create the same atmosphere of tension and danger in both stories.

17. Little Nedabyahu fits almost too well into the slot occupied by the Book of Mormon Mulek, "the Little King" who never came to rule, but escaped with a party of refugees to the New World.

18. The whole business of keeping, transmitting, and storing records follows the same procedures in both books.

Other parallels may be added to taste, but this should be enough to show that Joseph Smith was either extravagantly lucky in the opening episodes of his Book of Mormon--that should be demonstrated by computer--or else he had help from someone who knew a great deal.

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 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 nineteenth-century America. We know exactly how his neighbors reacted to the claims of Joseph Smith, and it was not (as it has become customary to insist) with the complacent or sympathetic tolerance of backwoods "Yorkers", to whom such things were supposedly everyday experience: nothing could equal the indignation and rage excited among them by the name and message of Joseph Smith.

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 forty 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 and 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.⁵ 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.

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 on

their missions 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? Can all that has transpired be but for the salvation of a few and the condemnation of many? But Jesus remains unyielding: that is not for us to decide or to question."** 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 me for silver and for gold. . . . And in that day will I visit them, even in turning 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.

**H. N. in Vigiliae Christianae, 20 (1966), pp. 6-7.

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 which were engraven upon the plates of Nephi, . . . but the Lord forbade it, 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 there 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 dealing 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 climatic 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. Does the Book of Mormon version have anything about that? Yes, and the Descensus and the Kerygma described there are uniquely glorious. Let us recall that the Descensus closely parallels the earthly mission of John the Baptist "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Luke 1:79). In the Book of Mormon, 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, three days after his Crucifixion, leaves the spirits in prison and now 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" (11:16-17). For they knew that he had come to lead them out of their prison. The first thing he did was to address them as

disobedient spirits, (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! The next thing was to insist that they all be baptized--exactly as in the "Descensus" accounts; 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. Then the Lord says a striking thing to the Nephites (11:39-40). "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. 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; this is the "smashing of the Gates theme", the "Harrowing of Hell" motif all the way through. As he is about to leave there is a great sorrowing among them as if they were being left behind in the darkness. This vividly recalls like situations in the royal Parousias of Egyptian rulers, a concept going back at least as far as the text of the Am Duat.

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 usually 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 transcendent importance, to which we shall refer below.

Most scholars and theologians 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, upon which after his departure they immediately set forth.

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 and for all that they really can be. The wonder of it, something akin to the excitement of Christmas, 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 immediately, 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 the 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.⁶ 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 parts 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

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.

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, who had been spared, did have great favors shown unto them, and great blessings poured out upon their heads, inasmuch 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 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 be 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

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

nothing to eat. I don't want to let them leave here hungry, lest they faint by the wayside.

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 go 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 went [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 must have 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 has not saved (rescued) this multitude in time of need, but it is the toikonomia (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.

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

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 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 spea 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.

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

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

7. . . . this shall ye 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.

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 (2) blessed them (gave thanks over them)

and (3) divided them

and (4) gave them to the Apostles

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

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

and (2) brake

and (3) blessed it;

and (4) he 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.

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. 18:28. 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 hath 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 that 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 garments of Jesus.

(2) The second time in his giving thanks to his Father. [Without quoting]

(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. [The prayer is not quoted]

(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 open 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

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?

in your heart. If you want to see those in their tombs revived, you 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 has 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.

6. And he said unto them: Behold, I know your thoughts, and ye 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, and 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 have 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 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 guaranteed their own resurrection? After all, Jesus was a special case, the Son of God; but the men, women, and children he raised from the dead all had to die again. What about? 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...

Didymus 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.

Didyme (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 Didymus, and I will show you the bones that have come

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 shall ye be blessed in the kingdom of my Father.

3 Ne. 28:13. . . . and they [all the disciples] were caught up into heaven....

apart in the tomb uniting themselves together again. . . I will show the body hollow putrified eye-sockets. . . devoid. . . 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 ask, What imposter with no text or precedent to guide him, could hope to venture into the unexplored morass of the Forty 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

15. And whether they were in the body or out of the body, they could not tell; for it did seem unto them like a transfiguration. . . changed from this body of flesh into an immortal state. . . .

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

37. . . . there must needs be 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.

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.

Let us quickly summarize some of the main points of our argument, as we did for the Lachish Letters.

1. The sheer daring, the terrible risk.
2. The lofty tone and undoubted sincerity: This is NOT the sort of story a trickster would choose to tell!
3. The emergence of the Forty Day literature as a "control."
4. Reasons for loss of the Forty Day Literature. Christ on the future of the Church: in terms of generations.
5. The secrecy of it all. The Book of Mormon explains it.
6. The "other sheep,"--stories of the Lord's other appearances.
7. Christ puts his work into world-perspective.
8. The Descensus and the Kerygma: a persistent annoyance to scholars.
9. The frequent meals.
10. Preparing the missionaries.
11. Celestial splendors of the visits.
12. The wonder and excitement among the people.
13. A specific case: 3 Nephi = Ev. Xii. Aps.
 - a. The Lord's condescension in coming and eating with them.
 - b. His object--perfect unity.
 - c. Miracle of the loaves.
 - d. Strange dealings with the children.

- e. The order of the Sacrament.
- f. Withholding the Sacrament.
- g. The sacramental blessing.
- h. The Lord's three prayers to the Father.
- i. His invitation of questions.
- j. Embarrassment of the Apostles and reassurance.
- k. The MAIN question: states of mortality:
 - 1. Condition of the Lord himself.
 - 2. Condition of those he raised from the dead.
 - 3. Condition of ordinary mortals in the Resurrection.
 - 4. Condition of those neither dead nor mortal.