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Indirect External Evidences—American Traditions. Continued

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CHAPTER XXXI.

INDIRECT EXTERNAL EVIDENCES—AMERICAN TRADITIONS. Continued.

I.

Messiah in the Western Hemisphere.

The appearance of Messiah in the western hemisphere, no less than the signs of his birth and death, is a circumstance that would undoubtedly find lodgment in the tradition of the native Americans. The manner of it, as described in the Book of Mormon, was as follows: It appears that a short time after the cataclysms which were the sign to the western world of Messiah's death, a number of people in the land Bountiful—a district of country in South America where the isthmus of Panama joins the south continent, and most likely including some part of that isthmus—were in the vicinity of a temple that had escaped destruction, and were conversing upon the many physical changes which had taken place in the land, and also of this same Jesus, of whose death they had received such appalling evidences, when—but let me quote the account of the event from the Book of Mormon:

And it came to pass that while they were conversing one with another, they heard a voice as it came out of heaven; and they cast their eyes round about, for they understood not the voice which they heard; and it was not a harsh voice, neither was it a loud voice; and notwithstanding it being a small voice, it did pierce them that did hear to the centre, insomuch that there was no part of their frame that it did not cause to quake;

yea, it did pierce them to the very soul and did cause their hearts to burn. And it came to pass that again they heard the voice, and they understood it not; and again the third time they did hear the voice, and did open their ears to hear it; and their eyes were towards the sound thereof; and they did look steadfastly towards heaven, from whence the sound came; and behold the third time they did understand the voice which they heard; and it said unto them, "Behold my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name: hear ye him." And it came to pass as they understood, they cast their eyes up again towards heaven; and behold, they saw a man descending out of heaven; and he was clothed in a white robe, and he came down and stood in the midst of them, and the eyes of the whole multitude were turned upon him, and they durst not open their mouths, even one to another, and wist not what it meant, for they thought it was an angel that had appeared unto them. And it came to pass that he stretched forth his hand and spake unto the people, saying, Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified should come into the world; and behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning. And it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words, the whole multitude fell to the earth, for they remembered that it had been prophesied among them that Christ should shew himself unto them after his ascension into heaven.^a

The task before us now is to ascertain if there is anything in the native American traditions which sustain the probability of this historical incident. Of course the reader must not be surprised if he finds the native traditions on such a subject very much confused. All such traditions, as I have before remarked, are so confused. Besides it must be remembered that there were several great characters among

^aIII. Nephi xi: 3-12.

the inhabitants of the western world, according to the Book of Mormon, who would likely be confounded with Messiah in the native traditions; such as Moriancumr and Coriantumr among the Jaredites, the first and the last great leaders, respectively, of that ancient people. Then there is the first Nephi, Mulek, the first Mosiah, and several of the Lord's apostles chosen from among the Nephites that are likely to be confounded with Messiah and their mission with his ministry among the people. But notwithstanding this confusion, I think evidences of this advent of Messiah in the western world are traceable in the native traditions; and I should be much disappointed if I had found it otherwise, for of all incidents in Book of Mormon history, the advent of Messiah is the most important.

II.

Of the Culture-Heroes of America.

Speaking of American "culture-heroes" in general, Bancroft says:

Although bearing various names and appearing in different countries, the American culture-heroes all present the same general characteristics. They are all described as white, bearded men, generally clad in long robes; appearing suddenly and mysteriously upon the scene of their labors, they at once set about improving the people by instructing them in useful and ornamental arts, giving them laws, exhorting them to practice brotherly love and other Christian virtues, and introducing a milder and better form of religion; having accomplished their mission, they disappear as mysteriously and unexpectedly as they came; and finally, they are apotheosized and held in great reverence by a grateful posterity. In such guise or on such mission did Quetzalcohuatl appear in Cholula, Votan in Chiapas, Wixepcocha in Ojaca, Zamna, and Cukulcan with his nineteen dis-

ciples, in Yucatan, Gucumatz in Guatemala, Viracocha in Peru, Sume and Paye-Tome in Brazil, the mysterious apostle mentioned by Rosales, in Chili, and Bochica in Colombia. Peruvian legends speak of a nation of gaints who came by sea, waged war with the natives, and erected splendid edifices, the ruins of many of which still remain. Besides these, there are numerous vague traditions of settlements or nations of white men, who lived apart from the other people of the country, and were possessed of an advanced civilization.^b

I suggest, in passing, that the part of the tradition which relates to the existence "of settlements or nations of white men who lived apart from the other people of the country, and were possessed of an advanced civilization," refers to those conditions that prevailed when the Nephites and Lamanites occupied the land; the former an industrious, civilized race, the latter an idle, savage race, conditions frequently referred to in the Book of Mormon, in describing the status of the Nephites and Lamanites, respectively.

Observe also that Bancroft, in the foregoing statement, says of some of the characters that, having accomplished their mission, they mysteriously disappeared. There are several such characters spoken of in the Book of Mormon. Such was the case with the second Alma, a noted Nephite character of the first half of the century immediately preceding the advent of Messiah. He was the first president or "judge" of the Nephite republic, also high priest of the Church, uniting in his person the two offices—a thing not unusual among the Nephites,^c nor among the native Ameri-

^bNative Races, Bancroft, Vol. V., pp. 23, 24.

^cSuch was the case with I Nephi and also Mosiah II. (Omni v:12-22). Also King Benjamin, (Mosiah i:2). In fact all the Nephite kings seem to have performed priestly functions; while under the Republic Alma was made president of the state and high priest of the Church, (Mosiah xxix:42), and in the fifty-

cans, if their annals may be trusted.^d After completing his life's mission, and making a remarkable prediction concerning the destruction of the Nephite people, Alma departed out of the land, "and it came to pass that he was never heard of more; as to his death or burial we know not of. Behold, this we know, that he was a righteous man; and the saying went abroad in the church that he was taken by the Spirit, or buried by the hand of the Lord."^e In a similar manner, Nephi, the father of Nephi, the apostle, a very noted Nephite

third year of the Republic Nephi, the son of Helaman, was, for a time, both president of the Republic and high priest of the Church. (Helaman iii: 37 and chapter iv.)

^dThe Mexicans believed that Quetzalcohuatl united in his own person the character of king, priest and prophet. (Kingsborough, Vol. VI., p. 213). Prescott speaking of Montezuma says: "He had been elected to the regal dignity in preference to his brothers for his several qualification both as a ruler and a priest, a combination of offices sometimes found in the Mexican candidates, as it was, more frequently, in the Egyptian." (Conquest of Mexico, Vol. I., p. 215). The same author speaking of the Incas of Peru says: "As the representative of the sun he stood at the head of the priesthood and presided at the most important of the religious festivals. (Conquest of Peru, Vol. I., p. 41). In a note on this passage Mr. Prescott takes exception to what he calls the "sweeping assertion" of Carli to the effect that the royal and sacerdotal authority were blended together in Peru; yet in another passage Prescott himself compares the ancient Peruvian government with that of the Jews and says: "The Inca was both the law giver and the law. He was not merely the representative of divinity, or like the pope, its vicergerant, but he was divinity itself." (Conquest of Peru, Vol. I., p. 135). Tschudi emphatically states the union of king and priest in the Incas as follows: "Moreover, the monarchs of Peru, as children of the sun, and descendants, in a direct line, from Manco-Capac, were the high priests and oracles in religious matters. Thus uniting the legislative and executive power, the supreme command in war, absolute sovereignty in peace, and a venerated high priesthood in religious feasts, they exercised the highest power ever known to man—realized in their persons the famous union of the pope and the emperor, and more reasonably than Louis XIV., might have exclaimed: "I am the state!" (Peruvian Antiquities, Tschudi, pp. 74, 75).

^eAlma xlv: 18, 19.

leader and prophet, departed out of the land in the same mysterious manner.^f

The quotation just made from Bancroft on the culture-heroes of America represents them as quite numerous; we shall see, however, as we proceed, that a number of them are the same person remembered in different countries under different names and titles, and that in the character and mission of each there is much similarity. Because of this similarity, however, it must not be supposed that it is my intention to claim each of these "culture heroes" as a more or less tradition-distorted representation of Messiah; and the life and mission of the culture-hero a distorted account of Messiah's advent and mission among the Nephites. Quite to the contrary, I believe that the traditions concerning some of these "culture-heroes" more nearly represent other Book of Mormon characters than they do Messiah. Such, for instance, is Votan, the supposed founder of the Maya confederation. Some things in his character and career make him more nearly resemble Moriancumr, the leader of the Jaredite colony, than Messiah. Bancroft, in one summary of the legends respecting him, says :

Votan, another mysterious personage, closely resembling Quetzalcohuatl in many points, was the supposed founder of the Maya civilization. He is said to have been a descendant of Noah and to have assisted at the building of the Tower of Babel. After the confusion of tongues he led a portion of the dispersed people to America. There he established the kingdom of Xibalba and built the city of Palenque.^g

Then again, in some respects, Votan resembles the first Nephi. He is said to have come to America one thousand

^fIII. Nephi i: 1-3.

^gNative Races, Vol. V., pp. 27, 28. Our author here follows Clavigero.

years B. C. ;^h Nephi came early in the sixth century B. C. ; Votan brought with him seven families ; the Nephite colony, as nearly as may be estimated, on reaching America, consisted of eight families.ⁱ Votan came to America by divine commandment ; so, too, did the Nephite colony.^j Votan wrote a book, in which he inscribed a complete record of all he had done ;^k so, also, did Nephi.^l Votan united in his person the qualities of high priest and king ; so, also, did Nephi.

After saying all this, however, it has to be admitted that there are some things in the legends concerning Votan which do not run parallel with the career of Nephi. Such, for instance, as his alleged visit to Spain, Rome, Jerusalem, where, in the latter place, he saw the temple of Solomon building ; also his visit to the Euphrates valley, where he saw the unfinished Tower of Babel. The part of his story which describes his finding in America a colony of the same race as his own people, reminds one of the first Mosiah, who found the people of Zarahemla, in the valley of the Sidon. It will be remembered that these people came from Jerusalem, were Jews, and are known as the colony of Mulek. These varied legends concerning Votan resem-

^hThe chronology of legends, or even traditions, is very uncertain ; and the variation of a few hundred years or so is not serious. The main point in the above case is that Votan came to America some hundreds of years B. C.

ⁱOf Lehi's family there were himself and wife, and four sons. Zoram, the servant of Laban ; he married one of the daughters of Ishmael. Of Ishmael's family there was himself and wife, two married sons and five daughters. If, as it is supposed, the four sons of Lehi married the four daughters of Ishmael then there were nine families that formed the colony. Ishmael, however, died during the colony's wanderings in Arabia, and hence there were eight families that reached America in the Nephite colony. (For above facts see I. Nephi ii, vi, vii, xvi: 34).

^jI. Nephi ii.

^kBancroft, Native Races, Vol. V., p. 166.

^lI. Nephi i, and I. Nephi ii.

bling in the respects here pointed out the several Book of Mormon characters, lead one to regard as reasonable the supposition advanced by nearly all writers who speak of him, that Votan is a generic name; and that the legends which center about this name represent the exploits of several of America's culture-heroes,^m and, as I believe, of several Book of Mormon characters.

III.

The Peruvian Tradition of the Messiah.

The natives of Chili have the following tradition concerning one of their culture-heroes, which closely resembles Messiah as he was revealed to the Nephites:

Rosales, in his inedited (i. e. unpublished) History of Chili, declares that the inhabitants of that extremely southern portion of America, situated at the distance of so many thousand miles from New Spain, and who did not employ paintings to record events, accounted for their knowledge of some of the doctrines of Christianity by saying, "that in former times, as they had heard their fathers say, a wonderful man had come to that country, wearing a long beard, with shoes, and a mantle such as the Indians carry on their shoulders, who performed many miracles, cured the sick with water, caused it to rain, and their crops and grain to grow, kindled fire at a breath, and wrought other marvels, healing at once the sick, and giving sight to the blind; and that he spoke with as much propriety and elegance in the language of their country as if he had always resided in it, addressing them in words very sweet and new to them, telling them that the Creator of the universe resided in the highest place of heaven,

^mThose who would have further information concerning Votan are referred to Bancroft's Native Races, Vol. III., pp. 450, 455. Also Vol. V., pp. 159, 160. Also to Donnelley's Atlantis, chapter iv, and the past notes in these several works.

and that many men and women who were resplendent as the sun dwelt with him. They say that he shortly afterwards went to Peru, and that many, in imitation of the habit and shoes which that man used, introduced among themselves the fashion of wearing shoes; and the loose mantle over the shoulders, either fastened with a clasp at the breast, or knotted at the corners, whence it may be inferred that this man was some apostle whose name they do not know."

The points of comparison between the character referred to in the foregoing quotation and the Messiah in his ministry among the Nephites, are:

First: In personal appearance, if due allowance be made for the imperfect description in the legend.

Second: In the character of the work performed, especially in the matter of healing of the sick. While in their midst Jesus is represented as saying to the Nephites:

Have ye any that are sick among you, bring them hither. Have ye any that are lame, or blind, or halt, or maimed, or leprous, or that are withered, or that are deaf, or that are afflicted in any manner? Bring them hither and I will heal them, for I have compassion upon you; my bowels are filled with mercy; for I perceive that ye desire that I shew unto you what I have done unto your brethren at Jerusalem, for I see that your faith is sufficient that I should heal you. And it came to pass that when he had thus spoken, all the multitude, with one accord, did go forth with their sick, and their afflicted, and their lame, and with their blind, and with their dumb, and with all them that were afflicted in any manner; and he did heal them every one as they were brought forth unto him.^o

Third: In relation to the graciousness of his language, the third Nephi represents the Savior as praying for the Nephites in this manner:

^uMexican Antiquities, Kingsborough, Vol. VI., p. 419.
^oIII. Nephi xvii:7, 9.

And the things which he prayed cannot be written, and the multitude did bear record who heard him. And after this manner did they bear record: "The eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard before, so great and marvelous things as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father, and no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the heart of man conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father."^p

Fourth: Relative to teaching the people, that many men and women were resplendent in their glory and were already dwelling with God, the Book of Mormon mentions the circumstance of Jesus taking very great pains to have recorded in the Nephite annals the fact that many of the ancient Saints arose from the dead and appeared unto many and ministered unto them;^q and from the whole tenor of his instructions to the Nephites, as found in III. Nephi, it is clear that there was ever present in his thought the fact of redeemed and glorified immortals dwelling with God in his kingdom.

Fifth: The reference in the quotation to the departure of the man-God for another land is paralleled in the Book of Mormon account of Jesus, where he is represented as declaring the existence of the lost tribes of the house of Israel, and the declaration of his intention to visit them. "Now," said he, "I go unto the Father, and also to show myself unto the lost tribes of Israel, for they are not lost unto the Father, for he knoweth whither he hath taken them."^r

^pIII. Nephi xvii: 15-17.

^qIII. Nephi xxiii.

^rIII. Nephi xvii: 4, see also chapter xvi: 1-3.

IV.

Topilitzen Quetzalcohuatl.

This personage appears under different names in the native traditions of various countries of America. In the Popol Vuh of the Quiches he is known under the title of Gucumatz;^s in Yucatan he appears under the name of Cukulcan;^t in Oajaca (despite some difficulties and contradictions) as Huemac; and in Mexico, par excellence, as Topilitzin Quetzalcohuatl. Respecting this character, various opinions are held. By some he is regarded as the Apostle St. Thomas, whom they credit with coming to America and preaching the Christian religion. "In support of their opinion," says Bancroft, "that he [Quetzalcohuatl] was no other than the apostle, they allege that the hero-god's proper name, Topilitzen Quetzalcohuatl, closely resembles in sound and signification that of 'Thomas, surnamed Didymus;' for 'to' in the Mexican name, is an abbreviation of Thomas, to which 'pilcin,' meaning 'son' or 'disciple,' is added; while the meaning of Quetzalcohuatl (in the Aztec language) is exactly the same as that of the Greek name 'Didymus,' 'a twin,' being compounded of 'quetzalli,' a 'plume of green feathers,' metaphorically signifying anything precious, and 'coatl,' a serpent, metaphorically meaning one of two twins."^u

Lord Kingsborough, it is well known, is the foremost among those who have identified this traditionary personage (Quetzalcohuatl) with the Hebrew Messiah—Jesus of Nazareth; and to this subject he devoted an incredible

^sBancroft, *Native Races*, Vol. V., p. 621.

^tBancroft, *Native Races*, Vol. III., pp. 135, 260, 451

^uBancroft, *Native Races*, Vol. V., p. 25

amount of labor and research.^v As Kingsborough's interpretation of the name, Topilitzin Quetzalcohuatl, as also the substance of his argument will appear in quotations from his works, it is not necessary to make a statement of them here. Let it suffice, at this point, to say that native American traditions assign too many of the qualities of Deity to Quetzalcohuatl to regard him merely as a man; and while many things are ascribed to him that are not in harmony with the character and mission of Messiah as set forth in the Book of Mormon, still one may trace the outlines of Messiah's advent and labors among the Nephites in the career of Quetzalcohuatl, as also the qualities of his divinity in what tradition ascribes to the Aztec deity. As for those adventures and human qualities found in Quetzalcohuatl not properly ascribable to Messiah, they arise, doubtless, out of the fact that the native traditions have confounded some of the exploits and characteristics of other great personages who have figured in their history with those of Messiah.

In order that the reader may have a fairly full account of what is said of this American man-divinity, I shall quote what several reliable authorities have said of him, beginning with Prescott:

A far more interesting personage in their [i. e. the Mexicans] mythology was Quetzalcohuatl, god of the air, a divinity, during his residence on earth, instructed the natives in the use of metals, in agriculture, and in the arts of government. He was one of those benefactors of their species, doubtless, who have been deified by gratitude of posterity. Under him, the earth teemed with fruits and flowers, without the pains of culture. An ear of Indian

^vThose who desire to follow the researches of the noble author on this point can do so by consulting Vol. VIII. of his elaborate work, pp. 5-51; also his explanations of plates 3, 10, 41 of the Vatican Codex with accompanying notes, Vol. VI. This is by no means all that his lordship writes upon the subject, but from these passages one may learn the substance of his theory, and the argument by which he sustains it.

corn was as much as a single man could carry. The cotton, as it grew took of its own accord, the rich dyes of human art. The air was filled with intoxicating perfumes and the sweet melody of birds. In short, these were the halcyon days, which find a place in the mythic systems of so many nations in the Old World. It was the golden age of Anahuac. From some cause, not explained, Quetzalcohuatl, incurred the wrath of one of the principal gods, and was compelled to abandon the country. On his way, he stopped at the city of Cholula, where a temple was dedicated to his worship, the massy ruins of which still form one of the most interesting relics of antiquity in Mexico. When he reached the shores of the Mexican Gulf, he took leave of his followers, promising that he and his descendants would visit them hereafter, and then, entering his wizard skiff, made of serpents' skins, embarked on the great ocean for the fabled land of Tlapallan. He was said to have been tall in stature, with a white skin, long, dark hair, and a flowing beard. The Mexicans looked confidently to the return of the benevolent deity; and this remarkable tradition, deeply cherished in their hearts, prepared the way. * * * * * for the future success of the Spaniards.^w

After referring to the numerous, lengthy, intricate and even contradictory legendary statements of the American aborigines which in full may only be learned from the elaborate works of Brasseur de Bourbourg, Lord Kingsborough, and H. H. Bancroft—P. De Roo remarks:

It is the universal opinion of the learned that Quetzalcohuatl is identically the same personage with the contemporary religious and civil reformer whom various nations have deified under different names; that he is the same with Huemac or Vemac, as the Mexicans also called him; with Topilitzin, as he was more anciently known in Tulla by the Toltecs; with Wixipecocha, under whose name he was venerated by the Zapotecs; with Zamna, Cozas, or Cukulcan, the theocratic ruler of Yucatan; nay, with Bochica, the civilizer of Cundinamarca of New Granada, and with Viracocha of Peru.

^wConquest of Mexico, Prescott, Vol. I., p. 64.

In the remainder of the quotation from our author, he speaks of this one person under his various names and titles :

Quetzalcohuatl arrived at Tulla, the Toltec capital, from Panuco, a small place on the Gulf of Mexico, where he had first landed. Duran likewise relates that Topilitzin was a foreigner, but could not learn from what parts he had come. His name, given him by the natives, signified "Beautiful-feathered serpent." Cukulcan, his Maya or Yucatec appellation, had exactly the same meaning. It was the name of princes and Toltec kings, and probably designates some honorable title, which, if we should make a few learned considerations, might be found to be the Great or the Glorious man of the country. * * * * *

The Indians remembered well that their god Quetzalcohuatl had not been like one of themselves. They described him as a white or pale faced man, of portly person, with broad forehead, great eyes, long black hair, and a heavy rounded beard. The Zapotecan Wixipecocha was also a white-skinned apostle, and the Toltecan Topilitzin is described as having all the same features, to which Duran adds that his beard was of a fair color and his nose rather large. He was very reserved in his manners, plain and meek with those who approached him, passing most of his time in meditation and prayer in his cell, and showing himself but seldom to the people. * * * * *

Very abstemious at all times, Topilitzen often observed long and rigorous fasts, practicing severe penances and even bloody self-chastisements, as is likewise stated of the homologous Quetzalcohuatl.

De las Casas testifies that Quetzalcohuatl lived a most honest and chaste life; Sahagun, that he never married nor ever was in the company of a woman, except in the act of auricular confession. While, according to traditional report, he was born of a virgin mother. Herrea states that he remained a virgin himself. The Yucatec legends also notice the celibacy of Cukulcan and his general purity of morals. * * * Quetzalcohuatl is described as having worn during life, for the sake of modesty, a garment that reached down to his feet. * * * For shoes, Cukulcan wore sandals, walked along bare-headed; nor is it said that his mantle was, like that of his equivalent Wexipeco-

cha, provided with a monk's cowl for head-gear. From the Mexican traditions we learn that Quetzalcohuatl, also, wore a cloak, which Bancroft calls a blanket over all, in one place, and a long white robe, in another; adding that, according to Gormara, it was decorated with crosses.*

It would be impossible within the proposed limits of this work to quote at length what has been written of this mysterious personage of the western world; whose character and career in so many respects are like that of the Hebrew Messiah, as he appeared in the western world. From this point I can only summarize and quote briefly respecting him, leaving the reader interested in the subject to make larger research in the works cited in the margins.†

And now first as to the personal appearance of Quetzalcohuatl:

He was a white man, of portly person, broad brow, great eyes, long black hair, and large round head, of exceedingly chaste, and quiet life, and of great moderation in all things.‡
 * * * * * Quetzalcohuatl is said to be a white man (some gave him a bright; red face), with a strong formation of body, broad forehead, large eyes, black hair, and a heavy beard. He always wore a long white robe; which, according to Gomara, was decorated with crosses. (J. G. Muller quoted by Bancroft, *Native Races*, Vol. III., pp. 273, 274.)

In the Book of Mormon account of the advent of Messiah among the Nephites there is no description given of his features or person. This, upon first thought, may seem

*History of America Before Columbus, P. De Roo, Vol. I., pp. 540-544.

†Perhaps the fullest and most accessible work on the subject is Bancroft's *Native Races*, Vol. III., pp. 248, 287; and P. De Roo's *America Before Columbus*, Vol. I., chapters xxii, xxiii.

‡Native Races, Bancroft, Vol. III., p. 250.

singular ; and yet it is in strictest harmony with human conduct in the presence of such an event. Over-awed by the fact of the presence of a heavenly personage men are liable to take no note of features or color of the eyes or hair or any details of personal appearance. It is not until men are removed from the awe-inspiring circumstance itself that they begin to think of details connected with a heavenly apparition. I think it probable, therefore, that not until after the Nephite accounts were written of the personal ministrations of Jesus did those who beheld him begin to think out the details of his personal appearance ; hence we have no description of him in their written annals, but we find it preserved—but perhaps with more or less of error in it—in the traditions of the people.

As to his general character while on earth the following is of importance :

This Quetzalcohuatl was god of the air, and as such had his temple, of a round shape and very magnificent. He was made god of the air for the mildness and gentleness of all his ways, not liking the sharp and harsh measures to which the other gods were so strongly inclined. It is to be said further that his life on earth was marked by intensely religious characteristics ; not only was he devoted to the careful observance of all the old customary forms of worship, but he himself ordained and appointed many new rites, ceremonies, and festivals^a for the adoration of the gods ;^b and it is held for certain that he made the calendar.^c He had priests who were called Quequet-

^aSee II. Nephi xv:2, 10.

^bSee III. Nephi xi:21, 28, also III. Nephi xviii:1, 25. Compare these several passages from Nephi with the statement in the text.

^cThis may simply be the traditional remembrance of the fact that the sign of the birth of Jesus was made an epoch from which the Nephites thenceforward reckoned their time. See III. Nephi ii:4-8.

zalcohua, that is to say "priests of the order of Quetzalcohuatl."^d The memory of him was engraved deeply upon the minds of the people, and it is said that when barren women prayed and made sacrifices to him, children were given them.^e He was, as we have said, god of the winds, and the power of causing them to blow was attributed to him as well as the power of calming or causing their fury to cease. It was said further that he swept the road, so that the gods called Tlaloques could rain; this the people imagined because ordinarily a month or more before the rains began there blew strong winds throughout all New Spain. Quetzalcohuatl is described as having worn during life,

^d"Priests after the order of Quetzalcohuatl." The Book of Mormon teaches that the Nephites had the high Melchizedek priesthood among them. That is to say, the priesthood of their high priests was after the same order of priesthood as that held by the son of God. Hence we have Alma saying: "I am called to speak after this manner [he was preaching obedience to the people] according to the holy order of God, which is in Christ Jesus. * * * * * And now I say unto you that this is the order after which I am called, yea to preach unto my beloved brethren. (Alma v: 44, 49). "I would that ye should remember that the Lord God ordained priests after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son, to teach these things unto the people." (Alma xii:1). The whole chapter deals with this subject of the priesthood, and should be considered as part of the reference. Jesus when instructing the twelve he had chosen from among the Nephites, said to them: "Ye shall be judges of this people according to the judgment which I shall give unto you, which shall be just; therefore what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am." (III. Nephi xxvii:27). It is fairly clear, that Jesus appointed priests after his own order even as the traditions of the Mexicans teach that their deity Quetzalcohuatl appointed priests after his own order. The coincident of the tradition and the Nephite record is remarkable, and affords an item of incidental evidence of considerable importance.

^eCompare this statement with the following passage: "Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, ye must watch and pray always, lest ye enter into temptation. * * * * * Therefore ye must always pray unto the Father in my name; and whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you. Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed." (III. Nephi xviii:12, 21).

for the sake of modesty, garments that reached down to the feet, with a blanket over all, sown with red crosses. The Cholulans preserved certain green stones that had belonged to him, regarding them with great veneration and esteeming them as relics.

* * * * * He also arranged the calendar, and taught his subjects fit religious ceremonies; preaching specially against human sacrifices, and ordering offerings of fruits and flowers only. He would have nothing to do with the wars, even covering his ears when the subject was mentioned. His was a veritable golden age, as in the time of Saturn; animals and even men lived in peace, the soil produced the richest harvests without cultivation, and the grain grew so large that a man found it trouble enough to carry one ear; no cotton was dyed, as it grew of all colors, and fruits of all kinds abounded. Everybody was rich and Quetzalcohuatl owned whole palaces of gold, silver and precious stones. The air was filled with the most pleasant aromas, and a host of finely feathered birds filled the world with melody.^f

So, too, the following:

Only Quetzalcohuatl among all the gods was pre-eminently called Lord; in such sort, that when any one swore, saying, By our Lord, he meant Quetzalcohuatl and no other; though there were many other highly esteemed gods. For indeed the service of this god was gentle, neither did he demand hard things, but light; and he taught only virtue, abhorring all evil and hurt. Twenty years this good deity remained in Cholula, then he passed away by the road he had come, carrying with him four of the principal and most virtuous youths of that city. He journeyed for a hundred and fifty leagues, till he came to the sea, in a distant province called Goatzacoalco. Here he took leave of his companions and sent them back to their city, instructing them to tell their fellow citizens that a day should come in which the white men would land upon their coasts, by the way of the sea in which the sun rises; brethren of his and having

^fNative Races, Bancroft, Vol. III., pp. 259, 260, 274. For a description of the Nephite "golden age," whence comes this "golden age" of the tradition, see III.Nephi, chapter xxiv, xxviii.

beards like his; and that they should rule that land.^g The Mexicans always waited for the accomplishment of this prophecy, and when the Spaniards came they took them for the descendants of their meek and gentle prophet, although, as Mendieta remarks with some sarcasm, when they came to know them and to experience their works, they thought otherwise.^h

Relative to Quetzalcohuatl in his capacity of Deity I shall quote the following passage from Lord Kingsborough's great work as representing the sum of his extensive research upon the subject and its elaborate presentation :

How truly surprising it is to find the Mexicans, who seem to have been quite unacquainted with the doctrines of the migration of the soul and the metempsychosis, should have believed in the incarnation of the only son of their supreme god Tonacatecutle. For Mexican mythology speaking of no other son of that God except Quetzalcohuatl, who was born of Chimalman, the virgin of Tula, without connection with man, and by his breath alone, (by which may be signified his word or his will, announced to Chimalman by word of mouth of the celestial messenger, whom he dispatched to inform her that she should conceive a son), it must be presumed that Quetzalcohuatl was his only son.ⁱ Other arguments might be adduced to show, that the Mexicans believed that Quetzalcohuatl was both god and man, that he had previously to his incarnation, existed from all eternity,^j that he had created both the world and man,^k that he descended from heaven to reform the world by penance, that he was born with the perfect use of reason, that he preached a new law, and, being king of Tula, was crucified for the sins of man-

^gWith this statement compare III. Nephi xvi: 6, 16; also III. Nephi xx: 14, 20, 27, 28; also III. Nephi xxi: 12, 25. Where the Savior predicts the coming of the Gentiles to the promised land, and their privileges and responsibilities respecting it.

^hBancroft, Native Races, Vol. III., p. 251.

ⁱCompare I. Nephi xi: 12-21; I. Nephi x: 4-6. Also I. Nephi xi: 21; Ether iii: 6-16.

^jMosiah iii: 4, 5.

^kHelaman xiv: 12; Ether iii: 14-16.

kind, as is obscurely insinuated by the interpreter of the Vatican Codex, plainly declared in the traditions of Yucatan, and mysteriously represented in the Mexican paintings.¹

It would be a useless repetition of facts already stated in the preceding pages of the present volume, to undertake separately to prove all these points; and we shall confine ourselves in this place to the three first very important articles. The reflection must have suggested itself to those who have perused the New Testament, that Christ is as frequently distinguished there by the appellation of the "Son of Man," as by that of the "Son of God," in reference no doubt to his humanity, and to the famous prophecy contained in the ninth verse of the ninth chapter of Isaiah: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:" which Christians, on the authority of many passages in the four Gospels, apply to Christ, although the Jews some times interpret it of the Messiah, and some times of King Hezekiah. The Mexicans bestowed the appellation of Topiltzin on Quetzalcohuatl, the literal signification of which is "our son," or "our child," the proper name being compounded of "to," "our," and "piltzin," defined by Alonso de Molina in his rare and copious vocabulary of the Mexican and Spanish languages to be *mino o nina*, "a boy or a girl," and associated by him with the cognate terms of "piltontli" and "pilzintia;" and it may not be unreasonably assumed, since analogies, which are numerous and not isolated, as their number increases, increase also their ratio of probability, not only that the Mexicans were acquainted with Isaiah's famous prophecy, but to mark their belief of the accomplishment of that prophecy, in the person of Quetzalcohuatl, that they named him Topiltzin; no less account of his having been born from a virgin of the daughters of men, then because another equally celebrated prediction of the same prophet declared that he should receive a name from that very circumstance: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign, Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." And the proper name Topiltzin does in fact bear a signification corresponding, if not literally, yet entirely in substance with that of Immanuel: since "God with us," which is the interpretation of the Hebrew name, means God domiciliated amongst

¹III. Nephi xi: 6-12.

men; and the full force of the expression is preserved in the term Topilitzin, which might be interpreted the Son of Man, or God on a level with men; for the Mexicans believed that Quetzalcohuatl took human nature upon him, partaking of all infirmities of man, and was not exempt from sorrow, pain, or death, and that he suffered voluntarily to atone for the sins of mankind.^m

As already remarked, there is much attributed to this Deity of native American tradition that seems incompatible with the character of Messiah, and with his labors while in the western hemisphere; but for all that one may see in outline here the leading truths respecting the Son of God as made known to the Nephites through prophecies and the Christ's advent among them, all of which is set forth in the Book of Mormon; while that which is not congruous to Messiah and his mission to the Nephites, results—as already pointed out—from the confusion of a number of traditions concerning several other great characters who have figured in native American history, and of whom the Book of Mormon speaks. But, in the foregoing excerpts from the works of those skilled in the lore of ancient America, we have the account of “The great or the glorious Man of the country,”ⁿ that can be no other than the Hebrew Messiah—the Jesus Christ of the Book of Mormon. There are the signs of his birth; the signs of his death; his sudden advent among the people; his personal appearance—not incompatible with the personal appearance of Messiah, but rather in harmony with it; his birth of a virgin; his being the only son of God; his name signifying “God with man;” his being the creator of heaven and earth; his crucifixion for the sins of the world; his being peculiarly “the Lord” to whom men prayed; his love of peace, his hatred of war; his respect for existing religion,

^mKingsborough's Mexican Antiquities, Vol. VI., p. 507.

ⁿThe happy suggestion of title is De Roo's Ante, p. 298.

yet his enlargement of it and the addition of religious rites and ceremonies; his teaching the people perfectly in their own tongue, yet also in new and honied words; his compassion for the sick, and healing them; his choosing special disciples to teach his religion and making them priests of the same order as himself; the beauty and gentleness of his religion that stands in such marked contrast to the subsequent harsh and sanguinary superstition that darkened the lives of the natives; his instructions as to historical records; his taking with him on his departure from the country four of the principal and most virtuous youths of the city of Cholula to the sea where he separated from them and sent back messages to his followers by them, promising to return;^o his prediction of other and white races to come and occupy the western world and rule it; his mysterious departure from the land, and his promise to return. All this, which so perfectly agrees both with the character and ministry of Messiah among the Nephites, as described in the Book of Mormon, is set forth in such clearness that it cannot be discredited because of some evident fantasies and incongruities in other parts of the traditions.

^oReaders of the Book of Mormon will find in this circumstance a resemblance to the fact of Jesus granting to three of the twelve disciples chosen from among the Nephites the privilege of remaining on earth without tasting death until he should return in glory. And when it is remembered that in granting this request to the three Nephites Jesus coupled the name of John, the beloved disciple, in Judea, to whom had been granted the same privilege (St. John xxi), sufficient ground work was laid for the tradition of the "four" "most virtuous youths" who were given a special mission by Quetzalcohuatl to his followers. The incident concerning the three Nephite disciples and the mention of John in connection with them will be found in III. Nephi xxviii.