



Type: Magazine Article

Christ's Personal Appearance in the Western Hemisphere: The Supreme Message of the Book of Mormon

Author(s): B.H. Roberts

Source: *Improvement Era*, Vol. 20, No. 6 (April 1917), pp. 476–499

Published by: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Abstract: Writes of a monument of Christ erected on the border of Argentina and Chile as a sign of peace between the two nations. Another monument of Christ, the LDS temple, was built in Hawaii. “Those who believe in the Book of Mormon also believe that this group of islands was colonized by certain adventurous people from the mainland of America [Hagoth, Alma 63].” These two monuments have been erected on a land that Christ once visited.



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CHRIST OF THE ANDES.

"Sooner shall these mountains crumble into dust than the Argentines and Chileans break the peace to which they have pledged themselves at the feet of Christ the Redeemer."

IMPROVEMENT ERA

Vol. XX

APRIL, 1917

No. 6

Christ's Personal Appearance in the Western Hemisphere

The Supreme Message of the Book of Mormon

By B. H. Roberts

The writer begs leave to state that the erection of the Temple of Christ in Hawaii, by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, soon now to be dedicated by the authorities of the Church, is the immediate inspiration of this article.

I—"The Christ of the Andes"

On the summit of the Uspallata Pass, of the Andes Mountains, on the boundary line between Chile and Argentina, and about an equal distance between the city of Mendoza, in Argentina, and Valparaiso, on the Chilean coast, stands a colossal statue of a human figure. It was cast from cannons belonging to the two republics on whose boundary line it stands. The figure proper is twenty-six feet high; while the huge cross circled by the left arm of the statue rises five feet higher. The right hand is "raised in the act of benediction." "The sweet serenity of the face is admirable," says one description. "Its look is penetrating, while its lips seem ready to speak." The feet of the statue rests upon a hemisphere of granite, which shows in outline part of the world, and forms the crown of an octagonal granite column twenty-two feet high. The monument is known as "The Christ of the Andes."

The historical events to which this noble statue of the Christ in the western hemisphere owes its existence follow:

In the year of our Lord 1900, the two republics, Argentina and Chile, were on the verge of war over the proper location of a boundary line between their respective countries, involving

the possession of eighty thousand square miles of territory. Large revenues were expended by both countries for the impending war, and little money was left for education or the development of internal resources of either republic. At this stage of the developing belligerency the British ministers accredited to these countries joined in tendering their good offices for a peaceful settlement of the dispute by arbitration; and two Roman Catholic bishops, one of Argentina and the other of Chile, traversed the towns of their respective countries urging peace and the arbitration of the matters in dispute. To this both countries finally agreed, and the question of fixing the boundary line was referred to the government of Queen Victoria; she dying, meantime, the question was passed on to King Edward VII, her successor, and by him given to a board of jurists and geographers for investigation and judgment. The decisions of this board were readily accepted by both countries.

Argentina and Chile, in the meantime, however,—once the spirit of war between them allayed—decided to go beyond the mere question of the boundary line dispute, and conclude a general arbitration treaty which brought on an era of good feeling between the two countries. Partial disarmament followed—a somewhat “beating of swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks.” Relieved of the terror of impending war, and from the heavy burdens of taxation attending upon preparation for it, both countries turned their normal revenues to internal improvements and to their schools, so that the outcome was attended by the happiest results.

Running parallel with these events was one other, one suggested by them—the erection of the monument to the Christ on the summit of Uspallata Pass. The good Bishop Benevente, of Argentina, took the initiative in the matter, by proposing, on Easter Sunday of the year 1900, the erection of a statue of the Christ on the boundary line of the two countries that should be at once a memorial of the treaty to be signed, and a covenant of peace for the future, to prevent, if possible, any recurrence of the strife which had brought the two countries to the verge of war. The suggestion found favor in Argentina, especially with the women and workmen’s Unions of Buenos Aires, and the “Association of Christian Mothers” collected the funds necessary to pay for the statue.

Several models were submitted for the monument, but the one selected was the work of a young sculptor of Buenos Aires, by the name of Mateo Alonzo. The monument was completed in 1903, two years after it was begun, and placed on exhibition in the capital where enthusiastic crowds visited it, and went away to sound its praises. When the two ministers who were

charged with the duty of signing the peace treaties between the two republics—Dr. Terry, minister of foreign affairs for Argentina, and Dr. Vergara Donoso, Chilean minister—met in Buenos Aires they went to see the statue, and at once approved of the suggestion to make it an international monument on the Argentine-Chilean frontier. A few days later work was begun on the foundation for the statue. By April, 1904, the monument was ready for the unveiling. A large concourse of people assembled at the summit of Uspallata Pass, coming from both the Argentine and Chilean side of the Andes, among them some of the highest dignitaries of both church and state, the army and the navy. The archbishop of Buenos Aires blessed the monument and celebrated mass in the presence of the multitude kneeling before it. Great was the rejoicing of the people. "Salvos of Argentine artillery on Chilean territory," says the account of the ceremonies, "and Chilean guns on Argentine soil, sealed the kiss of peace, which the archbishop of Buenos Aires gave the representative of the Church of Chile." These ceremonies enstalled the monument as a witness of the peace pact between the two republics, and marked the beginning of the "era of good feeling" between them which has since prevailed, and which it is hoped will endure even according to the determination expressed on the bronze covenant-tablet embedded in the base of the monument, as follows:

Sooner shall these mountains crumble into dust than the Argentines and Chileans break the peace to which they have pledged themselves at the feet of Christ the Redeemer.

And on another tablet, on the opposite side of the base from the above, this sentiment:

He is our peace who hath made us one.

These tablets were the gift of the workmen's and workwomen's unions of Buenos Aires.

The erection of this monument is regarded as epochal, and by some prophetic in its character; and, indeed, it may well be regarded as the herald of what shall yet be in the world, a universal peace among the nations—the reign of the spirit of the Christ in the affairs of the nations, if not his reign over them by visible, personal presence—the fulfilment of the prophetic voices, great in their volume, and heard in heaven, saying:

The kingdoms of this world are become the kindoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.^a

It was in this spirit, doubtless, that the women of Argentina had a reproduction of this beautiful statue—"The Christ of the Andes"—made and presented to the Permanent Commission

^aRev. 11:15.

of the International Peace Conference—and which has been accepted by them—for a place in the Peace Palace of the Hague.^b

This much at least, and now, may be said of the monument, “Christ of the Andes,” it is the first monument to the Christ marking the triumph of peaceful arbitration of national disputes as against the dreadful arbitrament of war; and it is erected in America, a land commonly supposed never to have been visited by the Christ in person.

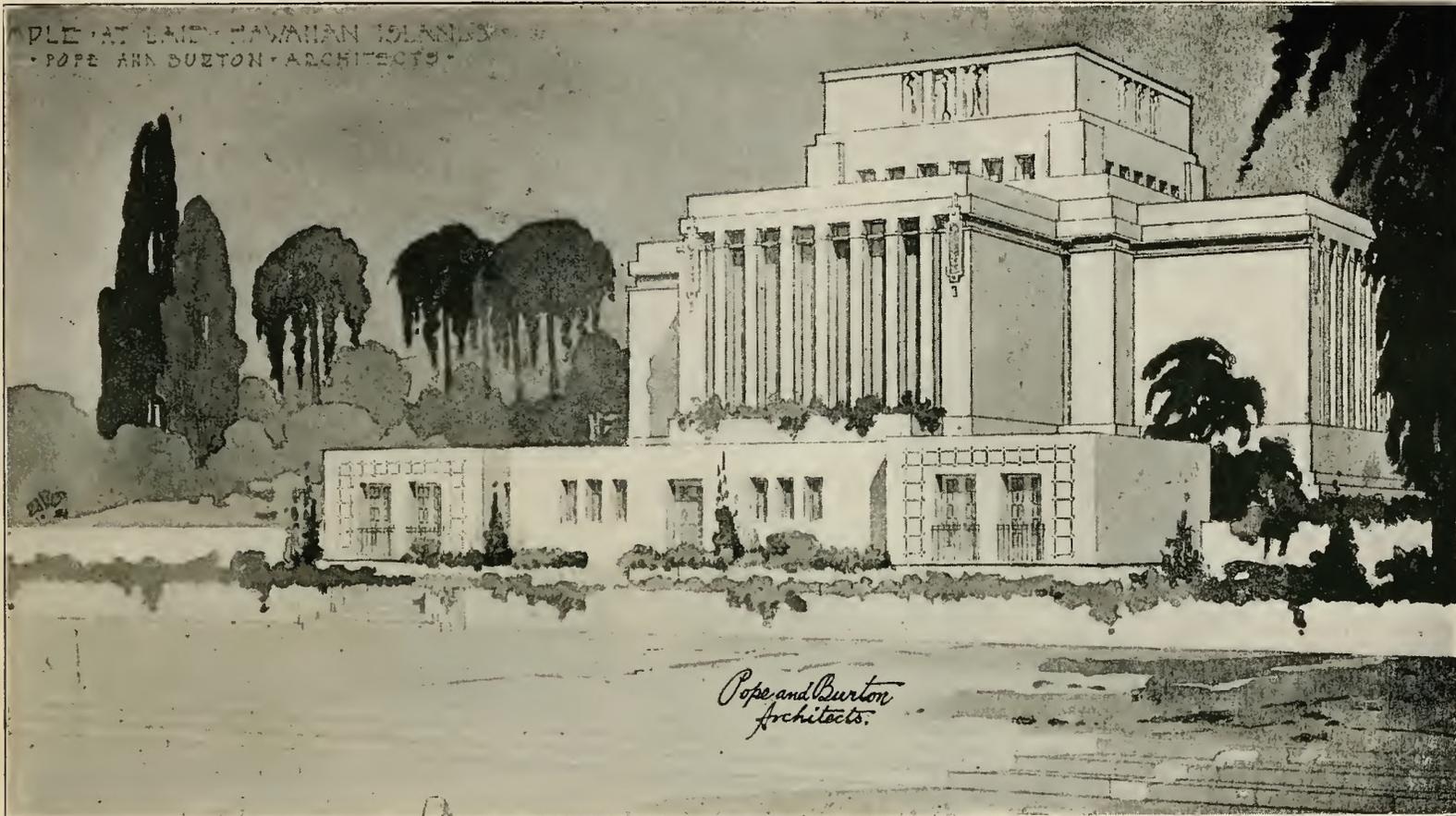
II—The Temple of Christ in Hawaii

Another monument to the Christ in America, different in kind and in purpose from the monument of the Andes, but not less significant, equally epochal, and of deep interest to the world, has been erected. This is the “Temple of Christ in Hawaii,” built on the island of Oahu, near the village of Laie, by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and which is soon to be dedicated to the purposes for which these sacred structures are used by the Church of the Latter-day Saints. How chaste in design, and beautiful in structure this Temple of Christ in Hawaii is, may in part be realized by the engraving of it accompanying this paper.

It may be considered a stretching of boundaries to speak of Hawaii as part of America, but if islands are to be regarded as belonging to the mainland to which they are nearest, then geographically the Hawaiian group belongs to the American continents; and it is not necessary that the reader be reminded that politically the group belongs to the United States, having been annexed by Congress, in 1898.

Without here at all considering the evidence for the fact, let it be said that those who believe in the Book of Mormon also believe that this group of islands was colonized by certain adventurous people from the mainland of America, about the middle of the century immediately preceding the birth of Messiah. Several ship loads of people, during a coastwise immi-

^bSee *Through South America's Southland*, by the Rev. J. A. Zahm, C. S. C., Ph. D. (Appleton & Co., N. Y. and London, 1916—pp. 265-269). The monument stands beside the old stage road which runs over Uspallata Pass between Chile and Argentina, about an equal distance between the noted “cloud and snow covered crests of the giant peaks Tupungato and Aconcagua which rise to the magnificent heights of over 20,000 feet, and 23,000 feet respectively, and hence was seen for a time by nearly all travelers going from one country to the other. But since the completion of the trans-Andine railway tunnel, between Argentina and Chile, travel by the stage has practically been discontinued, and but few travelers, either native or foreign, now see the monument; but from its solitude amid the grandeur of the surrounding mountain peaks, the “Christ of the Andes,” exerts a world influence by pointing the way to international peace.



THE TEMPLE OF CHRIST IN HAWAII

gration northward by shipping, from some part of the Pacific coast of General America, drifted westward, and never returned to the mainland. "Some of these never reached their destination," writes the late George Reynolds, premier student of the Book of Mormon, when thoroughness is considered. "They were either lost in the depths of the sea," he continues, "or were carried by storms and adverse winds to some of the many groups of islands that dot the Pacific Ocean. In this manner it is more than probable that the Sandwich Islands were peopled with the ancestors of the present inhabitants."^c

From this Book of Mormon standpoint, then, the inhabitants of the Hawaiian islands, as well as some other groups of islands of the south Pacific, are of the same race, in part at least, as the aboriginal inhabitants of the American continents. And the aboriginal inhabitants of America, according to the Book of Mormon, are descendants of the house of Israel, chiefly descendants of Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob, and hence heirs to the promises and blessings which attend upon those who are thus descended.

These considerations make the erection of the Temple in Hawaii of special interest and importance, as later will be seen. It is another monument to the Christ in America; on a group of islands geographically, politically, and racially American.

III—*The Message of the Book of Mormon*

These averments lead up to the questions: What is the chief importance of the Book of Mormon? what its message to the world, assuming that it has one? what is the significance of this Temple of Christ in Hawaii?

Considering these questions in the order in which they are asked, the first may be answered by saying, that the chief importance of the Book of Mormon,—the thing for which it was abridged from larger records kept by the ancient inhabitants of America, sealed up and preserved to come forth in God's own time, and likewise to be translated by the gift and power of God,—is to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel what great things the Lord did for their fathers; that they may know the covenants of the Lord with them, and that they may learn that they are not cast off forever; also to convince both Jew and Gentile that "*Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations.*"^d In other words, the chief value of

^c*Dictionary of the Book of Mormon*. Reynolds, Art. "Hagoth," p. 136.

^dSee the ancient Preface of the Book of Mormon, now used as the title page of the current edition of the work.

the Book of Mormon arises from the fact of its proclamation that Jesus Christ ministered personally among the ancient inhabitants of the western hemisphere. Their prophets, long before his advent into earth-life, through revelations from God, had foreknowledge, as the people of Israel in the eastern hemisphere had foreknowledge, of the coming of Messiah in the flesh. They knew the purpose of that coming, the redemption of mankind, and hence lived in the hope of it, and in the faith of it, and in the knowledge of the great salvation it would bring to the world.

At last the word of promise was kept in good faith. The all glorious, resurrected Christ, with the marks of the atonement made for the sins of the world upon him, appeared among the people in unsurpassable splendor of manner. He taught them his gospel, the power of God unto salvation; he selected a ministry; he established his Church; he gave to the people of the western world the most palpable evidence of the fact of the resurrection, and hence assurance of the future immortality of man. Christ visited the western world for these several purposes, and accomplished them. If he did all this, how splendid is the fact of it! How important it is that the world should know of it! What pains should be taken to ascertain the truth of it! What earnest inquiry should be made! What research should be conducted to establish the truth of the claims! How valuable some word would be from that message which Christ brought to America! . As one has said, and with undoubted truth:

“Were a parchment discovered in an Egyptian mound, six inches square, containing fifty words which were certainly spoken by Him, this utterance would count more than all the books which have been written since the first century.”^e

IV—*What if Christ Did Not Come to America?*

If the Christ did not visit America in person—how disappointing the conclusion! Why should he not? How shall we square the fact, if fact it be, that he did not visit America, with God’s justice, and mercy, and love?

In a certain revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord gave the following parable:

^e*The Life of the Master*, by John Watson, D. D. (Ian McLaren, author of *The Bonnie Brier Bush*, *The Mind of the Master*, *The Doctrine of Grace*, etc.) McClure, Philips and Co., N. Y., 1901, Prologue p. 7. Dr. Watson also said with equal truth:

“If a veritable picture of the Lord could be unearthed from a catacomb, and the world could see with its own eyes what like he was, it would not matter that its colors were faded, and that it was roughly drawn, that picture would have at once a solitary place amid the treasures of art.” *Id.*

“What man among you having twelve sons, and is no respecter of them, and they serve him obediently, and he saith unto the one, be thou clothed in robes and sit thou there; and to the other, be thou clothed in rags, and sit thou here, and looketh upon his sons and saith I am just!

“Behold, this I have given unto you as a parable, and it is even as I am.”^f

Let this be applied with reference to the inhabitants of the two world hemispheres, the eastern and the western. We would then have the following as the situation:

Regarding God as the Father of the human race, and accepting the Bible doctrine that there is no respect of person with God, but in every nation he that feareth the Lord and worketh righteousness is acceptable with him;^g and further accepting the Bible doctrine that God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth: that all have the right to seek God, if haply they should feel after him and find him; that he is not far removed from men, for in him they live and move and have their being; remembering also that all men are equally his offspring—accepting all this as true, then if Christ did not come to America, to give its inhabitants equal opportunity for knowledge of God and the means of human redemption, how is the divine justice, mercy, and love to be vindicated?

In America are abundant evidences of highly civilized nations having occupied its continents, both north and south. An eminent American historian writing of this says:

“Considering the vast extent of these remains, [*i. e.* of ancient cities, pyramids and temples] spreading over more than half the continent, and that in Mexico, and South America, after the lapse of an unknown series of ages, they still retain much of ancient grandeur which Time’s effacing fingers have failed to obliterate, it is certainly no wild flight of the imagination to conjecture that in ancient times, even coeval with the spread of science in the east, empires may have flourished here that would vie in power and extent with the Babylonian, the Median, or the Persian; and cities that might have rivaled Ninevah, and Tyre, and Sidon; for of these empires and these cities, the plains of Asia now exhibit fewer, and even less imposing relics, than are found of the former inhabitants of this country.”ⁱ

A more recent writer—P. De Roo, 1900—on the same theme says:

“We venture to say that the aboriginal inhabitants of our hemisphere have not till this day received their meed for ancient bravery, nautical skill,

^fDoc. and Cov. sec. 38:26, 27.

^gActs 10:34, 35.

^hActs 17:24-28.

ⁱMarcus Wilson, *History of the United States*, Book I, “American Antiquities.”

and wonderful attainments in geography and in every branch of material advancement and of civilization generally. Ancient prehistoric America was, indeed, a civilized world. * * * * * Proceeding from north to south, we find from distance to distance unmistakable traces of mighty, skilful, and learned nations that had either wholly disappeared from the face of the earth, or had become degenerated and degraded to such an extent as to be irreognizable at the time of not only the Spanish, but even of the Northman (tenth century) discoveries. * * * * * The Mayas (Central America) were intellectual giants, indeed. The ruins of their vast public works, of their costly edifices, of their sculptures and paintings, and of their finely carved symbolic writings attest the height of a civilization of which we might well be proud today. And yet all these evidences of a glorious past lay buried for long centuries before Columbus' discovery, in the virgin forests of Yucatan. Palenque, Uxmal, Copan, and several other ruined cities of Central America are as grand and beautiful monuments on the cemeteries of the New World as are Troy, Babylon, and Thebes on those of the Old; and their antiquity does not seem to be less venerable. They certainly pertain to America's remotest period. They were ruins more than they are now, in the sixteenth century; the natives of the neighboring region knew nothing of their origin, and no notice whatever of the existence of such cities appears in the annals of the surrounding civilized nations during the eight or nine centuries preceding the Spanish conquest. Bancroft is even of the opinion that the Maya grandeur was already at its height several centuries before Christ."^j

Such passages from highest authorities might be almost indefinitely multiplied, but the above is sufficient for the argument which follows:

Here are the two hemispheres east and west. Both inhabited by God's children, teeming millions of them, living through successive ages. Civilized nations rise and fall in each, but evidently they achieve great things; and the monuments of those achievements, in ancient times at least, are to be found as well in the western hemisphere, as in the eastern hemisphere. The Americas were populated by semi-civilized people, and also by wild tribes of men when discovered by Columbus. In the Bible, we have the evidence that God at "sundry times and in diverse manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets" to the people of the eastern hemisphere; and lastly also he spoke to them by his Son, "Whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world."^k This latter visitation involved the earth-probation of the Son of God among men. An earth-life, wherein he mingled with all classes and conditions of men, and was familiarly known as one ("and Lord of all,") "who went about doing good."^l An angel had proclaimed him at his birth to shepherds watching their flocks by night, as "a Savior, which

^j*America Before Columbus*, P. De Roo, Vol. I, pp. 173-178, Philadelphia and London, J. B. Lippincott Co., 1900.

^kHebrews 1:1, 2.

^lActs 10:38.

is Christ, the Lord;" and a chorus of angels straightway sang the *Gloria*: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Also at his birth came star-led magi from the east inquiring of King Herod, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."^m Inquiry among the chief priests disclosed Bethlehem of Judea as the predicted birth place of Messiah, and the magi went on to Bethlehem and found the young mother with the divine-parented Child, and there they worshiped him, opened their treasures and presented to him gifts, gold, and frankincense and myrrh. Warned of God in a dream not to return to King Herod, who sought the divine Child's life, they departed to their own country by a way other than they had come."

The young Child by this act being placed in great danger from the jealous rage of Herod, Joseph the foster father was angel-warned to depart into Egypt, there to tarry until those who sought the young Child's life were dead; and until, angel-directed, he could return with safety, and at the same time fulfil the ancient prophecy, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son."ⁿ So Joseph and Mary and Jesus returned from Egypt, and took up their abode in Nazareth, unwittingly making it possible to fulfil the prophecy concerning Messiah, that he should be called a Nazarene.^p At twelve years of age he appeared in the temple at Jerusalem, where he attracted the attention of the learned doctors, "both hearing them and asking them questions." At thirty he came to the baptism of John the Baptist, his forerunner, who when he had baptized Jesus proclaimed him both Son and Lamb of God. "which taketh away the sins of the world;" for John had received the promised sign—the Holy Ghost had rested upon Messiah in the sign of a dove, and it abode upon him, and by that token the Baptist knew this to be the Son of God; the one who should baptize with the Holy Ghost, and he saw it and bear record to his own disciples, and to all—"this is the Son of God."^q

Upon this testimony being given, Jesus opened his own public ministry. He called his twelve apostles, and commissioned them to teach. He traveled with them throughout Palestine. He instructed them by the sea shore, on the mountain top, and in the towns and villages of Galilee and Judea. In their presence he healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, made the blind to

^mLuke 2:9-14.

ⁿMatt. 2:1-12.

^oMatt. 2:15 and Hosea 11:1.

^pMatt. 2:19-23.

^qJohn 1:29-36.

see, the dumb to speak, and raised the dead; until truly it could be said of this Jesus of Nazareth, and it was said of him, that he was a man approved of God among men "by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him."^r He reprov'd unrighteousness, alike in the people and in the rulers, and thus aroused their fear, and incurred their hatred. These by wicked hands took him and crucified him.

At his crucifixion, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; the earth did quake; the rocks were rent;^s and from the sixth hour there was "darkness over all the land until the ninth hour." All to bear witness to the world that the Son of God was slain!

Though "slain," however, he could not be holden of death, and so he arose from the dead; this, too, angels—frequently his attendant ministers—proclaimed first to women, and sent them as messengers of the resurrection to the apostles.^t Later the risen Christ appeared to his disciples on various occasions. First on the evening of the resurrection day, when he gave them the most palpable evidence of the reality of the resurrection saying, when the disciples in fear had supposed that they had seen a spirit:

"Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bone, as ye see me have * * * * and while they yet believed not for joy and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye any meat? And they gave him a piece of broiled fish and an honey comb. And he took it, and did eat before them."^u

A week later he appeared to the disciples again and to Thomas, who had been absent the week before, and had doubted the report of his brethren, he said:

"Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side and be not faithless but believing."

And Thomas acclaimed the risen Messiah his Lord and God.^v After this Messiah was seen of the chosen disciples at the sea of Tiberias, where he directed from the shore their fishing, and with his hands prepared them a meal of broiled fish, of which they did eat.^w He appeared unto five hundred brethren at once, the greatest number of whom were living in the early days of Paul's ministry, and he appealed to them as witnesses

^rActs 2:22.

^sMatt. 27:50, 51.

^tMatt. 23, c. f. John 20, and Luke 24.

^uLuke 24.

^vJohn 20.

^wJohn 21.

of the resurrection.* He appeared unto the eleven disciples on a mountain—a rendezvous which he had appointed—and there he proclaimed himself as possessed of all power in heaven and in earth, and commissioned them to go and teach all nations.†

For a period of forty days after his resurrection the risen Christ continued his intermittent appearances, and his ministry among the disciples in Judea and Galilee; and finally, being assembled with them on the outskirts of Jerusalem, he gave them commandment to tarry in Jerusalem until demonstratively possessed of the Holy Ghost, after which they should become witnesses of him and his truth both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.‡

Thus divinely commissioned, the apostles went forth to the world as witnesses of the divinity of the Christ. Witnesses to the fact and to the efficacy of his atonement; witnesses to the fact of Messiah's resurrection from the dead, and hence witnesses to the truth of the resurrection of all men—to the doctrine of man's immortality; witnesses to the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ as the power of God to all who believe and obey it; witnesses to the ascension of the Christ, as also witnesses to the promise that he will in his glorified, resurrected personality return to the earth in power and great glory, even as he left it; and will establish his kingdom in fulfilment of his promise,—an everlasting kingdom, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

All this was done in the eastern hemisphere in respect of God revealing himself to men, and making known his purposes with reference to their salvation; but we are asked to believe that while God was at all this pains to reveal his purposes with reference to men and their salvation on the eastern hemisphere, he was neglectful utterly to be in anyway interested in the salvation of races and nations of men on the western hemisphere! Here he left himself without witnesses of the great truths he had taken every pains to have promulgated on the eastern hemisphere! Here successive generations of God's children, through age after age of time, and without communication with the spirituality enlightened centres of the eastern hemisphere, were left to perish in ignorance of God and his purpose with reference to men! Ignorant of God's love for men; a love so great that he even gave his only begotten Son in sacrifice, that whosoever believed in him should not perish, but have everlasting life!

Is that like God? Is it like the All-Loving Father of men?

*I Cor. 15.

†Matt. 28.

‡Acts 1. The world has no evidence that any of the disciples so commissioned ever came to America.

Under these supposed conditions, serenely accepted even by Christian people, can God—to refer back to the parable under which this argument is made—can God look upon his children inhabiting these two hemispheres and say, “I am just”? The answer is obvious; and hence I repeat, that if Christ did not come to America to reveal by personal manifestation the love of God, the glad message of human redemption, individual salvation, and each man’s immortality—oh the pity of it! Oh the injustice of it! What neglect or indifference it implies in God, with reference to so large a section of humanity—his children!

It would be beside my purpose to linger here in gloomy reflection upon the above supposed injustice of God. I am writing to deny the world’s conception of God’s limited communication of the revelation of himself, of his love, and of his purpose with reference to man. I wish to proclaim the visitation of the risen Christ to the western hemisphere, Christ in America.

V—Foreknowledge of the Christ in the Western Hemisphere

Foreknowledge of this important truth—that Christ would come in person to the western world, and here teach his gospel, and provide the means for its promulgation, we are indebted, as before briefly stated, to the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon, as is generally known, is a record of the ancient inhabitants of America abridged from larger sources of their history by two prophets—of the period corresponding to the latter half of our fourth century, A. D.—named Mormon and Moroni. Regarding their work as a whole it may be said that their abridgment of the ancient histories of American peoples gives an account of a colony known as Jaredites, who from the dispersion of peoples from the valley of the Euphrates, generally accepted as occurring some 2000 years B. C., came to America, landing somewhere on the coasts of what is now known as central America, and finally developed into a great and powerful nation with extensive colonial possessions in the north American continent. About 600 years B. C. this people perished by internecine wars, and were succeeded by colonies of Israelites which arrived in America from Palestine early in the sixth century, B. C. These colonies were known as the colony of Lehi and of Mulek. They settled in different parts of the western world, but finally were united, becoming one people about 200 years B. C. A great city called Zarahemla becoming the center of their civilization and national capital for many years.

Such, in briefest outline, were the peoples of America, and God left not himself without witnesses among them.

The colony which came from the valley of the Euphrates, were called Jaredites, after the leader of the colony. They had a knowledge of God, for Moroni, when beginning the translation of their record, informs us that the first part of the Jaredite record spoke of the "Creation of the world and also of Adam;" and gave an account of those things which happened from the days of Adam to the "great tower;"^a which account, however, Moroni did not include in his abridgment of their record, but limited his abridgment to those events in the Jaredite history from their migration from the Euphrates valley to the time of their destruction. This colony had knowledge not only of "Adam" but also of the "fall," for it is mentioned in their literature;^b and doubtless they had knowledge also of the corollary of the "fall," that is of redemption from the fall, and the means of that redemption. In their exodus from the Euphrates they had with them a prophet, and their prophet, Moriancumr by name, was in frequent communication with God, and the people in their journey often sang the praises of the Lord.^c To Moriancumr also was granted a full vision of the pre-existent spirit of the Christ—the God of anti-deluvian days; of the patriarchs, Melchizedek and Abraham; of the prophets; the Jehovah of the Jews—and he declared unto this Jaredite prophet, Moriancumr, that the form he beheld was the spirit-body of the Christ, in which likeness God had created man; and even as the Christ appeared in this spirit-body to Moriancumr, so he said, would he appear unto his people in the flesh.^d This vision, however, the prophet was commanded to conceal from his people.^e Centuries afterward a similar revelation was granted to one Emer.^f The last of the Jaredite prophets, Ether also knew of the Christ, and of his work, and was a preacher of righteousness.^g He not only "saw the days of Christ;" that is, in vision, but also declared that the western continents constituted a choice land, "the place of the New Jerusalem, which should come down out of heaven, and the holy sanctuary of the Lord; also he predicted that upon this land of the western hemisphere would be founded an holy city, to be built by the descendants of Joseph, the son of Jacob, this city to be the "Zion" of the western world.^h

Thus, from first to last, the Jaredites were not left to perish

^aEther 1:1-6.

^bEther 3:2, 13.

^cEther 6:9-12.

^dEther 3:13-16.

^eEther 3:21, 22.

^fEther 9:21, 22.

^gEther 11:1-5. Also 13:2-4.

^hEther 13. c. f.

without a knowledge of God and of his purposes with reference to man—his fall, his redemption, his immortality; or ignorant of his purposes with reference to this western world.ⁱ And God also caused a record of these facts to be preserved, and to reach the modern world through the medium of the writings of Ether in the Book of Mormon.

The Colony led to the western hemisphere by Lehi, brought with them the Jewish scriptures extant up to the time of their departure from Jerusalem, six hundred years B. C. The five books of Moses are definitely mentioned as being in the collection, as giving an account of Adam and Eve, and a record of the Jews “from the beginning, even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah, King of Judah.” Jeremiah is mentioned. Their collection also contained the writings of Isaiah which are extensively quoted in the Book of Mormon, including the fifty-third chapter, Isaiah’s great Messianic prophecy, by which the Christ’s character and mission were made known to Israel. For though the past tense form of the verbs are used—“prophetic perfect,” the future being viewed as already accomplished, it is generally conceded that this chapter, as it appears in the Old Testament, is prophetic. In this manner was it received and used by the teachers of the people descended from Lehi’s colony. If the language be changed into the future tense, this noble chapter would convey to those made acquainted with it the following view of Messiah’s charter and mission:

Few would believe the report about him; few would believe the arm or might of God revealed through him. He would grow up before the Lord as a tender plant, as a root out of dry ground—from an ancient stock, seemingly dead, the house or race of David. He would have no form nor comeliness, no especial physical attraction; and when men would see him there would be no striking beauty that would make him desirable. He would be despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Men would hide their faces from him, and would esteem him as nothing. He would bear the griefs of men, and carry their sorrows; yet they would consider him as stricken, even smitten of God, and afflicted by him; but he would be wounded for the transgressions of men, bruised for their iniquities; the chastisement of their peace would be upon him, and with his stripes would they be healed.

All men, like sheep, would be astray, every one would be turned to his own way, and the Lord would lay upon him the iniquities of all. He would be oppressed and afflicted, yet would he not open his mouth. He would be brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as sheep is dumb before her shearers, so would he open not his mouth. He would be taken from prison and from judgment, and who would declare his generation, for he would be cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgressions of God’s people would he be stricken.

ⁱEther 13.

^jSee Mosiah 13:33-35; and ch. 14.

He would make his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death. Because he would do no evil, there would be no deceit in his mouth. God would permit him to be bruised, to be put to grief, and make his soul an offering for sin. Then he would see his seed (the redeemed among men?), his days would be prolonged (through the resurrection?) and the pleasure of the Lord would prosper in his hand. He would see the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by knowledge he would justify many, for he would bear their iniquities.

For all this would God divide him a portion with the great, and he would divide the spoil with the strong; because he would pour out his soul unto death.

Then, as a final refrain of the whole chapter:

He would be numbered with the transgressors, he would bear the sins of many; and would make intercession for the transgressors.^k

In addition to this the inhabitants of the western hemisphere had also Moses' Messianic prophecy, and appealed to it as such, viz.:

"A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that all those who will not hear that prophet shall be cut off from among the people."^l

And then the Book of Mormon adds: "And now I, Nephi, declare unto you that this 'prophet' of whom Moses spake, was the Holy One of Israel; wherefore he shall execute judgment in righteousness."

Thus from the scriptures they carried with them in their journey from Jerusalem to the western world, and which they multiplied by copying, the people of the western world learned of the Hope of Israel, the promised Messiah, and the redemption to be wrought out for them.

But more important than what they learned from their scriptures concerning the coming and the mission of the Christ, was what was revealed to their own prophets, whom God raised up among them. To the first Nephi, in the sixth century B. C., was given, in great clearness, a vision of the chief events in the earth-life of Messiah: he saw, in vision, the virgin, who was to become the mother of the Son of God; the mother and child; the developed man-God; his fore-runner, who would prepare the way before him, John, the Baptist; the baptism in Jordan; the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him in the sign of the dove, the symbol of the Holy Ghost; the choosing of twelve special witnesses, the apostles; the brilliant ministry of the Christ, as manifested in the healing of the sick, cleansing the leprous,

^kIsaiah 53, and Mosiah, 14.

^lI Nephi 22:20 c. f.; Deut. 18:15, 18, 19,

opening the eyes of the blind, making the dumb to speak, the lame to walk, the deaf to hear; and having and exercising dominion over evil spirits. Also the hailing of the Son of God before a human tribunal, and his being judged by the world! "And I saw it, and bear record," writes Nephi. He saw also that the Messiah would be lifted up upon the cross, "and slain for the sins of the world." After the death of the Christ he saw the world arrayed against the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb of God; he saw the pride of the world, and its wickedness; and he saw the destruction of it, that it was great; and the angel who had instructed him through the vision, said, "thus shall be the destruction of all nations, kindreds, tongues and peoples, that shall fight against the twelve apostles of the Lamb."^m

To Nephi was also granted a vision of the Christ's visit to his own people in the western world, his appearing among them, and the establishment of his Church among them," and what befell his people afterwards. But we are concerned here chiefly with the fore-knowledge this prophet had of the Christ as set forth above.

Other prophets among this people were granted visions and revelations respecting the coming and mission of the Christ in the western world, but to none in greater fulness were these things revealed than to this first Nephi, son of Lehi.

Near the time of the advent of the Christ upon earth, however, there was a prophet sent to the people of Zarahemla, Samuel, the Lamanite, who foretold certain signs that should be given of Messiah's birth, and likewise the signs of his death. The signs of his birth were to be, first, "great lights in heaven, and a 'night' of continuous light—the night before his birth, a 'night' in which there should be no darkness, 'in so much' that it would appear to men as if it were day, 'one day and a night, and a day, as if it were one day.'" "Men should know of the rising of the sun, and of its setting; therefore they shall know * * * that there shall be two days and a night. Nevertheless the night shall not be darkened, and it shall be the night before he (Messiah) is born." Second, "a new star should arise," "such an one" as the people of the western world had never before seen; and this also should be a sign unto the people of Messiah's birth. And these signs were given that the people might be brought to believe upon the Son of God.^o

The signs of his death were to be three days of darkness; the sun would be darkened and refuse to give his light; also the moon and the stars; there would be no light on the face of this

^mI Nephi 11.

ⁿI Nephi 12.

^oHelaman 14:1-13.

western land even from the time he would suffer death, to the time that he would rise again from the dead—the space of three days. And during this time of darkness, there would be great storms and tempests, and thunderings and lightnings and earthquakes; mountains would sink and valleys rise; highways would be broken up, and many cities would become desolate. All these signs of Messiah's death, as well as the signs of his birth, were to be given "that there might be no cause for unbelief among the children of men."

When the wheels of time brought these events due, they were fulfilled even as predicted; both the signs of Messiah's birth and of his death were given. The day and a night and a day of continuous light, became a reality of experience; for at the going down of the sun there was no darkness on that night, "but it was as light as though it was mid-day." And in the morning the sun rose again "according to its proper order;" and men of the western world "knew that it was the day that the Lord should be born, because of the sign which had been given. * * * And it came to pass also that a new star did appear according to the word."^p

VI—The Appearing of Messiah in the Western World: His Ministry

The appearing of the Christ personally in America in fulfilment of the predictions of God's prophets in the western world was as follows—and because I may not hope to give the description of the events connected with that appearing half so dramatically as it is given in the text of the Book of Mormon itself, I quote, with occasional paraphrase, much of that description as it stands in the Nephite narrative.

Thirty and three years from the time the sign of Messiah's birth was given, "in the first month, in the fourth day of the month, of the thirty-fourth year," according to the Nephite method of computing time, "there arose a great storm, such an one as had never been known in all the land. And there was also a great and a terrible tempest; and there was terrible thunder, insomuch, that it did shake the whole earth as if it was about to divide asunder; and there were exceeding sharp lightnings, such as never had been known in all the land. And the city of Zarahemla took fire; and the city of Moroni sank into the depths of the sea, and the inhabitants thereof were drowned. The earth was carried up upon the city of Moronihah, that in the place of the city there came a great mountain. There was a great and terrible destruction in the land southward. But

^pIII Nephi 1.

there was a more great and terrible destruction in the land northward: for behold, the whole face of the land was changed, because of the tempest, and the whirlwinds, and the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the exceedingly great quaking of the earth. The highways were broken up, and the level roads were spoiled; and many smooth places became rough, and many were burned, and many were shaken until the buildings fell to the earth, and the inhabitants thereof were slain, and the places were left desolate. There were some cities which remained; but the damage to them was exceedingly great, and there were many in them who were slain. Some were carried away in the whirlwind; and whither they went, no man knoweth, save they know that they were carried away." Thus the face of the whole earth became deformed, because of the tempests, and the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the quaking of the earth. Behold, the rocks were rent in twain; they were broken up upon the face of the whole earth, insomuch that they were ever after found in broken fragments, and in seams, and in cracks, upon all the face of the land. And it came to pass that when the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the storm, and the tempest, and the quakings of the earth ceased—for behold, they lasted for about the space of three hours; there was thick darkness upon all the face of the land, insomuch, that the inhabitants thereof who had not fallen, could feel the vapor of darkness; and there could be no light, because of the darkness; neither candles, nor torches; neither could there be fire, kindled with their fine and exceeding dry wood, so that there could be no light at all; and there was not any light seen, neither fire, nor glimmer, neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars, so great were the mists of darkness upon the face of the land. And it came to pass that it lasted for the space of three days.

And there was great mourning, and howling, and weeping among all the people continually; yea, great were the groanings of the people, because of the darkness and the great destruction which had come upon them. And in one place they were heard to cry, saying, "O that we had repented before this great and terrible day, and then would our brethren have been spared, and they would not have been burned in that great city Zarahemla. And in another place they were heard to cry and mourn, saying, O that we had repented before this great and terrible day, and had not killed and stoned the prophets, and cast them out: then would our mothers and our fair daughters, and our children have been spared, and not have been buried up in that city Moronihah." And thus were the howlings of the people great and terrible.⁹

⁹III Nephi 8.

Then came a peculiar phenomena in revelation, the voice of God speaking so as to be heard at once by all the people throughout the land, who were spared from the great destruction—a great collective revelation. Only one other instance is recalled where such a revelation was given. This in the first promulgation of the Ten Commandments, as recorded in the Book of Exodus. In giving these commandments God addressed himself by word of mouth to the whole assembly of Israel, so that all the people heard the divine voice giving the commandments, until awe-struck they pleaded that Moses might speak unto them, and not the Lord, lest they should die.⁷ Here follows the collective revelation to the people of the western world.

“And it came to pass that there was a voice heard among all the inhabitants of the earth, upon all the face of this land, crying, Wo, wo, wo unto this people; wo unto the inhabitants of the whole earth, except they shall repent, for the devil laugheth, and his angels rejoice, because of the slain of the fair sons and daughters of my people; and it is because of their iniquity and abominations that they are fallen. Behold that great city Zarahemla have I burned with fire, and the inhabitants thereof. And, behold, that great city Moroni have I caused to be sunk in the depths of the sea, and the inhabitants thereof to be drowned. And behold, that great city Moronihah have I covered with earth, and the inhabitants thereof, to hide their iniquities and their abominations from before my face, that the blood of the prophets and the saints shall not come any more unto me against them. And behold, the city of Gilgal have I caused to be sunk, and the inhabitants thereof to be buried up in the depths of the earth. Yea, and the city of Onihah, and the inhabitants thereof, and the city of Mocom, and the inhabitants thereof, and the city of Jerusalem, and the inhabitants thereof, and the waters have I caused to come up in the stead thereof, to hide their wickedness and abominations from before my face, that the blood of the prophets and the saints shall not come up any more unto me against them. * * * Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. I was with the Father from the beginning; * * * I am in the Father, and the Father in me; and in me hath the Father glorified his name. I came unto my own, and my own received me not. And the scriptures concerning my coming are fulfilled. And as many as have received me, to them have I given to become the Sons of God; and even so will I to as many as shall believe on my name, for behold, by me redemption cometh, and in me is the law of Moses fulfilled. I am the light and the life of the world. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. * * * Behold, I have come unto the world to bring redemption unto the world, to save the world from sin: therefore whoso repenteth and cometh unto me as a little child, him will I receive: for of such is the kingdom of God. Behold, for

⁷C. f. Exodus 19 and 20. After the Ten Commandments were given, and Moses went up unto the mountain to the Lord, God said to him: “Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Ye see that I have talked with you from heaven.” Ex. 20:22. Moses later referring to this circumstance of God speaking to the children of Israel collectively, said: “Did every people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?” Deut. 4:33. c. f., 32.

such I have laid down my life, and have taken it up again; therefore repent, and come unto me ye ends of the earth, and be saved.”^s

“All the people of the land heard these sayings, and did witness it. And after these sayings there was silence in the land for the space of many hours.”

The heavy mists and blackness of the late three days of darkness drifted away, the glorious sun shone again, and was all the more welcome because of the late, protracted darkness. The tempest had sobbed itself to silence; the quaking earth had ceased to tremble, and a great calm had come to physical nature.

A multitude of people were gathered about a temple that had escaped the general wreckage of destroyed cities and shrines, holy and otherwise. They were pointing out to each other the mighty changes that had taken place upon the face of the land, marveling and wondering one to another, concerning all that had taken place, when lo, they heard a voice speaking. They knew not at first whence it came, nor could they understand at first the articulated sounds. It was not a loud voice, but it pierced them to the center, 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.” Was it reminiscent of that voice so lately collectively heard by the people, upbraiding them for their unbelief, and for their sins? A second time they heard the voice, but “understood it not.” And again the third time they heard the voice, and did open their ears to hear it; and their eyes were toward the sound thereof; and they did look steadfastly towards heaven, from whence the sound came; and behold the third time they heard the voice they understood it; 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 shall 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 tak-

ing upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.”⁴

This marvelous announcement opened Messiah’s personal ministry in the western world. In it he taught the people the means of salvation, the love the Father had for them; the love he also bore them. He continued it until he had established a ministry for teaching his truth—his gospel; he founded his Church, he gave to it his name; he commanded the ordinances of his gospel to be administered; water baptism for remission of sins, in which was to be symbolized his death, his burial, his resurrection, his walk in newness of life, signifying the new spiritual life to be of him who received the ordinance. Also Spirit baptism by the laying on of the hands, by which the Holy Ghost was imparted, and the convert brought into union with God, a spiritual life attained. The sacrament of the Lord’s supper was given as an ordinance through which the spiritual life of the believer was to be perpetuated. The resurrection was taught, the assurance of an eternal life established, giving meaning to this present life, and a strength and power unknown to those who have no such faith in the “promise,” “which God, that cannot lie,” gave “before the world began.”⁵

And thus in all things needful for man’s salvation did Christ minister unto the people while in America, and left a church as an institution through which to continue the work. And many were saved. Following the awful cataclysmic disturbances throughout the land,—the three terrible days of darkness, the earthquakes, the tempests, followed by the open and all-glorious appearing of the Christ—conversion to the truth, was universal; and the people continued in the truth, quite generally, for three generations⁶—equivalent in the Nephite method of chronology to three hundred years; a “golden age.” But in the fourth generation unbelief asserted itself; pride, which followed prosperity and peace, reared its head; corruption and sin abounded, with alienation from God as a result. Righteousness in them was overwhelmed. Unholy ambition led to strife, to plots and counterplots, to wars. The story of the inhabitants of the western world, is the story of man everywhere. He cannot long sustain “immunity from grief and pain.” “Nations melt from power’s high pinnacle when they have felt the sunshine for a while,” and downward go like avalanche “loos-

⁴III Nephi 11.

⁵See Titus 1:2. For all the above teaching of Jesus in the western world see III and IV Nephi, *passim*; and writings of Moroni, chapters 1 to 9.

⁶III Nephi 28:23; c. f. *Ibid.* 27:30-32; and I Nephi, 12:11-14, and context. Also Alma 14:10-12.

ened from the mountain's belt." It was particularly so with these western-world peoples of the fourth century of the Christian Era. And deservedly so, in their case, since they fell into sinful ways after such knowledge of truth had been vouchsafed unto them, as herein described, with such a wonderful display also of God's majesty, power, justice, mercy and love. No wonder that when they turned away from such marvelous light their darkness was correspondingly great, and their destruction sure and swift. So indeed it was; for internecine wars quickly overthrew orderly government among them, anarchy followed with all its destructive horrors, and the close of the fourth century left them in a state of barbarism, from which state they had but little recovered, except in the regions now known as Mexico, Central America, and Peru, when Europeans, in the fifteenth century of our era, reached their shores.

Such the great blessings of knowledge which God vouchsafed to the inhabitants of the western hemisphere, concerning himself, concerning the Christ, the gospel of redemption, concerning the justice, mercy and love of God. Such the account of the melancholy and rapid decline from divine grace to barbarous conditions.

Is it possible that such scenes and events as are described in the foregoing pages could have really happened in the western hemisphere without leaving some traces in the legends, and traditions of the native races? Certainly a negative answer must be made. If traces of these alleged events are not to be found, much doubt would be cast upon the things that are stated from the Book of Mormon in this chapter. And conversely, if such traces are to be found, they would be of very great evidential value in support of the truth of the Book of Mormon narrative of these matters, and of the truth of the Book of Mormon itself. To find the traces of these wonderful events in the traditions of the native races,—*Christ in the Traditions of America*—will be the subject of the chapter which follows this.