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## A Sacred History: External Evidences of the Truth of the Book of Mormon, Chapter XIV

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**Abstract:** Uses historical, linguistic, and archaeological evidence to prove the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. Basing his facts on research done by noted linguists and archaeologists of the time, the author writes concerning the god Quetzalcoatl, religious customs and ruins of advanced civilizations, comparisons between the Hebrew and Mayan languages, and the Egyptian hieroglyphic writings. Shreeve also tells of similarities in biblical beliefs between early people of both the western and eastern hemispheres and explains why Joseph Smith was incapable of writing the Book of Mormon without divine aid.

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## A SACRED HISTORY.

## External Evidences of the Truth of the Book of Mormon.

BY THOMAS A. SHREEVE.

## Chapter XIV.

FROM the "Mediation and Atonement of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," by President John Taylor, I quote as follows:

The story of the life of the Mexican Divinity, Quetzalcoatl, closely resembles that of the Savior: so closely, indeed, that we can come to no other conclusion than that Quetzalcoatl and Christ are the same being. But the history of the former has been handed down to us through an impure Lamanitish source, which has sadly disfigured and perverted the original incidents and teachings of the Savior's life and ministry.

Regarding this God Humboldt writes:

How truly surprising is it to find that the Mexicans, who seem to have been unacquainted with the doctrine of the migration of the soul and the metempsychosis *should have believed in the incarnation of the only Son of the Supreme God, Tonacateuctli*. For Mexican mythology, speaking of no other son of God, except Quetzalcoatl, who was born of Chimelman, the virgin of Tula (without man) by his breath alone, by which may be signified his word of will, when it was announced to Chimelman, by the celestial messenger, whom he despatched to inform her that she should conceive a son, it must be presumed this was Quetzalcoatl, who was the only son. Other authors might be adduced to show that the Mexicans believe that this Quetzalcoatl was both God and man; that he had previously to his incarnation existed from eternity, and that he had been the creator both of the world and man; and that he had descended to reform the world by endurance, and being King of Tula, was crucified for the sins of mankind, etc., as is plainly declared in the tradition of Yucatan, and mysteriously represented in the Mexican paintings.

The following brief extracts relating to Quetzalcoatl are from Lord Kingsborough's "Antiquities of Mexico." Speaking of a certain plate he observes:

Quetzalcoatl is there painted in the attitude of a person crucified, with the impression of nails in his hands and feet, but not actually upon the cross.

Again:

The seventy-third plate of the Borgian MS is the most remarkable of all, for Quetzalcoatl is not only represented there as crucified upon a cross of Greek form, but his burial and descent into hell are also depicted in a very curious manner.

In another place he observes:

The Mexicans believe Quetzalcoatl took human nature upon him, partaking of all the infirmities of man, and was not exempt from sorrow, pain or death, which he suffered *voluntarily to atone for the sins of man*.

Rosales, in his history, when speaking of the people of the extreme southern portion of America, states:

They had heard their fathers say, a wonderful man had come to that country who performed many miracles, cured the sick with water, caused it to rain that their crops of grain might grow, kindled fire at a breath, healing 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, and that many men and women, resplendent as the sun, dwelt with him.

Thus we see that in the traditions with regard to this especial God, we have an almost complete life of the Savior, from the announcement of His birth to his virgin mother by an angel,

to His resurrection from the grave. Had we space, other extracts could be given, showing that there were many details, not above mentioned, ascribed to Quetzalcoatl, that relate to incidents in the life of Christ. The Book of Mormon alone explains the mystery. The account there given of Christ's ministrations among the forefathers of these peoples makes the whole thing plain. We understand through that record, how and by what means they obtained this great knowledge, and can also readily perceive how the unworthy descendants of those whom the Savior visited, gradually added much childish rubbish to the original facts, making their story, like almost all other mythology, an unseemly compound of heavenly truth and puerile fable. But, in view of these facts, when all things are considered, it is almost a wonder that so much of the truth was retained to the days when America became known by Europeans.

Bancroft gives a very extended account of Quetzalcoatl, and the traditions relating to that God. In Vol. III of "Native Races" he says:

According to the account of Mendieta, tradition varied much as to the facts as to the life of Quetzalcoatl. Some said he was the son of Camaxtli, god of hunting and fishing, and of Camaxtli's wife, Chimalma. Others make mention only of Chimalma, saying that as she was sweeping one day she found a small green stone called Chalchihuite, that she picked it up, became miraculously pregnant, and gave birth to the said Quetzalcoatl. This god was worshipped as a principal deity in Cholula, where, as well as in Tlaxcala and Huejotzingo, were many of his temples. We have already had one legend from Mendieta, giving an account of the expulsion from Tulla and death of Quetzalcoatl; the following from the same source gives a different and more usual version of the said expulsion:

Quetzalcoatl came from the parts of Yucatan (although some said from Tulla) to the city of Cholula. He was a white man, of portly person, broad brow, great eyes, long black hair and large round beard; of exceedingly chaste and quiet life, and of great moderation in all things. The people had at least three reasons for the great love, reverence and devotion with which they regarded him: first, he taught the silversmith's art, a craft the Cholulans greatly prized themselves on; second, he desired no sacrifice of the blood of men or animals, but delighted only in offerings of bread, roses and other flowers, of perfumes and sweet odors; third, he prohibited and forbade all war and violence. Nor were these qualities esteemed only in the city of his chiefest labors and teachings; from all the land came pilgrims and devotees to the shrine of the gentle god. Even the enemies of Cholula came and went secure, in fulfilling their vows, and the lords of distant lands had in Cholula their chapels and idols to the common object of devotion and esteem. And only Quetzalcoatl among all the gods was preeminently called Lord; in such sort that when anyone swore, saying, by our Lord, he meant Quetzalcoatl 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 Goatzacoaleo. 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 white men would land upon their coasts, by way of the sea in which the sun rises; brethren of his and having beards like his; and that they should rule the land. 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. \* \* \* \* \*

This Quetzalcoatl 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 for the adoration of the gods; and it is held for certain that he made the calendar. He had priests who were called Quequetzalcohua, that is to say, "priests of the order of Quetzalcoatl." 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. 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 Tlalouques could rain; this the people imagined because ordinarily a month or more before the rains began there blew strong winds throughout all New Spain. Quetzalcoatl is described as having worn during life, 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. Upon one of these was carved a monkey's head, very natural. In the city of Cholula there was to be found dedicated to him a great and magnificent temple, with many steps, but each step so narrow that there was not room for a foot on it. His image had a very ugly face, with a large and heavily-bearded head. It was not set on its feet but lying down, and covered with blankets. This, it is said, was done as a memorial that he would one day return to reign. For reverence of his great majesty, his image was kept covered, and to signify his absence, it was kept lying down, as one that sleeps, as one that lies down to sleep. In awaking from that sleep, he was to rise up and reign. The people also of Yucatan revered this God Quetzalcoatl, calling him Kukulcan, and saying that he came to them from the west, that is, from New Spain, for Yucatan is eastward therefrom. From him it is said the kings of Yucatan are descended, who call themselves Cocomes, that is to say, "judges" or "hearers."

(To be Continued.)

## OUR TERRITORY.

*A lecture delivered before the 76th Quorum of Seventies in Ogden, by Moroni F. Brown.*

(Concluded from page 307.)

THE game attraction of Utah affords rare sport for those who are fond of testing the fleetness of the deer and antelope, and many Nimrods have had occasion to test their own fleetness through getting in too close quarters with the grizzly and other species of bear which abound in our mountains. Duck and chicken hunting, too, are amusements indulged in by many in certain seasons of the year: indeed millions of wild ducks fly about the shores of Great Salt Lake every Fall.

The patient angler resorts to the cool mountain brook, where the finny denizens of the limpid element fall a prey to the treacherous hook, and from far into the recesses of the mountains the merry voices of excursionists may be heard during the Summer months. There they quaff the sparkling water from the brooklet and for a fortnight subsist upon trout and herring, each returning with an increase in vigor and health that would indicate an improvement in health.

The attractions of city life in Utah are numerous when considered in connection with the recent settlement of this region. The symmetry with which our cities are laid out is indeed commendatory of their founders. The streets run at right

angles and according to the four cardinal points of the compass, and being of uniform width, present a most pleasing appearance, bordered as they are with shade trees whose foliage protects the pedestrians from the scorching rays of the sun.

To conclude without referring to the public school system of Utah would be manifesting too great a disregard for education, for indeed this is a matter to which the people of our territory attach very great importance; and though our public schools have received no success from Congress, the absence of illiteracy (so to speak) in Utah, will compare favorably with that of most of the states in the union, as attested by the statistics.

For many years the resources of Utah, aided by her numerical qualification as to population, has entitled her to a station amid the united and independent states of America; but her people have been considered as aliens because of their religious belief and practices, and therefore the strong hand of the nation is, and has been against them. The American Eagle fails to screech a note in their favor while "Old Independence Bell" in a broken condition would faintly echo in solemn tones the like condition of the constitution of the United States. But methinks I can see in the dim future a "star of promise" that shall ere long burst through the cloud that has ever hung over and obscured this territory; and the fetters with which her people are bound shall be broken, and they shall be placed on a level with all law-abiding citizens. Then, and not until then, will the rights bequeathed by the constitution to peoples of all creeds, colors and nationalities be made manifest in Utah. Then too will the resources and attractions of Utah rise to a brilliancy unsurpassed by those of any other part of the Union.

May that God who controls the destinies of all nations, who is able to say, "Thus far and no farther," to the head of this nation: I say, may He overrule all things for the welfare of His people and the accomplishment of His glorious purposes in the peaceful vales of the much-famed Utah, as also throughout the whole world.

## BE USEFUL.

"A MAN that is too well born for a trade is very well born for the gallows." There is a deal too much disrespect for honest labor for the healthful maintenance of either morals or government. There exists a notion among a great class of people that when a person is relieved by the possession of property from arduous toil, it becomes a degradation for him to labor at all. If the habit of work is so fixed that the moneyed man cannot remain idle, he apologizes for it as a sort of vice, and refers to "habit" much as he would refer to addiction to opium or rum, as something to be ashamed of, but which, unfortunately had got the better of him. His children are carefully educated to "sink the shop," and turn up their noses at those who work for a living. In seeking matrimonial alliances for them he looks for wealth rather than industry, and chooses as a husband for his daughter the man who has his inheritance in bank, no matter how unfit he may be to cope with misfortune, rather than the man who has a fortune in brain and will win his own way. Idleness and extravagance are curses worse than the plagues of Egypt: they breed sorrow, wretchedness, crime and misery; send sons into drunkards' graves and felons' cells, and put daughters on the streets, into madhouses and garrets of poverty. Every boy, rich or poor, should be taught that idleness is a crime—and girls should be taught it no less than boys.