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Archaeology and the Book of Mormon Part IX: Quetzalcoatl —The "White Bearded God" or Jesus Christ (continued)

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Abstract: This series is a comprehensive compilation of archaeological artifacts in Mesoamerica that relate to Book of Mormon places and peoples. It is copiously illustrated with photographs of buildings, pottery, statues, and carvings. The series includes evidences of Christ's appearance to the Americas and reviews ancient Mayan writings, including *Title of the Lords of Totonicapan*, the *Popol Vuh*, the *Annals of the Cakchiquels*, and the *Works of Ixtlilxochitl*. The author also discusses white and dark people in ancient America. The ninth part concludes a discussion on Quetzalcoatl and Jesus Christ.

ARCHAEOLOGY and the BOOK OF MORMON

by President Milton R. Hunter

OF THE FIRST COUNCIL OF THE SEVENTY

Part IX

Quetzalcoatl—The “White Bearded God” or Jesus Christ

(Continued)

THE FACT WAS presented in the January, 1956, issue of THE IMPROVEMENT ERA that the universally accepted Indian traditions held by the aborigines of North, Central, and South America at the time of the discovery of the New World dealt with a “White Bearded God,” known in Mexico as Quetzalcoatl and by various other names by other Indian tribes.¹

The identity of this “Fair God,” described as a radiant, white, beautiful being, dressed in a long, white robe, has been a puzzle to the Catholic padres, to historians, archaeologists, anthropologists, and others who have studied these Indian traditions. Numerous efforts have been made to identify him with certain historical characters, such as one of Jesus’ apostles—perhaps Thomas or Bar-

¹Daniel G. Brinton, *American Hero-Myths* (Philadelphia, 1882), p. 27; Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Native Races* (San Francisco, 1883), vol. 5, pp. 23-24; William H. Prescott, *Mexico and the Life of the Conqueror, Fernando Cortes* (New York, 1898), vol. 1, p. 64, vol. 2, pp. 388-389.



—Photo by Otto Done

Jade representation of the “White Bearded God” from early Christian era. Museum in Guatemala City, Guatemala, Central America.

tholomew—or with the Savior himself.² Others have thought that Quetzalcoatl may have been a European Christian who had visited America perhaps a few hundred years before the arrival of Columbus.³ In 1882 President John Taylor gave what is accepted by Latter-day Saints as the correct identification of the “White Bearded God.” To quote:

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. . . .⁴

The knowledge of Christ’s crucifixion was well-known in Book of Mormon days. Nephi taught the people that

. . . the God of Jacob yieldeth himself, according to the words of the angel, as a man, into the hands of wicked men, to be lifted up, . . . and to be crucified, . . .⁵

Nephi’s brother, Jacob, told the Nephites of Christ’s crucifixion. To quote:

. . . And he also has shown unto me that the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, should manifest himself unto them in the flesh; and after he should manifest himself they should scourge him and crucify him, according to the words of the angel who spake it unto me.⁶

Somewhat later Jacob declared:

Wherefore, as I said unto you, it must needs be expedient that Christ—for in the last night the angel spake unto me that this should be his name—should come among the Jews, . . . and they shall crucify him— . . .⁷

King Benjamin gave a marvelous sermon regarding the Savior to the

²P. De Roo, *History of America Before Columbus* (Philadelphia, 1900), p. 424.

³Thor Heyerdahl, *American Indians in the Pacific* (New York, 1952), pp. 219-345; Paul Herrmann, *Conquest by Man* (New York, 1954), pp. 170-172.

⁴John Taylor, *Mediation and Atonement* (Salt Lake City, 1882), p. 201.

⁵1 Nephi 19:10.

⁶2 Nephi 6:9.

⁷*Ibid.*, 10:3.



Above: Paganized ancient stone statue of the “White Bearded God” in museum at Chichicastenango, Guatemala.

Below: Pre-Columbian jadeite head representing the bearded Quetzalcoatl, Mexico. (Photo: Musée de l’Homme, Paris. Courtesy of Rand McNally & Co. Reproduced from Thor Heyerdahl, “American Indians in the Pacific,” 1952, Plate XIX.)

people in ancient America in which he made the following statement:

And lo, he [Jesus] cometh unto his own, . . . and . . . they shall consider him a man, and say that he hath a devil, and shall scourge him, and shall crucify him.⁸

With such an important event so thoroughly known among the Nephites and Lamanites, it would be natural for a knowledge of it to be carried down from age to age among their descendants, the American Indians. History testifies that such was the case. Several Catholic padres

⁸Mosiah 3:9.



Ancient Aztec representation in stone of the "Fair God," Quetzalcoatl. (Photo: Dietzschy, 1941. Courtesy of Rand McNally & Co. Reproduced from Heyerdahl, *ibid.*, Plate XXII, No. 1.)



Early stone statue representing the "White Bearded God" from Oaxaca, Mexico. (Courtesy of Rand McNally & Co. Reproduced from Heyerdahl, *ibid.*, Plate XXI, No. 2.)

were told by the Indians that Quetzalcoatl had suffered death by crucifixion. Von Humboldt, an important explorer and collector of Indian traditions during the past century, states that he "... was crucified for the sins of mankind, as is plainly declared in the tradition of Yucatán, and mysteriously represented in the Mexican paintings."⁹

Lord Kingsborough collected numerous Indian legends and writings of Catholic fathers and published them in nine massive volumes under the title of *Antiquities of Mexico*. In his famous collection he presents much evidence of the crucifixion of the "White Bearded God." Speaking of an early Mexican document, President John Taylor quotes Kingsborough as stating:

"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 that 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.*"¹⁰ (Italics were Pres. Taylor's.)

Juan de Torquemada, a famous Catholic missionary who spent much of his life laboring with the Indians in Mexico and in gathering their traditions, wrote a book entitled *Monarquía Indiana*. This book was first published in Spain in 1613 A.D. In it Torquemada wrote the following interesting report:

A friar named Diego de Mercado, a grave man and a dignitary of his Order, one of the most exemplary *religionists* of his time, told and wrote above his signature that years ago he had held a conversation with an Otomi Indian over seventy years old on matters relating to our holy faith. The Indian narrated to him how, long ago, the Otomis were in possession of a book, handed down from father to son and guarded by persons of importance, whose duty it was to explain it. Each page of that book had two columns, and between these columns were paintings which represented Christ crucified, whose features wore the expression of sadness; and such is the God who

reigns, they said. For the sake of reverence, they did not turn the leaves with their hands, but with a tiny stick kept along with the book for that purpose. The friar having asked the Indian what the contents of the volume were and its teachings, the old man could not give the details, but said that, were it in existence yet, it would be evident that the teachings of that Book and the preaching of the friar were one and the same. But the venerable heirloom had perished in the ground, where its guardians had buried it at the arrival of the Spaniards.¹¹

Bishop Bartholome de las Casas, a famous Spanish missionary, devoted most of his life to teaching the Indians of Chiapas, Mexico, and recording their beliefs. He reported that Francis Hernandez, a priest laboring under

(Continued on following page)

⁹Von Humboldt, cited in Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

¹⁰Lord Kingsborough, *Antiquities of Mexico*, cited in Taylor, *idem.*

¹¹Juan de Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana* (first published in Spain in 1615), 1732 ed., tomo, p. 15.

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his direction, wrote him a letter stating that the Indians he had contacted possessed a tradition of a God-head composed of three members, similar to the Holy Trinity worshiped by the Christians. Icona was the name the Indians applied to the individual comparable to God the Father; Bacab was their name for Jesus Christ; and Echuac was comparable to the Holy Ghost. The letter also stated that one of the old native chiefs claimed that the following story had come down to him from his ancient ancestors:

"... They [the Chiapan Indians] tell that Eopuco put him [Bacab, the "White Bearded God"] to death, had him scourged, placed a crown of thorns on his head, and hung him with extended arms from a pole; not meaning that he was nailed but bound to it; and to better explain, the chief extended his own arms. There he finally died, . . ."¹²

The foregoing tradition of the Chiapan Indians constitutes one more version of the crucifixion of the "Fair God." De Roo adds the following information concerning their tradition:

We have noticed before that the Chiapan son-god, Bacab, who had been scourged by Eopuco and crowned with thorns, had also been the divine son of the Mexican virgin goddess. This same son of Chibirias or Chimalma had been put to death by crucifixion; and this sacrilegious crime had been perpetrated on a Friday. So had the Chiapans been informed by bearded men who in ancient times had taught them to confess their sins and to fast every Friday in honor of the death of Bacab. . . .¹³

The foregoing quotations from several writers indicate that at the time of the discovery of America—even before the aborigines had had opportunities to receive information from European Christians—the knowledge of the crucifixion of the "Fair God" was widespread. Since this event was thoroughly known by the inhabitants of ancient America, as is attested in the Nephite records, it is logical to conclude that that is the source of the Indian traditions.

A graphic and vivid account is given in the Book of Mormon of the darkness that prevailed upon the Western Hemisphere and the terrible destruction which took place at the time of Christ's crucifixion and the excessive darkness that prevailed while the

Master's body lay in the tomb.¹⁴ It is not strange that the knowledge of such momentous events would survive until after the discovery of America by Columbus, and documentary sources testify that this was the case.

As a result of his extensive study of the American aborigines, Dr. P. De Roo made the following statement:

Another circumstance of our Saviour's death seems to be remembered in Mexico, for it is related in its traditions that, at the disappearance of Quetzalcoatl, both sun and moon were covered in darkness, while a single star appeared in the heavens.¹⁵

Compare the following description from the Book of Mormon with De Roo's statement:

And it came to pass that there was thick darkness upon all the face of the land, inasmuch that the inhabitants thereof who had not fallen could feel the vapor of darkness.

And there was not any light seen, neither fire, nor glimmer, neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars, for so great were the mists of darkness which were upon the face of the land.¹⁶

Students of the Book of Mormon readily recognize the fact that the Indians' tradition, mentioned by De Roo, that "... a single star appeared in the heavens" at Quetzalcoatl's death, confuses an event that took place at the birth of Christ with the events that occurred at his death; for the Nephites records declare:

... Samuel, the Lamanite did prophecy. . . .

Behold, I give unto you a sign; for five years more cometh, and behold, then cometh the Son of God to redeem all those who shall believe on his name.

And behold, there shall a new star arise, such an one as ye never have beheld; and this also shall be a sign [of Christ's birth] unto you.¹⁷

The fulfilment of this prophecy is recorded as follows: "And it came to pass also that a new star did appear, according to the word."¹⁸

A marvelous account of the destruction which took place on the Western Hemisphere at the time of Christ's crucifixion was recorded by Ixtlilxochitl, an Indian prince who lived near the city of Mexico (1600 A.D.).

To quote:

... the sun and the moon eclipsed, and the earth trembled, and the rocks broke, and many other things and signs took place, . . . This happened in the year of *ce Calli*, which, adjusting this count with ours, comes to be at the same time when Christ our Lord suffered, and they say that it happened during the first days of the year. . . .

A few days after he [Quetzalcoatl] went from there, the *destruction and desolation* related of the third age of the world took place, and then was destroyed that memorable and sumptuous building and tower in the city of Cholula, which was like another tower of Babel, which these people were building almost with the same designs, it being destroyed by the wind. And later those who escaped the extermination of the third age built a temple on its ruins to Quetzalcoatl, whom they placed as god of wind, because the wind was the cause of its destruction, they understanding that this calamity was sent by his hand; and they likewise called it *ce Acatl*, which was the name of the year of his coming. And, as it seems through the mentioned histories and annals, the aforementioned happened some years after the Incarnation of Christ our Lord.¹⁹

Certain historians have maintained that Ixtlilxochitl received his information from the Catholic priests. It is logical to believe that the Catholic fathers could not have given Ixtlilxochitl any information regarding the terrific destruction and unusual phenomena of nature on the Western Hemisphere at the time of Christ's crucifixion, since they knew nothing of those events. Such information could have come from only one of three sources, namely: first, from the Book of Mormon—not published until 230 years later; second, from the heavens through direct revelation; and third, from records handed down from his ancestors and traditions received from the old people. The third Ixtlilxochitl claimed to be the source of the information he used in writing his marvelous account of the history of the American Indians. Thus it seems to the writer that the *Works of Ixtlilxochitl* must be taken very seriously by students and in general esteemed as genuine and authoritative.

The Indian legends as reported by the Catholic missionaries, the statements made by Ixtlilxochitl, and the story given in the Book of Mormon all agree on several important points relative to the events which occurred

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¹²Las Casas, cited in De Roo, *op. cit.*, p. 373.

¹³*Idem*, p. 431.

¹⁴Nephi 8:9-10.

¹⁵De Roo, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

¹⁶Nephi 8:20, 22.

¹⁷Helaman 14:1-2, 5.

¹⁸Nephi 1:21.

¹⁹*Works of Ixtlilxochitl*, cited in Milton R. Hunter and Thomas Stuart Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon* (Oakland, 1950), p. 190.

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in America at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ or Quetzalcoatl; for example, the *Works of Ixtlilxochitl* speak of a terrible "destruction and desolation" which took place in ancient America, and then the significant statement appears: "This happened . . . at the same time when Christ our Lord suffered." That statement is in complete agreement with the account given in the Book of Mormon. Ixtlilxochitl also wrote: ". . . and it seems through the ancient histories and annals, the aforementioned happened some years after the incarnation of Christ our Lord." As part of the Book of Mormon's detailed account of the terrific "destruction and desolation" which occurred on the Western Hemisphere, the Nephite historian placed the event at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.²⁰

Another significant point is made by both Ixtlilxochitl and the Book of Mormon writers. Each account declares that Jesus was crucified during the early part of their year which perhaps would be in early April according to our calendar. Ixtlilxochitl states, "And they say it happened during the first days of the year"; and the Book of Mormon declared that the event occurred, according to their system of reckoning time, "in the first month, [and] on the fourth day of the month."²¹ (Italics supplied by author.)

The Nephites changed their point of reckoning time when the signs of the birth of Christ were fulfilled, as predicted by Samuel the Lamanite, reckoning it from that point forward.²²

The parallels between these accounts are so remarkable that they indicate that the Indians of Mexico held in remembrance the Nephites' dating of events and the knowledge of what occurred down to the time of Ixtlilxochitl, which postdated the Spanish conquest. Therefore, the historical data relative to Christ's crucifixion and resurrection were recorded in the Book of Mormon at the time the events occurred, widely disseminated among the people, and then handed down from age to age among the Indian descendants of the Nephite-Lamanite peoples.

Not only did the ancient American

prophets bear witness of Christ's crucifixion, but also prophet after prophet throughout the entire course of Nephite history testified of his resurrection and ascension; in fact, no book gives one a stronger assurance of these facts than does the Book of Mormon.²³ Alma predicted the "resurrection of Christ, and his ascension into heaven,"²⁴ declaring that thereafter he would appear to his descendants.²⁵ King Benjamin gave even a more detailed explanation of his resurrection, in which he predicted that ". . . he shall rise the third day from the dead; . . ."²⁶ Samuel, the Lamanite, also prophesied that following Jesus' death ". . . the space of three days" shall pass, and then "he shall rise again from the dead."²⁷

Since these facts were widely disseminated among both Nephites and Lamanites, it was natural for them to be handed down through the ages in Indian traditions. Francis Hernandez's report of the natives of Chiapas shows how accurately this knowledge had been retained by these Indians to the time of the Spanish conquest. According to his report, the "Fair God" of Chiapas

. . . remained dead three days, and the third day he came to life again and ascended into heaven, where he is now with the Father. Immediately after came Echuac, who is the Holy Ghost and who supplied the earth all that was needed.²⁸

Dr. P. De Roo was of the opinion that "Our Lord's resurrection is plainly brought to mind by the [foregoing] statement of the venerable Chiapan chief. . . ."²⁹

Following his resurrection and ascension, according to a beautiful account given in the Book of Mormon, Jesus Christ appeared to the inhabitants of ancient America and performed a mighty work. King Benjamin predicted these events as follows:

. . . the Lord Omnipotent . . . shall come down from the heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay, and shall go forth amongst men, working mighty miracles, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, causing the lame to walk, the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and curing all manner of diseases.³⁰

After Christ had visited the Nephites and returned back into heaven, the historian summarized his benevolent works as follows:

. . . after having healed all their sick, and their lame, and opened the eyes of their blind and unstopped the ears of the deaf, and even had done all manner of cures among them, and raised a man from the dead, and had shown forth his power unto them, . . . [Jesus] ascended unto the Father—³¹

Compare Paul Gaffarel's report of the folklore of the Indians of Brazil with the foregoing quotations from the Book of Mormon. He stated that the "Fair God" had

. . . raised the dead to life again, made the lame walk and the blind to see.³² Finally, having one day called together a great number of people, he ascended into the air and was transformed into the sun who enlightens this earth.³³

According to the Nephites, after Jesus had accomplished his benevolent works he ". . . departed from them and ascended into heaven. And the disciples saw and did bear record that he ascended into heaven."³⁴ Mormon also wrote:

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, have miracles ceased because Christ hath ascended into heaven, and hath sat down on the right hand of God, to claim of the father his rights?³⁵

The legend of the Mixtec Indians of Mexico maintained that the "Fair God," Wixipecocha, ". . . first went off to the mountains on the summit of which he appeared to them for a few moments and then vanished. . . ."³⁶

Before his final ascension, Jesus Christ informed the inhabitants of ancient America of his second coming. To quote: "And he expounded all things, even from the beginning until the time that he shall come in his glory—"³⁷ (Italics supplied by author.) The Master also declared:

And behold, this people will I establish in this land, unto the fulfilling of the covenant which I made with your father Jacob; and it shall be a new Jerusalem. And the powers of heaven shall be in the midst of

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²⁰1 Nephi 19:8-13; Helaman 14:14, 20-24; 3 Nephi 8:1-6, 19-22.

²¹*Ibid.*, 8:5.

²²Helaman 14:1-4; 3 Nephi 1:4-21; 8:1-5.

²³3 Nephi 6:20.

²⁴Alma 40:20.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 16:20.

²⁶Mosiah 3:10.

²⁷Helaman 14:20.

²⁸Francis Hernandez's letter to Las Casas, cited in De Roo, *op. cit.*, p. 373.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 430.

³⁰Mosiah 3:5-8.

³¹3 Nephi 26:15.

³²Mosiah 3:5-6; 3 Nephi 17:7-10; 4 Nephi 1:5.

³³Paul Gaffarel, *Historie de la Decouverte de l' America* (Paris, 1892), p. 428, cited in De Roo, *op. cit.*, p. 427; 3 Nephi 11:10-11; Mosiah 16:9; Alma 38:9; D & C 88:5-13.

³⁴3 Nephi 18:39; 19:1; 26:15; Mosiah 15:9.

³⁵Moroni 7:27.

³⁶De Roo, *op. cit.*, p. 433.

³⁷3 Nephi 26:3.

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this people; yea, even I will be in the midst of you.³⁸

These predictions of his second coming and the promises that he would bless the people at that time were preserved also in the beliefs of the various Indian tribes; for example, Ixtlilxochitl reported Quetzalcoatl's prediction of his return to earth as follows:

And at the time he went about taking leave of these people, he told them that in time to come, in a year which he called *ce Acatl*, he would return, and then his doctrine would be received, and his children would be masters and would possess the land. . . .³⁹

Regarding the second coming of Quetzalcoatl, William H. Prescott wrote:

. . . After presiding over the golden age of Anahuac, [Quetzalcoatl] disappeared as mysteriously as he had come, . . . As he promised to return at some future day, his reappearance was looked for with confidence by each succeeding generation.⁴⁰

Prescott also wrote:

The Mexicans looked confidently to the return of the benevolent deity [Quetzalcoatl]; and this remarkable tradition, deeply cherished in their hearts, prepared the way . . . for the future success of the Spaniards.⁴¹

An archaeologist named A. Hyatt Verrill, speaking of the promise of Quetzalcoatl's second coming, wrote:

. . . before he disappeared [he] prophesied that long after his departure . . . eventually he would return and re-establish the Aztecs and their faith. . . . There are countless Mexicans today who are still expecting their Plumed Serpent God to reappear and they still superstitiously make offerings to him in the ancient temple of Quetzalcoatl.⁴²

Dr. P. De Roo cites Father de Mercado, an early Catholic missionary, as claiming that he had obtained from the Totonac Indians who lived near Tampico, Mexico, the following legend:

Father de Mercado continues, telling what further discoveries he made in regard to the natives' dogmatic theology,—namely, that in some provinces of New Spain, as among the Totonacs, the people expected the advent of the Son of the great God into this world; and it was said he had to come

in order to renew all things; meaning by this not a spiritual renovation, but an earthly material improvement, as they expressed it by saying that at his coming the loaves of bread would be much larger and everything else would grow better in like

manner. With the intention of hastening the arrival of the Son of God, they celebrated a religious feast at a certain season of the year and sacrificed eighteen persons, men and women, whom they encouraged

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The Daylight—and the Darkness

Richard L. Evans

IN THE BEGINNING . . ." it is written "the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night."¹ It seems significant that the first recorded act of the Creator was to divide the light from the darkness. There are many phases of this thought that could be considered, but we should like to turn today to one sidelight of the subject: We shouldn't want to seem too old-fashioned because it hasn't seemed too long since we were young. But because men have found the mechanical means of lighting the night in a limited way, there appears to be an ever-growing tendency to recognize less and less the difference between night and day; perhaps especially among young people who seem to extend their activities to an ever yet later hour, and to go out to begin an evening's activity at about the hour when some of us were once expected to come in. But no matter how successfully men have lighted up limited areas of the earth, there is still a difference between day and night, and there are still safeguards that are essential to the safety and virtue and peace and protection of people. And there is still consideration due to parents who have an obligation to see that those for whom they are responsible are safely in, without having to wait and wonder at all hours. And there are still matters of health and safety to consider. A man cannot burn the candle at both ends without shortening the effective length of life. He cannot run both day and night and think to the best of his ability. And he cannot in the distortion of darkness make the safest decisions. The decisions of life should be looked at in the light. Of course there are some pursuits and some essential services that are required around the clock, and there are some who must turn the night to day to render such services. But despite all such exceptions, it is still true that the day is the safest time for decisions, for work, and for being about. And it is still true that deeds of darkness tend to be done in the dark. The Lord God "called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night," and there is still a distinguishing difference between the two.

"The Spoken Word"

FROM TEMPLE SQUARE
PRESENTED OVER KSL AND THE COLUMBIA BROADCASTING
SYSTEM, NOVEMBER 27, 1955

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¹Genesis 1:1-5.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 20:22.

³⁹*Works of Ixtlilxochitl*, cited in Hunter and Ferguson, op. cit., pp. 214-215.

⁴⁰Prescott, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 388.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 64.

⁴²A. Hyatt Verrill, *America's Ancient Civilizations* (New York, 1953), p. 104.

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to die with the thought that they were to be messengers of the country to the great God, sent to ask and beg him that he would deign to despatch them his Son, . . .⁴³

Near the close of the Book of Mormon period the inhabitants of ancient America apostatized from the true religion of Jesus Christ, retaining, however, many of the truths in an adulterated form. One of the pagan practices which developed among their descendants, the Indians, was the making and worshiping of stone statues of the "White Bearded God." The Catholic padres who first visited Indian tribes in various countries in Meso-America reported that they saw a number of these stone representations of the "Fair God." Some of the statues were destroyed by the Catholic conquistadores; others, however, have survived to the present time.

On our recent trip to Guatemala, it was intensely interesting to me to be shown in the museum in Guatemala City a representation in jade of the "White Bearded God." (See photo.) The director of the museum stated that as near as could be ascertained this jade figurine would date during the early Christian period.

Two or three days after visiting the museum in Guatemala City, our touring party visited Chichicastenango. There in a small museum we were shown a stone statue of the "Fair God," a rather grotesque representation however. (See photo.) The Quiché Maya Indians at Chichicastenango paid unusual reverence to it.

Also, photographs of one jade head and one stone statue of Quetzalcoatl from the valley of Mexico and one stone statue from Oaxaca are reproduced in this article making five representations of the "White Bearded God" which have survived in Mexico and Central America to our day, and there may be others which have not come to the writer's attention.

Although these representations are somewhat crude, depicting a degenerated conception of the Savior, yet they are important, tangible evidence, showing that the Indians did have deep-rooted traditions of the "White Bearded God" long before Columbus discovered America. Thus

⁴³De Roo, *op. cit.*, pp. 425-426.

scholars are confronted with the problem of the identity of the "Fair God."

As a result of a careful study of the *Works of Ixtlilxochitl* and other Indian writings, the perusal of Indian traditions gathered by Catholic padres, and an acquaintance with the contents of the Book of Mormon, the writer concludes that all of these sources bear witness to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, who with his Father, is the God—the Creator and Controller of the universe, and that following his resurrection he visited the inhabitants of ancient America—the ancestors of the Indians—and performed marvelous works among them before his final ascension into heaven. Also, the writer concludes that Quetzalcoatl and Jesus Christ are the same individual. Furthermore, archaeological findings, as well as Indian traditions—whether reported by native writers or collected by colonial chroniclers—corroborate the claims made by the Nephite historians; therefore, these traditions and archaeological finds bear witness to the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon and hence to its divine authenticity.

(To be continued)

Give and Take

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won't be happy, and if they're not happy they won't grow up whole. Sure, there is a good opportunity here, but I can probably find something at the college there. I got to thinking today that maybe this job here looked so good to me because I wanted to come back to the Midwest. My childhood was not like yours. When I got back from the Army and took my savings and went on a mission, it was the first real happiness I had known. My mission was here. Here is where I had been really happy."

Pearl went over to the couch and sat close beside him. She was deeply moved at the confession he had just made and didn't know what to say next. Finally she touched the crystal beads she wore and told him what her grandmother had said when she gave them to her.

"Maybe we've both been wanting too much of our past in our marriage," she said. "You really found yourself here, and I haven't done that yet. You were right when you said I was childish. I may as well grow up here as any place. I'll have to

(Concluded on following page)

FEBRUARY 1956

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