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Hawaiian Mythology

Author(s): R.G. Lambert

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Abstract: Sees some elements of Hawaiian myth as correlative to the Book of Mormon. Sites some particulars of Captain Cook.

HAWAIIAN MYTHOLOGY.

BY R. G. L.

THINKING something on the subject of the mythology of the people among whom I am laboring as a missionary would be of interest to the many youthful readers of the INSTRUCTOR; I shall try to tell them a little about what I have heard and am hearing in my travels in the distant land, and in the midst of the strange people of the Sandwich Islands.

I am now in company with Bro. Bryant Stringham traveling and laboring on the island of Kauai, the most northerly of this group, and by far the most pleasant island of the lot.

In our travels and labors we hear much of the mythology of this people, some of which is indeed very foolish and nonsensical to educated persons or to those who have been reared in the light of Christianity, or who have been taught in the principles of the gospel, yet some of it is of interest to the student, or a person of a reasoning mind.

We are led to believe that these islands were peopled from the American continent about fifty years before Christ. By referring to the Book of Mormon, Book of Alma, thirtieth chapter, third and fourth verses, we see an account of certain ships sailing into the west sea to the north from the isthmus or narrow neck of land, and that they were never again heard from. Now the tradition of this people is that they came from the direction where the sun rises, in vessels of some kind, or in a large canoe, as they express it, which goes to substantiate the quotation alluded to, as being the correct account of the source from whence they came.

Again, they were taught to believe in a Savior, or in other words that they were in a fallen state, and that a God, whom they term "Lano," would come to save them from their fallen condition and raise them from their degradation and sin. Of course this tradition is somewhat mixed up with foolish mythology, but this is the substance of it.

Now let us turn again to the Book of Mormon, the book that God has given us by divine inspiration, and examine the teachings of the ancient prophets among the Nephites, before the date that I first quoted, and we will find that for generations they had been taught to expect Christ to come as their Redeemer, to redeem them from their fallen or sinful state. This had been taught to the Nephites, and also to the Lamanites; then how natural for this people to expect a Savior, when we consider that they left that continent fifty years before His birth. How natural, when we look at human weakness and sin, for them in their ignorance, being robbed of a written language, to change the form that God had given to the superstitious myth they now believe in.

Perhaps a great many of the readers of the INSTRUCTOR have heard of and read that Captain Cook was the discoverer of these islands, though few perhaps have heard that the inhabitants worshiped him as "Lano," the God they expected, when he arrived. They expected their God to come in great power, to save them, or exalt them to some position greater than that they then occupied. They also expected him to be white, as they aver that they were formerly; but for sinning against the great God they were cursed with a skin of darkness, which will agree with some things we read in the Book of Mormon.

Now as the poor natives in their ignorance could conceive of nothing greater than a floating island, as they called a ship, they thought that it must be "Lano," their expected God, and as such, worshiped him; and he (Cook) in his wickedness let them do so undecieved; and it was through this he lost his

life, (so the natives' side of the story goes). It was, perhaps, a just retribution from God, for his wicked actions in letting his fellow men worship him.

Captain Cook's actions were all very strange to this people, some of which I will relate as they are somewhat amusing. When they saw him smoking they thought he was breathing forth fire and smoke similar to the volcano, and worshiped him on that account. He wore, as was then the fashion, a three cornered hat, and they thought that was the shape of his head. When he had the cannon fired from the vessels, they thought that he was calling thunder and lightning from heaven. This all seems foolish to us, but to them they could account for it in no other way than that he was a God, and as such, had power over the elements.

I now bid you "aloha" for the present, with a promise of more anon.

ANCIENT HARVESTERS.

IT is scarcely necessary for us to tell even the smallest of our readers that the engraving here presented is intended to represent a scene of the far east—the land of the Bible.



The dress of the persons pictured is sufficient to indicate that. It is not the style in vogue in the colder countries of the West; nor is the primitive style of harvesting here shown that which generally prevails at the present time in Europe and America. If a modern western harvest scene were presented to us we should expect to see one of the ingenious