

cult of Jahweh went hand in hand with it, so that a sort of modified mystic monotheism, based on Judaism, became the early creed of the new cosmopolitan Christian church.

Other legends, of a sort familiar in the lives of the founders of creeds and churches elsewhere, grew up about the life of the Christian leader ; or at any rate, incidents of a typical kind were narrated by his disciples as part of his history. That a god or a godlike person should be born of a woman by the ordinary physiological processes of humanity seems derogatory to his dignity—perhaps fatal to his godhead : * therefore it was asserted—we know not whether truly or otherwise—that the founder of Christianity, by some mysterious afflatus, was born of a virgin. Though described at times as the son of one Joseph, a carpenter, of Nazareth, and of Mary, his betrothed wife, he was also regarded in an alternative way as the son of the Hebrew god Jahweh, just as Alexander, though known to be the son of Philip, was also considered to be the offspring of Amon-Ra or Zeus Ammon). We are told, in order to lessen this discrepancy (on the slender authority of a dream of Joseph's), how Jesus was miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit of Jahweh in Mary's womb. He was further provided with a royal pedigree from the house of David, a (real or) mythical early Hebrew king ; and prophecies from the Hebrew sacred books were found to be fulfilled in his most childish adventures. In one of the existing biographies, commonly ascribed to Luke, the companion of Paul, but supposed to bear traces of much later authorship, many such marvellous stories are recounted of his infantile adventures : and in all our documents, miracles attest his supernatural powers, while appeal is constantly made to the fulfilment of supposed predictions (all of old Hebrew origin) as a test and credential of the reality of his divine mission.

* On this subject, see Mr. Sidney Hartland's *Legend of Perseus*, vol. i, *passim*.