

was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the spirit of God moved over the waters. And God said: be light made, &c." Hence many writers have not scrupled to give to water the epithet of uncreated, and to assert that it was the fountain, principle and essence of all material things. It was called *uncreated* because in the description of all the wonderful things which were made by the Lord during the six days of creation, it is not written that water was made; just as it is said of Melchisedek that he was 'without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning nor end of days', because his parentage or family, his birth or his death are not recorded in the sacred page. At all events, we see that water is very ancient, and that the spirit of God was moving upon it even amidst the darkness of chaos. That there was a mystery in this motion of the Spirit over the water is certain, and that He moved not over them in vain is equally so. Water then, most probably, received some wonderful properties: perhaps, fruitfulness, diffusibility, the dissolving and purifying principles, the capacity to reflect and reflect the splendours of that created light which was so soon to illumine the dark face of the abyss, were amongst these.

Water, which thus occupies so distinguished a place in the infancy of Creation, has always preserved its importance in the history of this world. All the leading events seem to be associated with Water, and nothing of importance appears to have been done without it. When Paradise was planted 'a river went out of the place of pleasure to water it.' (Gen. ii. 10.) When the abominations of earth kindled the wrath of God, 'the waters of a great flood' are made the ministers of His vengeance, and the purification of the world. Thus, when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the flood-gates of heaven opened, the whole earth was baptized in water, and its delinquents were washed away. And when the Almighty would give Noe a sign of peace, and of His everlasting covenant, a rainbow from the watery clouds is the mystic and consoling token. When the Angel of God called to Agar from heaven and declared that the Lord would make her son a great nation, 'God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water.'