

At the very beginning of the Gospel history we have the holy Precursor John Baptizing in this mysterious element at Bethania, and pointing out the Lamb of God who was to take away the sins of the world, and who was to 'Baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.' We behold Jesus himself descending into the Jordan, sanctifying its waters by this divine contact, purifying, as it were, the matter for the sacrament of Baptism, 'and forthwith coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit, as a dove, descending, and remaining on him. And there came a voice from heaven: 'Thou art my beloved son, in thee I am well pleased.' (Mark i. 10.) The Spirit of God, as we have seen, moved over the water amidst the darkness of chaos, and prepared it, as if, for the benighted creation of light, and life and order, which soon followed. So, at the new creation and redemption of man, the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, moves over the waters of the Jordan, giving testimony to the divinity of Christ's mission, and ushering in the transcendent glories of the regeneration of the world, that mighty work which far surpassed the first creation of man and of the world. Again we find that when Christ wrought his first miracle, and 'manifested his glory' so that 'His Disciples believed in him.' Water is the chosen element upon which he displays his omnipotence. For, at the marriage feast of Cana when entreated by His Blessed Mother, although his hour had not yet come, he anticipates that hour at her maternal request. 'Now there were set there six water-pots of stone according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews \* . . . Jesus saith to them: Fill the water-pots with water, and they filled them up to the brim. And Jesus saith to them; Draw out now, and carry to the chief steward of the feast.' It is unnecessary to repeat the remark of this functionary when he 'had tasted the water made wine;' (John ii. 6. 9.) but we cannot help observing that as Moses turned water into blood, Jesus changed water into wine, the emblem of His Blood, which precious Blood He was to bequeath for ever to His Church, under the appearance of wine: and as He had sanctified water in the Jordan to prepare

\* For the Pharisees and all the Jews, unless they often wash their hands, eat not, holding the tradition of the ancients.'—(Mark vii. 3.)