

evening or commencement of the first day of the Mosaic narrative.\*

The second verse may describe the condition of the earth on the evening of this first day; (for in the Jewish mode of computation used by Moses,

\* I have much satisfaction in subjoining the following note by my friend, the Regius Professor of Hebrew in Oxford, as it enables me to advance the very important sanction of Hebrew criticism, in support of the interpretations, by which we may reconcile the apparent difficulties arising from geological phenomena, with the literal interpretation of the first chapter of Genesis.—“Two opposite errors have, I think, been committed by critics, with regard to the meaning of the word *bara*, created; the one, by those who asserted that it *must* in itself signify “created out of nothing;” the other, by those who endeavoured, by aid of etymology, to show that it *must* in itself signify “formation out of existing matter.” In fact, neither is the case; nor am I aware of any language in which there is a word signifying *necessarily* “created out of nothing;” as of course, on the other hand, no word when used of the agency of God would, *in itself*, imply the previous existence of matter. Thus the English word, create, by which *bara* is translated, expresses that the thing created received its existence from God, without in itself conveying whether God called that thing into existence *out of nothing*, or no; for our very addition of the words “out of nothing,” shows that the word creation has not, in itself, that force: nor indeed, when we speak of ourselves as creatures of God’s hand, do we at all mean that we were *physically* formed out of nothing. In like manner, whether *bara* should be paraphrased by “created out of nothing” (as far as we can comprehend these words), or, “gave a new and distinct state of existence to a substance already existing,” must depend upon the context, the circumstances, or what God has elsewhere revealed, not upon the mere force of the word. This is plain, from its use in Gen. i. 27, of the creation of man, who, as we are instructed, chap. ii. 7, was formed out of previously existing matter, the ‘dust of the ground.’ The word *bara*