

verse, and as the commencement of the first of the six succeeding days, in which the earth was to be fitted up, and peopled in a manner fit for the reception of mankind. We have in this second verse, a distinct mention of earth and waters, as

very probable that *bara*, "*created*," as being the stronger word, was selected to describe the first production of the heaven and the earth.

The point, however, upon which the interpretation of the first chapter of Genesis appears to me *really* to turn, is, whether the two first verses are merely a summary statement of what is related in detail in the rest of the chapter, and a sort of introduction to it, or whether they contain an account of an act of creation. And this last seems to me to be their true interpretation, first, because there is no other account of the creation of the earth; secondly, the second verse describes the condition of the earth when so created, and thus prepares for the account of the work of the six days; but if they speak of any creation, it appears to me that this creation "in the beginning" was previous to the six days, because, as you will observe, the creation of each day is preceded by the declaration that God said, or willed, that such things should be ("and God said"), and therefore the very form of the narrative seems to imply that the creation of the first day began when these words are first used, i. e. with the creation of light in ver. 3. The time then of the creation in ver. 1 appears to me not to be defined: we are told only what alone we are concerned with, that all things were made by God. Nor is this any new opinion. Many of the fathers (they are quoted by Petavius, *l. c. c.* 11, § i.—viii.) supposed the two first verses of Genesis to contain an account of a distinct and prior act of creation; some, as Augustine, Theodoret, and others, that of the creation of matter; others, that of the elements; others again (and they the most numerous) imagine that, not these visible heavens, but what they think to be called elsewhere "the highest heavens," the "heaven of heavens," are here spoken of, our visible heavens being related to have been created on the second day. Petavius himself regards the light as the only act of creation of the first day (*c. vii.* "de opere primæ dici, i. e.