

the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light, and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good. And God divided the light from the darkness, and the light he called day, and the darkness he called night. And the evening and the morning were the first day."

The first question that arises, on reading this passage, is, whether the creation here described was a creation out of nothing, or out of pre-existing materials. The latter opinion has been maintained by some able, and generally judicious commentators and theologians, such as Doederlin and Dathe in Germany, Milton in England, and Bush and Schmucker in this country. They do not deny that the Bible, in other places, teaches distinctly the creation of the universe out of nothing. But they contend that the word translated *to create*, in the first verse of Genesis, teaches only a renovation, or remodelling, of the universe from matter already in existence.

That there is a degree of ambiguity in all languages, in the words that signify to *create*, to *make*, to *form*, and the like, cannot be doubted; that is, these words may be properly used to describe the production of a substance out of matter already in existence, as well as out of nothing; and, therefore, we must resort to the context, or the nature of the subject, to ascertain in which of those senses such words are used. The same word, for instance, (*bawraw*,) that is used in the first verse of Genesis, to describe the creation of the universe, is employed in the 27th verse of the same chapter, to describe the formation of man out of the dust of the earth. There was, however, no peculiar ambiguity in the use of the Hebrew words *bawraw aw saw*, which correspond to our words *create* and *make*; and therefore, it is not necessary to be an adept in Hebrew literature to judge of the question under consideration. We have only to determine whether the translation of the Mosaic account of the creation most reasonably teaches a production of the matter of the universe from nothing, or only its renovation, and we have decided what is taught in the original.

Now, there can hardly be a doubt but Moses intended to teach, in this passage, that the universe owed its origin to Jehovah, and not to the idols of the heathen; and since all acknowledge that other parts of Scripture teach, that, when the world was made, it was produced out of nothing, why should we not conclude that the same truth is taught in this passage?