

with the hypothesis which forms part of the theory of gradual refrigeration; viz. that the waters of the first formed oceans were too much heated to have been habitable by any kind of organic beings.\*

In these most ancient conditions, both of land and water, Geology refers us to a state of things incompatible with the existence of animal and vegetable life; and thus on the evidence of natural phenomena, establishes the important fact that we find a starting point, on this side of which all forms, both of animal and vegetable beings, must have had a beginning.

As, in the consideration of other strata, we find abundant evidence in the *presence* of organic remains, in proof of the exercise of creative power, and wisdom, and goodness, attending the progress of life, through all its stages of advancement upon the surface of the globe; so, from the *absence* of organic remains in the primary strata, we may derive an important argument, showing that there was a point of time in the history of our planet, (which no other researches but those of geology can possibly approach,) antecedent to the beginning of either animal or vegetable life. This

\* So long as the temperature of the earth continued intensely high, water could have existed only in the state of steam or vapour, floating in the atmosphere around the incandescent surface.