

conclusion is the more important, because it has been the refuge of some speculative philosophers to refer the origin of existing organizations, either to an eternal succession of the same species, or to the formation of more recent from more ancient species, by successive developments, without the interposition of direct and repeated acts of creation ; and thus to deny the existence of any first term, in the infinite series of successions which this hypothesis assumes. Against this theory, no decisive evidence has been accessible, until the modern discoveries of geology had established two conclusions of the highest value in relation to this long disputed question: the first proving, that existing species have had a beginning ; and this at a period comparatively recent in the physical history of our globe: the second showing that they were preceded by several other systems of animal and vegetable life, respecting each of which it may no less be proved, that there was a time when their existence had not commenced ; and that to these more ancient systems also, the doctrine of eternal succession, both retrospective and prospective, is equally inapplicable.\*

\* Mr. Lyell, in the four first chapters of the second volume of his *Principles of Geology*, has very ably and candidly examined the arguments that have been advanced in support of the doctrine of transmutation of species, and arrives at the conclusion, —“ that species have a real existence in nature, and that each