

invent; that no suppositions should be admitted upon subjects that depend upon facts and observation; that his imagination ought only to be exercised for the purpose of combining observations, rendering facts more general, and forming one connected whole, so as to present to the mind a distinct arrangement of clear ideas and probable conjectures; I say *probable*, because we must not hope to give exact demonstration on this subject, for that, mathematics alone can do, while our knowledge in physics and natural history depends solely upon experience, and is confined to reasoning upon inductions.

In the History of the Earth, we shall therefore begin with those facts that have been obtained from the experience of time, together with what we have collected by our own observations.

This immense globe exhibits upon its surface heights, depths, plains, seas, lakes, marshes, rivers, caverns, gulphs, and volcanos; and upon the first view of these objects we cannot discover in their disposition either order or regularity. If we penetrate into its internal parts we shall there find metals, minerals, stones, bitumens, sands, earths, waters, and
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