

decomposed; for the nature of time, which is successive, would not admit of its continuance.

If then, the cause be prior to its effect, it will be so at the commencement of a phenomenon; and its nature will be so far altered, as to be simultaneous with its effect at other times. Now how shall we determine this priority at the commencement? It is certain that it must be of one value or quantity in one motion or velocity, and of another value in a greater or less motion or velocity, as in light, sound, &c. And so by this doctrine, the cause could not be, rigorously speaking, "immediately and invariably prior to its effect"—for such priority in respect of the quantity of time, would vary according to the nature of the particular cause, as for instance it would vary according to a swift or slow motion. And so other influences might intervene to counteract the effect altogether; and the cause might not always, but only sometimes have an effect.

It is very requisite here to bear in mind the distinction between causes, and those elements or things, which may be said to contain the causes. The elements, say *a* and *b*, when put together, or acting on each other, constitute *c*; *a* and *b*, as elements, were prior to *c*, which depends not only on the particular constitutions of *a* and *b*, but also on their relative positions. That is, they were causes of *c*, precisely when they acted one on the other. If it be said that they were causes before such action, of what were they causes?