

The body that is raised from the earth's surface, and then left without support, will always descend. The position of the moon in a certain quarter of the heavens, will always be responded to by the rising or falling tides upon our shores. These antecedents may be variously blended; and this will give rise to different results; but the very same assemblage of antecedents will always be followed by the same consequents. Our own personal experience may have been limited to a few square miles of the earth that we tread upon—yet this would not hinder such a faith in the immutability of nature, that we could bear it in confident application all over the globe. In other words, we count upon this constancy far beyond what we ever have observed of it—and still the topic of our wonder and gratitude is, that a belief in every way so instinctive should be followed up by an accomplishment so sure.

18. But we shall dilate no further on the general position, that our faith in the future constancy of nature is intuitive, and not deduced by any process of reasoning however short, from our observation of its past constancy. Let us here recommend the masterly treatise of Dr. Thomas Brown on Cause and Effect—a philosopher who, with occasional inadvertencies in the ethical department of his course, hath thrown a flood of copious and original light over the mysteries of the human understanding; and who seems, in particular, to have grappled successfully with a question at one time dark and hopeless as the metaphysics of the schoolmen.