

But though the experience argument is of no real force, and, as shown by the beliefs of the higher order of minds, of no real effect, when brought to bear against miracles supported by the proper testimony, *it is* of great force and effect when brought to bear, not against *miracles*, but against some presumed *law*. It is experience, and experience only, that determines what is or is not law, and it is law, and law only, that constitutes the subject-matter of ordinary experience. Experience, in determining what is really miracle, does so simply through its positive knowledge of law: by knowing law, it knows also what would be a violation of it. And so miracle cannot possibly form the subject-matter of experience in the sense of Hume. For did miracle constitute the subject-matter of experience, the law of which the miracle was a violation *could not*: most emphatically, in this case, were there “no law” there could be “no transgression;” and so experience would be unable to recognize, not only the existence of the law transgressed, but also of the miracle, in its character as such, which was a transgression of the law. We determine from experience that there exists a certain fixed law, known among men as the law of gravitation; and that, in consequence of this law, if a human creature attempt standing upon the sea, he will sink into it; or if he attempt rising from the earth into the heavens, he will remain fixed to the spot on which the attempt is made. Such, in these cases, would be the direct effects of this gravitation *law*; and any presumed law antagonistic in its character could not be other than a law contrary to that invariable experience by which the existence of the real law in the case is determined. But certain it is—for the evidence regarding the facts cannot be resisted, and by the greater minds has not been resisted—that a man *did* once