

emotions. He, for his part, did not pretend that the physical uniformity of Nature could be absolutely proved. He was content to know that his "working hypothesis" had been proved to be invaluable by the test of innumerable discoveries, which could never have been made had not that working hypothesis been assumed. Indeed, what evidence has any man, even for the existence of his own home and family, better than that of a fruitful hypothesis, which has time after time resulted in the expected verification? No man can be absolutely certain that the home he left an hour ago is still standing where it did, or that the family he left in it are still in life; still, if he acts on the hypothesis that they are there, he will, in innumerable cases, be rewarded for making that assumption by finding his expectations verified, and in but a very few cases indeed be disappointed.

If, then, Dr. Ward asks, said Professor Huxley, whether or not I hold that experience can, in a mathematical sense, *prove* the uniformity of Nature, I answer that I do *not* believe it; that I believe only that, in the assumption of that uniformity of Nature, we have a working hypothesis of the most potent kind, which I have never found to fail me. But further, if I might use the word "believe" loosely, though with much less looseness than that with which men who are not students of science habitually use it, I should not hesitate to avow a belief that the uniformity of Nature *is* proved by experience, for I should be only too glad to think that half the "demonstrated" beliefs of metaphysicians are even a tenth part as trustworthy as the great working hypothesis of science; however, "who commits himself to even one statement which turns out to be devoid of good foundation, loses somewhat of his reputation among his fellows, and if he is guilty of the same error often he loses not only his intellectual but his moral standing among them; for it is justly felt that errors of this kind have their root rather in the moral than in the intellectual nature." That, I suppose, is the reason why men of science are so chary of investigating the trustworthiness of the *soi-disant* miracles to which Dr. Ward