

it must be not against, but in favour of, a miracle that *may be* designed to authenticate a divine revelation, because such a design constitutes a *reason* for the miracle. 2. The argument is not against the *possibility* of a miracle, but against its *credibility*; it does not say that a miracle is *impossible*, but that even if a miracle did occur, its occurrence is *beyond the possibility of being proved*. The unreasonableness of this position is exhibited by Hugh Miller, in his own powerful style, in a chapter on the *Bearing of the Experience Argument*, in "Footprints of the Creator."

But apart from the above general considerations, it is to be noted, in particular, that the argument involves two fallacies, technically called 1. *Petitio principii*, or Begging of the question; 2. *Sophisma a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*, or reasoning as if what is true only in *particular circumstances* were true *universally*. The *former* fallacy is evident, without using a syllogistic form, if it be considered that the *universality* of experience which is affirmed is in reality the question at issue, that question being, Whether there is not in the experience of certain persons, *e.g.*, the early Christian witnesses, an *exception* to the *general* experience? To say, as Hume does, that the experience is *uniform and universal* is the same thing as to say that there is *no exception* to it; or, in other words, it *assumes* what has to be *proved*.

The *second* fallacy, which is the one referred to in the paper, is apparent, if it be considered that, while it accords with experience that human testimony may be false, *every kind* of testimony is not *equally liable* to suspicion. Whatever suspicion may attach to testimony given in certain circumstances, there are other circumstances in which testimony may be given that place it above all suspicion. We may suspect the testimony that a man gives, when his giving it is seen to lie in the line of his own interests; but we attach weight to his testimony given in a matter in which his own interests are not concerned. And we are warranted, from what we know of human nature, to hold that the falsehood of testimony given by men, with no prospect but that of evil in relation to the most valued temporal interests, is simply incredible. We may safely say of it, as we cannot say of a miracle, in the ordinary sense of the term, that it is contrary to uniform and universal experience. In the testimony of the early Christian witnesses to the resurrection of Christ, we have testimony of the *highest kind possible*; and to throw upon it the suspicion that attaches to the most untrustworthy class of witnesses, as Hume does, is an instance of sophistry of the highest order.