

'experience,' and in the phrases 'contrary to experience,' or 'contradicting experience,' which it may be necessary to remove in the first place. Strictly speaking, the narrative of a fact is *then* only contrary to experience, when the fact is related to have existed at a time and place, at which time and place we being present did not perceive it to exist; as if it should be asserted that, in a particular room, and at a particular hour of a certain day, a man was raised from the dead, in which room, and at the time specified, we being present, and looking on, perceived no such event to have taken place. Here the assertion is contrary to experience, properly so called: and this is a contrariety which no evidence can surmount. It matters nothing whether the fact be of a miraculous nature or not. But although this be the experience and the contrariety, which archbishop Tillotson alleged in the quotation with which Mr Hume opens his essay, it is certainly not that experience, nor that contrariety, which Mr Hume himself intended to object. And, short of this, I know no intelligible signification which can be affixed to the term 'contrary to experience,' but one, viz., that of not having ourselves experienced any thing similar to the thing related, or such things not being generally experienced by others. I say 'not generally,' for to state concerning the fact in question, that no such thing was *ever* experienced, or that *universal* experience is against it, is to assume the subject of the controversy.

Now the improbability which arises from the want (for this properly is a want, not a contradiction) of experience, is only equal to the probability there is that, if the thing were true, we should experience things similar to it, or that such things would be generally experienced. Suppose it then to be true that miracles were wrought on the first promulgation of Christianity, when nothing but miracles could decide its authority, is it certain that such miracles would be repeated so often, and in so many places, as to become objects of general experience? Is it a probability