

A philosopher on Hume's teaching that a miracle is a violation of nature

To hold that miracles are a violation of the law of nature and therefore impossible is answered in two ways according to PJ McGrath in page 136, *Believing in God*.

One reply is to say a miracle is not a violation of the law of nature. But this would be to say that a miracle is caused by some natural law we know nothing about so McGrath rejects this one. He says that it denies that miracles can be evidence for the truth of religion for if miracles are just inexplicable but natural then they are not supernatural or necessarily from God.

The other reply is to say that natural law allows for exceptions. PJ McGrath in *Believing in God* accepts this one not realising that it too is saying that a miracle is not a violation of nature and so the miracle could be caused by natural law as well. Also, we use natural laws to make exceptions to many natural laws. For example, when you put your umbrella up you are making an exception of the natural law that you will get wet in the rain.

So, if a miracle is not against the laws of nature then it is natural and it is silly to call it a miracle. So it has to be supernatural in the sense that it breaks the law of nature and shows that there is a power that can do that. Trouble is, it then becomes silly for other reasons. You cannot win.