THE CREATURES PRAYING GOD:

OR,

THE RELIGION OF dumb Creatures.

An Example for the stirring up of our devotion, and
An Argument for the confusion of Atheisme.

Benedicite omnia opera Domini Domino, laudate & super-
exaltate eum in secula.

G. G.

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To the Reader.

O Lord Reader, The Author himselfe not vouching his name, title, or preface to this his worke, and very unwilling that it should be publisht, I thought fit to let thee understand, that the booke it selfe contains no paradox, notwithstanding the title: for the naturall servise of God in dumbe Creatures, when they obey God, in their owne kinde, and follow their owne natural course, this is it, which he calls The Religion of dumbe Creatures: and as it is frequent, and usuall, to make comparisons in particular instances, so here in generall their servise is compared to our Religion.

To commend the worke, seeing I am so farre engaged, as that against the Authors will, it was my opportunity to publish it, were in effect to commend mine owne judgement, I will here only acquaint you with the reasons that moved me;

First, to take away grosse Atheisme, which denies any God, he with no Sophistry, no persuasion, nor the testimonies either of God, or of men, but herein caues aide of the dumbe Creatures, and in effect divine them to beare witness, who instantly acknowledge a God, and discourse many excellent and admirable attributes in God, and this he calls their confession, or the naturall implicit faith of the Creatures, pag. 9.

Secondly, that this knowledge of God, which we learme from nature, is an imperfect knowledge, though otherwise it was the sole knowledge of the ancient heathen Philosophers, he brands it with this imputation, that it is no more in effect then the religion of dumbe beasts, but as reason is aboute fayre, so faith aboute reason; reason points out mysteries, faith discoveres them; by virtue of which faith, we joine with the Angels in their servise, as the dumbe beasts doe joine with vs in nature; and here he takes away all natural objections against the mysteries of religion, beating downe mans curiousity, pag. 16.

Thirdly, how the Creatures praisie God in their voices and sounds, which in effect are their prayers, in their naturall law, which is their decalogue, in all their qualifications and affections, both naturall, and as they are sometimes meanes and conduits of grace, whereby nature is sanctified, pag. 23.

Fourthly, how all naturall Sciences may be reduced to Theology, supposte
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The Metaphysics, natural Philosophy, which are indeed the branches of natural Theology, and are incorporated into the body of our divinity. And hence you may as well exclude the moral law, the decalogue, and the whole fater of nature, as to exclude human learning, which Fleming the perfections and excellencies of nature, both therein flow the praise and commendations of the Makers, p. 31.

Fifthly, this natural religion not only consists in itself, all natural sciences, but is the foundation of all religions. Thus Judaism, in the Ceremonial Law, as well as Christianity, acknowledging God in nature, through the natural law, and Ceremonial law, begun with Moses and the God of Israel. Christ yet the natural law together with the second Adam, began with Adam, not by any revelation, but by the grace of God, and therefore is common to all nations, to all religions. Hence he gathers these two notes, first, that different and opposite religions may not withstand in such things as are good, and alike approvable in both; for we join with dumb Creatures in their natural service, and that these laws of the Church are not to be hedged in, according to mens private phantasties and imaginings; or according to the Frustration, and jurisdiction of Prelates, but according to the unity and consent of faith. Secondly, that be the religions nearer to opposite and contrary, yet all agree in the natural law, and therefore are bound to perform both to each other, all natural rights, suppose the discharging of truths, where it is reposed, to vie more honestly in our actions, obedience to our superiors, allegiance to the Prince, and the like; thus may different religions live quietly and peaceably under one just government. If this were observed, surely it would cause much peace in the Christian world, so much detracted and disquieted at this day, with infinite and innumerable sects and religions.

To conclude: What can be more glorious to God, then that his praise should be set forth by all his Creatures? what greater charity, then to comprehend them, not within the walls of our Christian Church (though once they were contained in the Ark), yet within the confines of religion? what greater devotion, then by their example to glorie in thy selfe? though the Angels be out of sight, and thou cannot hear their hymmes, yet the beasts may awaken thy duleness, what greater humility, then to flounce to the basest worms, and together with them, to associate thy selfe in Gods service?

These reasons (I confess) did move me to publishe it: and as I had no other intent, but God's glory, so I beseech him to give a blessing to the reading hereof, that it may tend to the increafe of that devotion.

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Ps. 148. 7, 8, 9, and 10, Verses.

7. Praise the Lord upon earth, ye dragons and all creatures:
8. Fire and hail, snow and hoar frost, stormy winds,
9. Mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all Cedar,
10. Beasts and all cattell, wormses and feathered foulcs.

Woe absurdities may here seeme to be committed at once, with one breath; either that man should speake and exhort such Auditors, who are without sense, and therefore not capable of exhortation, or that Creatures dumbe in themselves, should be exhorted to praise God, which seemeth to be a thing proper to Angels and men.
Both these are easily satisfied, if we rightly consider that the praises of God do not necessarily imply the most exact and magnificent order and form, such as might well becom[e] the Maiestie of a Deity (both men and Angels come short in that excellent service) but the praises of God require no more in effect, than the power and ability wherewith God hath first enabled the Creature: for he accepts our imperfect prayers, and descends to our weakendness. Thus the stocks and the stones in their silence, and in their natural properties: the beasts in their sounds and their cries, in their fence and in their motions, all serve to praise him: for God requires no more then he hath first given, the right employment of his gifts is indeed to praise him.

Now man exhorting them to this their bounden duty, joynes with them in their service, and as it were seemes to congratulate their praises of God: notwithstanding his owne disobedience and sinne, yet he rejoiceth in their service, and exHORTs them still to continue their praises of God.

And though they seeme dumbe, yet in verity and truth they speake in their silence: for objecting or presenting themselves to our view, they use their excellent nature, their rare and wonderful properties, therein they speake their Maker. Man perceiving and apprehending this, falls instantly to admiration, which is a kinde of naturall trance, wherein his speech failles him, as if he were for a time strucken dumbe together with the dumbe Creatures, to shew his fellow-feeling and symbolizing affection with them; at length he comes to himselfe, begins to breathe, then is he tied to his veneration, as it were to comment upon their silence, or to be their interprete: for as God requires no more then the ability of the Creature, so he will admit no leffe, but expect, the uttermost extent of our power: In the dumbe Creatures their silence did suffice: Man having the free vse of his tongue, is therefore tied to addde Speech to their silence, Reason to their sense, and perswading them not to any impossibility above their condition, as to beleue the mysteries of Grace and the like, but applauding them in their owne naturall course, therein he seemes to exhort them, and thus exhorting them, this vp himselfe, and magnifies the Divine providence, who first appointed the course: As God speaking the Word, all things were made: God speaks to nothing, and by vertue of his words, behold a Creation: so wee speaking to the dumbe Creatures, and in them approving Gods works, wee shew the commorative of our wills to the Divine institution.

For in our speech wee do not alwaies respect others, but sometimes our felles. The most learned Preacher speaking to the most judicious Auditory, yet cannot promise unto himselfe happy success: wee must looke to the discharge of our owne dutie, and not to the event. Man speaking to the dumbe Creatures though they understand him not, yet his owne bounden dutie, together with the strength and vehemency of his affections, (that he can doe no leffe then speake in a cause which concerns Gods glory) this makes it no fruitless labour, and surely some profit thereby redounds: for whereas otherwife man were a stranger to beasts, and they serving God in their owne kinde, their service shoule no way concern him; yet now by vertue of his exhortation, he hath a part and portion in their obedience, and thus very cunningly, what is wanting in himselfe, he desires to supply it in them; to make their service seeme as his owne, as if forsooth they had beene rebellious, had it not beene for his perswasion; though himselfe be dishilude, yet it is he, that keepes all in good order: a pretty policy.

Thus as they were ordained for his naturall vse, for his food, clothing, labour: so it should seeme, they were appointed for his spiritual vse, to serve him in the nature of Chaplaines, that they should honour and praise God, while their master, surful and wretched man, dishonours him, yet their service might seeme to be done by his appointment.

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Though I will not excuse our stultes, yet suffer mee to speake in their behalfe, who being dumbe, cannot speake for themselves, I know not how powerful and effectual mans words are, but surely in them I can doe no lesse then admire their obedience; the most dumbe and senseless Creatures, the very Rocks and the Caves, if we speake vnto them, and speake aloud; instantly they make a repetition of our breath, whereby our owne words are renewed, as if they understood, and did answer us in our owne speech and language; suppose I should stretch out my voice, and cry vnto them to praise God, instantly you should heare them answer, Praise God: or if they faile in this Eccho, yet sure they will not faile in their conformity; herein they are not so properly our schollers, as prentices and examples to vs of obedience.

Then let vs conceive that all the worke of God make one corporation, and are as members of one body, vnder one common governement. As then it appeares in man, that the heart gives direction to the dull hands, to be lifted vp in devotion, and the dull hands knocke the sleepy heart, to awake her out of drowsinesse; And thus doe mutually prouoke and stirre vp each other to joyn in the servis; As this befalls the parts of Man in respect of himselfe, so the like befalls Man and the Creatures in respect of the Vniuers.

And that it may no way seeme strange, that dumbe Creatures should bee said to praise God, to speake most properly and most exactly of the praisies of God, which surely confit in a religious worship and servis of God; if then I should say, that in the flocks and in the fowles, in the four-footed beastes, and generally in all the dumbe Creatures, that there is some obscure shadow, or some resemblance of religion, or rather indeed some proper kinde of religion: For there are divers and severall kindes of religions, religions of all sorts, of all fizes, of all fashions (witness the diversitie of religions in these our daies) If then I should say that the dumbe Creatures have likewise their proper kinde of religion as well as men, and that they are very devout, godly, zealous, strict and most religious in their owne kinde, even farre above men; if I should say this; I would humbly crave your patience a while. Let mee bring my reasons and labour to proue it, that the natural servis of God in dumbe Creatures, howsoever wee may efteeme it, yet in verity and truth, it is a kind of natural religion.

Morall vertues we may suppose to be onlye competent to man, as being grounded in the reasonable soule, yet therein the dumbe Creatures instruct vs, Godly, Godly, learme of the Pigmire; religion wee may conceiue to be mans owne proper inheritance, yet behold, wee are stirr’d vp by the example of the dumbe beasts. The Ox and the Ass acknowledge their Lord & Master. The Windes and the Sea obey him. It should seeme, that as there is a religion above man, the religion of Angels, so there may be a religion beneath man, the religion of dumbe Creatures. For wherefore there is a servis of God, in effect it is a religion. Thus according to the severall degrees and difference of states, the state of nature, grace and glory, religion may likewise admit degrees, and difference.

Religion then, if I doe not mistake, consists of these foure parts: A Creed for our beliefe, which is the object of our religion. Faith: A set forme of prayer for our suplication, which is the anchor of our Hope: A decalogue or law for our practice, which is the rule of our Charity: Sacrifice and Sacraments for the photon and consummation of all, to seathon and sanctifie all. These are in effect the brieve heads of religion, as well appeares in our ordinary Catechisme, consisting of these foure parts, and therein is contained the summe of Religion. Now if all of these, or at least some of these, can no way appeare in the Creatures, yet how great the similitude and analogy is betweene both, if you please to obserue with patience, and to condemne nothing unheard, I doe well hope, that many things will be for our instruction, and all for our example and imitacion.
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And first, of that knowledge which we have of the Creatures, how there should be such a mutual intelligence or correspondence between us, as that we should truly know them and their religion, if wee understood their language, we were thorowly acquainted with all the secrets and mysteries of their Church and State. The first notice then which we have of the Creatures, is by an information of sense, wherein the Divine providence hath so fitted and proportioned things each to other, suppole the faculty to the object, sense to things sensible, that we instantly receive them, nor with any difficulty of learning, but by a natural instinct: Thus it is betweene the sensible man, and the visible world, being Creatures of like condition, we doe easily conceiue them.

Thus sense first restores to informe us: but if we should here rest only in the information of sense, this were most dangerous: from hence grew our first error: Whereas beauty was given to the Creatures, to point out the incomparable beauty of God, many beholding them, have so doted upon them, and so farre enamoured with their beauty, that they could goe no farther, but haue taken the Creatures for God, supposing that God himselfe could not be more glorious.

Thus whereas a right understanding would conclude, great is the beauty of Creatures, therefore how great and incomparable is the beauty of God! Sense, as being of a lower nature, not able to aim at such a high pitch, rather infers, Such is the beauty of Creatures, that our sense cannot possibly comprehend any greater beauty; therefore the Creatures are God. Thus sense and sense alone, without other information, is indeed the mother and nurse of idolatry; and if we should proceed to no further search and inquisition, then the Creatures might seeme to blaspheme, to make themselves Gods, being only witneses to the Deity, they might seeme to assume unto themselves the right of the Deity: Yet herein let me excuse them, they are innocent, they doe it not of themselues, but

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but through our corruption some sensual men have ascribed it: for being not able to conceive greater perfection, it is natural to man to acknowledge God in the highest. Thus some have worshipped the Sunne, the Moone, the Stars, diuers and seuerall Creatures, and the like.

By the way give me leave to make some vif of their error, and here to crie out, O what an excellent workman of Idolatry is God, that even his owne common and meanest workes should be of such excellency, as that they should be taken for God! And thus Idolatry which seemes wholly to detract from God, and to ascribe all to the creatures, yet by an ouer-ruling providence of God, contrary to her owne intent, in so much magnifying the Creatures, doth in them and by them set forth the supereminent greatness of God the Creator.

This were sufficient, if mans whole knowledge were plunged and puzzled in sense, and that he had no other guide or direction save only sense; but man hath further a reasonable soule, which taking information from sense, as it well becommes his condition, with degrees of discourse, and in this reasonable soule we shall finde this ingrafted, as a first ground and principle, that in all our knowledge, we must first search out the cause of every effect; for every effect naturally points out his cause: and there is no relation so necessary, as is that which is betweene the cause and the effect. As it is the truth of things, that nothing can subsist without a cause: so in our apprehension, that we cannot conceive the one without relation to the other: there is no knowledge without the knowledge of causes, and therefore we strive and endeoure to discern the cause in the effects, and the effects in the cause.

By vertue of this ingrafted principle, wee cannot consider the creatures alone, and by themselues, but together. Reason as apt to discourse, with them and in them wee must search out their cause, and enquire.

Here then Reason would faine know, whether the Creatures be the effects of another, or causes of themselues?

This
This is the first proposition, or \textit{Quære}.

Now you shall understand, that every search and inquisition, when we know not things of ourselves, but that we take our information from others, we seek them from others, and learn them of others; this is a kind of demand of whom then should reason demand this not of herself, then surely none but the Creatures; or who should make answer to this demand? not reason to herself, then surely none but the Creatures. Make then the answer of the Creatures, to this demand of reason; their answer as giving an account of their faith; for faith is the ground and foundation of religion, and without faith religion cannot subsist. Make then the faith of the Creatures in their answers; their answers, I say, not in express terms, for this is not necessary: men that are speechless and dumb, may notwithstanding make a confession of their faith, \textit{Deus est noster et Deus nobilis}, so may the dumbe and speechless Creatures, they may likewise use outward signs and tokens, to give a confession of their faith; their answer is answerable to their nature, their silent nature, and their full properties give this resolution, and make this answer, and that without any difficulty.

For their bounden nature must necessarily imply, that the limitation of their nature proceeds from another. Here is their answer: their composition and dissolution must necessarily presuppose first a compounder; here is their answer: their several times of rising and setting must argue, that there being a time, when they were not, needs they must want a cause first to subsist; being not by themselves, or for themselves alone, but carrying a mutual respect each to other: suppose the heavens to the earth, the earth to the heavens, the faculty to the object, the object to the faculty: this must needs infurce, that they could not thus severally ordainethemselves, but that there was some other extrinsicall cause, which knowing both, and making both, appointed each for other. To conclude, that unreasonable creatures should move, according to the rules of reason, and such as want understanding, should be guided by the direction of an understanding; this must needs argue that some intelligent cause did first ordain them, which now prefers them in their natural course.

This in briefe is their answer; for they intimate thus much, the Creatures acknowledge themselves to be no more then effects, they pointed out a cause, an intelligent cause. Here then we must exclude blind fortune, for that things by great chance should fall into such an excellent order, reason it selfe seems to oppose it, which admits no fortune, but deemes it as a base-born childe of ignorance; which if wee should yeeld, it would rather prooue the cause of disorder and confusion, and it would undoubtedly imply a contradiction, to ascribe the works of foresight and providence unto a blind guide.

Thus then the Creatures being true, real, positive effects, they seem to confess, or rather to challenge unto themselves a true, real, positive efficient cause, which in effect is to acknowledge a God, \\textit{or a Maker}. And this their knowledge of God, as it is fitly gathered from the Creatures, so is it in verity and in truth no lesse then a natural implicit faith of the Creatures:all of them testifying implicit faith the same truth, doe in a sort make one common confession of their faith: \textit{Accedentes ad Deum opus est credere quod sit Deus}; this is the first article of their Creed, that they acknowledge a God; thus they cannot be justly taxed with infidelity. Herein they farre exceed the Atheist, who denying his Maker, must therefore make himselfe lie of himselfe, and so consequencely should preferre himselfe. Surely of all others he is the greatest and the most notable Impostor, denying the true God, he makes himselfe God, for he made himselfe. But I will as easily beleue, that man either should not be borne, or being borne, that he should not decline in yeres, not be subject to sorow, grieue, or infirmity, and that he should never taste of death or corruption, as that he should first subsist without a Maker.

Thus then the Creatures agree that there is a God.
Now let us heare what other Testimony they give of this God; and looke how many Testimonies they give of God, in effect they rehearse so many Articles of their Creed; the first attribute of God is, *vitis mundi*, as God speaks of himselfe: *Ego Deus vini, non habebis Deos alienos*, &c. Let us then enquire of the Creatures, whether they acknowledge one God, or will admit a plurality of gods in their servitude. And hereupon the first view and appearance, they seeme unto me to cry and to testify one God, one God, for all nature is directed to one end: whereas if there were many efficient, they would undoubtedly intend their several ends. The world is circular, which beeth reSEMBLES the figure of one; all the streams are reduced to one head; all the degrees of things tend to the highest, there being in nature a priority and posteriority; Every government tends and ends in a Monarchie; Nature will not endure many competitors; order and decency require as much in effect: All hear is reduced to one first heart; all bodies to one first body. Philosophy beats upon this Axiom, that nature desires to work with the fewest instruments, and therefore every thing is to be reduced to the fewest principles. In the constitution of any thing, the fewest require but a couple; for the effecting of any thing, one will suffice; to admit of more, would rather hinder and distract the worke, then any way further or helpe the action.

Thus to acknowledge one God: the workmanship and fabrique of the whole world will testify as much, wherein the footsteps and impression of one and the same God doth most eminently appear, all of them giving sufficient demonstration of one and the same wildome and providence, which appears alike in all, grounding all his works, and all his actions, upon the selfe-same principles and rules of his owne wildome: there are not gods of the Mountains, gods of the Valleys, gods of the Land, and gods of the Ocean: for the fishes of the sea, the birds of the ayre, the beasts of the field, have a like fashion and

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finately perfect, and cannot admit degrees of comparison.

Being thus without composition, or diversity of parts, he cannot admit variety of faculties, which seeme to be tied and annexed to the diversity of parts, and therefore those many several perfections which appear in the Creatures, they are not one absolute perfection in God. Thus the wisdom of God is the power of God, the power of God is the will of God, the will of God is the justice of God, the justice of God, is the mercy of God; all these attributes can admit no difference between them, and all these attributes are but one and the self-same God, though to us, both for our apprehension, and in respect of Gods actions, they seeme to be divers and distinct, yet are they linked, and together incorporated in that one and infinit nature of God, which cannot admit a variety. Thus farre of God in himselfe: and all this we must suppose in a first cause or mover: and all this, it is no leffe in effect, then a natural implicit faith of the Creatures, as they doe necessarily point out and demonstrate this first cause or mover.

Now in respect of the Creatures, nothing can be wanting to God, which was necessarily required for the worke-ship. Suppose an infinit wisdom in continuinge the worke, which otherwise would aske an infinit time of deliberation, as I may so say, a world of consultation were requisite for the framing of this world, were it not supplied in an inftant by the infinit wisdom of God, which wisdom more especially and immediately appears in the comprehending and understanding of himselfe. Secondly, haung once laid downe the plot-forme, then succeeds a most absolute freewill in bounding and disposing his owne actions. Thirdly, intending to create, and being resolved of the manner, then followes an infinit power to put all in execution. Fourthly, haung once finished the worke, necessary it is, that there should be a continuance of the fame infinit wisdom, will, and power, in his Providence, for the continuance and preservation of his worke.

The Creatures can no more preferue themselves, then at first subsist of themselves, and therefore they want a continual concourse, and sweet influence of this first mover: for as it is a property of God to be independent, so it is a property of Creatures to be always dependent; and this sures as a bridle to curb them, besides the ouer-ruling power and prerogative which God refures in himselfe, whereof I will not dispute.

See here how many excellent attributes of God are discovered by the information and instructions which we have from the Creatures; these are the Articles of their faith, and all these arise out of this one ground (as the Schooler speaks) ratione, & necessitate causaliatis, as wee consider God to be the first cause and mover. Alas, I should be infinite, if I would proceed in this subject to speake of God, onely so farre forth as the Creatures doe teftifie of God, which in effect is their faith; but I will passe this over: yet giue me leaue to passe my centre uppon it. Audita & approbata sunt omnia: vpon due examination I finde them to be sound and Orthodoxall, I cannot take them with Atheisme or Herecie, but what they say or teftifie of God, it is most true; onely with this defect, that they say not enough; nature cannot be raiied above nature; the mysteries of grace fall not within the compass of natural bounds. Why, thus there are degrees of faith amongst vs: wee see but in part, we know but in part, all cannot conceiue mysteries alike, and the most faithfull man may truly say, Lord, Ibelieve, Lord, helpe my unbelief. And thus it is with the Creatures, what they teftifie of God, is most true, but they teftifie not enough, yet what they teftifie not, it is not out of srowardneffe, or that they are hard of beleve, but it is for want of capacity here then they are sufficiently excused.

Excused I say, in respect of themselves, but whether any wrong or injury be done vnto vs, this is a question; for if the Creatures propofe vnto vs this knowledge of God as a perfect rule of our faith, to which we should not add, but
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Whether this defect in God's knowledge appears by the testimony of nature.

but that we should be tied to the flint of their belief: to have no more faith then they, this were dangerous; for to admit this, were to oppose and contradict all the mysteries in religion, which are not discovered by their light; this were in effect to seduce vs. to make vs. of Christians, mere naturalls; Indeed they have already too farre prevailed on our passions and on our affections, that we are almost grownene soules, and beastly, like vs. to them, as if we were of their commen-wealth; but if they shall prese further uppon vs. to worke upon our soules, our consciences, and our understandings, to intice vs. to be of their faith, of their Church, of their religion, to make vs. of mere naturals, like to themselves, this were most intolerable. So then the question remains, whether the Creatures, or nature, I mean, in the Creatures, or that which is the same in effect, whether natural reason proceeding upon natural grounds, whether these supposing their owne ability in the fulness of Gods knowledge, seeme to exclude grace, or otherwise in the weakness of their knowledge, shewing their owne insufficiency, seeme onely to make way, and serve as an introduction to grace? It is a question indeed, in my judgment, of all others most worthy to be resolving: for in effect it implies the whole ground and foundation of all our mysteries, and it stands thus; whether by the light of our owne natural reason, we are to believe no more of God, then appears in the Creatures; or whether the same light of our owne natural reason will informe vs, that there are other greater mysteries to be received of God, more then those natural attributes, which are discerned by his works?

For your satisfaction herein, you may be pleased to understand, that what knowledge wee haue of God by the light of our natural reason, it is not derived immediately from God himselfe, but by a reflection, onely so farre forth as God is discerned in the glasse of his Creatures; now this is a rule in all arts, that no causes can fully, exactly and totally appear in their effects, as having first a proper

per nature allotted to themselves, before they were ordained to aaction; first, they are in themselves, before they come to relation, so that for the knowledge of causes in themselves, there must be some further search and investigation, more then the effect do demonstrate: this shall appeare, by considering the diuerity of causes, which I will suppose to be of three sorts.

First, natural causes: and these are not sufficiently discovered by their owne natural effects; (E.g.) by the nature causes and properties of a weed, you cannot discover the whole nature, and properties of the Sunne or the earth; for the inward nature and the outward actions, are not always of like extent, nor doe they agree in all accidents.

More especially this will appeare in voluntary causes, voluntary that they cannot totally be discerned by their works, causes which as the limitation of the works, and the diuersity of the works proceeds, not from the necessity of the nature, but depends upon the free will of the Maker. Thus one and the same voluntary cause brings forth various and different effects, and therefore cannot imprint her whole and perfect image in all. Thus if man were knowne by his works, we should never make search for malefactours, but everyone should instantly appeare.

Now there are yet other causes, and these are of a different nature, and condition: suppose the Angelical spirits, causes, and the material world; God and the Creatures, a spiritual Deity and a corporeal worke, because of both the different passions, different passions generae: how is it possible then, that the one should fully and perfectly discover the other? Thus in a word to make application of all, God being a cause, a voluntary cause, a cause of another nature, surely the whole vertue, and power of the Deity cannot be discerned or laid open by the worke of the Deity. E.g. By the instance, building of this house though the skill of the workman sufficiently appears, yet you cannot informe me of his age, his name, stature, strength, condition, complection, the place of his birth, the place of his dwelling, his means, his
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his maintenance, and none of all these will ever appear by the worke: and thus it befall the Creatures in reference to God, they set forth indeed many excellent attributes of God, yet they do not intend to give vs full satisfaction in the knowledge of God; but in humility seeme to confess, that there is something in the Deity, which appears not in the Creatures, and therefore in their owne want and defect, they referre vs to Gods owne revelation of himselfe.

For in our knowledge of God, the Creatures are not our bounds, but serue onely to point out a Deity, and then to cry, Plu. vtra, plus vtra, and so to leaue to God himselfe, sending vs from the outward shop of his worke, to the inward schoole of his words, from the theatre of the Creatures, to the sanctuary of his dwelling, there to learne a new lesson in the knowledge of God. Here is another article of their faith, another Testimony of God, in effect they confess that God being incomprehensible, he cannot be comprehended in his worke: hence proceeds their submission, considering their owne weakness, and the infinit distance betweene God and themselfes, they will not dare or attempt to discover the whole Deity, nor will they justly be taxed with curiosity, but content themselves with such a competent measure in the discovery of Gods knowledge, as their owne nature is capable.

Thus then the Creatures not fully revealing God, there is some place left for a further knowledge of God, and to this end there must be some further search and investigation made after God; here then is opened a gap to let in all the mysteries of our Christian faith and religion: suppose the eternall generation of the Sonne, the admirable procession of the Spirit, the glorious and indissoluble Trinity, the miraculous incarnation of the God-head, and the like. Nature indeed cannot reveal these mysteries, and being once revealed, nature cannot contradict them; she cannot oppose nor oppose them; for as all contrarieties are in the

the same kinde suppose heat to coldnefe, moyture to drought, and the like (these are qualities of the same kind) so in our understanding, all opposition must be betweene things of like nature; but if secrets and mysteries be of another kinde, of a different nature, of a different world, and therefore of a different speculation; then surely one and the same ground of reason which is fitted and proportioned to this our present state and condition, cannot equally suffice both, much lesse impugne and oppose things farre above and beyond her reach and capacity. So then, for the right understanding of mysteries which are of a different kinde, we must expect a reason of a different kinde, which in effect is a sanctifying grace, God holy Spirit to guide vs.

And to this end consider how absurd were it, that man should have no other teachers, or instructors in the knowledge of God, but only the dumbe Creatures, which must be admitted, in case we had no other knowledge of God, but onely of such attributes, as are discerned by his works; how improbable is it, that reason should have no other information, but onely from sense and sensible objectes, even concerning such things, which infinitely transcende and are above all reason, and all sense, as if a man should stoope downe to lay hold on such things, which are indeed above him, and beyond his reach?

Thus in humility the Creatures acknowledge their owne bounds; as bounds in their substance, bounds in their power; so bounds in their knowledge; they will not trespass beyond their bounds, they will not intrade upon mysteries, which standing a farre off, belonging to another world, and therefore farre remote from the view of nature. We want a sanctifying grace, like a prospecting glasse to discern them. Thus it falls out in nature, even in respect of natural things; the sunne and the stars must first send downe a light, and without their owne light, they cannot be discerned; so God himselfe must first give a testimony of himselfe, and then enlighten our hearts, for

Dumbe Creatures cannot be the sole teachers of man concerning God.

Faith is a kinde of reason elevated above a natural condition.

The necessity of faith.
The Religion of dumbe Creatures.

receiving this testimony, and without this his owne testimony, he cannot be revealed.

Thus to conclude, though the Creatures, or nature itself, are not the same in effect, though naturall reason proceeding upon natural grounds, though these do not discover our mysteries in particular, yet in general they seem to imply that mysteries there are, nature seems to confess that there is a power above nature, and this power did at first appear in the first institution of nature; reason seems to acknowledge that all faculties having their own proper bounds, these self cannot be without bounds, and therefore many things there may be and are beyond the comprehension of reason. Thus much in general.

Now for proofe and confirmation of our mysteries in particular, we do not require their testimony, for we have other greater proofs then theirs, and therefore we will leave them of that labour: they have the works of nature to testify the God of nature. We have works above nature, miracles beyond all natural causes, to testify our mysteries above nature: they have a Creation for their being; a providence for their preservation, &c. we have an eternal preference, an immutable decree, prophecies and predictions, fore-telling future events, together with the full accomplishing of these prophesies; in a word, they have the voice of nature; we have the testimony of the God of nature.

This I speake, looking to the generaall nature, yet it cannot be denied, but by a particular charge, as it were a special Commission, some Creatures may likewise be truly and properly said to give a testimony, and to confirm our mysteries of grace; for the same God is God both of nature and grace, he hath laid the foundation of grace in the ground-work of nature: as grace doth sanctifie nature, so nature supports grace; as grace works by nature, so nature may bear witness to the working of grace. Thus all miracles, what did they argue, but that the Creatures changing their own nature, did therein shew their obedientiall power to be at his command and direction, who first appointed their nature, who can change and alter their nature, and now works above and beyond nature; these works surmounting nature, his works may likewise surpaße nature. Thus mysteries above natural apprehension, are no more incredible then works above natural power; both carry the same stamp, and are of the same mind, they give credit and testimony to each other. Miracles we discern by sense, we acknowledge in reason, to be such as indeed they are, miracles beyond all natural power. Then prefently our faith not carried with a vaine credulity, not seduced with sophistry, but being truly informed of the works, presently the floopes in humility and hearkens to the words, and therein the acknowledged mysteries, mysteries beyond mans reason and comprehension.

Thus it should seeme, that some Giantlike Deity, by his Reason, works, by his words hath made knowne unto the world, that his power and his wildeome surpaßeth all natural bounds, while the Creatures shewing in themselves the effects of his power, do likewise point out the depth of his wildeome, and hereby conclude an infinite power, an infinite wildeome, both which cannot admit mans weake opposition or disputation, but rather should worke vs admiration, astonishment and silence.

For as in miracles, the dumbe Creatures, notwithstanding their natural inclination, yet are they over-rulled by Gods power: so in mysteries, man, notwithstanding his natural wrangling, and contentious wit, and the scrupulous curiosity of his owne mind, yet must he submitt himselfe to Gods words. Thus the power manifested, ferues as a scale to the will revealed: miracles proue the truth of mysteries; the one our natural reason may easilie see, and discern; and these being discerned, doe proue the infallable truth of the other.

This by way of digression: for this is extraordinary vn-

• D 2 usuall,
The Religion of dumbe Creatures.

and many good admonitions, they are, I confess, very learned preachers, and do exceedingly edifie, for they were able to strike the very heathen (who were without the knowledge of the true God) with wonder and amazement: the dumb creatures and senseless Creatures bear witness and testify of God. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork: one day telleth another, and one night certified another. Thus they instruct us, while they catechize each other, and as we exhort them to praise God, so they exhort us, that what is wanting in them, they may supply it in us: (here is their cunning:) they are dumb, therefore they make us their Advocates, their instruments and spokesmen, they vie our tongues to set forth God's praise, giving us occasion, and stiffening us to praise him, our praise becomes theirs, and their praise is made ours: we are their God-fathers to make the confession of their faith: they are our remembrancers, & ferue as the scales of our truth. And thus there is not only a communion of Saints, but a communion of Creatures, which is one, together in one natural servitude of God; as we partake with them in substance, so we may joyn with them, or rather learn of them, the commendations of God.

Thus much of their faith: wherein if I have been somewhat obscure, I pray remember the nature of faith, which is of things invisible, and from their faith and testimonies of God, come we then to their preachers, and praiers of God. It is not only proper to Angels to be continually busied in praising and magnifying God, singing their Hallelujah, &c. but even the most dumb Creatures partake in this service, and bear their part in this song, though not in such an excellent manner. This is nature's daily task and employment: for what is natural to things in general, therein nature cannot be wanting to her felle, but must first know and acknowledge her owne properties, within her felle: artificem collatisus opus, that the worker should praise and commend the workman. I take
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it to be a fœtuie imposed, or an hommage done to the Lord. Thus wherescuer ye discerne the worke, you cannot exclude the workeman, both are of like extant, since to be, and to be the effects of his power, both are alike inferable from the Creatures; who upon the first view and appearance doe plainly shew, that what they are in themselves, this they haue from their Maker; their perfection speakes his excellency; their conrurance, his eternity; if they haue ought praye worthy in themselues, this makes for his praise, who is most worthy of all praise, though we most vnworthy to set forth this praise.

Consider then in the Creatures in generall: First, their proper and bounded nature, together with so great variety and perfection in their owne kindes. Secondly, in this nature, such excellent properties, affections, and accidents which doe so well agree with the nature. Thirdly, from this nature, such strange and wonderful apparitions and effects. Fourthly, by this nature such an excellent order, and proportion both in themselues, and to the whole World. Fifthly, through this nature, such a confanty and perseverance in keeping their due course, in performing their duty, servise and ministry to man.

O excellent Artist, that could, so sweetly tune nature to make such a melody, where there is such a concent and agreement on every side; the parts to the whole, the whole to the parts, each to it selfe, all to the Maker! O excellent melody! here is neither found, nor voice to the ear, yet a most sweet and delectable harmony, a musicke of nature. Doe not then haarken with your ears, but listen with your minds, and in stead of notes, conceive this ditty: We sing the praises of our Maker.

This praise and servise of God seems to resemble our mentall prayer; for it is inward, secret, and consists only in Meditation. Come we then to their vocal prayers, which in effect are our Leiturgie or Church-servise: and first, behold the magnificence of their Temple, which is the material world, the naturalle Temple of God, a Temple made by

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by God for himselfe, and by himselfe consecrated to his ownerthe, where the heauens are the rooffe, the earth is the footstool, and wherein nothing is wanting, which may serve for beauty and ornament: here all the Creatures daily attend, and are ever conversant in this Temple: For the Sparrow hath found her a house, and the Swallow a nest, where she may lay her young ones, even those Altars, O Lord God of Hostes, my King and my God: Blessed are all they that dwell in thy Courts, for they shall ever be praising thee, Psal. 84:3,4.

Decent and comely ceremonies, which serve to stirre vp our dulness, and to set forth God's magnificence, and therefore are most commendable in vs, yet they haue none; They vsf for they want none: in stead of them, they have a truth ceremony, but and sincerity in their servise, without hypocrisie or diffimulation: they are not troubled or disquieted in their own thoughts (as we are) that they should be admonished by outward ceremonies: but they are like the Angels in heauen, wholly intent to their servise. I would I could say as much for our felues.

Now listen a while to their prayers: here every creature hath his sound & his voice, Vox naturæ inelaminitis Domini: in nature, the voice of nature calling upon the God of nature. Nature is no fool, that she should babble and talk to her selfe, nor is there any other nature, with whom she might have conference: she is no more idle and superfluous in her words, than in her works: Nature mihicet frustra, natura nihil dicet frustra. Then undoubtedly in these cries, these offers vs her prayers to her Maker.

Now would you know the meaning and sense of these prayers? Surely I conceive them to be to this or the like intent of purpose, Venite, iubilamus Deo nostro, genuflect sus, excelsus prayer, & Lete nos in viro: (the very beginning of our Morning Service) O all ye works of the Lord, praisye the Lord, bless him, and magnifie him for ever. Do ye yet require some more particular notice, what they request in their prayers? Truely they pray in a straungtongue, I never learnt their language;
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language; yet this I can say for a truth, in mine owne experience:

The diversity of their prayers.

That according to the diversity of occasions, you shall finde a difference in their prayers: in their joy and mirth, you may discerne their pleasant notes of thankfulness; in their griefe and heaviness, you shall heare their sorrowful, full sighes, and groanes of complaints. Then it should seeme, nature becomes a petitioner: and to whom should the petition, but to that higher power which sitts above nature? Though the dumbe Creatures haue neither speech nor language among them, yet their sound is gone out into all quarters: though their cries be inarticulate, and unimportant to vs, yet are they under foot of their Maker; that he seeth the secrets of our hearts, can much more easily discern the intent of their prayers.

But in this their servise; or prayers, doe they vse no means of devotion? haue they no respect to Gods magnificence? but confusedly doeumble vp, or bellow out their prayers, as if with their crying, and roaring, God could be praised? which were indeed more to dishonour God in the manner, then to honour him in the servise. Herein, to give you full satisfaction, I say, that every thing, according to the vtermost extent of his own ability, doth offer vp his servise to God in the most excellent manner. To instance only in their Quier, or in their Church-musicke, there you haue a full, perfect, and compleat Quier; sufficient variety of voices; the little chirping birds, the Wren and the Robin, they sing a treble; the Gold-finch, the Nightingale, they joyne in the meane; the Black-bird, the Thrush, they bear the tenour, while the four-footed beasts, with their bleating and bellowing, they sing a base: how other birds sing in their order, I referre you to the skilful Musicians: here is diversity of musicke, some haue their seuerall notes, as if they sung verses alone, and did pause and keepe time like Queriters, while others vse their continued songs, that all might please with variety.

These songs are fitted for every season: as if they had some proper service, some collectes appointed for the time: Thus they alter and varie according to the quarters of the yere, the hours of the day, the coasts of the world; and as if they were in some solemn procession, and did purpose to compass and circuit the whole earth, with their Anthemes and Letanes: some singing while they are flying, others make choice of the woods for their standing, in the groves, some in the meadowes, some in the plains, some on the house toppe: here are their voices. Now for their instruments; me thinkes the rockes, the caves, and the woods, with a hollownesse of their inward, like a musickall instrument, send forth an Echo, and seeme to vntitle their songs, together with the pleasant noyse in the fall, and gliding of waters, the pretty, sharpewhiffing of the winde, which serues as a ground to their musick.

And what is more, beleue it, they obserue their canonicall hours, as if they were some religious order, they haue their lauds, their Mattens, their Vepers, in effect, they haue their Morning prayer, and their Even-song, for these are the speciall and the appointed times for their devotions; neither will I conceale that which I haue so often obserued: sometimes one bird provokes another to sing, then me thinkes I heare the Churches Antiphons, one side of the Quier answering another, a custome which hath anciently beeene brought into the Church, according to the patern and presidnet of the Seraphims, Isa.6. Et clamabant ad altarem, & dicabant; Sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus exercituum.

To conclude, how effectuall, and acceptable their prayers are, I will not demand of them, they may chance their prayers to be foolish and partiall in their owne behalfe; herein are take rather the testimonie of God himselfe, and that to the poorest bird, which of all others we might suppose to be most neglected, for it is a night-bird, melancholy, ill pregising it hath a harsh note, and it feeds upon carrion, and yet notwithstanding the Psalmist can testify, Psal. 147.9. Ecceus dat pullos coronam innocentissim cum, as if God
God kept a watch oyer the nest, and did teach the young Rauens to call vpon him, and in effect to sal grace, and to give him thankes before the receuving of their food.

After their prayers followes in the next place, their deca
cologue or law: and truly, for the practice of their religion
in their lies and conversations, which appears in the
keeping and fulfiling of this decalogues or naturall law, I
cannot but greatly admire them. They are still carried
with the same course, which God first appointed; the
Sonne keepes his iust houre of rising, the Moone obserues
her certaine revolutions, so all the dumbe Creatures, and
all the beasts of the field doe the like: you may assoone
abolish their nature, as accuse them for the breach of the
law of nature; they are led by their owne instinct, they
have no libertie of will to oppose, they cannot be
refractory, but are like the Angels in heauen, sealeed and con-
firmed in their state and condition. Here is their confor-
mity to Gods naturall law; as farre forth as God hath gi-
gen them a law, they are surely led by the law, and the
most sanctified man can doe no more, but according to
the measure of grace that is giuen him. Alas! I should
shame our selues, if I should speake of our disobedience, in
respect of theirs.

Hear then how all those naturall vertues appeare in
them, how they are rooted and grounded in them, suppose
temperance, iustice, sobriety, industrie, naturall affection
and the like; I will forbear to speake, being verily per-
swaded that nature hath proposed them vnto vs, as pre-
sidents of each vertue, that haue giuen vs a rule, some in-
clination in our selues to morall vertues, the might annexe
some example to that rule, the example of dumbe Crea-
tures; that if we our selues, through the malignity of our
wills, should proue to abolish the law in our hearts
(for to the custome of sinne takes awaie the fenance of sinne)
yet, still the law might be referred whole and entire, to
gether with the exact patern and practice of the law, as
I may so say, booke of reports in the Creatures; and to
this purpose I had made a long discourse, but to enter vpon
it, I should prove tedious: therefore I will forbear to make
any further mention of this, which indeed is so evident and
palpable, as that it cannot admit a contradiction.

From their law, come we then to their sacrifice, which
truly is as naturall as is their law; for sacrifice is a pledge
of our thankfulnesse, which thankfulnesse is a branch of
Creatures, common iustice, this iustice is naturally ingraven in all
Creatures, that receu ing our selues from God, we should
offer vp our selues vnto God, or at least, something in lieu
of our selues, some quittance or fine in the acknowledgement
of our Tenure, that we hold our selues from God, and therefore we are not at our owne disposing, but must
surrender vp our selues vnto God; so that you might as
well exclude from nature, a naturall law, as to deny a sacri-
fice. Thus in generall, all things being ordained to Gods
glory, they are likewise ordained for his sacrifice, here is
their sacrifice. More particularly: Nothing in it selfe con-
tains in it selfe the vfe and end of it selfe; but hath some
reference beyond it selfe (E.g.) Doth not euer thing eva-
porate, and impart some part of it selfe, supposse the flowers
of the field in their sweet smell; many Creatures with their
incense and odoriferous perfumes: and what are these
indeed but natures sacrifices?

Shall we yet come neerer, and shew how they partake
in a true sacrifice? What are the stones in the Temple,
but indeed offered vp in sacrifice? For it is not nece-
sary, that all should consecrate, who attend at the Altar; all
cannot be principals; if the materiall temple will not suf-
face, come we then to mans body, which is the Temple of
Gods Spirit: and freely things ordained for the vfe of this
Temple, and the vfe confinishing in their owne slaughter,
they are indeed consecrated and become a sacrifice.

If hitherto you dislike the metaphorical or large signi-
fication, come we then to the strictest fence. What were
the sacrifices of the Iewes, but indeed the offering vp of
dumbe Creatures? Then surely, these dumbe Creatures were

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dumbe Creatures?
were no small part in the sacrifice, they cannot be excluded; but these were only types and shadows of a true sacrifice; Come we then to that one and only true sacrifice, the sacrifice of Christ: As we partake in his sacrifice, in regard of our nature, the manhood of Christ, so all the creatures cannot be excluded in regard of one common matter, or substance, in the body of Christ; so that in him, in him alone, the whole world, the great world in the little world, becomes a true and real sacrifice.

And for Sacraments: Are not all the creatures sanctified for man's use? And what is this in effect, but to be the visible signes of invisible grace? Suppose the four Elements: The fire, when God appeared like fire in a bramble-bush, and the Holy descended in fiery tongues; The air, when God dwelt with his ownbreath, breathed out his Spirit: The water, in our baptism: The earth, in her fruits; Bread and wine in the Eucharist. Thus they are in our Sacraments, according to the capacity of their nature: we see, they passively, all concur in the Sacraments.

And to proceed yet further: Left they might seeme to fail in the end, and hence of religion. It may, they are not altogether without hope; for what may they not hope and expect from God, who is so bountiful and magnificent in his rewards? though their service be a natural service, a service necessarily imposed, and that they can doe no lese than serve him in their owne kindes, yet it stands with God's bounty to reward their service. I say then, that they are not altogether without hope; for there is a natural hope, as Job speaks, Job 14:7. Lignum fructif launcherit, habes / quem quad renuntias: so if I should extend this natural hope, as an earnest, or as an implicit hope, to a reformation of nature; this were no inconvenienc. For certainly it is of all the dumm Creatures, that at the general day of our Resurrection, they likewise, though not in themselves, yet in their owne elements and principles, shall be renewed. For there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, that then they may be fitted for our use, as now in the time and state of corruption, they serve our present turns and occasions.

If this seeme a strange doctrine then, let this reason confirm it: Creatures were first created in Paradise. Then surely they were not so much ordained for slaughter, and mans use, as for the setting forth of God's glory. Now since our fall, they groan and travail in paine together with us under the burthens of our sins, and our miseries, the punishments of sin: Rom. 8. 22, yet still they continue innocent in themselves, they are often employed in God's service, alwaies praying God in their owne kindes, and never incuring the breach of his law, but are patient, notwithstanding our inmoderate and inordinate abuse. Then surely by a course of justice, according to their manner, and the capacity of their owne nature, though not in themselves, (that is) in the fire that is, malignity and corruption of their nature, yet in their owne first elements and principles, or as they have now entred into mans body, and are become parts of mans flesh, all the Creatures in general shall partake with us in our future intended renovation.

Thus then we will say with Isaiah, 24. 15. I and my house will serve the Lord: we and whatsoever is ours, either inwardly in our souls, or outwardly in our substance, we are all at his service, every one according to his power and ability doth praise God; and hath his religion, if a defecte Religion. Then looke to the power, and you shall finde it likewise defecte; for both are fitted and proportioned to each other: in nature, there is a law of nature; and where the natural creature is capable of grace, there are the mysteries of grace, the precepts and counsels of grace.

And thus without any figure or metaphor, the Creatures may truly be said to praise God, in a kind of religious worship and service; for whatsoever proceeds from religion, God tends to his glory: where is the end? Now the way must be agreeable to this end: and therefore what tends

...
to his glory, must needs runne in the course of his seruice, whether nature or grace. If ye say, that religion be properly tied to a state of grace; non est licandum de verbis, ut in re commercio, yet I am not of that opinion, for I thinke it no absurdity to say, a natural religion. Thus all nations are said to have their religion, and yet we know, that most of them have no more then sense, reason, and nature; and yet notwithstanding, they have a religion, then surely they have onely a natural religion, which in effect is no more, then the religion of dumb beasts, for nature appears alike in them as in vs: that which gives mans religion a speciall dignity and prerogative above the religion of dumb beasts, is onely this, that mans religion is not merelie natural, and onely natural, but there is an earnest of grace to sanctifie the corruption of nature, mysteries of grace beyond the apprehension of nature, and a certainty of hope beyond the expectation of nature.

And thus in generall, as there is a seruice of nature, so in generall, we may well say that there is a kind of natural religion; which notwithstanding proceeding onely from nature, it cannot be rayled aboue nature, but must againe returne and end in nature, and being by the necessity of their nature, it is therefore a seruice which requires no further reward, but onely servies as a motive and example to vs.

And thus far of the natural seruice of God in dumb Creatures, which I call the Religion of dumbe Creatures; now briefly to conclude, three things there are wherein I doe much deare to give you contentment. First, whether this meditation may be thought vaine and needless. Secondly, how farre it may seeme strange or a Paradoxe. Thirdly, what good we may be made of it: for the first, whether this be a vaine meditation, I pray trace it by degrees: the faith of the Creatures, I did suppose to be that knowledge of God, which is gathered from the Creatures, as much in effect, as the natural or reasonable man can know of God. Now whereas of all sciences, the Metaphy-

Metaphysticks haue euer beene held the most excellent, this very subiect is the principal part of the Metaphysticks; by consideration hereof, the heathen Philosophers haue beene strangely transported, and rauiished, and haue burst forth into these or the like exclamations and inuocations of God: Ets sanctum, primus motor, prima intellegentia, naturans naturam, immensa infinitas, principio sine principio, &c.

Secondly, after their faith, how the dumbe Creatures doe praise God in their owne nature, in their passions, in their affections, or if these be secret and hidden from man, then according to the imitacion of man, how they praise God in their voyces, in their sounds, which are the outward signes, and symptomes of their owne inward nature. This belongs to the Physickes, and is in effect, the whole scope and intent of all natural Philosophy.

Thirdly, for their law which serves as a guide to direct them; which law is written in their hearts, practised in their actions, in so much that in them, we may calmly read the characters of this law, the very pure test of the law of nature without any corrupt gloss: this is in effect, the whole ground and foundation of all moral Philosophy.

Fourthly, for the sacrifice and Sacraments of Creatures, when we consider how the dumbe Creatures are sanctified, and prooue to be Sacramentia, fit to enter into the Holie of Holies, to be vnto vs as meanes and conductions of grace, which seeme to imply, that nature and grace being now incorporated, there was surely some Deity incarnate, by virtue whereof, the whole materiall nature is combined to the Spirituall nature; not by consanguinity, but by alliance, by the nuptials of those two natures in his one person, who was both perfect God and perfect Man; this is a most deep and profound mysterie in Theology, and thus you cannot condemn this Meditation as vaine and needless.

How all sciences may be reduced to this natural religion.
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Creatures in generall, and suffer me to presixe these words in the frontispice, _A Iove principium_, or _In Dei nomine_, which are the same in effect. Then give me leave to turne over the leaves, and to the last lines, in stead of _Finis_, or _Explicit_, to adioyne these words, as a label or codicil to the worke, _Ad Dei gloriam_. & both these nature implies: for first there must be a workeman, then the worke must be directed to some end. Now besides the workie selfe, no other end appears but the workeman: things must then runne in a circle, from God, to God; God in the forefront, God in the vphost. And thus if you consider the Creatures, betwixt God and God, in stead of a naturall discourse, here you have a religion of nature.

Thus in Christian Religion, if our ceremonies were first invented by Pagans, if our prayers were first composed by Heathen, yet still we may lawfully vse them: for when we presixe, _In nomine Patris_, & _Fili_, & _Spiritus sancti_, or when we shew up our prayers with _Per Christum Dominum nostri_, then we give them the tincture of Christianity. Thus with _David's Psalmes_, which are indeed the Psalmes of the Iewes, when we cloze them up with this period, _Gloria patri & filio & Spiritui sancto_, then we make them ours, and properly ours; in effect, we Christianize them. And thus to consider the Creatures barely in themselves, without reference to God, were a most imperfect knowledge; but shew them their descent and original, from whence they proceed, shew them their right use, and the end of their progress, and here in effect you have composed a natural religion.

Thirdly, for the use which we may make vnto our selves of this Religion of dumbe Creatures, in a word it is this: First, it serves to make vs ashamed of our selves, that while all other Creatures doe strictly serve God in their owne kinde, yet wee, though more bound vnto God for the many blessings received, then they; though more especially intended for God's service, seeing all other Creatures serve man, and man alone is immediately ordained for God's service; yet the poore dumbe Creatures should strictly serve God in their owne kinde, while we, and we alone, and we only are the transgressors.

Secondly, it sets forth the large extent of Gods Church, the large and the unattouchable height of his glory, though his finnes, tent of his grace, haue made a separation betwixt God and vs, though our blasphemies be much and so great, as that faine they would obscure and eclipse Gods glory: yet maugre our attempts, and in the sight of our malice, God shall be glorified, as of the Angels above, so of the dumbe Creatures beneath: if men shall cease to sing their _Hosannah_, the stones will cry, _Luke 19:40_.

Then in the last place let their service be some encouragement and motive to ours, if we cannot attaine to the perfection of Angels to offer up our selves as a whole burnt sacrifice to God; if we cannot approze our selves, as members of one Catholike Church, to serve God in the unity of one faith, but that as the East hath formerly beene separated from the West, so is now the South from the North, as if with feds and schifmes, we were to quarter out our religion according to the coasts of the world, and to divise Christs seamless garment among vs, haueing first crucified the Lord of life: If in the course of Christianity, we cannot agree in the very fundamentall points of religion, but are wholly separated, so that neither one mother Church beneath, nor yet one heauen aboue can contain vs. Suppose that Christianity should cease, then let vs come to the terrors of humanity, and desire to exceed all other Creatures, as well in vertue and dignity, as in nature and condition. But if all faile, if all faile (as I fear they doe in some) then in the last place I pray let me recommend vnto them the religion of dumbe Creatures: surely we can doo no leef, then joyne with them in their religion: for they are sensual and beastly, like to our selves: then let not those most excellent attributes of God, which are discovered by them, be contradicted by vs: here we shall suioide Atheisme in our prayers, devotions, and seruice.
The Religion of dumbe Creatures.

of God, let vs not be inferior to them.

But above all, let me recommend this one thing to our
practice, that the Creatures may not outstrip vs, in the
strict observing of the natural Law, which to vs, in effect,
is, in moral honesty. This I doe the rather with, because the
morall law was never abrogated, notwithstanding the
change of Priest-hood, the change of Ceremonies, the
change of Religion, which was translated from the Syna-
gogue of the Jews, to the Church or congregation of the
Gentiles; yet till one and the same morall law was contin-
ued. So at this day, notwithstanding our diversitie of
Sects, Schismes and Religions; yet it were to be wished,
that our actions might be squared out by one morall law,
which law appears in the Creatures, and is common to
man and the Creatures, and is as natural to man, as is his
owne nature, and should no more be separated from man,
then his owne nature; for want then of religious piety and
godlinesse, let this morall law be our guide. Thus man
shall know his duties to man.

But how miserable were our condition? what a world of
mischief would follow? if we should neglect morall du-
ties, under cloake and pretence of religion, as if religion did
abolish nature, as if the morall law were abrogated toge-
ther with the ceremonial; Yet this is the practice and ini-
quity of these our most unhappy times, that all factions,
seditions and treacheries must be forsooth rooted and
grounded in religion, as if religion were the sole mother,
and nurse of all treasons; as if heaven could not subsist
with the earth; as if the Tower of Babel could not be built,
but with Church stones. This is the bane and the flame of
Religion, God knowes, I cannot speake of it with patience,
or without my great hearts griefe; and therefore I will
here end abruptly; beseeching the Almighty God
to reforme it; beseeching the Almighty
God reforme it.

Sunt & individuae Trinitati sit
honor & gloria.