

vice within the temple of the truth. But natural religion has its charms when it leads up to the stoop-steps of Gospel glory, just as in some rural village the neighbors coming up to the sanctuary from the lanes, and beneath the trees, linger to shake hands outside the church doors, and, as I have often thought, musing upon the spectacle on some lovely day of lambent atmosphere, find their minds softened for their song of praise by the whisper of the leafage rustle, and the mantling of the solemn skies.

Heartiness of sense has its power to serve the joy of spiritual strength, the strength of spiritual joy. If a true thanksgiving can translate itself in feasting, so can a real feast express a genuine thanksgiving.

Take up now this whole verse in its contextual connection. The occasion was the outbreking and outburst of a delivering Gospel upon an overbearing and overwhelming promulgation of the law. Read from verse 9 to verse 12, inclusive, and you will get the view; a picture, such as when an April sky smiles out upon an April shower, or as when a child laughs and plays with tears still sparkling in enameled eyes; and the consideration and the conclusion of it come to this, that we have a reason and a right of heartiness, cheeriness, and charity in the world redeemed.

Now, recent skepticism denies this right point-blank, in theory. In practice, it foregoes this privilege. The doubter and the scouter, in their new agnosticism, complain that they do not know what there is to be glad about. In the nature of the case they cannot know that there is such a thing as gladness. They may know, indeed, the sentiment or the sensation of one moment, but what can they know of the next? They cannot say that I know nothing, for they cannot be sure that there is any such real entity as I, and certainly they cannot tell by what evolution I may yet be evolved. They certainly will not permit me to insist that they know anything at all, or that they are anybody

or anything. They will not even let me esteem them to be agnostic, for how can I know that they exist? To know or not to know, that is the same as to be, or not to be. The universe, to such an one, divides itself between the unknowable and the unknown. But as to futures, there is nothing to be said. One can conceive of a positive unbelief or skepticism that sets out to reorganize uncertainty and to frame itself a possible hereafter, different from that depicted in any creed. Such a theory might have its enticements, its allurements, its hilarities and glees of expectation. But that which now passes for disbelief, is sheer negation of all things. It is a wail in space, a whine on earth. It crouches over the grave, and it has reason so to crouch. Now, a long-faced Christian is an anomaly; but a long-faced scouter is consistent.

What is there, O friend, to be glad about? What is there, or what *can* there be, to be merry over? True, one can bound or browse, as the cattle by the roadside; true, one can flit and flutter, as the minnow in the ripple. That is all so; but, then, *be* a bullock, *be* a minnow, and have done with it!

But, it is terribly hard to be a loving woman, or a working man, upon such terms as these. True, one can stand apart in doubt, dismay, defiance, of this unfinished and disordered creaturehood. Well, then, go out of it—go altogether out of it. Step aside and go out of it, at once. Leave—not just the terraqueous orb and the scenery which you call the “world,” “earth,” “time,” and such like, with dialect of all familiar ignorance and ignorant familiarity, because other worlds, and earths, and times, and what-nots, elsewhere and otherwise, might be as bad, or worse; but go *out*—altogether *out*, if it may be; and, finding a realm to suit thyself, leave this perplexed, defeated God’s creation to take its chances, or to meet its fate.

Well I know that the epicurean reasoning said its say, of old, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” Sad “funereal baked meats.” They say it