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A LETTER TO THE WATCH TOWER

MY DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: How true is it that our Heavenly Father can bring good out of evil, and cause the wrath of man to praise him. At the very time we are cautioned to "watch" and "beware," and that "the love of many shall wax cold," on account of iniquity abounding, He has arranged a mass of concurring events well calculated to increase our faith. I am reminded of this every day. I find men fulfilling prophecy; saying and doing many things, freely and voluntarily, which they have not the remotest idea had any connection with God or heaven, and yet which is of such a nature, or has such a relation to things which are of interest to the child of God who is watching closely every indication of the presence of his Lord, as to impress him forcibly with the thought that He is even *at the door*. While stopping in a certain city, not long since, a little incident occurred which had something to do with this train of thought.

I was in conversation with a gentleman (not a professor of religion, I suppose). We were in his place of business, and looking out of the window before me, I saw the tall, symmetrical spire of an adjoining fashionable church, which was surmounted by a weather-vane in the form of a cock. At first sight and thought it seemed to me to be a *vain* thing to be upon a Christian church, and your correspondent expressed his surprise at its being in *such* a place; for although it is a reminder of Peter's weakness and denial of his Lord, and inferentially of our weakness, yet it is so often used as the emblem of boastful power that it seemed quite out of place there, and it seems that the gentleman referred to was impressed the same way, for he said, looking archly at it, "O, it is in harmony with the principles of the churches in *these days*," giving a peculiar accent to the words "*these days*."

Soon after, looking out at the building from another point, I observed: "Those must be fine windows, judging from the appearance outside." "O, yes," said he; "it is a fine church *inside*, but that cannot be said of those who belong to it." And then, striking an attitude, and pointing with scorn toward the place, he said, "Why, sir, if you could take all the Christianity there is in there and boil it down, you would not get a piece as large as a pin's head."

Of course, I had nothing to say, but went off into reverie, and said to myself (the outgrowth of thoughts presented in the WATCH TOWER). That church is struck with lightning, and don't know it, but will some

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day wake up to the fact when it is too late to rebuild it. “As the lightning cometh out of the East, and shineth even unto the West, so shall also the coming [*parousia*—presence] of the Son of Man be.” The lightning has swept away “the refuge of lies,” and the *world* sees the dead men’s bones and all uncleanness.” The lightning not only reveals things which were hidden, but it has a pleasing or displeasing effect according as the things revealed are pleasing or displeasing to the beholder. To children who, in the stormy night, watch for the absent father, the lightning, to their joy, reveals him near at hand; but to the burglar, that same flash reveals approaching justice and doom; but in *either* case the beholders get true views of their surroundings. They see the highest objects first and best. The churches are the highest objects, and men now see what they are and what they *should* be; although they do not yet see down into the valleys of social and civil conditions so as to adjust things, but as the storm increases, they *will* be able to see, and “will learn righteousness,” and acknowledge “that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men.”

Let us lift up our heads “*knowing* that our redemption draweth nigh.”

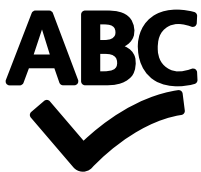
“Cheer up, cheer up; the day breaks o’er thee,
Bright in the promised shining way!
Light from heaven is streaming for thee,
Proving thee near the perfect day.”

Rejoicing in the light now shining from our Lord’s presence and hoping for the soon coming change to the likeness of his glorious body, of all who have made a covenant with him by sacrifice, I am your brother in Christ.

J. C. SUNDERLIN.

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— October, 1880 —



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