

# THE LOWER LIGHTS

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"Brightly beams our Father's mercy  
from the lighthouse evermore;  
But to us He gives the keeping  
of the lights along the shore."

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Michigan's 124 lighthouses have largely been reduced to tourist attractions by the electronic equipment of modern ships. But, in another era, their beacons shone through the fog and darkness, bringing many a sailor to the shores of the Great Lakes, who otherwise would have been lost or shipwrecked.

When Jesus began His work among men, the prophecy was fulfilled which said, "The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great light, and to those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death, upon them a light dawned." (Mt 4:16). He was (and is) the true light, which, coming into the world, enlightens every man." (Jn 1:9)

Jesus, the Light of the World (Jn 8:12), dispels the darkness of ignorance with the knowledge of God (2 Cor 4:6), shines through the fog of error that men may see the truth (2 Pet 1:19-2:3), and reveals the way of righteousness that men may come out of the shadows of sin (Jn 3:19-21). He has brought many a sinner safely to heavenly shores who otherwise would have perished eternally in hell (Acts 26:18).

The light of Jesus shines through His gospel. This precious treasure has been placed in the earthen vessels of men so that the greatness of its power is from God, not men. The content (the message that Christ Jesus is Lord)

is so much greater than the containers who carry it to men (bondservants for Jesus' sake) (2 Cor 4:4-7).

How truly honored was Paul when Isaiah's prophecy about Jesus, the Light to the Gentiles, was secondarily applied to him as he was commanded to take the gospel to the Gentiles, "I have placed you as a light for the Gentiles, that you should bring salvation to the end of the earth." (Acts 13:47). In the same way, we, too, are humbled by the honor of bringing the Light to men through the preaching of the gospel.

P.P. Bliss, the writer of the familiar hymn, had this in mind when he referred to Christians who live and teach the gospel as "the lower lights". Though Jesus is the Lighthouse, His disciples have an important role to play in rescuing men from sin and hell.

With this paper we "send a gleam across the wave" with the hope that "eager eyes are watching, longing for the lights along the shore." Perhaps your eyes are among those straining in the darkness of ignorance, religious error, and sin. We pray that as we present the gospel in writing, we may point you to the Light who will bring you to the shore of salvation. We invite you also to our worship assemblies and would be delighted to study with you in your home.

## **TIGER FANS EVERYWHERE!!**

I have been a fan of the Detroit Tigers since they won the World Series in 1968. I've rooted for them, win or lose (mostly lose) ever since.

A few years ago, when I moved to Newark, OH, I began noticing the **D** symbol of the Tigers on reflectors which were attached to rural mailboxes. I said to myself, "There are Tiger fans everywhere!"

I believed this for several weeks, until one day while reading the newspaper, it dawned on me. The **D** was not the symbol of the Tigers, but of the Columbus Dispatch newspaper. The reflectors were not a show of support by Tiger fans, but were to aid those who delivered the paper! I had failed to put the symbol in its context.

The biggest problem in men's interpretation of the Scriptures is a failure to keep its statements in their context. To tempt Jesus (Mt 4:5-7), the Devil quoted Ps 91:11-12, "He will give His angels charge concerning you; and On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone." Does this passage say, as the Devil interpreted it to say, that men should make a dangerous jump, expecting that the angels will catch them?

NO! Jesus replied to the Devil, "on the other hand it is written" and quoted Dt 6:16. Jesus showed that one must take every passage of Scripture in the context of the rest of the Scriptures. One cannot interpret any passage in such a way as it contradicts another passage. The Scriptures must harmonize. Since Dt 6:16 said, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test", Ps 91:11-12 cannot mean that Jesus (or anyone else) should jump, counting on God's protection.

The Devil made Psalms 91 say what he wanted it to say. Why did I see Tiger symbols on the mailbox poles? Because that is what I wanted the **D** to mean.

We must be careful not to take the Scriptures out of their context because we are looking for what we want to find rather than what the Lord is saying. If we look at the Scriptures with prejudiced minds, we will find our belief, as I found Tiger fans, EVERYWHERE! And, sadly, like the Devil, we will twist the Scriptures to our own destruction! (2 Pet 3:15-16)

Let us find in the Scriptures only what God has intended. Our salvation depends on it!!