



Context of A Light in the Darkness

By Marcus Lander (September 2011)

This must be one of the shortest and simplest poems I have ever written, but arguably it proved to be one of the most powerful. It has an interesting background story to it.

When my first wife and I separated, she moved to Jersey with my daughter. Although I was able to see her in the holidays I was not able to have as much input in my daughter's young life as I would have liked, and I felt a desire to impart some of my values to her and to share with her my love of the Bible, which had meant so much to me and had been instrumental in shaping my own world view growing up. I had the idea of expressing my thoughts about the essence of the Bible's role in the form of a simple poem designed for a child's comprehension. I printed it out on a small piece of paper and rolled it up. I inserted it into the battery compartment of a pocket torch I had bought for my daughter as a present, and posted it off to Jersey.

When it arrived a few days later, it was apparently the subject of much mockery on the part of my former partner, who never wasted an opportunity to belittle me. "What is the point of sending a torch?", my daughter's mother scoffed, "Doesn't your father know that we have electric lights in Jersey!" And then mysteriously, for Jersey is a very affluent country, and this had not happened for many a year, the lights in Jersey suddenly went out and the island was plunged into darkness, as the power supply to the island failed. When I spoke to my daughter afterwards, I asked her if she had received my package, and she replied that she had, and that it had actually come in very useful under the somewhat unprecedented circumstances of the power cut. I then told her to open it, which she did and took out my poem coiled around the batteries.

I believe in the power of poetry to speak to the human heart, but in this instance I cannot help but suspect that God may have intervened to enhance the power of the poem, by engineering the circumstances so that it provided a powerful object lesson for one young mind of the value of God's word for our lives. It certainly made a strong impression on me at any rate.