“In Thy Light”

The psalmist of Israel wrote in Psalm 36:9, “In Thy light we see light.” A simple line but its truth is the most crucial idea in all of thought, religion, history, politics, and ethics. What it means is that it is through God’s word and understanding (“In Thy light . . .”), that we interpret all the areas of life (“. . . we see light.”). His word, not man, is the measure of all things. Within the light of His word there is clarity of all things. When man becomes autonomous, all becomes dark and obscure and ultimately a horror. Such is the testimony of scripture, reason, and history.

When Adam beheld the creation he understood its meaning and purpose. His wife, his fellow-man, nature, the animals, work, and ethics were all seen in the light of God. All things made sense. And this knowledge of God was not something that Adam or his progeny would have to reason their way into. The knowledge of God was intuitive, instinctive in Adam. Through being in the image of God he was able to apprehend God in the creation as well as in his inner man – his spirit and conscience. As Paul would say in Romans 1:19-20, “that which is known about God was evident in them for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, eternal power, and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood by what has been made so that they are without excuse.” God’s revelation to man and in man is self-attesting in the creation. Man knows of the true God and His law and thus is culpable for his unbelief or rejection of God for an image. According to Paul, man “suppresses” (lit. “holds down”) the truth in unrighteousness.” (Romans 1:18). He knows it inwardly and outwardly but will not submit to that knowledge. He will not “glorify Him or give thanks” (Romans 1:21). He will, through flawed, elusive reason-invent religious, philosophic, psychological, political, scientific, artistic, and ethical systems that suppress accountability to the God who is there.

In God’s light man at the creation understood all things. All was knowable because in addition to the revelation of God in creation, God walked with Adam and spoke to him. The special revelation of God’s word interpreted all he saw and experienced. Adam’s divinely given reason along with his senses worked within the greater light of God’s word. His reason and senses were not independent and autonomous to God’s word. Rather, they were guided by the illumination of God’s revealed word. To put it simply, man knew instinctively there was the true God and was informed by God exactly who He was and what was His will. And the entire universe around man and within man made sense.

“In Thy light we see light.”

This relationship of Creator/Creature had to be tested. Satan’s temptation was classic. He created doubt in God’s word and character. “. . . has God said?” “You surely shall not die?” “God knows that in the day you eat you shall be like God knowing good and evil.” i.e. “You can be the source of truth. Of right and wrong. You can be God! To find life you must be free from God and autonomous.”

In light of this temptation Eve should have remained in her position beneath God’s truth. “In Thy light . . .” Instead she took a position outside of God’s revelation and from a perch of autonomy she viewed the pronouncements of God and Satan as an objective third party. “She saw the tree was good for food and a delight to the eyes.” (Her senses informed her. Empiricism.) “And it was desirable to make one wise.” (Her reason informed her. Rationalism.) And she chose
Satan’s position instead of God’s. With that decision man and all his domain was cursed. The Fall occurred. Man became sealed in Adam’s decision. He was autonomous and apart from God. Adrift in a world of himself. Lost in space. Alien to the God who was his life and being and meaning and standard. The limb on which he sat was severed.

Rightly did Francis Schaeffer say that the most important verse in the Bible is Genesis 1:1. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” In that sentence all the vital questions are answered. Rightly did the atheist Sartre say, “Without an infinite reference point all points are meaningless.” Rightly did the anti-Christian Voltaire say, “If there is no God we must invent one.” Without the infinite, personal Creator of all who is Trinity – nothing makes any sense.

“In Thy light we see light.”

What did God do? His word to man now became more than illumining. It became redemptive and salvific. It became inscripturated or written down to show man his history, the prophecy of the coming Savior, Jesus Christ, the King of Israel and His holy Law showing man his sin. It depicted Jewish ceremonial worship, the shadow of Christ’s death, and salvation. And thus when its chief object, Jesus Christ, came into the world, the Bible with its Old Testament, the gospels, and the explanatory New Testament letters became the authoritative, self-attesting divine witness to salvation. Of how man could be made right again, reconciled back to God, and regenerated by and unto the truth. Once more, in God’s light, man could see light through the re-creation of The Last Adam – Christ – “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

As long as man looks to his own reason and wit as the source of truth he will always beg the question of “says who?” At some point reasoning must be circular. Truth must be truth because an authoritative, infinite Source says it is true. That source must be God. We Christians do not merely have the truth but we have the only possibility of truth. Man knows this. He cannot be man apart from the presuppositions of God. He sees a universe of order, diversity, and design. He reasons from a mind that thinks in laws of contradiction and finality. He is thinking in accordance to theistic principle. An early Christian wrote “the soul of man is naturally Christian.” When he thinks in moral principles of right and wrong he is thinking with divine premises. God is the lens through which he views and judges all reality. Only a creation of God can argue for atheism on rational, sensory, and moral grounds. He is “without excuse.” He types papers on why he doesn’t believe in language.

It is only “in Thy light we see light.”