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# Light: Recovering an Ancient Perspective

Hayden Lukas



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As John the Baptist bore witness to the Light of the World, so too must the Church today. But there are many ways to talk about light. How should we speak about light when bearing witness to Christ? On which understanding of light should we draw? Light can refer to daylight or the light in a room—the physical

phenomenon we perceive through sight. But light can also refer to objects that produce light, such as a floor lamp; we “turn on the lights.” We are familiar with scientific descriptions of light, such as its speed or its wavelength. Light can also refer to mental activities, as when we use the words enlighten or elucidate. As a father to a young reader, it seems I read Dr. Seuss’ *Oh the Things You Can Think!* almost daily: “Think of Light! Think of Bright! Think of Stars in the Night!”<sup>1</sup> Christians have much to draw on when speaking of the Light of the World. But what exactly is light? I will sketch two competing answers to these questions, the Platonic and the physicalist. I will argue from this sketch that the Christian account of light is closer to the Platonic perspective than the physicalist. As such, Christians should return to a more ancient perspective of light because it offers a more compelling account of light and its role in God’s creation.

## “True Light”: Two Competing Views

Martin Luther was concerned with the meaning of the word “light” in his 1535 *Lectures on Genesis*. The opening chapters of Luther’s lectures are mostly warnings against toying with the clear words of Scripture. Luther complains that other commentators interpret the light at the beginning of creation through a variety of allegories or metaphors. He disapproves of light interpreted as some angelic force or some linguistic stand-in for knowledge. Luther says we should not “by force read meanings into words.”<sup>2</sup> For Luther, the creation account in Genesis is as simple as “calling a post a post.” It was written by Moses for the common man to understand quite literally. When God creates light, we should take it to mean simply, as Luther says, “true light.”<sup>3</sup> This is a worthy consideration. But “true light” is not as neutral a term as we might think. Light has had different meanings in different cultures and times. The meaning of “true light” for the common man in an ancient context is different from what it would be for the common man today.

For today’s common man, light is a physical phenomenon. For example, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* categorizes its article on “Light” in its section about “Physics,” which is a subsection of its “Science” category. Light is identified as “electromagnetic radiation.”<sup>4</sup> Such an identification is unproblematic to the contemporary consciousness. It is the kind of explanation every student in the US public school system is first exposed to in

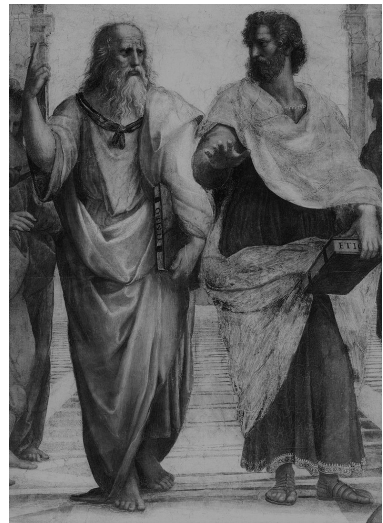
third, fourth, or fifth grade. According to this view, light is understood as a wave that travels through space at a constant speed (the speed of light). Its variable wavelength appears to us as different colors, but “light” specifically represents only the visible subset of a more general phenomenon, electromagnetic radiation. Light’s visibility is only based on the human eye’s capabilities, but “sight” is a much broader phenomenon that exists in many living things. Light can also be understood as a subatomic particle, a photon. But this development has only found its expression in the past on hundred years—it is a much newer concept.

Richard Feynman—who employs a specialist’s knowledge of light using the language of physics—describes it thusly: “Light, with which we see, is only one small part of a vast spectrum of [electromagnetic radiation], the various parts of this spectrum being distinguished by different values of a certain quantity which varies. This variable quantity could be called the ‘wavelength.’ As it varies in the visible spectrum, the light apparently changes color from red to violet.”<sup>5</sup> Simply put, light is a wave that radiates from a source and hits the human eyes, creating sight when interpreted by the brain. This is very intuitive for the common man today.

The contemporary view is the exact reverse of the ancients’ understanding of light. For the ancients, light is not something we see, exactly, but rather the thing by which we see other things. Inasmuch as Feynman offers a sophisticated view of today’s common man, the same can be assumed for Plato who, as we will see, offers a rather standard position from the ancient world. While it is not likely that every ancient person had a copy of Cratylus or Timaeus on his nightstand, Plato’s theory of light at least is substantially representative of the ancient world as a whole.

As explained in Timaeus, Plato believes every man has an interior store of fire, which is gathered in a pure form into the eyes, so that they can be shot out as a stream of vision:

The pure fire which is within us [was] made to flow through the eyes in a stream smooth and dense, compressing the whole eye, and especially the centre part, so that it kept out everything of a coarser nature, and allowed to pass only this pure element. When the light of day surrounds the stream of vision, then like falls upon like, and they coalesce, and one body is formed by natural affinity in the line of vision. [...] The whole stream of vision...diffuses the motions of what it touches or what touches it over the whole body, until they reach the soul, causing that perception which we call sight.<sup>6</sup>



*Detail of The School of Athens. Raphael. 1511. Public domain.*

For Plato, light was shot out from the eyes and information was captured outside of the body as it struck the light of day. Then this information was transmitted to the soul, causing perception. This was a popular theory of sight in the ancient world.

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Notably, this is the Christian view of sight, too. Here, Christian is a reference to the view of Christ, himself. Christ adopts such a view when he says, “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!” (Matthew 6:22-23). Christ utilizes an ancient theory of light.

The ancient worldview saw the eye as a lamp—something that produced light rather than merely receiving it.<sup>7</sup> That is to say, the eye was viewed as an active participant in the illumination of the world rather than as a passive recipient of illumination as it is today. In this sense, the ancient view of sight is exactly opposite to the present view. Christ’s view of light coming from the eyes does not have a developed physical theory like Plato’s does (Christ makes no reference to how the lamp shines). However, Christ’s statement still exhibits the same structure: light comes from the eyes, and that light diffuses itself throughout the whole body to the soul.

When confronted with Christ’s ancient view of sight, the Christian has a few options. First, they can assume that Christ is playing a kind of game. Christ, being all-knowing, knows light is really electromagnetic radiation and that the eye actually produces nothing when it sees something. Christ is just acclimating himself to a particular time and place and using the language of the historical period. That is, if Christ were around today he would make reference to the Encyclopedia Britannica or quote Richard Feynman when trying to make a point about light. Christ knows better than the ancients. Here, “knows better” roughly means “believes what the common man of today believes.”

Second, the Christian can adopt the view that Christ does not believe in the truths of modern science. In this view, either Christ is not omniscient or contemporary science is incorrect. Christ does not speak utilizing contemporary science, so he must not believe it to be true. Therefore, either the physical content of what he said is true (i.e., the eye is physically a lamp for the body, approximating the description of Plato in *Timaeus*, and which contemporary science has contested), or Christ is simply wrong, and the eye is not a lamp to the body. After all, Christ grew in wisdom and stature (Luke 2:52). In his day, this meant he believed that the eye is a lamp like everyone else believed. If he grew up today, he would not believe the eye is a lamp, just like everyone else. Christ is a product of his human contextual education and knows nothing more and nothing less. Christ also says, “The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes” (John 3:8). Nowadays, we know where the wind goes. We have weather stations across the world tracking the direction of the wind at all times, and these can tell us where the wind came from and where it is going. The same principle applies: Christ is simply mistaken that wind is unpredictable or contemporary weather forecasters are mistaken in how they understand the wind.

Of course, Christians should assume Christ is speaking the truth. We might qualify the word truth by saying it is a “different kind” of truth than the contemporary physicalist view. It could even be allowed that the physicalist or scientific view of light represents a “lower-order” way of speaking than Christ’s view of light. But I do not want to rely too heavily on such a qualification. While this might be acceptable in some logical schema, such

a qualification dulls the shock that Christ offers a picture of light totally different from our own. We should give ourselves no quarter when Christ offers us the truth. We ought to conform ourselves to him, whatever form the truth takes. Whether this truth is rightly called “physical” or “literal” will be explored below.

Christ is correct, but to argue for this is difficult as he does not offer a systematic theory of light, but only speaks about light when an explanation is occasioned. As such, I will give a general account of an ancient view of sight through reference to Plato and Christ together. Plato’s account more closely corresponds to Christ’s than a modern physicalist one, so an examination of Plato’s work will show how the logic of an ancient account of light is made. While this examination may not tell us exactly how Christ understood “light,” it will give us an ability to understand how one kind of ancient view is possible, and how this view may bring us closer to Christ’s own understanding of light than our own.

### ***Light: Intelligible and Intelligibility***

Luther asks us to understand light as “true light,” but we have seen this concept is unclear. In the context of the passage Luther brings it up (commenting on Genesis 1:3), it is reasonable to think that “true light” for Luther is a physical light as we experience it every day. But what is such an experience? Of what is it composed? For the common man today, we place light within the category of “Physics,” but our everyday experience is far removed from the scientific study of the structure of nature expressed in mathematical terms. And what of the common man in the ancient world? To understand the Platonic view of light, we must pause here because even the meaning of the word physical is not a simple thing to grasp. What exactly does it mean to be physical? For the ancients, this question was answered in the classical distinction between matter and form. It would be helpful to contextualize matter and form in their ancient philosophical usage before examining their relationship. What follows is a brief overview of matter and form. As this is not strictly the focus of this essay, I have chosen to generalize and simplify the views of a very diverse Platonic tradition, and much of what is explained below likely would fit an Aristotelian’s understanding, too. I will borrow the language of Hans-Georg Gadamer by referring to this as the “Platonic-Aristotelian” tradition.

The distinction between matter and form arose out of a desire to solve a problem: How can the mind know what something is? Put another way, what is it that the mind knows? The contemporary philosopher would place these questions within the domain of epistemology or the philosophy of mind. But for the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition, the significance of knowledge about the world (i.e., what the mind knows) is actually framed as a metaphysical problem.

Many Philosophy 101 classes are misled into taking this distinction as an epistemological problem, and many class sessions follow the unfortunate course of interpreting Plato either through contemporary physicalism or 16th and 17th century debates about epistemology. Plato is not heard as Plato in such a setting. Rather, he is heard as an idiosyncratic and often incoherent Enlightenment philosopher. Platonism is from the ancient world, not the Enlightenment world. This must always be kept in mind.

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It matters whether the distinction between matter and form is taken as a metaphysical problem rather than an epistemological problem because this changes how the questions surrounding matter and form are understood. On the Platonic view, “matter” and “form” are not simply some distinctions that help the mind analyze the world—something in the realm of epistemology. Rather, “matter” and “form” are metaphysical categories. That is, the distinction between the two applies generally to all things; their usage is universal in scope—not only applying to the mind but to all of reality. Put simply: for the Platonist, matter and form are both foundational parts of the structure of the world.

The problem Platonism is trying to solve is how the material world can be grasped at all by the mind. After all, my mind is not the chair sitting in the corner of my room. But my mind can know this chair. How is that possible? The Platonist answers: the matter which makes up that chair has assumed a certain form so that the mind can grasp it. Matter has taken on a form which makes the matter intelligible to the mind.

The basic relationship between matter and form: matter is that in which form assumes a body, and form is that which grants matter intelligibility. Matter cannot be known without identifying some form in it, and form cannot be encountered apart from some matter revealing it (although the Platonic tradition does not always agree on this latter point). The certain thing for the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition is that form is what makes matter intelligible. In fact, form could simply be taken as intelligibility. In many respects, form only refers to those concepts or ideas by which we understand reality; when we call a ball “round” or “blue” that is how we come to know anything about the ball. The intelligible qualities of things (their formal characteristics) that the mind grasps onto through language or thought reveal the identity of matter. To speak of “matter” and “form,” then, is simply to understand that there is a process by which the mind comes to understand matter, namely through matter’s intelligible qualities. These intelligible qualities are simply matter’s formal characteristics—certain patterns according to which matter operates.

Matter being united with form always involves some arrangement that puts two unlike things together. That is to say, to know one thing, I must know it through something else. Matter is not form, although it bears its image, and to become acquainted with matter, I must know its form. To understand anything, I have to understand it through something that it is not.<sup>8</sup> For example, a tree is not the shapes (of letters) I see on the page as I read the word “tree.” A tree is also not “green” or “leafy” or “tall” or “woody.” It is no vocable, no sound, no arrangement of letters. It is not an idea or observation. It is not a thing that is “in” my mind, and it is not the sensation of touching or seeing something I would call “woody” or “leafy” or “tall,” yet these things are the only way I come to know a tree: words, sensations, and encounters through some means or medium. I meet a thing by that which it is not.

The modern temptation is to treat this incongruity as a source for skepticism. In the skeptical view, thoughts, sensations, observations, and ideas—that is, the mind’s encounter with the world through the world’s formal characteristics—are (at best) interpretations of or (at worst) illusions about reality. While the sensations, observations, thoughts, and ideas through which we encounter reality may have some meaning in themselves, they do not get at matter in itself.

This is unproblematic for the Platonist, for the Platonist agrees with this line of reasoning. In fact, this explains why the Platonist attributes “true reality” to form rather than to matter. Forms reveal the truth about the world because they are the only thing that can be recognized as truth. If we attributed “true reality” to matter rather than form, then we would never be able to know the truth because matter is entirely unintelligible. By attributing true reality to form rather than matter, the Platonist is giving an account of the structure of the world: Truth is a quality of the world because the world has a structure based on form.

This account of “true reality” is quite different from the common view of “true reality” today. Generally speaking, true reality is revealed by the forms for the ancient world and revealed by matter for the contemporary world. That being said, in the Platonist view scientific or physicalist accounts of reality are not ever really describing reality materially. A “material description” of the world is impossible using Platonist terminology. In fact, the difference between a Platonic-Aristotelean account of the universe and a physicalist account of the universe is not that the physicalist account can account for modern scientific descriptions of the universe while the Platonic cannot. Rather, it is that the Platonic tradition tries to account for the process by which scientific knowledge is grasped by the mind from the outset, whereas the physicalist tradition largely leaves this an open question. Contemporary physicalist accounts generally do not seek to provide an answer beyond “the human brain has adapted to make descriptions of reality.” Platonists, rather, assume a matrix in which the tools of the mind—sensations, words, ideas, concepts, and so on—are coterminous with the structure of the actual world. A critique of either position is not possible here, but it is worthwhile understanding the radically different perspectives.

The Platonic view of light, as we have seen, falls closer to Christ’s understanding of light than that of the physicalist. The approach contemporary Christians decide to take, whether physicalist or Platonic, will affect how they understand light. Platonists understand “true light” related more directly to form than matter, because form is simply the intelligible quality (or complex of qualities) of a material thing. This is simply what physical light means for the Platonic understanding: form and matter together. “True light” is material, but it is grasped by its formal characteristics, its intelligible qualities embodied in matter.

That being said, given an ecumenical spirit, the Platonist and physicalist may be able to come to an understanding on such a description of light. It is not hard to see that material objects are grasped by their formal (and largely measurable!) qualities. But light occupies a unique position in the relationship between form and matter for Platonism that may break any ecumenical possibilities with physicalism.

Although light itself is intelligible (it is form embodied in matter) it can also be understood as pure intelligibility; pure meaning or pure information. Light and Intelligibility may even be thought of as coextensive. When darkness comes, the nature of the world is hidden, but when there is light, the truth is open for all who have eyes to see. Light fills the important role in the ancient imagination as that which makes all things intelligible. This is the meaning set forth in Plato’s allegory of The Cave. While illusions about reality are portrayed as shadows, the truest things are revealed by the light of the Sun, which produces light to illuminate all truth. The light from the Sun makes all the forms outside the cave

intelligible.

For those unfamiliar with the allegory of The Cave, the crucial thing to grasp (for the purposes of this essay) is that the Sun (which is not a star among many, but the one and only source of life and light) is interpreted as a causal agent for Plato. As Plato has it, “[the Good (represented by the Sun)] is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this visible world, and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual.”<sup>9</sup> The Sun authors all of existence because it makes all things intelligible; it is “the source of reason and truth.” Light is equivalent to reason and truth; they are contiguous without medium. We could not understand anything if light did not make all of existence available for the mind, illuminating the world around us to sight.

As we saw above in Timaeus, we are able to see not simply because the eyes have a stream of fire, but because the eyes’ fire meets the fire coming from the Sun’s light. “When the light of day surrounds the stream of vision, then like falls upon like, and they coalesce, and one body is formed by natural affinity in the line of vision. [...] The whole stream of vision...diffuses the motions of what it touches or what touches it over the whole body, until they reach the soul, causing that perception which we call sight.”<sup>10</sup> It is the fire of our eyes meeting the fire of the Sun in material objects that creates our ability to see the intelligible qualities (or form) of the material world. The Sun enables forms to become available for thought, and in this sense, causes our ability to see the world for what it truly is.

Both Plato and Christ note the importance of the Sun in this respect. For Plato says, “when night comes on and the external and kindred fire departs, then the stream of vision is cut off; for going forth to an unlike element it is changed and extinguished, being no longer of one nature with the surrounding atmosphere which is now deprived of fire: and so the eye no longer sees,”<sup>11</sup> Christ also says, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him” (John 11:9-10).

I am not making the banal point that both Christ and Plato knew the definition of the word night. They both have a subtle understanding of sight. Vision is no longer possible when the external light that illuminates all of reality departs. Light is literally that which imparts truth. When the Sun goes down, the truth is able to be hidden, because the light of the external world is no longer available to humans. For Plato, this means the stream of vision is “cut off,” whereas for Christ, this means “the light is no longer in him.” For both thinkers, illumination radiating from a higher source is necessary for the mind to know anything true about the world.

### ***Christ The Light***

The preceding account provides a description of an ancient view of sight. Christ’s description of light shares substantial characteristics with this account: “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!” (Matthew 6:22-23). Whether the Platonic understanding of light is what



Luther meant by “true light” I will not take a guess here. But I will also not assume Luther meant *electromagnetic radiation* when he spoke of “true light.” But there is a True Light that appears in the Scriptures, Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.

If we seek to interpret biblical passages that describe Christ as light itself, or as a light-bearer or bringer, the Platonic understanding is much more compelling than a contemporary physicalist view. For the Christian, the ancient view should prove satisfying for both reason and affect. For if we understand the “light of Christ” from an ancient perspective, (notably, closer to Christ’s own perspective) Christ is the One through which all of reality becomes intelligible. He is the source of meaning in all being, built into the very structure of reality—comparable to the Sun in Plato’s Cave. But if we view light in a physicalist understanding, Christ’s status as light is more contentious. It is hard to see how Christ is literally *electromagnetic radiation*.



Detail of *Disputation of the Holy Sacrament*. Raphael. 1510. Public domain.

This term “literal” exposes the difference between the two views I have outlined when defining the term “light.” For the physicalist, “literal” means a physical phenomenon that can be strictly identified as a kind of electromagnetic radiation. But for the Platonist, “literal” has a broader meaning. Literal light is any phenomenon that confers intelligibility, mental or non-mental. This phenomenon can be a physical light or some insight that gives the mind a deeper understanding. This may seem like unnecessary hair-splitting on a definition of “literal,” but it shows the difference between the two worldviews. In Platonism, literal light is not only a certain kind of electromagnetic radiation, but a range of phenomena that take the same form—the conferring of intelligibility or “bringing to light”—whether this is mental or non-mental.

Literalness is not necessarily important or valuable. It just seems to be one of the things that physicalism desires in its explanation of phenomena. Literal interpretations of texts are understood as “scientifically valid or true” in many cases today. For example, in discussions about Creation or the Flood, “literal” is often taken to mean “scientifically valid or true.” I defend many elements of such “literal” interpretations, but such an understanding of “literal” cannot be taken as a sufficient understanding when applied to light, or likely any phenomena in the Scriptures.

A Platonic literalness is more compelling when trying to understand the employment of the word “light” in passages such as John 1:5, which tells us that the Light of Christ “shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.” For the physicalist, this statement would be taken to be a metaphor because (the life borne by) Christ is not literally

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a light shining in darkness. The physicalist could argue that biblical descriptions of Christ as light are metaphors for either electromagnetic radiation or for normal experiences of “true light.” But this will prove challenging without recourse to phenomenology, which is roughly what I have employed in parts of this essay that identify light as a certain kind of pattern or form identifiable in nature and in the mind. Even if no recourse is made to phenomenology and an attempt is made to speak in terms of neuroscience or some other area in the physical sciences, the problem remains as to how such a program can be considered consistent with Christ’s self-professed ancient understanding of light which is flatly the opposite of the current scientific understanding. If such an argument could be made, it would likely take a similar shape to that of the Platonic tradition. Such an argument would be welcome.

But if the Platonic description of reality is largely correct in the way I have presented it, then Christ being a “light” is a literal truth which is built into the structure of reality. This truth should prove valuable in interpreting statements about Christ as the Light, such as in the Prologue to John’s Gospel. Light is literally the thing by which information comes to be known—it is how facts about the world “come to light.” For the Platonic mind, we saw that light is only able to grant information if “like interacts with like,” which is a reference to the capacity of the human mind to grasp forms in the material world. But this is not an arbitrary happening—it is something built into reality at the level of metaphysical analysis.

“Light” is a literal description of how information is transmitted. It may be that *electromagnetic radiation* is not even what is meant by *light*. Perhaps an encyclopedia article about “Light” does not belong in the category of physics, but in the category of religion. Of course, light is a physical phenomenon. The Christian and the Platonist do not doubt this. But it means more than something strictly *material*. Christ is *literally* the light—that thing by which the intelligible qualities of the whole world become known.

Said otherwise, Christ is the meaning of the world. He is the thing by which all the disparate beings in the world are illuminated, and their meanings made intelligible. Apart from this light, we literally live in darkness because the true light has not shone on us.

A physicalist understanding does not offer the benefit of this literalness. Light would only be a metaphor, not a literal description of who Christ is. As noted above, the Platonic ideal is that we come to know something through what it is not—a phenomena, a sensation, a word, an experience. Physicalist metaphors instead show us what Christ is not by something he is not. Light literally is a particle received by the eye and interpreted by the brain. Christ literally is not. Light literally is electromagnetic radiation. Christ literally is not. The same is true for experiences of light. Sunlight is warm on the skin. Christ is literally not warm on the skin.

Preachers need to be especially careful about such metaphors because such metaphors end up conferring no real information about Christ. Statements about Christ as the “light of the world” end up having very specious meanings, if not altogether arbitrary ones, when taken metaphorically. Christ’s majesty and glory are diminished when our language about him cannot rise above suggestive metaphors. We should seek to be

forthcoming in our descriptions of his work and his role in the actual world.

As such, we should not assume Christ “knows better” than the ancients. That is, Christ does not believe everything the common man of today believes about the world; we should not assume Christ shares with contemporary man an incomplete and unsatisfactory picture of reality. Instead, we should allow ourselves no quarter and seek to conform our own thinking to his. This conformity includes understanding that his identity fits into the structure of reality in a deeply intelligible way. After all, the Scriptures testify that Christ is the Light of the World. In saying this, they mean Christ is that which gives the world its ability to be understood at all.

In writing this essay, I have not tried to convince the preacher that he should educate his congregation on Plato’s *Timaeus*. Such education may occasionally delight or interest the listener from the pulpit, but Platonism should not be undertaken as a programmatic education. Rather, in writing this essay, I am asking the preacher to open the imagination of his audience to the possibility that there is a logical structure to the world, and that in this structure Christ plays the central role. Christ’s centrality to all creation is proclaimed more clearly when he is understood as he who makes all things intelligible. He is the Light of the World, not one light among many. Within a Platonic framework, Christ fills this role literally. But in the common physicalist framework, he fills this role only arbitrarily and metaphorically.

It is a marvel that the light of the world, Jesus Christ, truly man and truly God, came to enlighten the whole world. It is certainly to Christ’s glory that we understand him truly as that which makes all reality intelligible, meaningful, and true. This is not an arbitrary phenomena but fits into the structure by which all reality comes to be known. When the Scriptures speak of light, they are not asking the reader to understand it as particles or waves or *electromagnetic radiation*. Rather, they are asking us to see the process at work by which truth is revealed—Christ manifesting himself through Word and Sacrament to us, who, having been delivered from the domain of darkness, now share our inheritance with the saints in light.

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## Endnotes

1 Dr. Seuss, *Oh, the Thinks You Can Think*, (New York: Penguin Random House, 2003).

2 LW 1:19.

3 LW 1:19.

4 Glen Stark, “Light,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, December 1, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/science/light>.

5 Richard Feynman, Robert Leighton, and Matthew Sands, *The Feynman Lectures on Physics* Vol. 1 (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1963), 26.1.

6 Plato, *Timaeus* 45b-c. trans. Benjamin Jowett. 4th edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953).

7 For a summary of how Christ’s understanding of the eye fits into the ancient picture, see Jeffrey A. Gibbs, *Matthew* 1:1-11:1 (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), 355-357. Also, compare John 11:9-10 with Plato, *Timaeus*, 45b-d.

8 See a contemporary account of this in Walker Percy, *Symbol and Existence: A Study in Meaning*, (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2019), 234-237.

9 Plato, *Republic* 517c, trans. Benjamin Jowett.

10 Plato, *Timaeus* 45b-c, trans. Benjamin Jowett.

11 Plato, *Timaeus* 45c, trans. Benjamin Jowett.