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## What is Meant by "All Fulness," Col. 1, 19?

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and of a sound mind. For what, if not to develop spiritual self-control? In point of fact, the doctrine of 'guidance' has greater meaning and dignity when we accept our God-given responsibility for the day's work than when we find it necessary to ask for instructions at every turn."

One critic, quoted in the *Lutheran*, lists six "harmful features": 1) Centering the thought on sin; 2) inculcating morbid introspection; 3) overemphasis of sex problems; 4) insistence on listening for divine "guidance"; 5) substituting for intelligence emotional subconscious urging in relationship with our environment; 6) a warping of the personality of the individual. He thinks the Group disparages by implication the entire Christian ministry.

The universal acclaim which the movement has received in the United States and Canada is a token that the modernistic phase of church-life has lost its appeal. In a way it is a parallel to the Theology of Crisis,<sup>2)</sup> which has come as a rebound from the theology of the higher criticism. In both cases the cure may turn out to be as bad as the disease.

THEODORE GRAEBNER.

### What is Meant by "All Fulness," Col. 1, 19?

The verse in question reads in the original: "Ου ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι. The Authorized Version translates: "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell," while the Revised Version renders it: "For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell." The Vulgate (Nestle, 5): "Quia in ipso complacuit, omnem plenitudinem inhabitare." Luther: "Denn es ist das Wohlgefallen gewesen, dass in ihm alle Fuelle wohnen sollte." Moffatt modernizes: "For it was in Him that the divine Fulness willed to settle without limit."

Whom has "it pleased"? This is not expressly stated in this verse if one translates as does the Authorized Version, the Revised Version, the Vulgate, and Luther. Moffatt answers: "The Fulness." Four different answers have been given by various exegetes. Some supply "Father," others "the Son" or "Christ," still others "God," and some finally take πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα as the subject with Moffatt. Accepting the second view, one would be forced to interpret καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ ἀποκαταλλάξαι of v. 20 as meaning that it pleased the Son, or Christ, to reconcile through the fulness. That would be strange, to say the least, in the light of 2 Cor. 5, 18, according to which God reconciles through Christ. To supply "God" or "the Father" may

2) Dr. Brunner, the famous expounder of Barth, has accepted the Buchman movement.



seem better at first sight if one accepts *εὐδόκησεν* as a technical term for the divine counsel. Taking exception to this, Abbott observes: "The verb *εὐδοκεῖν* is used by St. Paul even more frequently of men than of God (seven times to three). It cannot therefore be said that it was in any sense a technical term for the divine counsel, so as to render the express mention of *ὁ θεός* as the subject unnecessary; nor is there any instance of its being used absolutely in this sense; see 1 Cor. 1, 21; Gal. 1, 15, where *ὁ θεός* is expressed with the verb. Indeed, except in Luke 2, 14 even the substantive *εὐδοκία*, when it refers to God, is always defined either by a genitive (Eph. 1, 5, 9) or by *ὁ θεός*, being the subject of the sentence, as in Phil. 2, 13, where the article with an abstract noun after a preposition 'necessarily brings in a reflexive sense, to be referred to the subject of the sentence' (Alford).

"Here there is nothing in the context from which *ὁ θεός* can be supplied, and clearness, especially in such an important passage, would require it to be expressed."

Indeed, if any subject is to be supplied, the context would demand *ὁ υἱός*, the antecedent of the relative in v. 15, which, as we have seen, cannot be reconciled with 2 Cor. 5, 18.

The only choice left is *πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα* as subject, rather, to let it stand as subject according to the well-known principle that nothing is to be supplied until all the syntactical possibilities are exhausted and the supplement is clearly indicated by the context. *Πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα* as subject is not only syntactically possible, it also makes good sense and is dogmatically sound and tenable. It has been urged that, since v. 20 is also dependent upon *εὐδόκησεν*, this construction would not make satisfactory sense. Yet this only seems so. We would have this idea: All the fulness was well pleased through Him (namely, the Son) to reconcile all things unto Him (namely, God). We are forced to ask the reader to permit an anticipation at this point. Taking *πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα* in the same sense as it is used in 2, 9, that is, in the sense of the fulness of the Godhead or Deity, this construction makes for the best sense possible. For what is the fulness of the Godhead? It is nothing else than the whole divine essence with all its attributes and perfections, in other words, God Himself, of course, not hypostatically, as God the Father, but *οὐσιώδως*, as Dei essentia. Thus the verse in question states the sublime truth that it has pleased God to become incarnate in the Son, and the following verse states the purpose of the incarnation. Thus Ewald, Ellicott, Soden, the Revised Version (margin), Moffatt, and others in as far as the subject is concerned.

The objection has been raised that *πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα* is a neuter, while *εἰς αὐτόν* of the next verse is masculine. We answer: This epistle, though positively Pauline, is characterized by marvelous



brevity, compactness, and peculiarities in vocabulary and sentence structure. The heaping of sentence upon sentence, the easy gliding from one into the other by means of *ἴνα*, participles, infinitives, and relatives (see 1, 9—20), seem to indicate a wealth of thoughts importunate of expression, and we can well imagine St. Paul, intellectual giant that he was, laboring as the inspired instrument of God in the selection of words from his rich vocabulary as he perhaps dictated the inspired paragraphs to an assistant, his thoughts continually outdistancing the actual expression, with the result that he uses a *constructio praeagnans*. Thus it may be explained that, though he has used the abstract term *πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα*, a neuter, he refers to it with the masculine *αὐτόν* as if he had used *ὁ θεός* instead, because it has the same meaning in this connection. And why should this be so peculiar? This explanation may be adopted without in any way detracting from the inspired character of this epistle, since the Holy Spirit did not use the inspired writers as mere machines, but made use of their talents, vocabulary, and their powers of expression. Does this *constructio praeagnans* not rather go to show that the apostle uses the term *πλήρωμα* in the same sense as in 2, 9? Thus the only other objection also falls to the ground, namely, that *εἰρηνοποιήσας*, another masculine, does not agree with the neuter *πλήρωμα*, for it is suggested by the preceding *αὐτόν*. Briefly we have here a construction according to the sense, which is a frequent phenomenon in the New Testament and elsewhere.

Thus we have *πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα* as the subject of v. 19 and, "grammatically considered, also of v. 20, but, exegetically considered, the more definite *ὁ θεός* involved and included in the abstract *πλήρωμα*" (Ellicott).

Who is not reminded of 2 Cor. 5, 19 by this construction? There we have: *ὅτι θεός ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσων ἑαυτῷ*. The only real difference between this verse and Col. 1, 19. 20 is *εὐδόκησεν* and *πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα*. The former passage is very clear indeed, and in its light the latter becomes clear also. It may be urged, however, that *κόσμος* is not the equivalent of *τὰ πάντα* as *subiectum reconciliationis*. This we deny on the following grounds: In 2 Cor. 5, 19 Paul purposes to state the universality of the reconciliation made in Christ. *Κόσμος* denotes all that was to be reconciled, the whole human race, no more, no less. *Τὰ πάντα* can mean no more and no less, for it is a plain doctrine of Scripture that mankind only is *subiectum reconciliationis*. Cf. Rom. 3, 23. 24. Yet because Paul here purposes to teach the universality of reconciliation, every part of which was performed by Christ Himself, angels being excluded even as partial mediators, he uses *τὰ πάντα*, the all. (On this matter see Pieper, *Chr. Dog.*, II, 456, note 1064; Stoeckhardt, *Epheserbrief*, 66 ff.) Thus the verses in question, without the added modifier, are indeed parallel to 2 Cor. 5, 19, though differing in their phraseology.



We have asked the reader to grant for a moment that  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu \tau\acute{o} \pi\lambda\eta\rho\omega\mu\alpha$  has the same meaning in v. 19 that it has in 2, 9. This we propose to prove now.

"According to the double use of  $\pi\lambda\eta\rho\acute{o}\upsilon\nu$ , to 'fill' and to 'fulfil,'  $\pi\lambda\eta\rho\omega\mu\alpha$  may mean that which fills or that which fulfils, the fulness, or complement." (*Exp. Gr. Test., in loc.*) Cf. also Pieper, *Chr. Dog.*, II, 189 f.; Lightfoot's *excursus* in his commentary on this epistle; Stoeckhardt, *Epheserbrief*, 108 ff.; Kretzmann, *Lehre u. Wehre*, 1920, 125 ff. Exegetes generally, with few exceptions, agree that  $\pi\lambda\eta\rho\omega\mu\alpha$  as used here signifies "that which fills," or "the fulness." But that does as yet not explain the meaning.

What is meant by  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu \tau\acute{o} \pi\lambda\eta\rho\omega\mu\alpha$ ? The difficulty is this, that Paul consistently uses  $\pi\lambda\eta\rho\omega\mu\alpha$  with a defining genitive in every instance except in our passage. Hence it has become a *crux interpretum* and has suffered many interpretations.

Severianus and Theodoret (*apud* Abbott and others) interpret  $\pi\lambda\eta\rho\omega\mu\alpha$  of the Church and are followed by many modern, also Lutheran, exegetes. This view is based upon the preceding verse, which says that Christ is the Head of the body, the Church. The apparently insuperable objection against this view is that  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu \tau\acute{o} \pi\lambda\eta\rho\omega\mu\alpha$  refers to more than v. 18. V. 19 states the reason for everything affirmed in vv. 15—18 at least. To explain  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu \tau\acute{o} \pi\lambda\eta\rho\omega\mu\alpha$  of the Church or the elect is needlessly and unwarrantedly to restrict it in utter disregard of the qualifying adjective  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$  and the significant definite article, which, by the way, is not translated in the Authorized Version. Again, while the Scriptures speak of Christ as dwelling in the believers, they nowhere say that the elect *dwelt* in Christ. (Zorn, *in loc.*)

Abbott lists the view of Schleiermacher as similar, in the *International Critical Commentary*, thus: "Who, referring to  $\pi\lambda\eta\rho\omega\mu\alpha \tau\acute{\omega}\nu \epsilon\theta\nu\acute{\omega}\nu$  in Rom. 11, 12. 25. 26, explains the word here of the fulness of the Gentiles and the whole Israel, whose indwelling in Christ is the permanent state, which is necessarily preceded by the complete reconciliation of which the peacemaking was the condition," and refutes it by saying: "But there is nothing to support this either in the absolute use of  $\pi\lambda\eta\rho\omega\mu\alpha$  or in the context here. It is clear that the  $\kappa\alpha\tau\omicron\iota\kappa\eta\sigma\alpha\iota$  is stated as antecedent, not as consequent, of  $\alpha\pi\omicron\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha}\xi\alpha\iota$ , *haec inhabitatio est fundamentum reconciliationis* (Bengel)." That the objections to the former view also apply here is apparent.

Meyer lists and refutes Hofmann's "idea of the immanent indwelling of the universe in Christ, repeated by Schenkel in the sense of Christ's being the *Archetype*," as "entirely alien to the New Testament view of the relation of Christ to the world" and as "not indicated either at Eph. 1, 10 or here in the context by  $\tau\acute{\alpha} \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha \epsilon\nu \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\omega} \sigma\upsilon\nu\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\eta\kappa\epsilon\nu$ . Christ is not the place for the world, so that ulti-



mately all comes to dwell in Him, as all has been created in Him and has in Him its subsistence; but the world, originated and maintained through Him, which He was to redeem, is *the place for Him.*" That silences Hofmann.

Meyer, Eadie, and others "understand with Beza '*cumulatissima omnium divinarum rerum copia, . . . ex qua in Christo tanquam inexhausto fonte, omnes gratiae in nos . . . deriventur.*'" Meyer explains: "What is meant, namely, is the whole *charismatic riches* of God, His whole *gracious fulness* of *εὐλογία πνευματικὴ* (Eph. 1, 3), of which Christ becomes permanent (*κατοικῆσαι*) Possessor and Bearer, who was thereby capable of fulfilling the divine work of reconciliation." But it was something much greater that made Christ capable of fulfilling the divine work of reconciliation. According to this exegesis our verse asserts only that divine grace resided in Christ as the perfect Man, regardless of how many superlatives Beza and Meyer employ in setting forth their views. It does not surprise us that Beza, an ardent follower of Calvin, thus interprets this passage; for he is bound to do so by the false Reformed axiom: *Finitum non est capax infiniti*. Besides, this view forces us to supply *τοῦ θεοῦ* or its equivalent. We maintain that no addition is called for by the context because the words make good sense without a modifier. Since Paul consistently uses a qualifying genitive in every other instance, he certainly would have done so here if he had thought it necessary. In the preceding context he is telling us that Christ is true God, born in eternity, that He is the Creator of all things, and that all things subsist in Him; that He is the Head of the Church, the First-born from among the dead, that He might become preeminent in all things. And v. 19 gives the reason for this.

A recent commentator has interpreted *πλήρωμα* of "all fulness of the eternal thoughts of God concerning the creature (*ueber der Kreatur*): those regarding creation, redemption, and deliverance and those regarding eternal salvation." Though this view correctly refers *πλήρωμα* to the whole context, the context does not treat of *thoughts*, but of *facts* and *acts*. We reject this view as being too far-fetched and fanciful and ask: "Why has Paul not indicated this by a qualifying genitive as he does in every other case?" and answer: "Simply because there is no need for one."

Finally, most exegetes supply *τῆς θεότητος* from 2, 9. While this view assigns the correct meaning to *πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα*, one might say that it errs *in excessu* in that it operates with a superfluous modifier. We are in perfect agreement with the meaning, but we condemn the method by which these exegetes arrive at this meaning. Why should Paul expect his readers to supply a genitive from a passage which is as far removed as 2, 9? If we study the *nuda verba* in their glorious setting, it will be clear that Paul has stated exactly what he meant to state. Let us study the expression itself with an eye on the context.



*Πάν τὸ πλήρωμα* in and of itself can mean only: "all the fulness." But what is meant by these words in this context? We have shown that *πάν τὸ πλήρωμα* is the subject of our verse. Of this subject we are told that it was pleased, or decided, to dwell in Him (*ἐν αὐτῷ*), namely, in Christ. This can properly be predicated only of an intelligent being. Hence *πάν τὸ πλήρωμα* must designate an intelligent being. Of what intelligent being can it be said that it decided or was pleased to dwell in Christ? There can be only one answer: God. God decided to dwell in Him. The whole fulness of the Deity, *Dei essentia*, was pleased to dwell in Christ, to make Him its permanent abode.

This interpretation is in keeping with the context, in fact, it is demanded by the context. According to the following verse all the fulness was pleased to reconcile all things through Christ unto itself. 2 Cor. 5, 19 makes it plain that it is God who was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. Thus the apostle here expresses the same truth which he states in the Corinthian passage, though the phraseology differs, as we have seen above.

However, this interpretation is also in full agreement with the preceding context. In v. 15 we are told that Christ is "the Image of the invisible God." The Greek word translated "image" here means far more than the English image. It connotes not only similarity, but also representation and manifestation. (Grimm-Thayer, Lightfoot, Abbott, Moule, etc.) In Heb. 10, 1 it is opposed to "shadow" (*σκία*) "and plainly means 'the things themselves, as seen.' Thus the Lord Christ, in the mystery of His Person and natures, is not only a being resembling God, but God Manifest. Cp. John 14, 9 and Heb. 1, 3." (Moule, in *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*.) Cp. also Col. 2, 16, 17, where "shadow" is contrasted with "body."

Ellicott remarks (*in loc.*) "that Christian antiquity has ever regarded the expression 'image of God' as denoting the eternal Son's perfect equality with the Father in respect of His substance, nature, and eternity," quoting Damascenus: "The Son is the Father's image in all things save only in being the Father."

Pieper observes: "*Nach diesen Stellen naemlich [Kol. 1, 15; Hebr. 1, 3] ist Christus nach der Gottheit nicht 'ix Gottes Bild', . . . sondern Gottes Bild SELBST . . . und nicht 'im Glanz der Heiligkeit Gottes,' sondern Gottes Glanz selbst.*" (*Chr. Dog.*, II, 322.)

Thus Quenstedt correctly says: "*Col. 1, 15 intelligit apostolus imaginem, non accidentalem et artificialem, quae non est eiusdem cum exemplari essentiae, sed naturalem seu substantialem et essentialem; vox Dei vero hic sumitur non οὐσιωδός, sed ὑποστατικός, scil. pro Deo Patre.*" (*Syst.*, I, c. 9, s. 1.)

Gerhard agrees: "*Filius Dei est imago Patris substantialis; ergo ut Pater est aeternus, omnipotens, iustus, perfectus, ita quoque Filius*



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*est aeternus, omnipotens, iustus, perfectus, nimirum, quia est substantialis et perfecta Patris imago.*" (Locis, III, 1. 15, s. 12, 206.)

Moreover, Christ is the "Image of the invisible God." In Him our great God has become visible, as it were; though Gerhard correctly says: "*Dicitur autem Filius Dei imago Patris non solum respectu nostri, quia Dei voluntatem nobis manifestat, et Deum quasi visibilem nobis facit, ut Calvinus super 1. Col. et 1. Hebr. nimis icivone scribit, sed etiam respectu Patris, quia est substantialis imago Patris, perfecte referens naturam eius, quippe cui est ὁμοούσιος.*" (Locis, I, 1. 3, 162.) And Quenstedt sums up: "*Quia perfectissima imago invisibilis Dei est, ergo ipse ut Deus, invisibilis sit, oportet. Filius, qui est invisibilis Dei imago, non invisibilis mansit, sed in carne manifestatus fuit.*" (Syst., I, 9, 384 b.)

If Christ is the perfect and exact Image of the Father, of perfect equality with the Father in respect of His substance, nature, and eternity, it follows of necessity that all the fulness of the Deity dwells in Him, and it is quite natural for Paul simply to say in this context that all the fulness was pleased to dwell in Him, the term *πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα* being used absolutely. Thus it is seen that our interpretation of the term in question is in admirable agreement with both the preceding and the following context.

Again, it must be granted that *πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα* is a beautiful term to describe our great God, pointing as it does to His omnipresence and confirming the Scripture truth that He fills all things. What more fitting term could have been used in the context?

We therefore maintain that the expression *πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα*, without modifier, means the fulness of the Deity, "*omnes divitiae divinae naturae,*" in this context; indeed, that it cannot signify anything else in this setting and that any addition is superfluous. It is of this fulness that Bengel says: "*Haec inhabitatio est fundamentum reconciliationis,*" which we subscribe unequivocally, accepting this great mystery by faith as does Bengel in the words: "*Quis exhaustiat profundum hoc?*"

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Exodus 6, 3 b.

Was God Known to the Patriarchs as Jehovah?

(Compare *Schrift und Bekenntnis*, 1931, p. 124.)

"But by My name Jehovah was I not known to them." This statement, as it appears in our English and German Bibles, seems to contradict other passages of Holy Writ. The context, vv. 2—5, reads as follows: "And God spake unto Moses and said unto him, I am the Lord [Jehovah]; and I appeared unto Abraham, unto