

# All the Fullness

*“All the fullness” as a personified phrase*

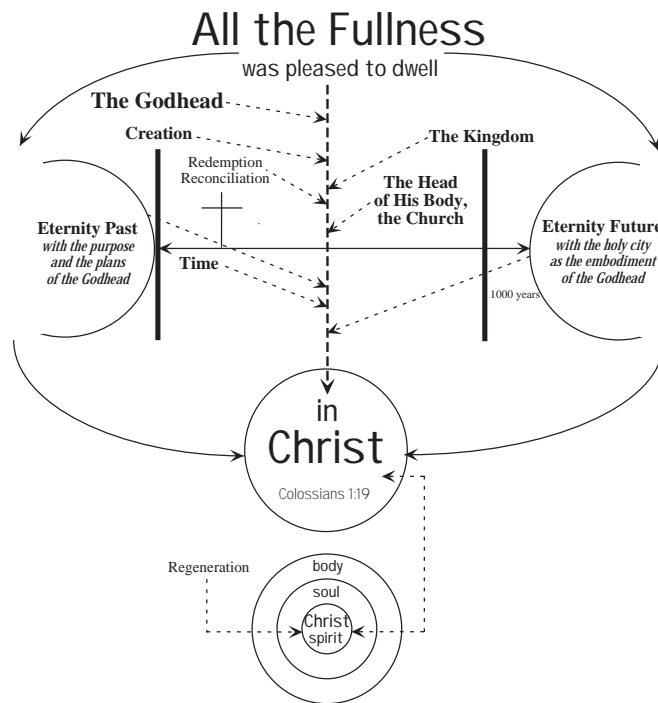
One of the most awesome verses in the entire Bible is Colossians 1:19. This is because it reveals from God’s perspective the one unique pleasure of the universe. It says, “Because in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell.” *All the fullness* is a comprehensive phrase that includes all the major things in the universe, depicted in the diagram. These things include the Godhead, eternity past, creation, time, redemption, the church, the kingdom, and eternity future. All this fullness was pleased to dwell in one place — Christ. Thus, Christ is the focal point and concentration of the pleasure of all the fullness in this universe. If we see with the eyes of our heart the truth and reality of this verse, it will impact our lives in the most profound way, as nothing else could.

The first thing we must do is seek to understand what Colossians 1:19 actually says. The literal Greek should be translated, “For [ὅτι (*hoti*) = because] in Him all the fullness was pleased to

dwell.” In this unique utterance *all the fullness* is personified. R. C. H. Lenski, in his commentary on Colossians, observes the grammatical significance of this phrase: “It is not necessary that ‘all the fullness’ have a specifying genitive [e.g., ‘of God’] because this fullness itself is personified by what is predicated of it

in the verb [*was pleased*] plus its infinitives [*to dwell* and *to reconcile*] and participle [*having made peace*].” Thus, all the fullness is characterized as having a feeling — a pleasure. This personification of all the fullness reveals not only the Personhood of the Godhead but the entire economy of the Godhead, including all Their purposes, plans, counsels, and acts from eternity past to eternity future. This point is confirmed by M. R. Vincent in his *Word Studies in the New Testament*:

“Thus the phrase *in Him* should all the fullness dwell gathers into a grand climax the previous statements [from Col.1:15-18] — *image of God, first-born of all creation, Creator, the eternally*



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*preexistent, the Head of the Church, the victor over death, first in all things.* On this summit we pause, looking, like John, from Christ in His fullness of deity to the exhibition of that divine fullness in redemption consummated in heaven (vv. 20-22).”

To personify all the fullness by making it the subject of the verb, *was pleased*, is in contrast to most of the English translations of the New Testament, and it is also in contrast to how many Bible commentators have sought to interpret it. For example, both the *King James Version* and the *New King James Version* insert “the Father” as the subject of the verb *was pleased*. The *New King James Version* says, “For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell.” But it is important to notice that *the Father* is italicized, indicating that these words are not in the original text, but are inserted by the translator in an attempt to make the thought more understandable. Of course, according to the truths revealed in the Bible concerning the Godhead, there is no problem with that translation. Theologically, it is accurate to say, “It pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell.” But this is not what the text in Colossians 1:19 says. Inserting “the Father” is an interpretation and not a translation of the Greek text. *The New Translation* by J. N. Darby says, “For in Him all the fullness [of the Godhead] was pleased to dwell.” Darby translates the verse literally, but inserts his interpretation in brackets.

One of the predicaments in translating the Bible is that at certain points the systematic theology of the translator may limit him because it can bring in a preconceived notion or thought. For example, in coming to a verse that is difficult to understand, he may interpret the verse so as to fit into a systematized body of truth. In some cases this is necessary and legitimate because it maintains the harmony of the whole Bible. In other cases, as here in Colossians 1:19, the translator may miss an awesome revelation of the greatness of Christ. So it is best not to impose our own thought on the Bible. Our lack of understanding may simply be due to the fact that we fail to possess the same revelation the apostle Paul had. This, I believe, is the case in handling Colossians 1:19. Paul was expressing the immensity and enormity of the centrality of Christ in the universe, and the only way he could express it was by saying, “In Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell.”

Verse 19 should be literally translated according to the grammar: “Because in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell.” The words “was pleased” are the verb. And the subject of this verb is “all the fullness.” “All the fullness was pleased to dwell.” The *Rotherham Emphasized Bible* gives us a faithful translation by

saying, “Because in Him was all the fullness well pleased to dwell.” *Young’s Literal Translation of the Bible* also renders this verse accurately: “Because in Him it did please all the fullness to tabernacle.” This is hard for us to grasp because it is not according to our natural concept. Nevertheless, it is something that God wants to convey to us to show us how vast Christ is.

There are a number of other distinguished scholars and Bible teachers who confirm the thought of all the fullness being a personification. For example, in *The Cambridge Greek Testament*, A. Lukyn Williams comments on the phrase *all the fullness*: “If all the fullness (πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα) be the subject, more is attributed to what is impersonal than we should expect.” In other words, at first glance we would mistakenly view all the fullness as being impersonal, and therefore would not attribute something personal — “was pleased” — to it. Thus, perceiving the personification of the phrase *all the fullness* broadens the scope of its application and of our expectation. Williams goes on to say, “Colossians 2:9 is parallel only in form, for there it is only said that the fullness dwells in Christ, not that the fullness exercises pleasure and determination, and even reconciles (v. 20).” Here he acknowledges the personification of all the fullness by connecting it with the two infinitives, to dwell and to reconcile: “For in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself.” Both infinitives go with *all the fullness*. All the fullness dwells, and all the fullness reconciles. So *all the fullness* is an all-inclusive utterance of the Holy Spirit that brings us back into the context of Colossians chapter 1 to see all that is included in this fullness. The context will help us understand the significance of all the fullness.

#### *All the fullness concentrated in Christ*

All the fullness was pleased to be concentrated in Christ. This is the most awesome revelation of Christ — that in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell. It is the same as saying that there is nothing outside of Christ. Don’t go outside of Christ. Don’t even take a little trip someplace else, someplace apart from Him, be it to your self-life, be it to anything of the world, anything that fascinates you. Don’t go outside of Him. Don’t look at yourself outside of Him. Don’t contemplate yourself outside of Him. There is nothing outside of Him.

The revelation of Christ being the concentration of all the fullness is the communication of a burden and a message — that in our experience Christ would be so totally all that we are just falling into His arms over and over again. We are just into the bosom of the Father,

into that love-life over and over again, whatever we may be passing through (John 1:18). It is like the Father is saying, “My Son is the concentration and focus of all the fullness.” This tells us that before any kind of history in the universe, the Father designated that the fullness of everything would dwell in His Son. That is how much Christ is “front and center” in this universe. And the reconciliation of this universe is happening wherever Christ is supreme, exalted, has first place, is the theme, is the atmosphere, is the conversation, is the love, is the glory, is the majesty. What God is doing in this universe is exalting and magnifying His Son, Christ. This is His pleasure. So we need to be taken totally out of ourself by being enthralled and occupied exclusively with the Son of God.

#### *The unique reason Christ has first place in all things*

Colossians 1:18b says, “That He Himself might have the first place in all things.” A more literal translation would be, “So that in all things He Himself becomes the first place.” He *becomes* the first place in all things. Then we see that verses 18 and 19 are connected by the word “because.” This little “because” assigns *the reason why* Christ has become first place in all things. It is “*Because* in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell.” Again, R. C. H. Lenski helps us understand this connection. Speaking of the conjunction “because,” he says, “ὅτι [*hoti*] states the evidential reason by which we know that the God-man is what verse 18 states he is; it corresponds to ὅτι [*hoti*] occurring in verse 16, which is to be understood in the same sense.” Thus, the thoughts in verses 18 and 19 must be taken together. All the fullness being pleased to dwell in Christ *is* the unique reason He has the first place in all things. This is what practically motivates us for Christ to become first place in all things in our experience. The pure revelation of such fullness dwelling in Christ produces in us *the reason* for Him to have first place in all things.

Do we know why Christ has first place in our life? Oh, brothers and sisters, it is *because* in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell. It is not even because *I* think *I* need to give Him first place. It is not because I have been so bad and wayward. It is not because I am so rebellious. It is not because I need to get it together and give my all. This is like kicking a donkey — “Come on now. Get going! You’ve been in one place too long. Now get on with it.” That is not the reason! He has first place because of one unique reason — “Because in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell.” This is revelation. This is light concerning what moti-

vates us to give all to the Lord and let Him be the first place in all things. This is saying, “Lord, You have the first place because You *are* the first place. *Before* I was born, *before* I had a history, *before* there was my failing condition, *before* all the considerations of my subjective self, it was the delight and pleasure of all the fullness that all the positive things in the universe be concentrated and permanently dwell in You.” This is the unique reason why Christ has the first place in all things. This is the unique reason why I give Him first place in my life.

#### *The deep significance of “all” in God’s thought*

Let me illustrate how Christ is all. Consider that the bowl I am holding is Christ. Look into this bowl. Behold *all the fullness* in this bowl. The Godhead is in this bowl. Eternity past is in this bowl. All creation is in this bowl. Time is in this bowl. Redemption is in this bowl. The church is in this bowl. The kingdom is in this bowl. Eternity future is in this bowl. These are the items that compose all the fullness. All these items together make up all the fullness. They all have only one unique pleasure, that is, to dwell in this bowl — God’s Christ!

This is the deep significance of *all* in God’s thought. In our thought *all* may be circumscribed to all my money, all my time, all my future, all my self. That may be the extent of what all means to us. But in God’s thought, all means all the fullness dwelling in Christ. The revelation of all from God’s view — that *all* is concentrated in Christ — will radically change our life. We will be a person who sees that the meaning of our very existence is in this One in whom all the fullness is concentrated, is embodied, and dwells. Then we know what we were made for and what the universe was made for. This is how high and how immense our Christ is. He is more majestic than we could ever imagine. He is beyond what we could ever conceive.

#### *How big is our God?*

Let me give a personal testimony of finding a bigger God in my experience. It happened over thirty-five years ago when I was dealing with the Lord about giving my all to Him. I remember so clearly when the Lord spoke to me to burn my sermons. To me that was a step of surrendering all. There was a struggle. It was like I was giving up my life — indeed, it was *my* life that was wrapped up in those sermons. My God was too small. I confined Him to the little blue cards I had typed for Sunday mornings. They were carefully prepared and alliteratively outlined, and if I lost those cards, I

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# Christ as The Grain of Wheat

(Part One)

*But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much fruit."*

John 12:23-24

Jesus was riding into Jerusalem as the King of Israel. As He made His way into the city, a great multitude of worshippers swarmed around Him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! The King of Israel!" Soon thereafter the Greeks who had come up for the Passover feast were expressing their desire to see Jesus. What was Jesus' response to all this outpouring of praise and adulation? It was this very statement about a grain of wheat. To His realization, the time had come for a grain of wheat to fall into the ground and die. Of course, in this illustration, He Himself is the grain of wheat. And the cross is the means of death that the grain is about to pass through.

If we have ever seen a grain of wheat, we know how small and unimpressive it is. To the outward eye, it is difficult to discern any value. A single grain, when held in your hand, looks as though it should be discarded. Is it not therefore striking that Jesus would at such a monumental hour — the hour of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem — liken Himself to a grain of wheat? And not just a grain of wheat, but a grain of wheat falling into the ground and dying? What prompted the Lord to make such a statement, and why at this hour?

## *The Germ of Life*

Within every grain of wheat is a germ of life. The life is encased within the shell and is invisible to the eye. But it is nonetheless there. It is a hidden, encased life. Now, for the germ of life to break out of its encasement and produce more life, it must pass through a process of death. Otherwise, the grain remains the same. I may have a grain of wheat sitting in my pantry for several years. And year after year, as it sits there, nothing happens to it. The grain of wheat remains the same. But the moment I take this grain of wheat outside and drop it into the ground, something begins to hap-

pen. The shell cracks. The grain of wheat, so to speak, dies. But out of its cracking and death, the germ of life that had always been resident within the grain comes forth. The life is no longer encased, but is released. Moreover, the life begins to grow and sprout and produce a stalk of grain. Then when the stalk of grain ripens, it produces many more grains — indeed, a multiplication of grains. And those grains, in turn, produce more grains. Ultimately, from one grain comes forth an entire field of wheat.

Jesus was the grain of wheat that had the germ of life within Him. Within the Man, Christ Jesus, was the life of God. He possessed the eternal life, the "zoe" life. In the Bible there are three different Greek words that are all translated into our English word "life." So when we read the word "life" in the New Testament, one of three Greek words is behind it. The first Greek word is "bios," from which we get the word biology. This word is generally used in reference to the physical life, the physical duration of life, or the physical means of life. The second Greek word is "psuche," from which we get the word psyche and psychology. This word usually refers to our soul or soul life. And the third Greek word is "zoe." Zoe is the word used in the New Testament to denote the divine, eternal, uncreated life of God.

We must realize that as the grain of wheat, Jesus Christ had within Him the "germ of zoe." As John declares, "In Him was life" (John 1:4). That is, in Him was zoe. In Christ was the divine, eternal, uncreated life of God. God's life was encased in the Man Jesus. To many who encountered Him, it was hidden. They could only see the outward shell and could not discern the infinite value of Christ. To them He appeared to be just an ordinary man that was to be despised and rejected (1 Pet. 2:4, 7). They could not see that He was the incarnation of God Himself. Nor could they appreciate that the cross was God's ordained way for Him to fall into the ground and die — for His humanity to be cracked, for the outward encasement to be broken, and for the life of God to be released.

## *Not Remaining Alone*

The Lord said, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, *it remains alone.*" Christ as a single grain of wheat had the divine life in Him, but unless He were to die He would *remain alone.* Now let me ask you, what did Jesus mean by the phrase "remains alone"? When He was on the earth, He had the

twelve disciples continually with Him. He was not alone. In fact, He often had multitudes thronging around Him. So what did Jesus mean when He said that unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone? He was alone in this sense — He was the only man on earth, the only man in history, that had the divine life. All other men had bios. All other men had psuche. But no one else had zoe. Indeed, sinful man was alienated from the life of God (Eph. 4:18). Thus, Jesus was alone in the sense that only He possessed the life of God.

Even with Peter, James, John, and Andrew — those so close to the Lord — Jesus was alone. Surely He was their Shepherd, Friend, Teacher, and Leader. But He was not their life yet. They had yet to be regenerated by the zoe life. And as a result, Jesus did not have that much spiritual fellowship with them. Certainly He helped them, guided them, taught them, and was exceedingly patient with them. But they did not yet have that fellowship of life that can only come with the new birth. Hence, as a grain of wheat He was alone. None of the others were like Him. There were no other grains of wheat.

So Jesus went to the cross and passed through death. Satan was ecstatic, thinking that he had finally succeeded in terminating Jesus on the cross. He gloated over the thought that he had quenched zoe in man. But then something startling happened. On the third day life sprouted forth. Out of the cracked shell of Jesus' humanity, life was released. In fact, life shot up in resurrection! Life was no longer encased and confined but was released. Not only so — life multiplied to produce much fruit! Why? Because His life, as the outpoured Spirit, was made available to all men. So on the day of Pentecost, Peter preached the gospel and three thousand opened up and received the life of God. And a short time later, another five thousand! Eventually, tens of thousands of men and women received the life of God. Then they started spreading — from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, to Antioch, to Galatia, to Asia Minor, and Europe — eventually all over the world. The divine life was no longer encased in one Man at one place. But now it was in many men in many places. The devil did not succeed in terminating zoe life. He, to his great dismay, unwittingly succeeded in doing the opposite — he released it to multiply!

Thus, Christ no longer remains alone. By His death and resurrection, many grains have been pro-

duced. No wonder Jesus said to Mary soon after His resurrection, "Go to My brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God' " (John 20:17). Never before had He called the disciples His brothers. To be a brother means that you possess the same life and nature. You have the same father. You are related in life. What a fact! Jesus Christ is our Brother! He is not merely our Shepherd, Friend, Teacher, and Leader, but He is our Brother! The Bible tells us that we both — Jesus Christ and us — have one Father (Heb. 2:11). It also tells us that He is the Firstborn Son among many brothers (Rom. 8:29), that He is not ashamed to call us brothers (Heb. 2:11), and that God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6). Hence, by His death and resurrection, Jesus is no longer alone. The one grain has become many grains. The one Son has produced many sons. This is truly amazing!

### *God's Goal*

What does this show us? This shows us that God's goal over us is not only to cleanse us from sin. Surely cleansing us from sin is a major part of God's goal. He has redeemed, justified, and reconciled us by His precious blood. But we cannot stop there. That's only part of the gospel. God's goal is also to impart life. Not just to cleanse but to impart life. Do we realize that as sinners we were not just sinful, but we were also dead? (Eph. 2:1). We were spiritually dead. We were not alive to God. And God was not alive to us. At best, God was a topic of study or a religion to us.

So when Jesus went to the cross, He had this goal in view — to impart life to man. And this is the goal of the Holy Spirit — to give life! (2 Cor. 3:6). This is why He is called the life-giving Spirit and the Spirit of life (1 Cor. 15:45; Rom. 8:2). So when we open up to Jesus Christ and pray to receive His saving grace, two things happen to us. First, we are cleansed in His blood and made right with God. Second, we receive His life. That is, we receive the divine life, the life that was incarnated and encased in that one grain of wheat, that went through death, that came up in resurrection, that ascended to the Father's right hand, and that was poured out as the life-giving Spirit. That *same life* has now gotten inside of us and millions of others.

The Lord said, "Because I live, you also shall live" (John 14:19). It is not just He who is alive, but there are

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just did not know what I would say. I was so riveted to my sermon notes that God was restricted to them. I had spent thirty hours preparing each of those cards. Then the Lord said, “Burn them.”

My God at that time was limited to a little blue sermon card. I only experienced a blue-card God. He was narrowed to that one little thing. When He spoke to me to burn my sermons, He also said, “Do not use any more notes when you speak.” I was so riveted to those notes that the dealing over them was an intense struggle for a period of time. It was like *my* life was going out the door into the incinerator. I definitely felt like I was losing something. Of course, that is the way the soul life feels. It always feels like it is losing something. So read your symptoms and find out where you are. When you are feeling like you are going to lose something, that is a symptom. It is just a symptom of the soul. The self cannot help but feel that way. In fact, it is programmed that way. And we feel that consciousness in us. That is why there is a tug-of-war. You can feel the tug of that contrary self-life.

But what happened to me was that I exchanged my little measly all and I got *His all*. And from that point, I remember getting up to speak without one note. I had been enjoying God all week long in the Word, and I was sitting there on the platform, waiting to get up to share. I was thinking, “God, what am I going to say? I have so many things to say.” The light in the Word was everywhere. The fresh flow of the Spirit was in my heart. I had found a larger God. I found a bigger God than I had known, a God who could supply and energize. This is what can happen to us when there are those little struggle points in our life and we just let our all go and take His all. The struggle seems so real to you, but don’t be bothered. God is stretching your capacity so that He would be more of the fullness to you. This is our God.

We have to see how rich and full God wants to make Christ in our experience. If we see what a big Christ we have — that all the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him — we will easily and readily give Him first place in all things. We will enjoy the riches of Christ in a way that we have never known, in a way that transcends our piddly efforts, in a way above and beyond what we have eked out in our Christian life up to now.

#### *The excellency of the knowledge of Christ*

The apostle Paul gave Christ first place in all things. Otherwise, how could he have such a testimony, saying, “I count all things as *dung*”? Where did he get that word? It is translated in various ways in English — dung, refuse, rubbish, worthless trash.

“Dung” is a word the Holy Spirit used from the experience of a man who was under the revelation of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. I have often felt, “Dear Lord, I would like to get into a crevice of Paul’s heart. I want to know the kind of Christ he knew.” In Philippians 3:8-9 he declares, <sup>8</sup> “But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith.” Paul did not want to have even a shred of his own righteousness. He was saying, “I do not want anything in myself that could boast or merit something or establish something before God and feel satisfied that I did something. I do not want one bit of my righteousness. I want the righteousness which is of God by faith, *that I may know Him*” (Phil. 3:10). Thus, standing in Christ as all my righteousness is the key to knowing Him in an ever-deepening way. I want to know Him and all that He is as He lives in me and operates in me. I do not want to be satisfied with my own man-made righteousness proceeding from myself. I want to know Him.

Do we see this? This is the testimony of a man who sees Christ in such a way that all else fades away into oblivion. This is the revelation of Christ given to us in Colossians chapter 1. It is the kind of vision where we see that in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell. Such a seeing of Christ has the power to become the unique reason for Christ to be first place in all things in our lives. Oh, we need to see such an immense Christ!

#### *The transmittable and executable Christ*

Now this Christ is transmittable and executable. This is because He was processed through His incarnation, human living, death, resurrection, and ascension. Christ was identified with every kind of temptation that we touch in our daily life. He defeated every foe and won every battle with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Not only that, He conquered death itself and became in resurrection a life-giving Spirit, so that all the residing fullness in Him is transmittable to us. Now Christ can be instantly executed from within our spirit.

In regeneration our spirit was joined to the Lord, making possible the direct transmission of His life into us (1 Cor. 6:17; 15:45). Oh, what a vision — that such a Person has now become One who is on our level, and not only on our level, but on our level inside of us. Now

in our spirit, when we pray and sing and just join ourselves with this One, then all the fullness that has been pleased to dwell in Him, including God's essence and nature, is transmitted into our being so that He not only transforms our soul but He gives life to our mortal bodies.

This is our Christ today. All the fullness concentrated in Him is transmittable to us and executable in us and for us (Col. 1:19; 2:9-10). This means Christ is all-sufficient to us. The more we see how all the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him, the more He will be all-sufficient to us. What happens with such an awesome revelation of Christ is that we discover His all-sufficiency. That is the net effect over our being — His life is sufficient for everything. This all-sufficiency of Christ is over us that we might experience all that He is in His immense and expansive fullness.

*The discerning ability of seeing  
the all-sufficiency of Christ*

Because Paul saw such an all-sufficient Christ, he could deal with the distractions that entered in among the Colossian believers: "Beware that no one carries you off as spoil through his philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ" (2:8). Look at Paul's discernment concerning things that distract from Christ. Once you see Christ the way God sees Christ, you will have an automatic discernment concerning the things that differ from Christ and are substitutes for Him (cf. Phil. 1:9-10). It is not a matter of judging or condemning anything or anyone. It is a matter of discerning.

When you are under the revelation of the all-sufficiency of Christ and you see that in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell, you can evaluate everything. The revelation has discerning ability. It discerns the emphasis today in the whole professing Christian world. It discerns the Christian magazines. It discerns the stories and reports circulating in the Christian world. It discerns the focus of all the Christian activities and seminars. It discerns the Christian bookstores. It discerns the "how-to" books, the psychology books, even the books on handling your money and having a better marriage. I do not mean that God cannot be in all these things, but I am saying that so many believers today are focused on these kinds of things, and the all-sufficiency of Christ is diminished. There is not a taste and an aroma of Christ. Instead, it is a philosophy. It is a way of doing things. It is methods, procedures, and principles to live by. It is adjusting your life. It is solving your problems. We

cannot say that all these things are bad. They may be good. But good is not necessarily God. From the very beginning of the Bible, there was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, signifying an independent self-life with Satan as its source.

In Colossians 2:8 Paul is burdened to warn the saints of the distractions so that no one would carry them off through these substitutes, which are not according to Christ. What are we according to? We must be according to Christ. In verse 9 Paul assigns the reason why we should be according to Christ: "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." The conjunction "for" can also be translated "because." It is the same conjunction, ὅτι [*hoti*], used in Colossians 1:19, which tells us why Christ has the first place in all things.

In verses 8 and 9 Paul gives us a clear comparison. He compares the Christ who embodies the fullness of the Godhead with the superficial realm of philosophy, empty deceit, the tradition of men, and the elements of the world. This comparison shows us that the real fullness of our life is to be found in being completely occupied with the Person of Jesus Christ. Fullness is not found anywhere else but in Christ. All the fullness in Colossians 1:19 includes the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in Him bodily in Colossians 2:9. And not only in Their *existence* is the Godhead part of all the fullness, but the entire *economy* of the Godhead is also part of all the fullness.

*We are made full in Him*

Paul continues in verse 10: "And you have been made full in Him, who is the Head of all rule and authority." The word "fullness" in verse 9 and the words "made full" in verse 10 come from the same Greek word. Thus, Paul first reveals Christ as the embodiment of all the fullness, and then he says, "And you have been made full in Him." The verb "have been made full" is in the perfect tense — the tense that describes a permanent state of being. So it can mean that even with all the philosophy, tradition of men, and other distracting things, even with your hearts broken and suffering due to these kinds of things (2:2), you are still presently in a state of fullness in Him.

Christ is your real point of reference; you are made full in Him. All the fullness dwells in Him, and you are in Him. So we do not *arrive* at fullness. We do not stretch forth and seek to somehow attain fullness. We start out in fullness because we are joined to fullness — we are joined to Christ — and fullness is our life (Col. 3:4). Fullness is our permanent state. Fullness is our

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real situation. Are you not in Christ? Is your spirit not intertwined and joined with the One in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily? Are you not right now joined to Christ in your spirit? Now, what will you relate to when you wake up in the morning? Will you relate to the self, with all the thoughts and feelings of the soul life? Or will you relate to your real life? When you relate to Christ, your real life, you relate to your state of fullness. Thus, our constant point of reference is always Christ. Our beginning is Christ. We do not travel to reach Christ. He is our starting point. I do not care where I am or how I am — on the floor, under the floor, or up against a wall. My starting point is always Christ, where all the fullness dwells.

So practically in our experience we must see that all the fullness includes all the fullness of the Godhead and that we are made full in that fullness. That fullness is described in John 17:10, where Jesus says, “And all things that are Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I have been glorified in them.” This means the fullness in the Godhead is being transmitted into us. We are made full with the riches of Their nature and essence. Jesus is glorified *in* us. That is why it is so utterly important to be done with a life of introspection. In this fullness we are through with morbid introspection over ourselves — analyzing the self, our failures, and our fears about the future. We must be done with that kind of life, and ever keep our spirit in its proper order — fixed on Christ. This is what Paul is saying in Colossians 2:5: “I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.” Our order is faith in the Person who is our fullness. This is the proper order of our being. Our order is our enjoyment of the fullness of Christ, where we receive grace upon grace (John 1:16). We receive His all. With Christ, God freely gives us all things (Rom. 8:32).

### *Giving our all for His all*

Who would not give all for this? All includes everything. It includes every emotion, every reaction, every kind of environment that we cope with, the hopeless feelings that sweep over our soul, the depression that seizes us. Nothing is as bad and wrenching as depression. It grips you like a vice so that your feelings seemingly cannot rise. Depression is a horrible state to be in. But we can even surrender that state to the Lord. Who can get out of that state? We bring our state to Him by calling upon His name (cf. Lam. 3:52-57). In that call — “Jesus” — is the revelation of all the fullness that was pleased to dwell in Him. That fullness met death and conquered it. It broke through demonic

regions and realms. It defeated every region of the enemy’s domain. And whether I feel His victory or I don’t feel it, I declare that Name. Whether I have an instantaneous change or I don’t have any change, I speak that Name. We do not walk by sight. We walk by faith. Sight is what we see. Sight is what we can feel. It may be that to us God is our own subjective feeling. But God is not our feeling. God is God. So by faith we say, “Thank You, Jesus, You are the Victor. You broke through the regions of death and hell and Hades. You broke through it all. Now You are far above all to be my all.”

It is an awesome thing to see that in Christ all the fullness was pleased to dwell. Included in that fullness is all that He has accomplished in God’s economy. And now in Him we are in a state of fullness because we are drawing our resources out of His fullness. The Christian life is nothing but a life of grace — grace in exchange for grace. What a Christ!

— Bill Freeman

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many others who are *also* alive. I can personally testify that I am alive to God. One night I opened my heart to Jesus. He came into me and my spirit was reborn. My spirit came alive with zoe life. Now I don’t just have bios. I don’t just have psuche. I’ve got zoe! This is God’s goal over me. This is His goal over you. God’s goal is to impart His life into each one of us. Thank God for Christ! Thank God for the grain of wheat that fell into the ground and died! Thank God for the life that was released and multiplied!

— To be continued

— Kirk Eland

## *the Christian*

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