

The Importance Of The Perfect Not Being Allowed To Be The Enemy Of The Good

Post by “Pacatus” of March 5, 2024 at 4:32 PM

I haven't gone back through the thread, so I might be rehashing a bit. My last impression was that “perfect” is generally taken as an absolute abstract ideal, an attachment to which could easily deter one from pragmatically seeking the attainable “merely good” or “good enough.” But then I recalled the words from the preamble to the U.S. Constitution: “in order to form a **more perfect** union.” It turns out that “perfect” has not necessarily been confined to that absolute sense –

“A few usage guides still object to the use of comparison words such as *more*, *most*, *nearly*, *almost*, and *rather* with perfect on the grounds that perfect describes an absolute, yes-or-no condition that cannot logically be said to exist in varying degrees. The English language has never agreed to this limitation. Since its earliest use in the 13th century, perfect has, like almost all adjectives, been compared, first in the now obsolete forms perfecter and perfectest, and more recently with *more*, *most*, and similar comparison words: *the most perfect arrangement of color and line imaginable*. Perfect is compared in most of its general senses in all varieties of speech and writing. After all, one of the objectives of the writers of the U.S. Constitution was ‘to form a more perfect union.’” <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/perfecter>

And : <https://strategiesforparents.com/is-it-correct-...-perfect-union/>

And Wiktionary includes the understanding of “excellent” for the Latin “perfectus”:
<https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/perfectus#Latin>. Similarly from
<https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=perfect>.

Just for interest ... 😊 😐