

SERMON XXXV.

And gave him to be the head (or, a head) over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.—VER. 22, 23.

FOR the coherence, sum, and scope of these words, which is the only part that remaineth now to be handled, it is this: it containeth the most excellent part of Christ's supremacy, who is the King of kings; it treateth of the supremacy which he hath over the Church, and over all churches whatsoever that are his body. And yet—do but observe the condescending of Christ speaking by his Spirit, when he speaks of the height of his own dignity—he expresseth his own dignity with those terms of respect to his Church, as it is apparent he would shew forth withal her dignity also. As he would set out his own greatness, that he is a Head, so he would set forth her nearness to him, and her advancement with him. It is worth your observing, that he calleth him a 'head over all,' here is his dignity; but withal he addeth, to her, 'which is his body.' He is not a mere external Head to rule her, as a king is a head of his kingdom; but he is a Head to her as to a body, a natural body, a conjugal body, as a husband is to his wife, or as the head is to the natural body.

He had before expressed his dignity in other words: he saith, he hath all things under his feet; he had laid the Church itself as low as at his feet, as low as could be. Now, whereas he might have said he is a head over all the Church, he doth not say so; but he saith he is a 'head over all to the church;' *over all*, but to her. Still to express her dignity; if he be over all, it is for her, for her good, for her comfort.

He expresseth again his excellency in another phrase; he saith, 'he filleth all in all;' but withal still he expresseth it with terms of respect to her, he giveth her her due, and her utmost due; for all this, saith he, she is *his fulness*. He involveth the Church's dignity together with his own. All which, my brethren, put together and opened, there is nothing can afford greater comfort unto us.

I divide the words into these three general parts:—

Here is, first, *The dignity of Christ and his relation to his Church*; he is a 'head over all to his church,' and he 'filleth all in all.'

Here is, in the second place, likewise, *The Church's relation to Christ, and her dignity*: her relation, 'which is his body;' her dignity, she is his spouse.

And then, thirdly, here is *The founder of both*, both of the Church and of Christ too, as a Head; it is the gift of the Father. 'And hath given him,' saith he, or 'gave him to be a head to the church, which is his fulness, even of him that filleth all in all.' Even both these are founded upon the Father's gift. And do but observe that too, when he saith, he 'gave him to be a head to the church,' he doth express it so ambiguously, as the question is whether he meaneth more favour to Christ in giving him to be her Head, or more favour to the Church in giving him to be a Head to her.

The words will bear both in the Greek, *καὶ αὐτὸν ἔδωκε κεφαλὴν ὑπὲρ πάντα τῆ ἐκκλησίᾳ*. It may be translated as well, 'given him to the church to be her head,' making the greatness of the gift lie there, that it should be to her. Or it may lie, 'given him to be a head to the church,' making the greatness of the gift to be in giving him this privilege, this dignity. So that still he involveth Jesus Christ's dignity with his Church's; and let them for ever go together.

So you have the scope, and coherence, and sum of these words. I told you there were three parts of the text; and lest I should forget the founder, which is the last of the three, I will begin first with that, for indeed it will not come in so properly afterward, and it is the first thing in the text; 'and gave,' speaking of the Father.

Herein there are two things to be considered:—

The first is, that it was a gift to either. For God to give the Head, to give Christ to be the Head to the Church, was a gift to her; for God to give to Jesus Christ to be the Head of the Church, was a gift to him. The words do ambiguously refer to both. The greatness of the gift I shall shew, when I come to open those words, 'over all,' above all gifts; that is one part of the meaning.

But take it first thus. It was *a gift to the Church*, that God gave Jesus Christ to be her Head, and her to be his body. You will easily see that, for you heard in my last discourse she was 'under his feet;' therefore to advance her so far as to be his body, to be his queen, you must needs acknowledge this to be a great advancement, and a mere gift on her part. Do but think of Esther's advancement, read her story, from a slave to be a queen, and think what the advancement of the Church is, to be a body unto Christ, her Head.

Then, secondly, it is *a gift to Christ* to be a Head, and to have a Church to be his body. I will instance in both severally.

It was a gift, first, that God would give Jesus Christ a body, whereof he might be the Head. You read in Adam's story, who was Christ's type, that God brought the woman to him; you know Adam was the type of 'him that was to come,' Rom. v. 14, and that in marriage, as Eph. v. 32. As soon as he saw her, he knew her, knew God's meaning; saith he, 'This is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.' He took her thankfully, as a gift from God; though afterwards, when he was fallen, he most impiously upbraided God with this gift. 'The woman,' saith he, 'whom thou gavest me,' Gen. iii. 12. I quote it only for this, that she was a *gift*; for even in these words Adam, when he was fallen, acknowledgeth her to be so. Now this is as true of the second Adam too, Eph. v. 23, 30, 32, compared. The Apostle speaks there of Adam and Eve, and he compareth Christ and his Church, and saith that was the mystery enfolded in Adam's marriage. Now you shall find this second Adam acknowledging this gift more thankfully than the first doth. What saith he, John xvii. 6? Speaking of his Church, saith he, 'Thine they were, and thou gavest them me;' and, Heb. ii. 13, 'Lo, here am I and the children that God hath given me.' He doth it more thankfully; but still it argueth that the Church was a gift to him.

As a gift to him, so for him to be a Head to the Church was a gift too. *Ἐδωκε κεφαλὴν*, he gave him to be the Head,—so Beza reads it, and so you see our translation renders it,—that is, appointed him to be the Head, set him in the place of a Head, *constituit*, as Gen. iv. 1; the word *give*, for so it is in the original, [דָּן]. It is said that Pharaoh set Joseph over all the land of Egypt; and the Septuagint saith, he appointed him, made him a head over

all the land of Egypt. Now this translation our translators have followed: 'he made him to be the Head;' it might be read as well, 'made him to be a Head;' but they put the gift upon Christ, it was a gift to him to be made a Head, which certainly is the more direct scope of the place.

Now let me only add this concerning it. It was as a great gift to Jesus Christ to give him a body, so to advance him to that great dignity to be their Head. Although for his own excellency none else was fit for it, it was his due; yet still, as I have often said, so it is carried, because he is less than the Father, as he is God-man. That which is his due is a gift; therefore the school-men do exceeding well in this. They say there was a threefold grace bestowed upon Christ.

First, There was the grace of union, that the manhood should be united to the Godhead; it was a great grace that, and the foundation of all the rest.

Secondly, That this manhood should be filled with all personal graces, which they call *habitual grace*, as they call the other *gratia unionis*; that that should be full of grace and truth, as it is in John i. 14. It is a great grace too.

But then, say they, thirdly, There is *gratia capitis*; there is this grace bestowed over and above all these, that he should be a Head, that he should have a Church, to whom he might communicate all his grace; that as the Apostle speaks of himself, Rom. i. 5, 'By whom we have received grace and apostleship,' that is, the grace of apostleship: so Jesus Christ, he received the grace of headship. It is therefore a gift.

I will not stand to open this further; I will come to some observations.

Obs. 1.—The first observation is this: That Christ, you see, reckoneth it a new gift and grace, besides his having personal communion with God, to be united to him, to have a body, whom he might fill, whom he might communicate unto. It is a new grace to be a Head, and to have a body. 'He gave him to be the head to his church, which is his body.'

My brethren, do but think this good thought from hence. Is it a gift, is it a grace, that God should make Christ a Head, as you see it is? Then never doubt of his willingness to communicate anything to you; for it is a grace to be put into the office, to be a Head to fill you. It is given him, you see, given him as a matter of grace, that he should be a Head to his Church, and fill all in all. As it is the office of the liver to communicate blood to the whole body, it were unnatural for it to keep it within itself: so for the head also not to diffuse spirits into the whole. There is no consideration can more comfort you than this. How willing then must our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ needs be to communicate to his Church; it is a grace that he should do it, it is an honour that he should do it; it is the greatest advancement, the highest of all the rest that his Father hath bestowed upon him. 'My goodness,' saith he, 'extendeth not to thee,' but my comfort is, it extendeth to my saints; it is Christ's speech, Ps. xvi. 2.

Do but consider, to make a little use of it to yourselves further, wherein lieth the excellency of grace? It lieth in communicating to others; so Christ reckoneth it, and so should we. Hast thou grace in thy own heart, as Christ hath habitual grace in his? There is one mercy. Doth God make thee an instrument to do good to others? There is another mercy. It is the gift given to Christ, to be a head to communicate to members. See what the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. xii. 7, 'The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.' All the manifestations of the Spirit, whereby a man profiteth another, it is a gift, it is given to him; the text plainly holdeth forth that.—That is the first observation.

Obs. 2.—In the second place, Is it a gift that Jesus Christ himself should be the Head of the Church? It is given to him; although none else is fit for it but he, and though it be his due, yet it must be given. Then do but make this consequence from it: it is certain an office or dignity, in the Church, or over the Church of God, must hold of the Head Christ; it must be given too, it must be appointed too—that is all one: *constituit*, he did make him, constitute him, or give him. If the great office of all the rest is by way of gift appointed, then certainly all the rest, they must all hold *in capite*, hold of the Head Christ. The Pharisees knew this well enough; you shall see how they put Jesus Christ to it, for when any come to usurp authority over you, as you are a Church, ask the same question that the Pharisees did Christ. They put him to it that was the Head of the Church. Matt. xxi. 23, ‘When he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee that authority?’ The principle they knew well enough. No man was to exercise any authority over the Church, but it was to be given him. Who hath given thee this authority? say they to the Head.

What answer doth Christ give them? He knew it was a folly to tell them, for it would not satisfy them. But I will ask you another question, saith he; and that also makes for what I say. ‘The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven’—that is, by divine institution—‘or of men?’ Here was a shrewd question. ‘And they said, We cannot tell;’ for they were in a doubt; you may read what their reasonings were. I only quote it for this, that Jesus Christ himself, that was made the Head of the Church, was asked by what authority he did it. Therefore you may very well ask any other men, if they take any authority over the Church, Will you shew your office, that it is warranted in the word? John could not baptize, you see, but he must have it from heaven. This is our Saviour Christ’s scope and meaning.

Now, my brethren, that you may see the ground of the equity of this, you must know, that all officers of a Church are in a further distance from the Church, to have any authority over it, than Jesus Christ is over the whole Church. Now, if that Jesus Christ doth not take upon him to be a Head, who deserveth it, but it is given him, certainly no man is to take any office over the Church of God, but he must have a warrant for it; the thing will necessarily follow. All the kings and princes in Christendom, and all the parliaments in the world, cannot set up an office over the Church which Christ hath not set up. It is God, saith he, that hath set in the Church some apostles, and some prophets, and some teachers, 1 Cor. xii. 28. Or, if you will speak in the language of the text, ‘given them,’—that is, appointed them, so the phrase in Eph. iv.

You that cannot add a hair to your head, can you think you can add a member to the Church of Christ, which shall have an office, that he never appointed? Take the natural body; can any man invent, all men, take all their wits together, a member that is not natural to the body, that God hath not already made? For in his book all our members are written. Can you make a different member from the hand or the eye, that the body hath not, that you can say will be useful to the body? Go to the Church; all the men in the world cannot find out by their wisdom and appointment an officer that shall rule in the Church, that doth not depend merely upon God’s command; you must have all these members written in his book. The head is written, you see; it is given to him; certainly then all the members must.

This kingdom is pulling down, it is setting up a power over churches; what else makes all the commotions and stirs that are among us? All that I will say is this. Have a warrant for what you do, that it may be said, 'By what authority do ye these things?' My meaning is this: by what authority do these appointments exercise jurisdiction over the Church of God? If Christ himself have it by gift, certainly they must. All our tenor holdeth *in capite*, that I may speak in law; holdeth of him that is Head of the Church. I do not say that if there be officers in the Church which God hath not appointed, that presently they deny Christ to be the Head, and that they do not hold the Head itself. Far be it from us to say so; that is the expression in Col. ii. 19. Speaking of idolaters, he saith they do not hold the Head Christ; but we may say that those officers do not hold of the Head, as it is expressed, Eph. iv. 15, 16. In which two places you may see the different phrases.

So much now for that first thing, he had it given to him to be the Head. He had his body given to him, and he had his headship given to him too.

Now I come to the dignity itself; it is *headship*. 'He gave him to be a head over all to the church.' There are three things to be explained in this.

First, *What is intended by Church.*

Secondly, *What being a Head to the Church importeth.*

Thirdly, *To what purpose 'over all' cometh in.* It is put, you see, between his being a 'head,' and 'to the church.' 'He is a head,' saith he, 'over all to the church.'

I will begin with the first, *What is intended by the Church.* Therein I shall only open this distinction to you of the differing acceptation of the word *church*. In general you must know this, that the word church hath a relation to an assembly of men uniting in one; that is properly a church, apply it to what you will, whether to a church of saints, or a church of men, a civil assembly of men; it is applied to both in Scripture.

Now, it being taken here of *saints*, that are members of Christ, it hath this double acceptation in Scripture; I shall mention no other: if any man can find any other, I would see it.

It is taken, first, for the general company and assembly of all saints, united together by several bonds to Christ their Head, or united by one band. If you speak of the church of men, united they are by a common band unto Jesus Christ their Head. This we call the Catholic Church, which you have in the Creed. It is called in this epistle, chap. iii. 15, the whole family of all that are named in heaven and earth, which are united by one common bond. In chap. iv. he saith, there is one body, and one Spirit, and one Lord; it is all one with what is here in the text: he is a Head to his church, which is his body.

And, my brethren, that this general assembly of all saints is the church universal; to give you a place for that, it is Heb. xii. 23, 'Ye are come to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven.' The general assembly of saints, this is here in heaven; take it in earth, take it wherever saints are,—they are either in heaven or in earth,—this 'general assembly' is the church universal. That is the first acceptation of the word.

But, secondly, we find in the New Testament particular assemblies and companies of saints, and that on earth, to be dignified with the name of churches, and to be dignified with the name of *bodies to Christ*; not one body, but if they be several churches they are distinct bodies to Christ. We read, therefore, of the churches of Galatia, chap. i. 2; of the churches of

Judea elsewhere ; of the churches of Asia, Rev. i.—iii. ; of all the churches of the Gentiles, Rom. i. 5. Now these I call, as divines do, particular churches in a distinction from the general church of all saints. I will give you my warrant for it, for that very phrase of a particular church. It is 1 Cor. xii. 27, 'Ye are,' saith he, speaking to the church of Corinth, 'the body of Christ, and every one of you members of Christ in particular.' That same phrase, *καὶ μέλη ἐκ μέρους*, it is, you are a part, you are in particular ; our translation rendereth it well, it is the most genuine reading of the words. The meaning is this : as every one of you are members of Christ in particular, so go, take you altogether, as you are the church of Corinth, you are a body of Christ in particular too. Here you see is a particular church mentioned in distinction from the general assembly whereof you heard out of Heb. xii.

You must know this,—for the scope of this place in 1 Cor. xii.,—the Apostle had shewn that the church of Christ is a body unto Christ, he had discoursed under that similitude throughout the whole chapter in all the verses before. Read the whole chapter from the very 1st verse to the 27th, and you shall find that he compareth the church of Christ to a body, and Christ to the head ; but he had so discoursed as he had meant the universal church all the way in all the former or the chief part of the chapter. Now, because they might say, How doth all this discourse of Christ and his body, when you mean the church universal, concern us ? And how doth your similitude hold of us ? It holdeth indeed of the church in general, but doth it hold of us ? Yes, saith he, 'You are the body of Christ, and members in particular ;' and, therefore, all that I have said of the church universal under the similitude of a body holdeth good of you, of your church in particular, every particular church being the model, and bearing in its proportion the resemblance of the universal.

And he doth it to prevent all disorder, and schism, and rent, which was among that church, and he useth and enforceth that similitude of a body. There is the same reason of a particular body, that Christ is their head, and of the whole body, as there is the same reason of a drop of water and the whole ocean ; they are *totum homogeneum*. A church, a particular church, the church of Corinth is the body of Christ in particular, as well as the whole church is a body to him in the general. This is the scope of that place. Therefore, saith he, you may apply all that I have said of the body of Christ in general to your own ; you are the body of Christ and members in particular, though you are not the whole body of Christ—that is, the church universal.

Now, you see that in respect of the universal church, a particular church of Corinth is said to be a body to Christ. I will give you a place that saith it is his whole body ; as it is a part in respect of the church universal, so it is within itself an entire whole body. The place is 1 Cor. xiv. 23, 'If therefore the whole church be come together into some place ;' mark it, the place is express. As this church of Corinth was but a part of the universal church, yet within itself—as he saith 1 Cor. v. 12, 'Do not ye judge them that are within ?'—it was a whole church. 'If the whole church be come together in one place ;' the church of Corinth was not the whole church of Jesus Christ in heaven and in earth, neither can the whole church of God (take it so) meet together in one place ; yet he calleth it, you see, a whole church : 'if the whole church come together into some place,' to that end to edify one another, as the scope of the place is. This church of Corinth, therefore, was as truly a body to Jesus Christ, and a whole body to him, as the church universal was the whole body, and had all the privileges of the body.

As for example, to exemplify it unto you. In your city you have many several companies, as mercers, &c. All these companies are several bodies, yet they are all parts of the city; they are companies in particular if you compare them to the whole, yet they are entire and distinct companies amongst themselves; so is it here of particular churches.

And, my brethren, that you may see what the limits of this whole church of Corinth were, what the bounds, the *terriers* of this whole church were; it is of no more than could meet together in some place. 'If the whole church,' saith he, 'be come together into some place.' Some say that the meaning of this ἐπι τὸ αὐτὸ is only this, that they came together to one purpose in unity. But it is clear, by comparing other scriptures, that it is a distinct thing from meeting in unity; it is meeting in one place, as Acts ii. 1, 'They were all with one accord'—there is their unity—'in one place.' Here are the *terriers* of this church.

There is a place in 1 Cor. xi. 20, 'When you come together in one place,' ἐπι τὸ αὐτὸ, saith he. I will tell you how they answer this. Say they, there might be many churches in Corinth, and yet it may be truly said, 'When you come together into one place;' as if you should speak to all the churches in London, 'When you come together into one place,' taking it in a distributive sense. But come to this place, 1 Cor. xiv. 23, 'If the whole church be come together into some place;' that cannot be in parts, it is a contradiction to say that the whole church should meet together in one place and yet meet in several congregations, for if the whole meet, and meet together, they do not meet in parts certainly.

Now, my brethren, this is a particular church; and let me add this, you see here is but one church at Corinth, and there was another church not far off from Corinth, not two miles, that was a distinct church too, a whole body to Christ, as Corinth here was. Rom. xvi. 1, 'I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea.' Where, do you think, stood this same Cenchrea? It was situated by the water; as near as Ratcliff is to London, so near it was to Corinth, as Strabo in his 18th book sheweth. These were two distinct particular churches. That church of Corinth was a whole church, as many as met in one place. That church of Cenchrea was a whole church too, though it was so near it; for Cenchrea was to Corinth as Leith is to Edinburgh in Scotland, a haven town.

I will give you another instance of a particular church that met only in one place for their public ordinances, and it is the greatest instance of the biggest church that ever was in the world, for it was the first church. I do it to explain to you the difference of a universal church and a particular church, and to shew you what the bounds of it is. My brethren, the church of Jerusalem—of which you shall read from the second chapter of the Acts to the eighth—may for the bigness of it and number seem a monster, yet in one place still; and it certainly being the first church that ever was under the New Testament,—it consisting of some of all the tribes, as appeareth, Acts ii. 5, 9–11, &c., they were men of Israel out of all nations,—it was to be the mother church, and so the epitome of the Catholic Church. It had all the apostles as ministers of it in it; therefore it was *maximum quod sic*, as we say in philosophy; we say of the natural body, there is a stature, a bigness, which the body may be stretched to, beyond which it cannot go; so, certainly, that was a church that was stretched to the utmost wideness that the sides of a church could be stretched to. There was the greatest reason in the world for it: it was the first church, to be the mother church, from thence to go out into the whole world; they had all the apostles to be

their ministers, and it was the epitome of the Catholic Church : therefore it was stretched, I say, to the utmost wideness that a particular church could be stretched to ; yet the Holy Ghost doth carefully put in this, and distinctly and often, that however their number seem to be great, yet they met in one place ; he expresseth it so from the first to the last. Do but walk the Scripture around with me and you shall see it.

In the beginning of that church their number was but one hundred and twenty ; so Acts i. 15. They were in one place, ver. 13. ‘ They went up into an upper room, and they abode there,’ or continued there, ‘ with one accord ;’ so he saith, ver. 14. They were in one place and with one accord, for these are still things distinct.

Go on to Acts ii. 1 : ‘ They were all with one accord in one place.’ What their houses and their places were we know not, the Holy Ghost doth not record it, but certain it was so big as he saith, ver. 6, ‘ It was noised abroad, and the multitude came together ;’ namely, where the apostles were. And the place was so big that, ver. 14, Peter standing up lifted up his voice to speak to them all, that they might all hear, and there was no less than about three thousand converted at that sermon and added to that church, ver. 41 ; and many thousands else did surely come, and when they were increased to this number of three thousand, yet still in one place ; for, ver. 44, ‘ all that believed were together ;’ it is the same word in the Greek that is translated elsewhere ‘ in one place.’

Well, chap. iv., there is this number of three thousand increased to five thousand, so ver. 4 ; yet still in one place, the Holy Ghost diligently noteth out this. He telleth the story there how that Peter and John were apprehended by the priests and by the rulers and elders, and then at ver. 23, he saith, that ‘ being let go, they went to their own company,’ where they ‘ prayed together with one accord ;’ and, ver. 31, he saith, ‘ when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.’ Here still this church is in one place.

Here is a mighty church you see now ; as full, one would think, as the seats could hold. Read chap. v. 11, 12, and you shall see how diligent the Holy Ghost is to note this plainly that they were in one place. Saith he, ‘ Fear came upon all the church,’ &c., ‘ and they were all together in Solomon’s porch ;’ here is still this great church in one place.

Well, let them be multiplied to what they will, for we know not what they were multiplied unto, but this is the upshot of the story : Acts vi. 1, ‘ When the number of the disciples was multiplied ;’ make them as many as you will, yet it is said, ‘ the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them ;’ they called them not in parts, but the whole together. How prove you that ? Plainly, ver. 5, ‘ The saying pleased the whole multitude.’ Here was the whole multitude gathered in one place ; you see how diligent the Holy Ghost is in this great church to put in still that they were in one place. And, my brethren, let what exceptions be made that can be, I will believe the Holy Ghost. Let men say, How could possibly so many be in one place, what one place could contain such a multitude ? I could send you to Charenton in France, where you may see many thousands come together at once. I could send you to the Books of Esther and Nehemiah, where all Israel met together ; but certain it is that here they all met together in one place, ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ.

And let me add this too, that the members of this church were fleeting, they did not dwell constantly at Jerusalem. For the great objection is, they

say that it was not a church consisting of fluid members, but of men that constantly dwelt there, and this objection they have from Acts ii. 5, 'There were dwelling at Jerusalem devout men out of every nation,' whereof three thousand were converted. My brethren, this hinders not. Mr Mead, in his *Diatrise*,—which I refer all readers to, he is far enough off from this notion that I draw it to,—in his last discourse but one upon this very place, saith that by dwellers at Jerusalem is not meant men that had a fixed habitation there; but he saith the word *κατοικοῦντες* will signify men that sojourned, that were there for a while, and he bringeth two instances out of the Septuagint for it in Genesis. And he giveth this reason, which to me seems to be unanswerable, that they did not dwell at Jerusalem fixedly, for, ver. 9, it is said that they 'heard in their own tongue wherein they were born, Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites,' &c. Now, how could they be both dwellers at Jerusalem and dwellers in all these countries too, if they had not been sojourners there for a time? The truth is, it was a land-flood, it was a fluid church, occasioned by their coming up to Jerusalem at the feast. I give this instance for this purpose, that the greatest church in the world, the first that ever was, was but one church, a church that could meet in one place; the Holy Ghost, you see, is diligent to express it, and I have shewed you how it might be.

You see, therefore, there are two sorts of churches. There is, first, the church universal, which is the whole body of Christ upon earth; and there is a church in particular, as you heard of the church of Corinth, and you have heard it exemplified by the church at Jerusalem.

I will in a word give you the reason why that, beside the church universal, God hath instituted a particular church as a body too. It is in a word this, because the whole church universal cannot meet together for ordinances. You cannot call all the saints upon earth to hear and to pray together; yet that God may have a constant worship upheld in the world, and in a constant way, and known where to be had, and by whom, he hath appointed his people to meet in several bodies; and, saith he, I will account all these several bodies to be several churches to me, and I will be a Head to them. As for instance, the king is king of the whole kingdom, but withal hath granted charters to this corporation, and to that corporation, and to the other corporation; he is king of all, and they are so many several bodies unto him.

Now, I having explained to you the difference between a particular church and a universal church,—for that they that meet in one place together are a particular church no man denies,—you will ask me, which of these two are meant here? for I have brought this distinction but to explain the text.

I answer, that here the church universal is meant in a primary manner, the whole church both in heaven and in earth, whereof Jesus Christ is the Head. It is plain that the church universal is here primarily meant; it needeth no proof, for he speaks of that church that is his fulness; now it is only the universal church, when they shall be all put together, that makes up the fulness of Christ. Take all churches in all ages, when they meet together, as they shall do one day; take the general assembly of saints and angels, they only are *his fulness*. And that he speaks here of the universal church, the phrase implieth it, 'he filleth all in all;' that is, the universal church.

But yet, secondly, so that all particular churches, that are bodies to Christ and churches too, are not excluded, but so far as they bear relation unto Christ as a body, so far he is their Head and filleth them all. For if they

have this honour to be churches and a body to Christ in particular, then assuredly Jesus Christ is their Head and filleth them as well as he doth the whole church, even as a king is as well a head of several corporations as he is of the whole kingdom. And for this I will give you Scripture: Eph. iv. 10, he telleth us there that Jesus Christ is ascended up on high, that he may fill all things; here is the same phrase that is used in the text, and he calleth him a Head afterward, ver. 15. To fill all. Who? Not only the universal church, but all the officers and members of the particular church. How prove you that? Saith he, ver. 11, he gave some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; which you all know are the officers of particular churches. So that by 'filling all in all,' he doth not only mean filling the universal church, but a particular church with all the officers of it, till it come to that proportion of stature that he hath appointed it to.—So much for the explication of this, what is meant by *church*, and whether both be meant or no.

Now, my brethren, how far the word *church*, set aside the universal church, may reach,—whether or no it may not reach beyond a particular congregation that do meet together in one place,—is the great question of these times. And I know that some have expected that I should speak to this, because, and merely because, the word *church* is here in the text. As, that I may state the question to you, for I shall do no more, whether, yea or no, besides a particular congregation that meet together in one place,—which you see is reckoned a church and the whole church,—many congregations, many churches united in one, may not be called one particular church. When I say many churches, the meaning is this: many churches, though they do not meet together in one place for ordinances of worship, of prayer and sacraments, and hearing the word, yet are but one in respect of discipline and government; whether or no these are not to be reckoned one church merely for discipline sake, excommunication, and the censures of the church. Here is the question. As, for example, whether many churches under one diocesan bishop, in order to being governed by him, though all the churches in that shire cannot meet together to pray and receive the sacraments, &c., yet whether in respect of discipline and government they might not be united in one under him as their governor.

Or, secondly, whether, yea or no, many churches that do not, nor cannot meet together to pray or to hear in common, or to receive the sacrament in common, yet being to be subject to all the elders and ministers within such a circuit, whether they may not be said to be one in that respect, as being under those elders and ministers; which is a Presbyterian church. Whether doth the Scripture allow this, yea or no?

Or, whether that only a particular congregation—taking in both the elders and ministers and the congregation itself together, that enjoy both worship and discipline together—is said to be a particular church, and none else. This is the great controversy of the times, and this you expect, it may be, that I should answer.

If you will take the answer of my judgment, you know that already. If you will take an answer out of other scriptures, I have no ground to run out into it from this text. For all that this text saith is but this, that he is the Head of his church, which is his body. He doth not determine whether a diocesan church be his body, or whether a Presbyterian church be his body, or only a particular congregation. Only, my brethren, to determine this I will but give you this one rule out of the text, and that is this: that nothing is or can be reckoned the Church of Christ but what may be called a dis-

inct body to Christ. Now then, take many congregations united together in one under a diocesan bishop, you must make that one man the church and a body to Christ. Take likewise many congregations united in one under many ministers, you must make these ministers met together the body of Christ. Now then, the rule I shall give you will be fair and easy. In Matt. xviii. 17, there our Saviour Christ doth first let fall the institution of a particular church; that is clear of all sides. And I speak to the church in hand, for it is a church not only for prayer and the sacraments, but for discipline, for he speaks of one that is to be cast out. 'If any man offend,' saith he, 'go tell the church.' Now by church here he cannot mean the universal church, that is plain. Why? Because you cannot call all the men in the world together that are saints to tell them; you cannot call men and angels together, that is without question. What then is meant by church, for he speaks of a new institution under the New Testament? My brethren, what is meant by church in that Matt. xviii. you must find in the apostles' writings, for Christ left it to them to interpret; you must go and find in the Epistles of Paul, and in the Acts of the Apostles, for they interpreted Christ and his meaning.

Now then, read all over the Acts of the Apostles, read over all the Epistles; if you can find one man called a church and a body to Christ, if you can find the elders of several churches met together called a church, and may be called a body of Christ,—for that is still necessary to a church, to be a body to Christ, 'the church, which is his body,'—if you can find this, then embrace and submit to that as a church; for it is that which Jesus Christ intended, it is an ordinance which you may warrantably be subject to, and apply all those places to: obey your elders, &c. Apply it thus; they are the church, they are our elders.

This rule, my brethren, to begin with the first institution of a church under the New Testament, and to take the interpretation of it afterward, is the fairest rule that can be given, and it is fair upon two grounds. For when Jesus Christ mentioneth a church where he would have men go for discipline, for excommunication, certainly he doth not speak in obscurity,—that is, that it should not be interpreted by the examples of the New Testament, namely of the apostles that followed him,—for there was no church extant under the New Testament in Christ's time while he lived, therefore it was left to be interpreted by what was called church afterward.

Now, look what was familiarly called a church by the apostles, look into the Acts, and from thence to the end of the Revelation,—that which, I say, is usually called a church, and is a particular church, a body to Christ, certainly that is the church Christ meaneth; otherwise we were still to seek what church Christ sendeth us unto. If we cannot find that those which should exercise discipline over us are called a church somewhere or other in the Acts of the Apostles, or in some of the Epistles, how can our consciences be satisfied? Here we have a church mentioned; Go, tell the church, saith he; the consciences of men, therefore, must have it expressly determined by the apostles what church we must rest in. Now go all over, I say, and see to what thing they give most familiarly that name.

And the fairness of this rule appeareth likewise in this, that certainly that must have the name of a church which carrieth the authority of a church; will you call any one a king that hath not the authority of a king? They that have the authority of a church must have the name of a church, especially when Jesus Christ will first institute and give a name to it. Now, look and see to what the name of a particular church is given, and let that

be the decider of this great controversy. That is all I will say of that point. I have avoided discoursing upon it, because it is not natural to the text; only it was necessary to give you this distinction of this word church for the comfort of all churches particular, that Jesus Christ is their Head as well as he is of the church universal, that they may look at Christ to fill them,—and he is their head to fill them, and all the members and officers of them,—as well as he filleth the universal church.

I will add but two cautions, to inform you concerning two divisions; the one from the universal church, and the other from particular churches. It is proper to the thing in hand, 'church,' 'the church, which is his body;' and there is no schism to be in the body, no schism from the universal church, no schism from particular churches that are truly churches of Christ. I will tell you of two great divisions from either. You have heard of two sorts spoken of, the one of old, the other of latter years; the one the Donatists of old, the other the Brownists of late. You call the Brownists the new Donatists, and the Donatists the old Brownists. I will explain that which is the worst in either opinion, and you shall see it is proper to the thing in hand.

First, for the Donatists that were in Austin's time. I have examined diligently the writings of Austin; among them I find the highest venom of their opinions to lie in this, and it is high enough,—if we may know men by the writings of their adversaries against them, for there is none of their own writings extant,—the truth is, they denied the church universal, they denied that the church was anywhere but in that part of Africa where they were, and this inflamed that holy man Austin against them. They might have put out of their creed, 'I believe the Church Catholic,' and put in 'I believe a little part of the world to be the Church.' Here you see a schism hath been from the church universal.

Now, go take the Brownists; they never deny the church universal, as the Donatists do; they have always affirmed that there is a church universal in all places, yea, and in England the most glorious church of saints of any in the world. But yet herein hath lain their error; they have sinned against particular churches, as they of old did against the universal church. And against these I, for my part, and many of my brethren, profess that they are in an error; and it is evident by Rev. xv., that, from the first time of the separation from Popery, there hath been a temple built to God, churches to God, in all the Reformed Churches.

I come to the next thing, and that is, *The Head of the Church*. How great a dignity this is to Christ, and benefit to the Church, I shall shew when I handle those words, 'over all.' I must speak to this, *he is a Head to the Church*.

It is a similitude, as all that are made of Christ have the greatest reality in them. A head in Scripture is to be taken in three several senses. There is, first, a *political head*, a ruling head, as a king is said to be the head of his loyal subjects; as I remember there is a place in one of the Books of the Kings which makes the kings of Israel heads of the people. And in this sense is God said to be a head to Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 3.

Secondly, there is a *conjugal head*, as the husband is the head of the wife, in the same 1 Cor. xi. 3.

Thirdly, there is a *natural head*, which I need not quote Scripture for; that is, the head of the natural body, as a man's head is of the members of his body.

In all these senses is our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ head of the

church in a peculiar manner. He is, first, a head of the church as a king is head of his loyal subjects; for he is not so much a head to rebels, he treads them under his feet, but he is a head to his loyal subjects. Now he is in a peculiar manner a king to the church. Ps. xlv. 4, 'Thou art my king,' saith the church, my king in a more especial manner. He is so a king to the church as he is not to all the world besides. A head in that sense. And in this large sense, take a head for a king, and Jesus Christ is a head to the angels too, as Col. ii. 10. It is said there he is the head of all principalities and powers; that is, he is their king. Of this headship that Christ hath over the angels, I shewed when I opened the 10th verse, where all in heaven and in earth are said to be gathered together in one, as in a head, to Jesus Christ.

Secondly, there is a conjugal head; so the husband is said to be the head of the wife, and that is nearer than of kings to their subjects, nay, though they be loyal subjects; you find this in Eph. v. 23. The headship of Christ to his church is nearer than that of a king to his loyal subjects; it is the headship of a husband to a wife; even as the relation of a king to his queen is nearer than to all his subjects: he is a head to them, but he is in a nearer manner a head to his queen. So is it here.

Thirdly, there is a natural head; that as in nature the head is the head of the body, so is Jesus Christ a head to his members and to his churches; they are all as members of that one body, and therefore he saith plainly in 1 Cor. xii. 12, that as the body is one and hath many members, so also is Christ. And this is meant here, for it follows, 'which is his body.'

Now, my brethren, if you will take it in this latter sense of a similitude taken from a natural head, so our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is a head only to the church of men who are of the same nature with him, so he is not to angels; neither is it anywhere said that angels are the spouse of Christ, neither is it anywhere said that they are the members of Christ. He is neither a conjugal head to them, neither is he a natural head to them, but he is a head to them as a king is to his loyal subjects; he is the head of all principalities and powers.

Yet so, let me add this, to open this similitude, when we say that Jesus Christ is a head to his church, which is a similitude drawn from the natural head, the meaning is not but that in reality Jesus Christ hath a greater nearness to his church than the head hath to the natural body. Though it be but a similitude, yet it importeth a greater reality, a greater nearness. Why? Because that all the similitudes that are drawn from things here below and applied to Christ do hold more really of Christ than of the things whence the similitude is drawn. Is he called a vine? He is the true vine, the other is but a false vine in comparison. Is he called a head, and the church his body? There is more reality and nearness betwixt the church and him than between the natural head and the body; that other is but a shadow of this. Only he is not a natural head, though the similitude be drawn thence; but he is a mystical, a spiritual head.

I cannot now enter into all the particulars for which Jesus Christ is called a head. I will mention only one. It is proper to a head of a body to be but one, natural reason will tell you so much; for the similitude is drawn here from the natural body; 'the church,' saith he, 'which is his body.' If there were many heads to a body, it would be a monster.

Do but look upon Popery a little; what doth it? It clappeth another head upon the universal church, the Pope; makes him a head of the church. It is the greatest derogation from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ that

can be, to make or name any other head of the church but himself. Magistrates are heads in the church; but to make any man a head of the church is the greatest derogation to Christ that may be. That he that hath 'all under his feet,' so it is before; God hath given him over all to be a head; above all privileges else this is the greatest, that he is a head to his church, it is the chiefest flower of his crown. How can this, therefore, be given to a vile man, as the Pope is? In Col. i. 18, it is reckoned there among the great prerogatives of Jesus Christ, among the flowers of his crown, that he is the 'head of the body, the church, who is,' saith he, 'the beginning, the first-born from the dead.' He is, saith he, *αὐτός, ipse, he, and he alone*, as the Greek emphasis is. And if the Pope can say that he is the beginning, and the first-born from the dead, let him challenge it and wear it, that he is the head of the body, the church. But *he, he Christ*, is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; he is the Head of the body, the church.

I will give you another place, Eph. iv. 11, 12, where you have all the greatest officers that ever were upon earth, the rulers of a church mentioned, 'He hath given some apostles;' certainly here is Peter mentioned, from whom the Pope claimeth his supremacy. To what end was this? Read ver. 12, 'For the edifying of the body of Christ;' and ver. 15, 'That we may grow up to him that is the head.'

My brethren, they themselves, though they say the Pope is the head of the church, dare not say, 'which is his body.' They say he is a head for external government; they dare not say that the church is his body. They dare not say, he is Lord of the church, that is Christ's title only; for, 1 Cor. xii. 15, there is but one Lord, namely to the church. They dare not say, he is the husband of the church, for then they would make the church that cleaveth to him a whore; for there can be but one husband of the church. But to be the head of the church is more than this; it is a nearer relation, and will they go and give him this then? It is *crimen capitale*, a capital crime, and all the distinctions they can make will never acquit them of high treason against our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a wonder that ever men of learning should give this title to the Pope; there can be no reason given of it but one, and that is this: it was to make up a complete character that he is Antichrist, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. Ignorant times did give him this title, and it hath been long the unhappiness of the world, that what the ignorance of former ages hath said and established, that the learning of succeeding ages must maintain; therefore the learnedest wits of the world, the Jesuits, have gone about to maintain this title of the Pope.

You know, when I opened those words, that Christ is advanced 'far above all principalities and powers,' I told you, that that was it that made the Pope Antichrist, because he was an imitation of Christ in this, and took on him the power which was personal in Christ alone. As Jesus Christ is said to 'sit at God's right hand,' so he 'sitteth in the temple of God;' as Christ is over all principalities and powers, so likewise doth the Pope sit above 'all that is called God,' 2 Thess. ii. Afterwards I gave you a prospect of all the glory of Christ; I put all together out of this chapter. I will give you a prospect of all the glory of Antichrist, as it is parallel with that of Christ's, set forth in this chapter. You shall see how he doth usurp and arrogate to himself all that is attributed to Christ here in this chapter, that you may see that he hath the full and complete character of that great Antichrist upon him.

When I set out Christ unto you, I told you his exaltation lay in this: he was advanced at God's right hand above all principality and power; that

all things are under his feet ; that he is a Head to the Church, &c. Now do but compare Christ and Antichrist together.

First, Doth Jesus Christ sit in heaven, which is the holy of holiest, the temple of God, and the inward part of it? Look in 2 Thess. ii. 4, and you shall find that he is the Antichrist that sits in the temple of God, the whole temple of God on earth, for so the Pope challengeth to do, and if he could he would sit in heaven itself ; he would, as his predecessor, the king of Babel did, make his throne above the stars, if he could ; but he cannot come to heaven. However, he sitteth in heaven here below, he arrogateth to himself all power in the Church of God.

Secondly, Doth Jesus Christ sit at God's right hand in his temple, above all principalities and powers? So doth this Antichrist ; he exalteth himself above all that is called God ; above all kings and emperors, be they what they will.

Thirdly, Hath Jesus Christ this world and the world to come to rule in? Lo,—we will follow the Pope still,—he arrogateth to rule all in this world ; for he saith, all the kingdoms of the world are given to him, and he is to dispose of the crown of them in order to the church. And, which never any monarch ever did before him, he arrogateth power in the world to come, just as Jesus Christ ; and he and his divines have fancied to themselves a world to come for him to have the keys of,—that is, purgatory, which men's souls go to when they are dead. He putteth down all the monarchs in the world ; they rule men, but men here below, they never followed men's souls into the world to come ; the Pope professeth a power there. Nay, they have said they can command angels, and sometimes they have let men out of hell.

Fourthly, Hath Jesus Christ all under his feet? Go to Rome ; there is no prince in Europe, none of the Roman emperors required that men should fall down and kiss their feet ; but yet this subjection doth the Pope require above all princes else. It is a strange thing, that he of all others should arrogate this, which was proper to the kings of the East. None of the emperors or kings of Europe require this of their subjects ; they kneel to them, but never fall down to kiss their feet ; this is the lowest subjection, and this the Pope requireth.

Nay, Doth Jesus Christ set his feet upon his enemies? Doth he make them his footstool? You know the story of a Pope that did it to Frederick the emperor, whom he caused to lie down on the ground, and set his feet upon his neck, and blasphemously used that passage in the psalm, which is meant of Christ, *Calcabis super aspidem et draconem*, &c.,—‘ Thou shalt tread upon the dragon and the serpent, and everything that hurts thee.’

And lastly, that nothing may be wanting, there is but one prerogative of Christ's left. He is over all a Head to the Church. This title doth the Pope arrogate to himself too. My brethren, I will say but one thing to you, as they said to Christ that were sent to know whether he was the Messiah, ‘ Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?’ So, is this he, or do we look for another Antichrist? For my particular, I look for no other.