

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 τῇ 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, [תָּן]. 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 *ἐπὶ 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,' *ἐπὶ 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 τόπῳ.

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-

tinct 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. xliv. 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.

SERMON XXXVI.

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

I DIVIDED these words into these two parts :—

First, *What concerneth our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as a Head* ; he is a head to his Church over all, and he filleth all in all.

Secondly, *What concerneth the Church* ; it is his body, and it is his fulness.

First, Concerning the headship of Christ : I shewed you, that by head here was meant a similitude drawn from the natural head of a man's body. There is a conjugal head, as the husband is the head of the wife. There is a political head, as the supreme magistrate is the head of the commonwealth. But this similitude hath relation to the natural head of the body of man, which is the nearest relation of all others. I opened so much in general in the last discourse. Now I shall shew you more particularly *the relation of headship that Jesus Christ hath to his Church.*

I have often had many discussions with myself, whether that this relation of headship should not import some distinct office from that of king, priest, and prophet, to which three all divines do reduce the offices of Christ. But I have at last resolved my thoughts thus : that this relation of headship doth import all his offices, but with that peculiarness, and with that eminency, as no other relation in Scripture doth. For—

First, to begin with his *kingly office* ; there is this difference between a king and a natural head of a body, that a king ruleth only externally by commands, and by laws, and by proclamations declared ; but the rule of a head is natural. Therefore now, if you reduce it to the kingly office of Christ, it is with an eminency, with a peculiarity. It is our advantage that we are not ruled by Christ as a king simply considered, so far as that similitude will carry it, by external laws revealed, or by way of promises or rewards ; but we are ruled by Christ naturally and inwardly, as the members are ruled by the head, which of all rules is the best and most eminent. So that it noteth out the peculiarity of his kingly office.

Secondly, come to his *prophetical office*. His headship noteth that too, and that with a peculiarity. The head doth not teach the members by outward dictates, or by way of doctrine ; but it doth teach the members by way of impression, a secret impression, carrying them on to do the thing it teacheth. So Jesus Christ, as a head, doth not only teach by way of doctrine, but by efficacy. I need not write unto you, saith he, for you are all taught of God to love one another. And this is the most glorious teaching in the world.

Thirdly, go to his *priestly office*, and his headship importeth that too. There are two parts of his priestly office. There is, first, offering of sacrifice ; secondly, there is intercession, a pleading of that sacrifice before God for us. And of the two, intercession is the most eminent part of the priesthood of

Christ; for that part of his priestly office was resembled by Melchisedec, who, we never read, offered sacrifice, but he blessed Abraham, as Christ doth us from heaven, and now intercedeth for us.

Now, intercession is noted out by headship, for it is natural to the head to speak for the members; the tongue speaks, if speaking will prevent any danger; the head takes care of the members by intercession and by pleading. It noteth out, therefore, his priestly office, and that with an eminency and by a peculiarity.

I might shew likewise how it noteth out his being God and man; but I would finish the chapter at this time, therefore I must cut off many things. Only there is this question, which I know not well how to pass over,—I find it not started by interpreters upon the place, but I find it started by some divines in other discourses of theirs,—and it is this, When it was that Christ began to be Head of his Church? Say they, it was when he did ascend; and the text, say they, is clear for it: for having raised him from the dead, he gave him to be a head over all things to his church, when he had first set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.

To solve this doubt in a word or two:—

In the first place, headship is taken either largely for one that *representeth* another, who is a common person for others. The head, you know, standeth for the whole body; therefore you give the name of the whole man to the head: it is so in all languages. In Latin, *caput* is put for the whole person; so likewise in Greek, the word *κεφαλή* is put for the whole person: so Jesus Christ, being the head, is put for the whole body, as 1 Cor. xii. 12; and as you see oftentimes in princes' coin. Now then, take Christ as he is a common person, a person representative, so he was a head before his incarnation. In election we were all chosen in him as in a common person, standing for us, and undertaking for us, as I shewed when I opened those words, 'chosen in him.' And so, likewise, he was a common person when he was upon earth, and every action of his was capital, as the school-men say; every grace of his was *gratia capitis*. Now, as headship is taken thus for a common person representing another, so I say Christ was a head before his incarnation; and so he was a head while he was upon earth.

But then, secondly, headship importeth *an influence into members*; and that influence is either virtual or actual, as I may so distinguish. It is virtual, as before Christ was incarnate; yet the virtue of his being God-man and a head to his church was it that filled all the saints then as well as now. Therefore he was a 'Lamb slain from the beginning of the world,'—that is, he was considered as such; so he was a head from the beginning of the world, from Adam's fall.

But then there is an actual influence, whereby the Godhead, dwelling in the manhood, doth actually fill all things through his manhood, as the instrument of it: and so he began to fill all things when he ascended; for then the human nature was enlarged to take into his care every member of his church, and to send commission that this soul should be filled with this good thought, and that soul with this; which was not before.—And so I have cleared that thing.

Now, this similitude of a head importeth many things; but I will keep to what the text saith. There are two things imported in the text whereby the headship of Christ is represented to us—

First, He is said to be a Head *in respect of eminency*; and that is plain in the text; he gave him to be 'a head over all.'

Secondly, He is said to be a Head *in respect of influence into his members*;

that is plain in the text too, 'he filleth all in all.' I shall open those words afterward; but only, because the text giveth us hints of these two, I will first speak a little of them.

First, He is a Head *in respect of eminency*. The head, *caput*, is oftentimes put for the *beginning*. Christ is a head in that sense; he is the beginning of his church, he hath that eminency: so Col. i. 18, 'He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.' Here is one eminency. Now, he is the beginning of the church. As Adam was the beginning of the creation, so is Christ of the new creation; he was first in order intended, he was not ordained for us, but we for him; the text is plain for it, for we are 'his fulness.' The head is not ordained so much for the body, as the body for the head. He hath the first in that sense.

He is likewise head in respect of eminency, for he is worth all the body. Oh, my brethren, think what Jesus Christ is! The head of a man is infinitely more worth than his body. Divide them you cannot; but if you could divide them, the head is of more worth than all the body, for all reason, and wisdom, and whatsoever is glorious, all the senses dwell in the head; there is but one sense dwelling in the body,—namely, the sense of touching,—but the perfection of all the senses is in the head, it is the seat of the understanding. All the beauty is in the head; therefore the civil lawyers, in their language, call whatsoever is excellent, *caput*, the head.

All beauty, you know, lieth in the face, and the face and head is all one. You may read, 1 Cor. xi., of uncovering the head, that is, uncovering the face; covering the head is covering the face with a vail, as the custom of those times was. Such a one, my brethren, is Jesus Christ. You see saints, and you see but few of them, and you do not see them in their ruff, in their glory, as they shall be in their robes at the latter day; when you have thoughts of them all, put them all together, what are they? They are but the toes, the fingers, the hands of this head. Christ is worth all this body, and a thousand bodies more, if you could suppose them. In him is all the beauty: for it is said, the glory of God shineth in the face of Jesus Christ,—the face is put for the head,—so 2 Cor. iv. 6.

The image of God appeareth in the head more than in all the body; so it doth in Christ. God is very well pleased when he looks upon the Head, though the members be scabbed, and diseased, and full of humours; but in him I am well pleased, saith he. He is *primum amabile*, that makes the body beautiful in the eyes of God; and he will never leave it till he hath cleansed it, and made it like himself. He is 'fairer than the children of men,' than all the children of men put together, Ps. xlv.

And whereas you will say, All the grace we have Christ hath; but, my brethren, how hath he it? Not as you have it; for the fulness of the God-head dwelleth in him, and dwelleth in him bodily. The body hath all the use of the reason of the head, so that when you see a man do actions, he doth them rationally; as when a man playeth on a lute, it is a rational act, which made one say that the soul is in the fingers' ends: but now he doth these actions by way of participation; it is the soul that guideth all. So we have grace, but it is by participation; the spring of all is in Christ the Head. All the counsel, all the wisdom is in the Head; and he is 'made unto us wisdom,' we have none of ourselves; he is the mighty Counsellor, as you know he is called.—So that he is a Head in respect of eminency, a Head over all, body and all.

Secondly, He is a Head *in respect of influence*; which is imported in these

words, 'he filleth all in all.' He is a Head in respect of influence these three ways : in respect of communicating—

1. Of life.
2. Of motion.
3. Of strength.

First, *All our life is from him; that is, spiritual.* The body indeed liveth a natural life without the head, but it doth not live an animal life, a sensitive life, all that is from the head. You have a natural life from Adam, but all your spiritual life is from the Head, Christ. My brethren, the very bands by which we are united to this head all come from him, as all the nerves and sinews, by which the members are united to the head, spring from the head. You have a plain place for it, Col. ii. 19, speaking of men that did not hold the Head, Christ, by which, saith he, 'all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.' He doth not only communicate all life to us, but he knitteth us to himself; first he apprehendeth us, and then we apprehend him, as in the Epistle to the Philippians.

Secondly, The head you know is *the principle of motion*, as well as the principle of life and union of the members. There is no motion in any little member but it is formed in the head first, and the head, the fancy first formeth it, and then sends the spirits to the toe, and biddeth it move this way or that way; or to the hand, and bids it act this thing or that; and it is more the action of the head than it is of the toe or of the hand. So it is here; all the spiritual actions which you do are from Christ, that 'worketh all in all,' 1 Cor. ii. 6, as he is here said to 'fill all in all.' What a mighty vast comprehensive Head have we, that should think all the good thoughts of every member; that is, give directions that any should think them. He sendeth his Spirit down, who is said to be that same *ἐνέργεια*, that same inward working, Eph. iv. 16; he sendeth his Spirit down, and that works every thing that Christ would have wrought.

I find in some of the school-men, handling Christ's headship, that they would make the Holy Ghost to be the heart, and Christ to be the head; they would follow the similitude so far. But it is an absurd one, for to make the Holy Ghost the heart in this body is indeed to make him a member whereof Christ is the head; he beareth no such part. But what part doth he bear in this body then? He beareth the part of the spirits, that run up and down in the nerves and sinews and blood, which is called the life of a man, that carry all the commissions for actions to be done, and that part indeed the Holy Ghost hath between the head and us.

Now, my brethren, do but think with yourselves what a head Christ is, in respect of motion. Suppose—it is a supposition may be made to illustrate the thing—there were a man as high as that his head were in heaven, and his feet were here upon earth, and his hands stretched all over the world. No sooner did the head that was in heaven think of moving the toe, but it would move in an instant. Even such a one is Christ, he is a head, he hath a part of his body in heaven, he moveth them as he pleaseth; he hath another part on earth here, and he moveth them as he pleaseth too, and he doth it in an instant. He is the principle of all motion. He is the head in that respect.

Thirdly, *He is the fountain of all strength likewise.* All the strength of the body lieth in the spirits. Take away the animal spirits that come from the head, the body is a weak thing; 'it is sown in weakness,' when the spirits are gone, the body dieth. Further than Christ strengtheneth us, we

are all dead ; therefore the Apostle prayeth, Eph. iii. 16, ' that they may be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.' And I am able, saith he, ' to do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.'

And so much for the headship of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He is, first, the fountain of all spiritual life, the uniter of us to himself, the principle of all union is from the head ; he is, secondly, the fountain of all motion ; and, thirdly, of all strength.

The second thing to be considered in Jesus Christ's headship is this, *He is said to be a Head over all* ; ' gave him to be a head over all.'

There are many senses of them, and they are all full of comfort to us. The words note out first, as I said before, an eminency, an excellency, a superexcellency. As Eph. vi. 16, ' Above all things take the shield of faith,' that is the most eminent thing of all the rest ; so Jesus Christ is a head above all. And so it referreth to the gift ; that above all gifts that God hath given him, this is the greatest gift, to be the head of the church. That is one meaning. It was the greatest gift that could be given to Christ to be a head of the church, which is his body ; more than sovereignty over all things else, which he had mentioned before. And it was the greatest gift that could be given to the church, the words will bear either ; *καὶ αὐτὸν ἰδῶκε κεφαλὴν ὑπὲρ πάντα τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ.*

Or else, in the second place, ' he gave him to be a head over all to the church,' hath this sense in it. It noteth out his sovereignty and superiority over all in relation to his church, that God gave him to be a head to the church, who is above all ; and so indeed the Syriac translation readeth it, ' he that is above all, God gave him to be a head to his church.' And this seemeth to be the meaning more properly, for he had set him out before, how he was over all principalities and powers, far above all ; yet he repeateth it again in this, he gave him to be a head over all to his church ; that is, he that was Lord of all, God added this to him, to be a head to the church ; noting out, that none was fit to be a head to the church but he that was over all ; he is over all that belongeth to his church for her good ; over all that are against her to hurt her. And it was needful for the church to have such a head, for we have enough against us ; but who shall be against us if Christ our head be for us ?

There is a third meaning yet, and it is for our comfort. It is this : it hath relation to headship ; that is, above all relations else he gave him to be a head and to act that part. He doth not say, he gave him to be a lord simply, nor a king, nor a brother, but above all these, though he is all these, he is a head. God gave him to be above all things else a loving, and kind, and natural head to his church, which is his body.

Every one of these senses, my brethren, how full of comfort are they ! If you refer ' above all' to gift, ' he gave above all him to be a head ;' how full of comfort is it ! That this should be the greatest gift that ever God gave, Christ to be a head to his church ; and Christ reckoneth it so. Look into John xvii., read over that chapter ; you shall see there, as it is a prayer, so it is a thanksgiving too ; it is an acknowledgment of mercies and benefits given him by his Father. He telleth his Father indeed he had given him glory ; saith he, ver. 1, ' Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee,' ' with the glory which I had with thee before the world was,' ver. 5 ; which, ver. 22, he calleth ' the glory which thou gavest me.' And this indeed Jesus Christ valueth most, therefore he mentioneth it first in ver. 1 ; for his own person being worth more than ours, he hath reason to value his own glory more than all ours ; he should not love himself regularly

else. But next to that, what valueth he? Ver. 2, 'Thou hast given him power over all flesh;' here is his being over all; but to what end? Mark what followeth: 'That he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.' And, ver. 22, 'The glory which thou hast given me I have given them.' So that he useth this power that he hath in order to our salvation. And if you read that chapter, observe it, what is it that Christ mentioneth oftenest in that chapter as the greatest gift? It is the giving of his church to him. He mentioneth it, ver. 6, 'I have manifested thy name to them which thou gavest me; thine they were, and thou gavest them me.' So again, ver. 8, 'I have given thy words to them which thou gavest me, and they have received them;' ver. 9, 'I pray for them which thou hast given me;' ver. 10, 'All mine are thine, and thine are mine;' still he pleadeth his interest in them as by way of gift. So ver 11, 'That those which thou hast given me may be one;' still he mentioneth this as the greatest gift of all the rest which God hath bestowed upon him.

My brethren, Jesus Christ reckoneth his being a head to the church more than all his temporal dominions, more than his being over all things else. What use shall we make of it? In a word thus, let us prize our relation to Christ, seeing Christ prizeth so much his relation to us; he prizeth it more than his being over all things, than his being far above all principalities and powers; let us prize it more than all worldly greatness and riches, or what else soever. Our being members of Christ is more than our being all things, as Christ's being a head to us is more than being Lord of all the world.

And then again, let the Church value this gift of Christ being a head to her, for it beareth that meaning too; there is an emphasis in that word *him*. 'He gave *him* to be a head,' so saith the text. He had set him forth as Solomon in all his royalty, sitting at his Father's right hand over all principalities and powers; 'and he hath given him,' saith he, 'to be a head over all to the church.' What should the church do now? It should go over all the excellencies of Jesus Christ to make her prize the gift of Christ to her as a head. And let me tell you, he hath given him to be a Saviour, the Saviour of his body, but to be a head is the greater, to be a head is an everlasting thing. When sin will be remembered no more, when his priesthood is at end, he will be a head for ever when he hath given up the kingdom to God the Father. It is a peculiar blessing. To which of all the angels hath he said he is a husband to them, or a head to them, as a body? To none of them. It is only to this body, the church, the sons of men.

Oh, my brethren, when you are in heaven and when sin shall be forgotten, —you love him now because he saveth you, justifieth you, and cleanseth you, and you will love him at the latter day because he pronounceth you blessed, forgiveth you all sins, and suffereth you not to enter into condemnation; —but when all these shall be over, what will be the sweetness for ever? That he is your head. 'Above all he gave him to be a head to his church.'

And do you but consider what a head you have. There is I know not how many *alls* in him. In his person there dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; so he saith, Col. ii. 9. In his relation to you he is *all*, and he is *in all*, Col. iii. 11. In his power for you he is *above all*; so saith the text. In his communicating his goodness, 'he filleth all in all;' so saith the text too. He is one that hath all the Godhead; that is all in all, that is above all, that filleth all in all. What would you have more? Here are *alls* enough for you; value this gift, that Jesus Christ is your head.

Last of all; take that other sense, that of all relations else he is above all

a head, performeth that part the best, and nothing is more comfortable to his church. He is not only above all other heads, above husband, above the natural head of the body, puts them all down, they are but shadows to him ; but above all offices belonging to himself he is above all a head to his church. It is as if a wife should say of her husband, He is the best warrior in the world, he is a king, he hath the power and command of all the world, he is wise, he is rich, he is above all in everything, and he hath all sorts of excellencies in him ; but above all he is the best husband in the world, he putteth himself down in that, he acts that part the best. So it is with Jesus Christ ; he is the king of all the world, he is wise, &c. ; but above all he is a head, he excelleth in that above all things else.

I should have made this use of it and pressed it upon you : If he be a head above all, it is fit you should be subject to him in all. 'Wives,' saith he, 'be subject to your husbands, as the church is to Christ.' One would wonder at that, that the church's obedience to Christ should be made the pattern of wives' obedience to their husbands. Certainly it argueth that the church is more naturally, more willingly subject to Christ than wives are to their husbands. Yet let any wife consider, How do I obey Christ ? how do I obey my husband ? But I pass from that.

I have done with the relation of Christ to his church ; he is a head, a head over all to his church. I come now to the office of Jesus Christ to his church imported in these words, 'he filleth all in all.'

First, I must explain to what kind of thing this word *all in all* is restrained or limited.

Secondly, I must explain the phrase of *filling*.

Thirdly, the phrase itself, *all in all*.

First, This word 'all' is not to be extended to all things in the world, though that be true that Christ doth put all the fulness into the creature ; Adam brought an emptiness. But that is not the meaning here. It is to be restrained to his body, to believers, they are the *all* here mentioned. As in Col. iii. 11, Christ is said to be 'all in all,' but what meaneth he ? To his church ; 'There is neither Greek nor Jew,' saith he, speaking of the new creature in the words before, 'Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free ; but Christ is all in all,' namely, in his saints, be they what they will. So, Eph. iv. 10, 11, it is said he filleth all things, but by 'all things' there is meant his saints, his church, as it followeth, 'He gave some to be apostles, &c., for the edifying of the body of Christ.'

Secondly, For the phrase *filling* ; to open that, 'he filleth all in all.' It is Christ's work in heaven, my brethren. 'He ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things,' saith the Apostle in Eph. iv. 10. He gave him to sit at his own right hand, that he might fill all things, saith the text.

It implieth, first of all, *an emptiness in us* that are filled by him. Not only a real emptiness, that we have nothing in ourselves ; 'without me,' saith he, 'ye can do nothing ;' we are but valleys, 'every valley must be filled,' Luke iii. 5. But he filleth only those that have a sensible emptiness, that have a feeling of their own wants : 'He filleth the hungry with good things,' Luke i. 53. Hunger is not only a real emptiness, but hunger is a sensible emptiness.

My brethren, the church, take all the saints in heaven and in earth, they are all empty things without Jesus Christ. We are not able to think a good thought, we are all but mere empty vessels brought to a conduit pipe to be filled ; we have not a drop of good, not so much as one good thought, further than Jesus Christ filleth us. This is the glory of our Head.

Secondly, consider *what he filleth us with*. He filleth us with his Spirit. Read from Luke i. 15, to the end of the Revelation, you shall find that phrase used many a time. They were filled with the Holy Ghost, filled with him as with wine, Eph. v. 18; 'filled with the fruits of righteousness,' Phil. i. 11; 'filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,' Col. i. 9; 'filled with joy,' Acts xiii. 52. And if this be not enough, you shall be 'filled with all the fulness of God' one day, and a little of God will fill you, Eph. iii. 19.

But thirdly, *How is it that Christ filleth his Church?*

He doth it two ways.

He filleth them first *meritoriously*, by what he did here upon earth; he purchased power and grace to fill them with these. For, my brethren, you must know this, that Christ doth nothing for us but he himself had something in him proportionable that might merit why it should be done. Doth he make us rich? He was first poor. Doth he fill us? Himself was first empty, so saith Phil. ii. 7. It is said there, 'he emptied himself;' so the words *ἐκένωσε* signify.

Then again he filleth *efficiently*, and that while he is in heaven. He sendeth down the Holy Ghost, and he works all; the manhood doth it instrumentally, the Godhead doth it virtually. The fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in him, and runneth, overfloweth through the human nature as the instrument of it, and filleth all in all.—And so much now for his filling.

Thirdly, I come now to the phrase, *filleth all in all*. There are two things in that to be considered distinctly.

First, Here is *an all which is filled*.

Secondly, Here is *all with which it is filled*.

First, He filleth all, that is, as I said before, *all saints*, all the members of his body. And that importeth these particulars:—

First, It importeth that he filleth *every saint*; there is not one but he filleth. There is not a saint, my brethren, but hath a measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, which God hath appointed him to have, and Christ filleth him top full before he hath done, he leaveth not one saint out. We are all vessels, 'vessels of mercy,' that are to be filled; and you may read Eph. iii. of a sea of love, a sea that knoweth neither shore nor bottom. 'That ye may be able to comprehend,' saith he, 'what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth,' of what? 'Of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled,' saith he, 'with all the fulness of God.' Every saint shall be thus filled one day, thrown into that sea of the love of God, and Jesus Christ, and of the knowledge of him, and take in all that he can hold; he shall be filled top full according to his measure.

Secondly, This word 'all' importeth *all sorts of saints*, that both Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, men and women, shall all be filled. Thus you find the word 'all in all' used, Col. iii. 11, 'There is nether Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all these.'

Then, thirdly, he filleth all, that is, *all the powers and faculties*, both of body and soul, that are in every one of these members. Thou hast an understanding, a memory, a will, a fancy, thou hast outward senses, thou hast a body; Jesus Christ will fill every one of these top full. He will empty thee of every one of thine own thoughts before he hath done. He will fill thine understanding with none but his own thoughts, top full; thou shalt think no thoughts but what Christ himself thinketh. He will fill thy will, thou shalt have no desires, no affections, but what Jesus Christ hath; he

will fill thee with all his own joy, with all his own delights, with all the pleasures himself hath at God's right hand. I tell you, my brethren, he will turn a man's self out of doors, and fill a man's self with himself, that as the iron that is red hot, all the pores of it are filled with heat, there is nothing but iron and fire, so at last there will be nothing but Jesus Christ and the man. As the cloud filled the temple, so will he fill your bodies and make them temples of the Holy Ghost; he will glorify you with the same glory that he himself hath; he will fill all parts in a man at last.

Secondly, He will fill all in all. I have shewed you what *all* is to be filled, Now then, what is the *all* with which he will fill *all*? He will fill you with all sorts of graces, he will fill the whole with all sorts of gifts, so the word is taken, 1 Cor. xii. 6: 'God worketh,' saith he, 'all in all.' It is not that every one hath all gifts, but take the whole body, and amongst them they have all. He worketh in the eye, and filleth that, and he filleth the hand as a hand, according to the use of every part. So that put all together, and he is all in all, and so in this life, and in the world to come it is said, God will be all in all, 1 Cor. xv. 28.

So much now for that head likewise; 'he filleth all in all.' And so now I have done with Christ's part, wherein he is said to be a Head over all, filling all in all.

Now then, will you come to *the Church's relation*? The church, saith he, which is 'his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.' You see that in Jesus Christ's relation there were two things. There was, first, his *headship*; there was, secondly, his *office*, filling all in all. Now if you come to the church's relation, she hath something to answer both. Answerable to his headship, she is called his body; 'which is his body.' Answerable to his filling all in all, she is called his fulness.

In my last discourse I handled what was meant by the word *church*. There was a necessity that lay upon me to open that distinction of church, universal and particular. I gave you two cautions about two errors concerning each of these, both toward the church universal and toward particular churches. Concerning which I must necessarily say something to take away some mistakes and misapprehensions of meaning; for I walk by this rule, to give no offence to Jew or Gentile, or to the churches of God, as the Apostle speaks.

The first error, I told you, was of the Donatists of old, who denied the Church Catholic, and restrained it to one part of the world; and yet the imputation of this error lieth upon those whom you call Brownists to this day. This I cleared them from, and it is as great a clearing as can be.

The second error was of those who hold particular churches—those you call parish churches—to be no true churches of Christ, and their ministers to be no true ministers, and upon that ground forbear all church-communion with them, in hearing or in any other ordinance. And as I acquitted these from that other error, so I acquitted myself from this, and my brethren in the ministry. I would not now have touched upon it again, but, as I said, to clear, not myself so much, as some mistakes about it.

The first is this: it was understood as if I said that all parish churches and ministers generally were churches and ministers of Christ, such as with whom communion might be held. I said not so. I was wary in my expressions. I will only say this unto you about it. There is no man that desireth reformation in this kingdom,—as the generality of all godly people do,—but will acknowledge and say, that multitude of parishes, where ignorance and profaneness overwhelm the generality, scandalousness and simony

the ministers themselves ; that these are not churches and ministers fit to be held communion with. Only this, the ordinances that have been administered by them, so far we must acknowledge them, that they are not to be recalled or repeated again.

But here lieth the question, my brethren, and my meaning. Whereas now in some of the parishes in this kingdom, there are many godly men that do constantly give themselves up to the worship of God in public, and meet together in one place to that end, in a constant way, under a godly minister, whom they themselves have chosen to cleave to,—though they did not choose him at first,—these, notwithstanding their mixture and want of discipline, I never thought, for my part, but that they were true churches of Christ, and sister churches, and so ought to be acknowledged. And the contrary was the error that I spake against.

Secondly, for holding communion with them. I say, as sister churches, occasionally as strangers, men might hold communion with them. And it is acknowledged by all divines, that there is not that obligation lying upon a stranger, that is not a member of a sister church, to find fault in that church, or in a member of it, as doth on the church itself to which one belongeth.

I will give you my reasons that moved me to speak so much. It was not simply to vent my own judgment, or simply to clear myself from that error ; but the reasons, or rather the motives and considerations, that stirred me in it were these :—

First, if we should not acknowledge these churches, thus stated, to be true churches of Christ, and their ministers true ministers, and their order such, and hold communion with them too in the sense spoken of, we must acknowledge no church in all the Reformed Churches ; none of all the Churches in Scotland, nor in Holland, nor in Germany ; for they are all as full of mixture as ours. And to deny that to our own churches, which we do not to the churches abroad, nothing can be more absurd. And it will be very hard to think that there hath been no church since the Reformation.

Secondly, I know nothing tendeth more to the peaceable reformation amongst us, than to break down this partition wall ; for there is nothing provokes more than this doth, to deny such churches to be true churches of Christ. For do but think with yourselves, and I will give you a familiar example. You come to a man whom you think to be a godly man ; you tell him he hath these and these sins in him, and they are great ones ; it is as much as he can bear, though you tell him he is a saint, and acknowledge him so. But if you come to him, and say, besides this, You are a limb of the devil, and you have no grace in you ; this provokes all in a man, when there is any ground in himself to think so, or in another to judge him so. So it is here ; come to churches and say, You have these defects amongst you, and these things to be reformed ; but if you will come, and say, Your churches and your ministers are antichristian, and come from Babylon, there is nothing provokes more. Therefore, if there be a truth in it, as I believe there is, men should be zealous to express it ; for this is the great partition wall that hindereth of twain making one.

Then again, this is that which I consider, and it is a great consideration also. I know that Jesus Christ hath given his people light in matters of this nature by degrees. Thousands of good souls that have been bred up and born in our assemblies, and enjoy the ordinances of God, and have done it comfortably, cannot suddenly take in other principles ; you must wait upon Christ to do it.

In this case men are not to be wrought off by falsehoods, God hath no need of them. No, rather, till men do take in light, you should give them all that is comfortable in the condition they are in; we should acknowledge every good thing in every man, in every church, in every thing, and that is a way to work upon men, and to prevail with them; as it is Philem. 6, 'That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.' It is that which buildeth men up, by acknowledgment of every good thing that is in them.

Lastly, the last inconvenience is this: it doth deprive men of all those gifts that are found amongst our ministers, and in this kingdom, that they cannot hold any communion or fellowship with them. So that I profess myself as zealous in this point as in any other I know. And, for my part, this I say, and I say it with much integrity, I never yet took up religion by parties in the lump; I have found by trial of things that there is some truth on all sides. I have found holiness where you would little think it, and so likewise truth; and I have learned this principle, which I hope I shall never lay down till I am swallowed up of immortality, and that is that which I said before, to acknowledge every good thing, and hold communion with it, in men, in churches, or whatsoever else. I learn this from Paul, I learn this from Jesus Christ himself, he 'fillet all in all;' he is in the hearts of his people, and fillet them in his ordinances to this day; and where Jesus Christ fillet, why should we deny an acknowledgment, and a right hand of fellowship and communion?

My brethren, this rule that I have now mentioned, which I profess I have lived by, and shall do while I live, I know I shall never please men in it. Why? It is plain, for this is the nature and condition of all mankind; if a man dissents from others in one thing, he loseth them in all the rest; and therefore if a man do take what is good of all sides, he is apt to lose them all, but he pleaseth Christ by it, and so I will for this particular.

I come now to 'his body' and his 'fulness.'

First, It is said to be *his body*.

Secondly, It is said to be *his fulness*. I shall speak to both.

Our Saviour Christ's body is either taken for his *natural body*, which he weareth in heaven now and was laid in the grave, or it is taken for his *mystical body*, namely his saints. Concerning this distinction I will add but this: That what Christ did to his natural body, that he doth to his mystical body, to conform them to him.

Again, for a second distinction, our Lord and Saviour Christ hath a *sacramental body*. Saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. xi. 24, speaking of the bread, 'This is my body, which was broken for you.' And he hath a *ministerial body*, which is an assembly of his children incorporated to enjoy ordinances. 1 Cor. x. 17, speaking of the church of Corinth, 'You,' saith he, 'are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.' This is a ministerial body to Christ. As he hath a universal church, a mystical body, whereof only his saints are members, so he hath a ministerial body, which is his ordinance, which are saints incorporated and made one, either really or verbally; really, by eating that one bread, as the Apostle saith.

Now to leave these distinctions; only I will give you one observation upon the last distinction, as I did upon the former. There is a sacramental body, that is, the bread which is broken. There is a ministerial body, which is the ordinance of church-fellowship. Here you see the same thing said of saints that is said of the sacrament. It is said of the saints, 'which are his body;' there is no more said of the bread in the sacrament, which is

his body. Yet the Pope and the Papists give more reverence to the sacramental bread,—and that bread, they say, because it hath the appellation of *body*, must needs be transubstantiated,—to the sacramental body of Christ, than they do to the mystical body. As of old,—it was an argument used long before the Reformation in England,—they do give more reverence to images of Christ than they do to the image of Christ in men's hearts, than they do to saints; so now they give more reverence to the sacramental body of Christ—and both these errors are correspondent and proportionable—than they do to the mystical body.—And so much for those two distinctions.

Now, why doth this come in, 'which is his body?'

It cometh in upon a twofold consideration—

First, To shew the nearness of the relation that Jesus Christ hath to his Church, and his Church hath to him. He is not a head only as a ruler, but he is a head as a natural head to a body; he is so a head to his church, which is his body.

Secondly, To shew that he is affected to them, to the saints, as the head is to the body.

I might handle many things here concerning the church's being a body to Christ wherein the similitude holdeth, but I shall not be able to do that and despatch what I am yet to do. I shall only make this use of it: That a body and the members of it are united one to another by the nearest union, by a union of sense; so saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. xii. 12, 'As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.' Here is a union. And the inference of the Apostle from thence is this, ver. 25, 'That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one of another; and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it.' This is the inference the Apostle makes of the church's being a body.

Now let me make but an observation upon the former distinction mentioned. I told you there is a sacramental body of Christ; 'This is my body.' And there is a ministerial body of Christ; you are 'one body, for you are partakers of that one bread.' My brethren, it is strange to see and to consider how that these two have made the greatest divisions in the world. Those things that are for communion—for Christ hath appointed church-fellowship for communion; he hath appointed the sacrament for the communion of his body; you shall be one body, saith the Apostle, by it; 'Ye are one bread and one body; for ye are all partakers of one bread,' 1 Cor. x. 17—are that which hath caused the schism of the body, as I may so express it in the Apostle's words. For what hath bred the greatest difference between the Papists and us of all other points? It is, 'This is my body.' It was that chiefly about which all the martyrs suffered. Amongst the Protestants, what hath made the greatest dissension between the Lutherans and the Calvinists? It is, 'This is my body.' There is, though not a transubstantiation, yet a consubstantiation—he is in and with the bread; so the Lutherans hold. Amongst ourselves, what hath been the great division? Still though not about the sacramental body, yet about the ministerial body of Christ, church-fellowship. The body of Christ hath been the occasion of the rending of the body of Christ. As the dispute was about the body of Moses, so are the disputes about the body of Christ. My brethren, if you cannot agree in judgment, yet agree in heart. Let me but mind you of the relation you bear to Christ; remember you are his body, and there should be no schism in the body; and there would be no schism if you did not judge one another for these things. Though you are of different minds,

here is no schism, for this will be while the saints are upon the earth ; but the schism is in judging one another, in not being at peace because you differ in judgment.

Let me say to godly men, agree ; you are the body of Christ, remember that ; let your mystical relation to Christ, that mystically you are his body, prevail over all considerations whatsoever. It is the strongest tie in the world. Shall I prophesy unto you ? Either agree, or God will make you agree ; either with the sword, or with fire and fagot. And let me edge it with this a little, ‘ which is his body.’ Oh, my brethren, this word, *his body*, is a sweet word. You are not only a body among yourselves, but consider whose body you are, you are the body of Christ, *his body* ; the body which he owneth, which he filleth, which is more his body than yours ; and if you will do nothing out of love one to another as becometh saints, yet do it out of love unto him.

I will add this : this word *his* is added also to shew that it is the relation this body beareth to Christ that giveth the excellency to it. This body would have no beauty, no excellency in it if this head stood not on it. ‘ The church, which is his body.’—So I pass from that.

I have nothing now remaining, but only this last point, *which is his fulness*. He beareth the relation of head, she of body : he performeth the office of filling her ; she performeth this to him, she is his fulness.

These words, ‘ his fulness,’ are either taken actively or passively. If you take them actively, they refer to Christ, and then the meaning is this, that *he filleth her*. If you take them passively, *she is his fulness*. I cannot stand to shew you how the word is taken in both senses, either for that which filleth, or that which is filled. I pitch rather upon that which this translation holdeth forth, viz., that this body is said to be Christ’s fulness.

Why doth the Holy Ghost add this ? He doth not content himself to say, that Christ is the Head of the Church, which is his body, but he must needs bring in this, that she is *his fulness*.

He mentioneth it, my brethren, as an honour to his church, that she is such a body to him, as that though he be a head that filleth her, yet he is not complete without her. He would shew that Christ needs her not, therefore he saith he filleth her ; he ‘ filleth all in all :’ and yet because he is in some sense imperfect without her, she is as an ornament to him, therefore he addeth she is his fulness ; ‘ the fulness of him that filleth all in all.’

Now she is called the fulness of Christ in the same sense that it is said, 2 Cor. xii. 9, ‘ My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ What, is not God’s power perfect without our weakness ? Yes, it is perfect in itself ; but it is said to be made perfect, because it is declared to be perfect in weakness. So when the church is said to be Christ’s fulness, what, is not he full without her ? Yes, for he ‘ filleth all in all ;’ yet his fulness she is, and she setteth off his fulness, because she serveth as an empty vessel for him to fill, and to shew his fulness in ; that he is not full only in himself personally, but that he hath enough overflowing to fill all his body, to fill all in all.

Now then to open this, Jesus Christ hath a *threefold fulness*—

He hath, first, a *personal fulness* ; the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth personally in him, so Col. ii. 9.

He hath, secondly, a *dispensatory fulness*, mentioned here in the text ; he filleth all in all. ‘ Of his fulness we all receive grace for grace.’

Then, thirdly, he hath a *relative fulness*, which ariseth from a relation to his church. He is the head, and the church is his body. And, as if you would make a man, you must not only have a head, but you must have a

body too, or it is not a perfect man : so if you would make up Christ,—take Christ mystically,—you must not only have the person of Christ, but there must be a body too ; and so there ariseth a perfect full stature of Christ, as the Apostle calleth it, 1 Cor. xii. 12.

Now, my brethren, when, and how, doth the church become the fulness of Christ ?

It becometh his fulness by these three things—

First, when Jesus Christ hath every saint brought to him, and gathered about him, united to him, and all joined in one with him, every saint that God hath given him. If there were one saint wanting, Jesus Christ should not be full. Mark what I say to you, if there were this joint of the little finger cut off, this body of mine would be imperfect : so if Jesus Christ should want but one of his members,—the joint of the little toe, as I may so express it,—the least saint, (comfort thyself,) Jesus Christ should not be full ; thou makest up Christ's fulness.

Secondly, the church is then said to be his fulness, when she shall have all variety of all gifts and graces dispersed amongst them. As now, take the members of a man's body, there is not a member but hath its use, there are variety of uses for the several members ; put them all together, and there is a completeness for all sorts of uses the body needeth. So it is here. Take all the saints together at the latter day, and there will be nothing wanting of grace, or of any measure of gifts, that is needful for glory, and excellency, and ornament.

Thirdly, to make up this fulness of his body yet more complete ; as there must be all the members, not one wanting ; as there must be all variety of uses that members serve for, none lame or imperfect : so likewise there must be a fulness of growth to a stature, to a proportion, or else the body is not full. For example ; if this hand of mine, or this little finger were writen shorter in its proportion, if it did not grow to the full measure of the proportion of a little finger, there would be an uncomeliness and a disproportion, the body would not be full. So it is in the body of Christ ; therefore to make up this fulness so much the more, you read, Eph. iv., that the Apostle, in the 10th verse, having said that he filleth all in all, saith, ver. 15, that the saints are to 'grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ ;' and, ver. 13, 'till they all come to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' To open these words a little :—

The fulness of Christ lieth not only in having every member, but every member growing up to a full stature that God hath appointed him. You see some little saints, and you see some great saints ; there are saints great and small, as they are called in the Revelation. You wonder at this disproportion. Now mark ; when you come at the latter day, and all the saints are round about Jesus Christ, you will find a perfect body ; you will say, if this saint had grown anything more, he had not stood well among his fellows ; if this saint had been anything less, there had not been a fulness. They are all to grow up to the fulness of the stature of Christ.

Why is it called the fulness of the stature of Christ, and not of the body ? Because the fulness of the body is in the fulness of the head, therefore he rather calls it the fulness of Christ than of the body.

The corollaries from thence are in a word these :—

Is the body the fulness of Christ, and so his fulness, that he will have every part, every member ? *Here is then a certainty of salvation.* A man may lose his clothes, and suffer them to be taken from him ; but if he can help it, he will never lose his members. My brethren, Christ will never lose

his members ; ‘ My Father,’ saith he, ‘ is greater than I, and none shall pluck them out of my Father’s hand.’ But if his sheep were his very hands themselves, to be sure he would not suffer them to be pulled off ; they are not only his sheep, but his members ; they are not only in his hands, but his hands and his feet ; they are the members of his body, yea, they are his fulness.

Secondly, Learn from hence this : *Thou shalt certainly have thy measure in the growth of grace.* Thou art humbled in thyself because thou growest not according to the means ; that which God hath appointed thee to, thou shalt, either by afflictions, or by the word, attain to that stature ; for the members of Jesus Christ are all written in God’s book, and the stature that they are all ordained unto, that when they are all met the body may be full. That doctrine is not true that telleth us that Christ might have died and been in heaven to want a body ; for you see it is his fulness, he cannot want so much as one member but he had been imperfect.

I will give you but some observations, and so end.

First, See the love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He might have taken all the glory and honour to himself here ; the Holy Ghost might only have said, He is the head of the church, which is his body, that filleth all in all ; but he would needs put in that is his fulness, ‘ the fulness of him that filleth all in all.’ He would not take all the honour to himself, he would give her her due ; his body, saith he, which is his fulness. Certain it is, my brethren, that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ accounteth you his fulness. Doth he see a soul converted to God ? It is a part of my fulness, saith he ; his joy is full by it. Doth he see you get a little grace at a sermon ? Here is one step more to my fulness, saith he. He needed not anybody, he was perfectly glorious in himself ; but he hath taken upon him such a relation as he were imperfect without a body, he standeth in need of a body. What saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. xii. 21 ? ‘ The head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of thee.’ Jesus Christ, though a head, cannot say to the least saint, I have no need of thee. It was his love to enter into this relation. And learn from hence to give everything his due praise ; you see here, though the Apostle saith that Christ filleth all in all, yet he giveth the church her due praise ; he mingleth that with his. Christ filleth all, yet the church serveth for him to empty himself into.

Secondly, Is every degree of grace in a saint a part of Christ’s fulness ? Doth it add to his fulness ? Is the addition of every member a part of his fulness ? Then conversion of souls, adding grace into the hearts of men, is the best work in the world, for it is an adding to Christ’s fulness ; and what can be a greater work ? It is not only doing good to a poor soul, though that would move one ; it is the motive that James useth : ‘ He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death,’ he pulleth him out of the fire ; but besides this, he addeth to Christ’s fulness, which is the highest motive that can be. That as the apostle Paul saith, that it moved him to take all that pains he did, to suffer persecutions for preaching of the gospel, and to be glad of it too ; I bear, saith he, the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body’s sake ; this was Paul’s motive : but here is a higher motive ; here is not to do it for his body’s sake only, but for Christ’s, to make up his fulness. If there were a piece of work, a statue that were to last to eternity, would not all the cunning artists in the world be glad to have a hand in carving but a finger in that statue ? My brethren, to build up the saints, to joint in the saints to Christ, is to add to the fulness of Christ. The work of the ministry is the best work in the world ; God had but one Son in the world, and he made him a minister.

Thirdly, What a glorious sight, my brethren, what a glorious meeting will there be at the latter day, when Jesus Christ shall have all his fulness, all his body fully and perfectly united to him in all their glory, perfectly cleansed, not a member wanting, and all grown to their full stature ! To see the man Christ, as I may so call him, that perfect man the Apostle telleth us of, Eph. iv. 13, and in 1 Cor. xii. 12,—that is, Christ and all his members making one perfect man, he the head and they the body,—there was never such a sight as this ; not only to see this head crowned with all glory and honour, sitting at God's right hand, and having all things under his feet ; and how beautiful will that head be to behold ! Our Lord and Saviour Christ is more worth than all this body, when it hath all her graces, and all her perfections ; and the least member of this body is more worth than all the world, let me tell you that too ; but when you have viewed the head, to view every member limb by limb, to see all the beauty and perfection of every part, when there shall not be a saint wanting, nor a degree of grace wanting, but a body proportionable to this head ; the head being so excellent, if he had not a body suitable he were deformed. Christ's beauty, my brethren, will add to the beauty of this body ; and the beauty of this body, put all together, will set off the beauty of the head. How doth our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ himself long for this day, when he shall be full, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, as the Apostle saith, 2 Thess. i. 10.

My brethren, if you had heard of a piece of work that all the cunning carvers in the world had been about these six thousand years, and it had been wrought limb by limb, and all the Bezaleels in the world, filled with the Holy Ghost, had been carving of it, and this piece had not been complete and put together, as you know in working arras there are many pieces put together to make the picture of a man ; if you heard of such a piece of work, what mighty, what infinite expectation would you have ! Let me tell you this, that this body of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ hath been carving and working by all the prophets, and apostles, and ministers, by all the Bezaleels of the world, filled with the Holy Ghost, to this day, limb by limb ; and, as the Psalmist saith, 'I am wonderfully and fearfully made in the lower parts of the earth,' God hath wrought it in the lower parts of the earth, as he did his body in the womb. When all these shall be brought together, and Christ the Head set upon them, then view them all together, what a sight will it be ! Oh, but let me say one thing more. What will it be to be a member of this body, though but the little toe, though but the least part of it, to be one that shall go to make up the fulness of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ !

So I have done with this text, and thus likewise I have, together with this chapter, finished that course of this exercise which I undertook at first ; and I have so done it, as I am not conscious to myself of having offended any.