

become his Father, and it is in his paternal tenderness that he places all his confidence at the hour of death. For this reason *he committed his spirit into his hands*. What more certain or faithful depositary than a Father, and particularly when the soul of his Son is confided to his care? His Father therefore eagerly received this beloved soul, he carefully preserved it, and faithfully restored it at the appointed time, that is, on the day of his resurrection, by reuniting it to his body, to be never more separated from it.

It is thus the literal sense of this word is explained by the holy fathers and interpreters. St. Athanasius adds this simple but so admirable reflection that it is impossible to read it without experiencing the most delicious emotions. "When Jesus says on the cross, *Father into thy hands I commend my spirit*, we must behold in this spirit all men whom he has committed with himself to the bosom of his Father, and whom he commends to him that they may be vivified by and in this *spirit*. For we are his members, and this multitude of members that we are, form but one *body*, which is the church. It is therefore the entire faithful whom he recommends to God with his own soul."—Thus the great work of redemption is entirely achieved, and the Son of the Most High commits himself into the hands of his Father, because it was for him he had laboured, as if he said to him, 'Father, you have desired me to come and purify the world from its crimes. I have come and I have cleansed it in my blood. Receive me now and see whether the work I have performed be well done, whether the children of my redemption, being now cleansed in my purity, be worthy of you; accept them

and preserve them for ever in your love.'

O last word of Jesus! sweet word which it is impossible to call to mind without remembering the death and the divine love of our Saviour! Christians! let us imprint it on our memory and precious guard it as the monument of our deliverance, the foundation of our joy and hope during life, and as a pledge of peace and confidence at the hour of death. It was thus the church and the saints considered it. The church recites it daily in her office, when at the close of day, and of her prayer, she wishes to reveal to our mind, the termination of our life, and the moment when we shall pray to God for the last time. She particularly loves to recite it and to bring it to the recollection of God himself, when she recommends to him the soul of one of her expiring children. A St. Basil, a St. Lewis, and many other saints pronounced it when dying, and they were consoled in death. We should in imitation of their example pronounce it with our last breath.

You accept, O Lord, this last word, and this last sigh of your Son. In hearing his prayer, you have heard ours by anticipation, and accepted the deposit of our souls, by accepting the care of his. By raising him up on the third day, you have also by anticipation raised us. Accept beforehand likewise, the humble, but cordial tribute of our gratitude. We shall be more grateful, and have a better knowledge of your tender mercies, O Lord, in your glorious eternity.

We have already observed, as a remarkable circumstance in this LAST WORD, of the Man-God, that it was uttered with a loud cry, as the FOURTH. St. Luke assures us of this in express