

## **DAY 37.**

*Jesus gave up the Spirit.*

AFTER our Lord Jesus had uttered the word mentioned before, He bowed His head and gave up the spirit. He bowed His head first to His Mother, and then to all men, as if to bid a last farewell; as if to ask His Mother's leave to pass away, and to give both to her and to all men the kiss of peace. Observe here, O faithful soul, the unutterable love of your God, how He loved us even to the end. See how, when all power of speech has been taken from Him, and while His life is ebbing away, and death is already in possession of all His members, nevertheless the latter, so far as they could, gave forth signs of love. See here the true Jacob blessing His children with outstretched arms, and gathering up His feet upon the bed of the Cross, as He passed away to the Father. Behold Christ's gracious members now dead, yet still showing us the same love and good will as when alive! His arms remain extended to embrace us; His eyes cast down to look upon us; His head bowed low to kiss us; His wounds open and gaping, that we may enter in and take refuge in it; His head also, which before He had lifted up to His Father, while offering Himself to Him with tears, He now bent down to us in love, as a most welcome messenger of our reconciliation with the Father, and in order to give us the kiss of peace as a sign of atonement.

He bowed His head towards the earth, and turned away from the glorious title of the Cross, to show us how little He valued all glory and honor, and that He desired to close His life in all abject and lowly poverty, and that He allowed nothing of this world to cling to Him. Thus, at the very end of His life, He taught us that whenever we are honored or praised by men, we ought to bow ourselves down to the earth, by making ourselves of no account, and by saying within ourselves: "Why are you proud, O dust and ashes?"

Thus, then, Life died upon the Cross, that He might give to us from the tree of the Cross the fruit of life. Thus was this most excellent ransom paid for us, and all our debts canceled. And with the same faithfulness with which He had carried out His Father's embassy, and finished it, He returned to His Father, commending His Spirit into His hands; as if He would say: "For Me, O loving Father, You have cast away the debts of all men, and for Your honor I have gladly taken them upon Myself. I was made an exile from My kingdom; I have been sold as a slave in foreign parts; I have become a prisoner, and despised, and wounded, and I have been put to a shameful death. I have allowed Your anger to take vengeance on Me, that, appeased by My agony and sorrow, You might take man back into Your favor. I have satisfied the requirements of Your love and justice, and the prayer of mercy I have fulfilled. I have exposed My whole self, and offered it—to You My will, to the Jews My Body, to sinners My Blood, to the executioners My garments, to My disciple My most loving Mother: and now I have nothing left, save My afflicted, and burdened, and care-worn spirit. Indeed, there is no place under heaven worthy of Me, except the heart of My tender and sorrowing Mother; yet she, too, is overwhelmed by so much anguish and distress, that she can bear it no more; and truly My afflicted spirit is rather a trouble and a burden to her, than a comfort. Therefore I fly to You, for the torrent of Your divine consolation can alone swallow up My sorrow and sadness, and now I commend My careworn spirit into Your hands. Enough, and more than enough, O most gracious Father, You have made known Your anger against Me, and inflicted on Me grievous sweat and labor in the work of others. You have required of Me the payment of a debt which I had not contracted, and You have left Me alone in My grievous torments. Now, then, at last, after You have chastised Your only Son, be mindful of mercy, open to Me Your Fatherly Heart, and receive My Spirit."