

that no one had ever spoken as "this Man". His hands cured the leprous, His fingers touched the ear of the deaf, and hearing was restored. His eyes converted Peter, His saliva restored sight to the man born blind, the touch of His garment was sufficient to cure the most inveterate maladies. Yes Jesus Christ was, indeed, the green and fruitful tree, *par excellence*.

The sinner, on the contrary, is dry wood, the sterile tree, dead, useless, all whose acts are dead, vitiated from the root. If, then, the innocent is treated in so grievous a manner, what will it be with the sinner? If the fire of divine justice burns and destroys so actively a tree so green, so fruitful, so laden with flowers and fruits, what will become of the dry, sterile, dead, useless, good only to be cast into the fire? The Romans, in fact, came. Their battle-axes hewed down Israel as a dead trunk is hewn down, and they cast it into the fire.

Who, then, is the Man who, upon the point of death, speaks with such authority? Up to this time Jesus had kept silence. Like a lamb, He had opposed no complaint to the outrages of His executioners. But at this moment He stops short, imposes silence and, in a firm, strong voice, like a teacher and master, He gives His last instructions. The cortege could not resume its march toward Calvary's height until He had finished speaking. It is because this Man is God. As a master He governs human wills. He knows how to impose His orders as well upon multitudes as upon individuals.

## II — THANKSGIVING

*Jesus, turning toward them said. . . .*" One glance from Jesus is a grace, one word from Jesus, were it even apparently severe, is a greater favor still. Every gift is a part of His Heart. And whether He afflicts, or whether He consoles, He always seeks the greater good of His creature.

And here, what language! He forgets Himself to think only of the woes that are shortly to fall upon the deicide people. Doubtless, in a certain sense, Jesus is not to be pitied, His fate is not to be deplored. He is accomplishing at this moment the great work of the Redemption of the world. He is expiating sin, He is rendering to God His Father infinite honor and satisfying His justice in full. He Himself by His