

## ROD OF JESSE

denies it a third time and the cock crows.

Elsewhere the High Priest's questioning of Jesus, which is not to be understood as taking place in sight of Peter, takes a very different turn. *Nothing will be said of the Christ in this examination.* It would be contrary to the open revelation which is made of Jesus in this Gospel to make his self-disclosure now a basis for judgment. Nor has he opportunity to speak of the Son of Man coming with the clouds of Heaven. That vivid imagination belongs to a primitive idea of Judgment Day which John has replaced, as we noted once before, by having Jesus say:

'Now is the Judgment of this world, now shall the Ruler of this world be cast out; and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.' (John 12,31.)

It is too much to speak of a Jewish trial in John. There is no trial. There are no false witnesses: none are required. And the Sanhedrin is not to be found. Our Fourth Evangelist, again with greater skill, evades the whole difficulty of the improbable gathering of the Sanhedrin at such a time because that august body had effectively condemned Jesus after the Raising of Lazarus. (John 11,49.) So Annas will question him now about his teaching and his disciples, and Jesus says in reply, 'I have spoken openly to the world...' – words which might serve as a motto for the way in which the farewell discourses and prayers are designed to involve us.

I have said nothing secretly. Why ask me? Ask those who have heard me. They know what I said.

This is an insolent answer if we conceive of Jesus historically as a bound prisoner and a man in trouble, but the real audacity here is the Evangelist's. We must not forget his cunning. John's verisimilitude gives us no literary photography. He speaks to the mind and his focus is on Jesus' words replying to the High Priest but laying claim to the believer's assent. One of the servants strikes him: 'Is that how you answer the High Priest?' Jesus makes a short defense of his answer and is sent on to Caiaphas, still bound.

John has learned from his predecessors. We have in the haughty reply a hint of Luke's defiant Jesus when he says to the Sanhedrin, 'If I tell you, you will not believe me.' That may have given him a clue. And we have in the shocking blow received – a blow delivered by the hand, John says, and I suppose to the face – the same effective proof of a bodily presence which Mark achieves by his skillful use of Jesus' touch or by his saying that Jesus' own people went out to