

The Fourth Gospel



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150

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The Fourth Gospel

The Gospel History and Its Transmission

F. C. Burkitt



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VII.

THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

Nam dicere ut est quis potest? audeo dicere, fratres mei, forsitan nec ipse Johannes dixit ut est, sed et ipse ut potuit.

S. AUGUSTINE, *in Joh.* i.

WE come now to consider the Fourth Gospel, the Gospel according to John. And before we begin our investigation we shall, I think, do well to remember the immense influence which this work has had for century after century. No work could hold so great a place before the world so long, without intrinsic merit of an extraordinary sort. However peculiar the aims and methods of the author of this work may be, however out of harmony may be the world of ideas in which he lived with that which surrounds us at the present day, we shall not be likely to arrive at a true solution of the problems which the work offers by belittling it. If the history turn out to be no history, it must be because it was intended to teach something to the author more important than history. If the rhetoric does not always ring true, if the argument sometimes fails really