

**THE GOSPEL OF THE
REJECTION: A STUDY IN THE
RELATION OF THE FOURTH
GOSPEL TO THE THREE**

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The Gospel of the Rejection: a Study in the Relation of the Fourth Gospel to the Three by Wilfrid Richmond

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WILFRID RICHMOND

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A STUDY IN THE RELATION OF
THE FOURTH GOSPEL
TO THE THREE

BY WILFRID RICHMOND

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PREFACE.

IN considering the question as to the authorship and authority of the Fourth Gospel, the answer to a previous question is sometimes assumed. The previous question is this :—What is the relation to one another, *supposing* both to be equally authoritative, of the story told by the Fourth Gospel and the story told by the Three? Does the combination of St John's story with the story of the Three introduce difficulties, which are absent if the story of the Three is left to stand by itself? Does the treatment of the story of the Three as complete without the story of St John introduce difficulties,

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which are absent if the story of the Three is combined with the story of St John? In reading Dr Drummond's "Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel" it struck the present writer that justice was not done to the contribution of the Fourth Gospel to the coherence and completeness of the story of the Ministry of our Lord. The following essay is an attempt to present the claim of the Gospel in this respect, and to give as simply as possible the answer to the question:—What does the Fourth Gospel do to make the story of the Ministry of Jesus Christ an intelligible whole?

The question is treated quite by itself. No attempt is made to indicate the bearing of the view suggested on questions of authenticity and authorship and authority. The only question considered is—What do we historically gain from the Gospel supposing its authorship and authority to remain

unshaken? The question whether we historically gain anything or not can only be tested by considering it on the hypothesis that the authorship and authority of the Gospel stand. When it has been considered, the result of the consideration will be one element in the case for or against the Johannine authorship and apostolic authority of the Gospel. *E.g.*, Dr Drummond's general conclusions would be modified if Chapter II. of Book I. in his work were to be re-written in the sense of this essay. How far or how it would be modified I do not attempt to discuss, though I am very sure that our debt to Dr Drummond would not be diminished.

The question with which I endeavour to deal is not merely a question of the external connection of the history of the Synoptists with the history of St John. It has to do not merely with the piecing together

of the references to time and place in the one narrative and the other. The relation of the two leads us on to questions as to the part which both narratives play in setting before us the purpose of Christ and its fulfilment, as that purpose and its fulfilment must be conceived in the light of the long history that had gone before, and in the light of the history that followed. It is a question not only of the relation of the Fourth Gospel to the Three, but of the view of the whole Gospel story in its context with the books of the Old Testament and of the New, with which the Gospels are bound up as parts of a literary and historical whole.

Apart from any value which this study of the Fourth Gospel may have as a contribution to the discussion of such questions as these, it is possible that it may have interest for those who read the books of the

Bible for their own understanding. If there is anything in it that is of value to any one it has come to the writer as the result of years of teaching, in which the Fourth Gospel has more and more commended itself as playing its part with the Three in bringing before the mind the vivid realities of the story of Him Who is our Life.