

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO;  
THE IRENAEUS TESTIMONY TO  
THE FOURTH GOSPEL: ITS  
EXTENT, MEANING, AND VALUE.  
A DISSERTATION**

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**FRANK GRANT LEWIS**

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The University of Chicago

FOUNDED BY JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

THE IRENAEUS TESTIMONY TO THE  
FOURTH GOSPEL: ITS EXTENT,  
MEANING, AND VALUE

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVINITY SCHOOL IN CANDIDACY  
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

(DEPARTMENT OF NEW TESTAMENT)

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BY

FRANK GRANT LEWIS

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## PREFACE

The reader will observe the narrow limits of the following discussion. It makes no claims to grappling with "the Johannine Problem," nor with the general problem of the fourth gospel alone, nor even with the single question of the authorship of the fourth gospel. I have simply set myself the task of discovering what the testimony of Irenaeus to the fourth gospel is and of estimating its significance. My essay, therefore, deals with only one aspect of the problems mentioned above. That it is an important aspect, however, will not be denied. Even when the study of Irenaeus leads to an elimination of his testimony from the factors which have to do with the Johannine question, as the study of Harnack did, the study is recognized as essential and significant.

That the question of the significance of the Irenaeus testimony is a mooted one cannot be evaded. When Ernest F. Scott, one of the latest and most suggestive writers on the fourth gospel, in the preface of *The Fourth Gospel: Its Purpose and Theology*, says: "It may be granted that the external evidence is not sufficient to warrant a decisive verdict on either side," the situation appears to be hopeless. He was undoubtedly influenced by the immense difference in the conclusions of Lightfoot, Harnack, Bacon, and Zahn, in view of which it might seem that nothing more can be said. The very diversity of their conclusions, however, raises the question whether some more common and more tenable ground may not be discovered. This is to be done, nevertheless, not by a mere combination of these important views, but by a fresh examination of all the data involved. Such an examination I have endeavored to make.

The crucial question is: Did Irenaeus have actual knowledge of Christian affairs in Asia at the close of the first century? If this essay makes any contribution toward answering this question, it is through a more careful criticism and evaluation of the Irenaeus testimony attributed to Polycarp and the presbyters, as it bears upon that question, than has been made heretofore.

In view of the present condition of the text of Irenaeus, nothing more practical appeared possible than to use the Stieren text without criticism. This could be done with the less hesitation because, as the discussion endeavors to show, the meaning and value of the Irenaeus testimony to the fourth gospel must be found in a more general interpretation than that which bases its conclusions on mere variation of text. No theory can be

secure which hinges on uncertain, or conjectural, readings. Fortunately there appears opportunity for a theory in which such readings may largely be disregarded.

I have freely laid under tribute all available works which offered assistance. This puts me under obligation to many for whose suggestions only this general acknowledgment can be made. I am grateful to all. I am particularly indebted to Professor Ernest DeWitt Burton and to the researches of a seminar conducted by him in The University of Chicago during the autumn of 1906, in which the entire field of the external evidence to the authorship of the fourth gospel was patiently examined. If I have here succeeded in going beyond that study and finding what, until now, has been overlooked in Irenaeus, this is largely due to the suggestive criticisms of Professor Burton which were received in that seminar and others which he has given in the preparation of this dissertation itself. I need hardly add that it has been a personal pleasure to have my independent study work out in accord with his "booklet" theory of the composition of the gospel.

FRANK GRANT LEWIS

NOVEMBER, 1907



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## CHAPTER I

### THE EXTENT OF THE IRENAEUS TESTIMONY TO THE FOURTH GOSPEL

The extent of the Irenaeus testimony to the fourth gospel is in itself significant. What that extent is may be seen from the following tables.

The first table is an arrangement of the references to the testimony from the point of view of the gospel. It serves especially to show how much of the gospel Irenaeus used, what parts were of particular interest to him, and, indirectly, the portions which he did not use.

The second table is an arrangement of the same references from the point of view of Irenaeus' work. It calls attention particularly to his attitude toward the gospel as that attitude is to be seen at different stages of the progress of his discussion.

The tables are intended to present the references and, at the same time, to offer some interpretation of the testimony to which the references direct. In order to make such interpretation, certain abbreviations and symbols are employed. These are of three classes:

1. Those which precede the references to the gospel. Here—

No symbol—an exact quotation.

v—a quotation varying merely *verbally* from the Westcott and Hort text, and so not materially affecting the sense.

s—a quotation varying from the WH text in *sense* as well as verbally.

r—any looser *reference*, not a quotation.

By an "exact" quotation is meant, where the Greek is preserved, an agreement with the WH text; where we have only the Latin, a Latin reading which seems to represent the WH text. In some instances indicated as "exact" quotation, however, only a part of the verse, or verses, of the gospel as referred to is quoted; but the quotation is "exact" as far as it is used, even when, as in some passages, words of interpretation are fused with the quotations (e. g., 4. 25. 3b).<sup>1</sup>

It may be added that Irenaeus often used language which is colored by the influence of the gospel but which does not show a sufficient number of the words of the gospel to warrant calling it even a "reference." His language received such coloring from the thought of the prologue especially. But the prologue was the part of the gospel which he liked particularly to quote. In view of this, there is less occasion to attempt to include among the references every passage which indicates even a coloring from the gospel.

Still further, it is to be noted that these tables do not include such passages

<sup>1</sup> All references are to the *Adversus Haereses*, unless otherwise indicated.