

**THE REVELATION OF THE
FATHER: SHORT LECTURES
ON THE TITLES OF THE LORD
IN THE GOSPEL OF ST JOHN**

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The revelation of the Father: short lectures on the titles of the Lord in the Gospel of St John by
Brooke Foss Westcott

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GOSPEL OF ST JOHN.

BY

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PREFACE.

IT was my intention to deliver the substance of these lectures during my Summer residence at Peterborough in the present year. Very shortly before the time of residence came my connexion with the Cathedral was most unexpectedly broken and my purpose was consequently unfulfilled. I have reason however to think that some to whom I had been allowed to minister for fourteen Summers, would have followed with interest the examination of a subject which we had already approached eleven years ago, and it has been a pleasure to me to continue so far as I could the old relation by revising week after week what I had hoped to address to them. Such friends will, I trust, receive the result as a memorial of a connexion on which I shall always look back with affectionate gratitude.

The subject itself is one to which I was anxious to direct attention. A complete series of related passages of Holy Scripture taken just as they stand without the exercise of any choice presents, as I believe, with incomparable clearness that harmonious progress of thought in the record of divine revelation which makes the idea of inspiration a living reality.

This is true especially of the narratives of the Gospels. And no one, unless I am mistaken, can consider the titles by which the Lord successively reveals Himself in the Gospel of St John without acknowledging the naturalness of each revelation, and the growing light which they throw one after the other in due order upon His work and upon His Person. Each title as it was used was intelligible. Each title when studied afterwards disclosed (and still discloses) fuller depths of meaning. On the other hand there is not the least indication that this vital unfolding of the truth little by little, these underlying correspondences, were directly present to the mind of the Evangelist as he wrote, still less that they were due to a conscious design. We observe them only when we allow every detail of time and place and circumstance to produce its full effect through patient medita-

tion. In this respect what I have said can only suggest topics for meditation and not supersede the exercise itself.

Such meditation will bring back with a multiplied blessing that complete trust in the Written Word, quickened by the Living Word, which many seem to mourn over as irreparably lost. No doubt we have used the Scriptures for purposes for which they were not designed. We have treated them too often as the one mechanical utterance of the Spirit and not as writings through which the Spirit Himself still speaks. We have isolated them from the life of the Christian society, and that still larger life which is, in its measure, a manifestation of God. There is an immeasurable difference between making the Bible a storehouse of formal premisses from which doctrinal systems can be infallibly constructed and making it in its whole fulness the final test of necessary Truth. The Bible itself teaches us by its antithetic utterances that no single expression of the Truth is coextensive with the Truth itself. And life proves beyond question that words gather wealth in the course of the ages. It is not too much to say that no formula which expresses clearly the thought of one generation can convey the same meaning to the generation