

**FROM MALACHI TO
MATTHEW, THREE LECTURES
ON THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649018031

From Malachi to Matthew, three Lectures on the period between the Old and New Testaments
by Walter Morison

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Cover @ 2017

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WALTER MORISON

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ON THE

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BY THE
REV. WALTER MORISON, D.D.,
Westbourne Grove, London.



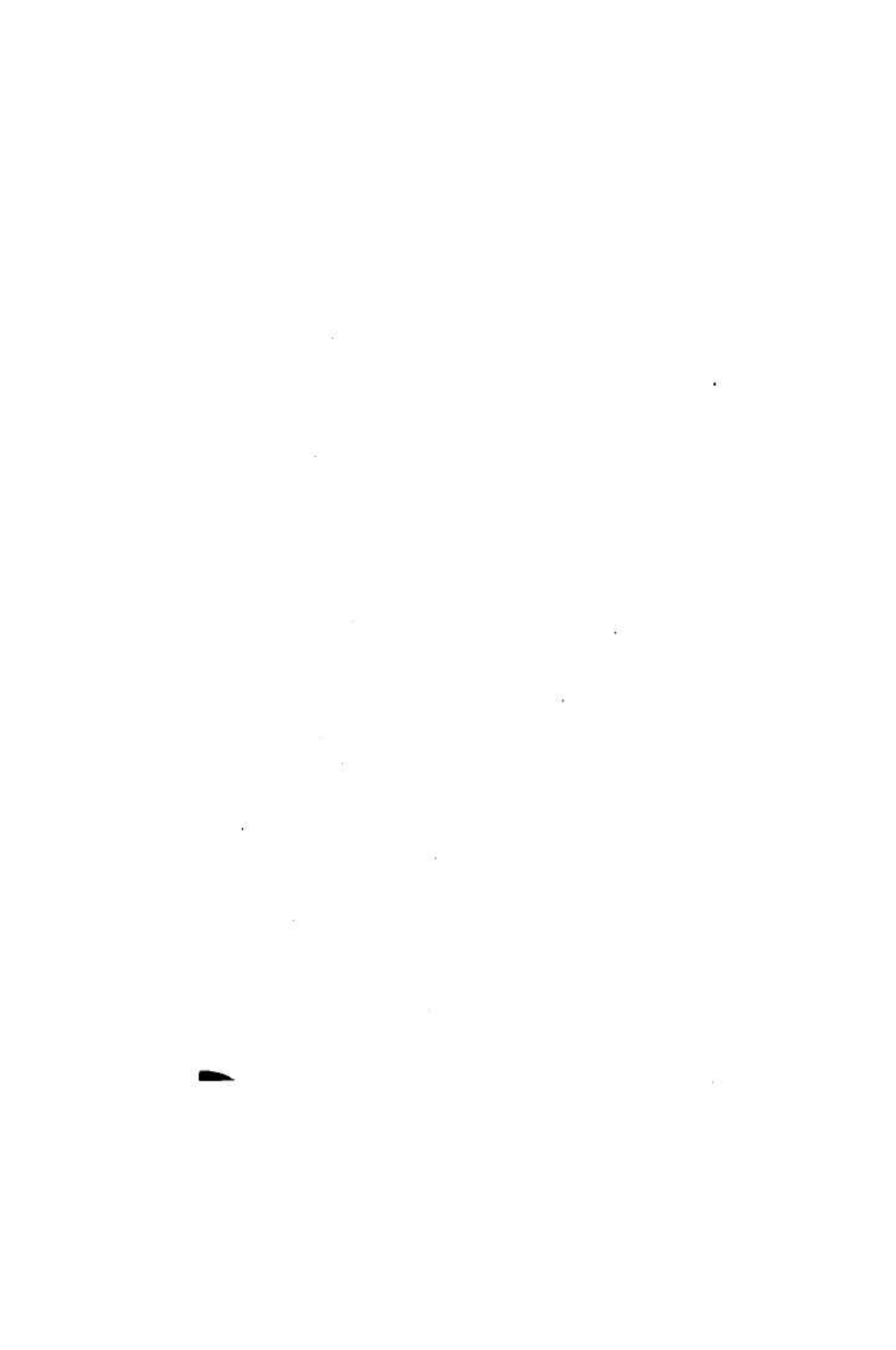
LONDON:
JAMES NISBET & CO., 21, BERNERS STREET, W.
1879.

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PREFACE.

THE object of the delivery of these Lectures from the pulpit was to supply in a simple popular form some general information on a period little known by many ; and the reason for the oral delivery of the discourses has also prevailed so far as to induce compliance with a request made by some who heard them that they should be printed.

Indebtedness is acknowledged, in connection with the material of the Lectures, specially to the writings of Ewald, Kuenen, and Dean Stanley.





FROM MALACHI TO MATTHEW.

LECTURE I.

EVERY one has noticed the blank leaf in the Bible, separating the Book of Malachi, the last of the prophets, from that of Matthew, the first of the evangelists. All are aware that the Scriptures contain an Old Testament and a New, being made up of two great historical parts. And when we have considered more particularly how the matter stands, we have found that, while there is a narrative of events—not, indeed, in every part detailed, but still continuous—from the creation on to the time of Malachi, there a sudden cleavage occurs; or rather the long mountain range subsides into the plain, and there stretches away a vast almost unrelieved expanse, haze-covered, and lost in the distance, until afar off

the first sunlit peaks of the New Testament times appear. There is a blank in the biblical story of about four hundred years. From the complete repatriation of the Jewish people, after their deliverance from the captivity in Babylon, till John the Baptizer appears upon the scene, announcing that the Messiah is at hand, there is not one word of direct historical information for us within the boards of the Bible. There are some fore-shootings of prophecy in the Book of Daniel and elsewhere, and there are one or two back-glances in the New Testament; but, apart from these, we are, so far as Scripture is concerned, left in total darkness as regards this lengthened period of the Israelitish history.

This is a remarkable fact, and it naturally excites reflection on the part of the intelligent reader of the Scriptures. For one thing, from the gloom in the midst of which he finds himself when the light of the biblical narrative is withdrawn, he is led to realise as he had not done before, the indebtedness of the world to the Sacred Writings for the knowledge which it possesses of ancient times.

But he is not merely led thus to estimate highly the value of Scripture light upon history from the "darkness visible" of the period on which it does not shine: he begins to wonder and enquire why the light should be wanting as regards that period. Wherefore the break in the continuity of the inspired narrative

which is found? Have any books been lost? Or was the break intended? It seems strange, that when there has been given an account, more or less full and detailed, of the events happening in the Church from the beginning of the world up to a certain point, there should then be a sudden stop and a gap for several centuries, with, at the end of that long period, a resumption of the narrative.

That the pause in the narrative was intentional, seems not to admit of doubt. We have no whisper of the loss of any books whose information might have bridged the interval. And the book of Malachi viewed in connection with the narratives of the evangelists, gives evident indication of its having been intended to be the last inspired utterance for a time, while the narratives of the evangelists, on their side, similarly show that they are a new beginning, or rather a resuming of the story where it had been left off. The Gospel narrative fits in to the book of Malachi, as you have seen a new building in a row of houses fit in to the one before it, whose gable had been left with embryo fire-places in it, which are answered to in the rooms of the new building set up. Malachi ends with the following words—"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord," &c.; which is a reduplication upon what had been said a few verses previously (iii. 1.)—"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare