is not necessarily implied, even if the  
words of the text be literally understood;  
and in a matter like astronomy, where  
popular language is so universally broad,  
and the Scriptures so generally use popular  
language, it is surely not the letter, but  
the spirit of the narrative with which we  
are concerned.

**11. with Mary**] No stress must be laid on the omission of  
Joseph here. In the parallel account as  
regarded the shepherds, in Luke ii. 16, he  
is mentioned. I would rather regard the  
omission here as indicating a *simple matter  
of fact*, and contributing to shew the  
truthfulness of the narrative:—that Joseph  
*happened not to be present* at the time.  
If the meaning of *the house* is to be pressed  
(as in a matter of detail I think it should),  
it will confirm the idea that Joseph and  
Mary, probably under the idea that the  
child was to be brought up at Bethlehem,  
*dwelt there some time* after the Nativity.  
Epiphanius, supposes that Mary was at  
this time on a visit to her Kindred at  
Bethlehem (possibly at a Passover) as  
much as two years after our Lord’s birth.  
But if Mary had kindred at Bethlehem,  
how could she be so ill-provided with  
lodging, and have (as is implied in Luke  
ii. 7) sought accommodation at an inn?  
And the supposition of two years having  
elapsed, derived probably from the “*two  
years old*” of ver. 16, will involve us in  
considerable difficulty. There seems to be  
no reason why the magi may not have  
come within the forty days before the  
Purification, which itself may have taken  
place in the interval between their departure and Herod’s discovery that they  
had mocked him. No objection can be  
raised to this view from the “two years  
old” of ver. 16: see note there. The general idea is, that the Purification was *previous* to the visit of the magi. Being  
persuaded of the historic reality of these  
narratives of Matt. and Luke, we shall  
find no difficulty in also believing that,  
*were we acquainted with all the events as  
they happened, their reconcilement would  
be an easy matter* ; whereas now the two  
independent accounts, from not being  
aware of, seem to exclude one another.  
This will often be the case in ordinary life;  
e.g. in the giving of evidence. And nothing can more satisfactorily shew the  
veracity and independence of the narrators, where their testimony to the main  
facts, as in the t case, is consentient.

**treasures**] *chests* or *bales*, in  
which the gifts were carried during their  
journey. The ancient Fathers were fond  
of tracing in the gifts symbolical meanings: “as to the king, the gold: as to one who was to die, the myrrh: as to a god,  
the frankincense.” Origen, against Celsus;  
and similarly Irenæus. We cannot conclude from these gifts that the magi came  
from *Arabia*,—as they were common to  
all the East. Strabo says that the best  
frankincense comes from the borders of  
Persia.

**13–23.**] FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.