**13.**] The command was immediate; and  
Joseph made no delay. He must be understood, on account of “*by night*” below,  
as having arisen the same night and departed forthwith. Egypt, as *near*, as *a  
Roman province and independent of Herod*,  
and *much inhabited by Jews*, was an easy  
and convenient refuge.

**15. Out of Egypt**] This citation shews the almost  
universal application in the N.T. of the  
prophetic writings to the expected Messiah, as the general antitype of all the  
events of the typical dispensation. We  
shall have occasion to remark the same  
again and again in the course of the Gospels. It seems to have been a received  
axiom of interpretation (which has, by its  
adoption in the N. T., received the sanction of the Holy Spirit Himself, and now  
stands for our guidance), that the subject  
of all allusions, the represented in all  
parables and dark sayings, was He who was  
to come, or the circumstances attendant  
on His advent and reign.—The words  
are written in Hosea *of the children of  
Israel*, and are rendered from the Hebrew.  
—A similar expression with regard to  
Israel is found in Exod. iv. 22, 23.

**that it might be fulfilled** must not be explained away: it never denotes the event  
or mere result, but always the *purpose*.

**16.**] Josephus makes no mention  
of this slaughter; nor is it likely that he  
would have done. Probably no great  
number of children perished in so small a  
place as Bethlehem and its neighbourhood.  
The modern objections to this narrative  
may be answered best by remembering  
the monstrous character of this tyrant,  
of whom Josephus asserts, “a dark choler  
seized on him, maddening him against  
all.” Herod had marked the way to his  
throne, and his reign itself, with blood;  
had murdered his wife and three sons  
(the last just about this time); and was  
likely enough, in blind fury, to have made  
no enquiries, but given the savage order  
at once.—Besides, there might have been  
a reason for not making enquiry, but  
rather taking the course he did, which  
was sure, as he thought, to answer the  
end, without divulging the purpose. The  
word “*privily*” in ver. 7 seems to favour  
this view.

**was mocked**] The Evangelist is speaking of Herod’s view of the  
matter.

**the borders thereof**] The  
word *coasts* is the common rendering of  
the Greek *horia* in the A.V. It does not  
imply any bordering on a sea shore, but  
is an old use for *parts, or neighbourhood*,  
as côte in French. See margin of A.V.

**the borders thereof** will betoken the  
insulated houses, and hamlets, which belonged to the territory of Bethlehem.

**from two years old**] This expression must  
not be taken as any very certain indication  
of the time when the star did actually  
appear. The addition **and under** implies  
that there was uncertainty in Herod’s  
mind as to the age pointed out; and if so,  
why might not the jealous tyrant, although he had accurately ascertained the  
date of the star’s appearing, have taken a  
range of time extending before as well  
as after it, the more surely to attain  
his point?

**17. that which was spoken by Jeremy**] Apparently, an accommodation of the prophecy in Jer. xxxi. 15,  
which was originally written of the Babylonish captivity. We must not draw any  
fanciful distinction between “**then was  
fulfilled**” and “that might be fulfilled,”  
but rather seek our explanation in the  
acknowledged system of prophetic interpretation among the Jews, still extant in  
their rabbinical books, and now sanctioned  
to us by N.T. usage; at the same time  
remembering, for our caution, how little  
even now we understand of the full bearing of prophetic and typical words and  
acts. None of the expressions of this prophecy must be closely and literally pressed.  
The link of connexion seems to be *Rachel's  
sepulchre*, which (Gen. xxxv. 19: see also