

Exod. xxv. 33, 34; xxxvii. 19, 20.—In the description of the golden candlestick it is directed that there be “three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch.” Whether the reference here be to the shape of the *flower*, as one commentator suggests, or according to the common belief to that of the *nut*, the inference is evident that the tree was very familiar to the people of Israel; the generation here addressed would need to know it in Egypt. The peculiar form of the nut I find is used even by ourselves in way of illustration; we talk of the *almond-shaped eyes* of the Japanese. In connection with this golden candlestick, it is interesting to note that lapidaries of the present day are said to designate as *almonds* the pieces of crystal which they suspend from chandeliers.

Num. xvii. 8.—After the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and the plague that followed as a consequence, God gave direction for the trial by rods, with this result—“It came to pass that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was *budded, brought forth buds, and blossomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.*” At one and the same time the rod presented *bud and flower and fruit.* It is very well worth noting that what happened here *supernaturally* was wholly in the line of what happens *naturally* in the case of this tree. It is a striking peculiarity of it, that the fruit *sets at once*, so that every year one may see on these broad plains stretching out before us, phenomena similar to that which happened in the tabernacle in the wilderness. I think this uncommon speed in setting the fruit must be God’s wise provision against the destructive influence of frost, seeing that the blossoms appear in the very midst of our winter season, and that long after we may have severely cold weather. To return to this love of the *fitness* of things on God’s part, and to His great regard for that which we call natural, might we not refer to the plagues of Egypt, the flour in the barrel, *water made wine*, much bread from little, eyes anointed with *clay*, &c.?

Ecd. xii. 5.—In the wise preacher’s figurative description of old age is the clause, “and the almond tree shall flourish.” An odd interpretation of this passage is that given by Gesenius. Starting with the assumption that the allusion cannot be to the *white* locks of the aged, seeing that almond blossoms are *pink*, he derives the verb rendered *flourish* from a fresh source, and translates the clause, “the almond is rejected.” Why, he finds suggested in the previous mention about the grinders, his interpretation being—the teeth are so few and feeble that even the sweet nuts of the almond have to be foregone; this is a sure sign of old age. To keep to the common view, in spite of the objection urged, there does seem much appropriateness in the choice of this illustration. Before the leaves appear, and not in dense mass, but somewhat scattered, the flowers clothe the tree in a robe that while sometimes a light rose-colour, is more commonly pinkish, shading down to white. To me a *slightly discoloured white* would represent the average hue. As I looked over this valley last winter, dotted here and there with these trees in full bloom, the force of the figure here employed was too strongly felt to yield now to petty carpings. It was not unlike glancing over one of the gatherings of the American Board, where hoary heads so characterize the whole scene, and add uncommon beauty to it.

Jer. i. 11, 12.—“Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast *well* seen; for I will *hasten* my word to perform it.” The connection of thought here I did not learn till coming here, and it was a glad surprise when once perceived; possibly to some of our Canadian friends it may yet be new. The Hebrew word “shaked,” translated by us almond tree, is from a root signifying *to be wakeful, to hasten*, and has the origin of this use of it in the habits of the tree. It is the first harbinger of spring, putting forth its welcome blossoms before your winter has well begun. While to the south of us, in Syria, it blooms as early as January, here last year in this part of Turkey by the middle of February our plain was like an orchard, with the white and whitish pink, and pink blossoms of the almond on every hand. Before we knew it, to our surprise, winter seemed