

verses of the preceding chapter. The writer of Hebrews, after referring to the Priesthood, a portion of which was held by those whom he was instructing, as shown by the manner of his address to them, says:

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

A careful reading of this text ought to make plain the meaning of the sentence concerning which inquiry is made, and over which some obscurity has been thrown by an arbitrary division into chapters. If the chapter heading, which is not a part of the original epistle, had been after the third verse in the sixth chapter, or had not been in at all, there would be no difficulty in understanding the quotation made; such difficulty as there is arises wholly from failure to associate the ideas of the closing sentences of chapter five and the opening words of chapter six, and is really removed by the student of the scriptures removing the defect in himself—in the text itself there is nothing doubtful.

It will be observed that the Apostle is reprimanding those whom he is addressing, because their condition is such that they need to be taught again the first principles, instead of being able to teach them, as should be the case with those who minister to the Saints, as they were doing; in other words, they had need of milk as babes, and not of the strong meat required by those who administer food to babes. He told them how they should advance, that it was "by reason of use" of the first principles in the instruction by example and precept which they gave, and not by being merely passive listeners to such as taught them those principles. Then he urged them to "go on unto perfection"—to do so by leaving those principles as a foundation, and not by attempting to lay again that foundation, which he afterwards says is an impossibility to those once enlightened and who have fallen away. The foundation once laid must remain; if abandoned or torn up there is no replacing it—a lesson that is uniformly confirmed in the course of apostasy.

There are some persons who assume that the word "leaving" must be interpreted as "abandoning" or "rejecting." Such definition, however, is not justified by any part of the text; and in order to exclude any possibility of willfully wrong construction, some translators have given the word this meaning and inserted the word "but" before it, to conform to the idea of the text. But as the matter stands there is no real necessity for that variance in form, to express the same idea. The word leaving in the verse quoted

should have its ordinary definition as given by lexicographers: "suffering to remain; not removing." This is the only interpretation that the inspired writer himself gives, in his instruction for the Hebrews to leave the principles as a foundation on which to proceed to perfection; that is, "leaving [suffering to remain; not removing] the principles," etc. This was what Paul did in his address; he told them of the principles, the necessity of their actual "use," and passing on in his remarks, he left those principles as a foundation, exhorting them to build thereon to perfection.

There has been also the suggestion that people who have obeyed the first principles, and fully believe in the six cardinal elements mentioned by Paul—faith, repentance, baptism, laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost, the resurrection, and the judgment—may then depart from the same and go ahead of them to perfection. The absurdity of this idea is as great as would be that of a completed house without a foundation to support it. These principles cannot be discarded from, ignored or omitted. They are eternal as their Author—they reach to perfection in themselves. Every Gospel principle is eternal in the sphere where it operates; faith exists and acts eternally, the full doctrine of repentance is an eternal forsaking of sin, the effects of baptism by the water and the Spirit are eternal forgiveness and eternal guidance in truth, the resurrection has an everlasting effect, as does also the eternal judgment. The first principles of the Gospel named by Paul cannot be abandoned or cast aside except in apostasy, which permits no renewal when it becomes complete.

As to another part of the quotation by our correspondent, and which he may wish some expression upon—"the principles of the doctrine of Christ"—we will suggest that principle means "a fundamental truth or tenet; a comprehensive law or doctrine, from which others are derived, or in which others are founded; an elementary proposition." This is the position the principles named occupy, other doctrines growing out of them as elementary, to the work of perfection. Therefore let those who have laid the foundation in their lives by obedience to "the first principles of the oracles of God," leave that foundation in its place, not vainly attempting to lay it again, or negligently stopping at the foundation, as Paul criticizes the Hebrews for doing; but going on to that perfection in the exercise of those principles and others derived therefrom, to the full age of adulthood which characterizes the real followers of Christ Jesus.

FOUND A REMNANT.

As a contribution to the discussion of the whereabouts of the so-called lost ten tribes of Israel, a celebrated Russian archaeologist, Prof. Hahn, announces that during a journey in the Caucasus region last summer he found a formerly unknown colony of people living in Daghestan and numbering about 20,000 souls, whom he considers a remnant of ancient Israel. Their language, he says, is decidedly Semi-

tic, although mixed with foreign elements. They have a tradition that their ancestors were inhabitants of Palestine, but were driven away from that country by Assyrian and Babylonian kings, their temples being first destroyed. These descendants of the Hebrew race, Prof. Hahn says, are a mixture of the Aryan type and the present type of European Jews. Their religion is said to be of decidedly scientific origin and furnishes proofs that the people must have become separated from the nation far back in the history of the race.

There is certainly nothing impossible, or even improbable, in this alleged discovery. It is but reasonable to suppose that the captives, when leaving the domains of the Assyrian and Babylonian rulers and slowly proceeding northward, in order to find a country where they could enjoy religious liberty, should establish colonies on their road, and also that many should falter in their faith and leave the main body of the people, and settle down rather than proceed further north. Thus it happened that both Asiatic and European nations received an infusion of Israelitic blood to an extent not generally realized. Israel were "sifted" among the nations "as corn is sifted in a sieve."

Probably no more striking historical evidence of the wanderings of the captives have been preserved, as far as known, than that furnished by the Scandinavian mythology, where both many of the proper names and the doctrines embodied seem to point to an unmistakable origin in the ancient sacred history and theology. Asgaard, where Odin is said to have ruled, may possibly be only another name for Jerusalem, since the word literally means "The City on the Hill," being composed of A, a ridge or hill, and Gardur, a city. The custom of laying on of hands and imparting blessings to posterity, as prevalent among the ancient followers of Odin, reminds of the solemn closing hours of the life of Jacob. The Temple service is another feature of Odin's religion, illustrating the point, and then comes the remarkable forecast of the end of the world and its regeneration, which seems to be in the main a synopsis of the predictions made by the ancient prophets, colored by ideas and conceptions received from other sources during the long separation of the people that settled in

northern Europe, from the main body. It is impossible to read the descriptions of the prevalence of iniquity toward the end of the world, and the commotions of the elements; the gathering of the hosts of Luke in a final battle with the sons of Muspellheim; a battle in which gods and men are all but overcome; the purification of the world by the fire of Surtur and the new heavens and the new earth, with a new Asgaard as its center—it is impossible to read this thoughtfully without a strong conviction that its primary source is identical with that from which Israel's religious teachers drew their information and inspiration. Very likely, therefore, many of the myths or ancient sagas are founded on real historical facts and are descriptions of events along the road traveled by the