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Full Forgiveness.

Translated from Dr. E. Preuss's *Die Lehre von der Rechtfertigung*, Part V.

THE REV. JUL. A. FRIEDRICH, Iowa City, Iowa.

(Continued.)

Are we to produce still more testimonies? Are we to show — and this would be an easy task — that our Evangelical Lutheran Church has confessed the doctrine of full forgiveness at all times? Are we to summon Martin Chemnitz to the arena? or Aegidius Hunnius? Hunnius says: There are no degrees in justification. For it is impossible that a man should have partly obtained forgiveness of sins and partly not. It is also impossible for a man to be partly in grace and partly without it, or to be an heir of eternal life and at the same time a child of the devil. But he that is justified *has obtained full forgiveness of all his sins* and is fully in grace and an heir of eternal life. For in justification our greater or lesser worthiness does not come into consideration, consequently our justification cannot be increased or decreased by our worthiness. Not even our faith conditions our justification in so far as it has this or that quality, being strong or weak, but only in so far as it apprehends its object, the merits of Christ. But the merits of Christ are indivisible.¹⁾ John Gerhard says: The Word of God “carefully distinguishes between justification and

1) *Justificatio nec magis recipit nec minus, quandoquidem fieri non potest, ut quis ex parte remissionem suorum peccatorum obtineat, ex parte vero non; nec quisquam partim in gratia est, partim extra gratiam; nec quis potest esse ex parte haeres vitae aeternae, ex parte vero filius gehennae et damnationis. Sed homo justificatus plenariam omnium peccatorum adeptus est veniam, et totus est in gratia Dei atque vitae sempiternae haeres. Neque spectantur in justificatione illae virtutes, quibus auctis vel diminutis ipsa quoque justificatio tale subeat vel incrementum vel decrementum. Quin ne quidem fides ingreditur justificationem, quatenus ex sua conditione aestimata nunc firma, nunc languida est, sed quod subjectum suum aspicit, quod aequabile semper est. Considerat quippe gratiam justificantis Dei, quae infinitate sua omnem inaequalitatem respuit. Considerat meritum Christi, quod, quia infinitum est et in justificationis actu totum apprehenditur, itidem hujusmodi graduum inaequalitatem in justificationis arcano non constituit. (A. Hunnius, *Articulus de Justificatione*, p. 102.)*

Was Moses Weak in Arithmetic?

H. E. Fosdick has been traveling through the Sinaitic wilderness and tells the readers of the *Ladies' Home Journal* what he found there. "One striking difficulty in the Biblical narrative—the numbers of the fugitives—must occur to every traveler. That 600,000 men, with women and children added, which would make a grand total of some three million folk, ever lived in this desert has seemed to every visitor here an appalling strain upon credulity. . . . So many people could not live in the Sinaitic peninsula, which to-day supports, in a poor and whipped existence, five or six thousand Towara Arabs. . . . No such number, much less any increased descendants, ever could have settled in Palestine, which at its latest census in 1922 had a grand total of about 800,000 folk, Moslems, Christians, and Jews combined. . . . In the endeavor to solve this problem, many suggestions have been made. Some have imagined that better conditions in water and pasturage existed in the olden time. But that will not hold. . . . Some have ascribed the enormous numbers to exaggeration in telling a heroic tale. Such stretching of statistics is familiar to students of the Scripture. . . . While, however, it is possible that exaggeration is the secret, it is strange that the records should show such correspondence with the land everywhere else and then should slip so incredibly as to put 3,000,000 people where a few thousand might possibly survive. . . . Some have fallen back upon supernaturalism and have held that the vast host was miraculously sustained; but the Biblical narrative itself prevents that explanation. Only three special providences are mentioned, and they could not solve the problem"—because each September the quails blow in by multitudes, but not in sufficient number to feed 3,000,000, because "manna" is still found there, "but such manna could not solve the problem of sustaining 3,000,000 folk," and because "Arabs who know the ways of the wilderness still will draw water from apparently dry cliffs,"—"but it still is incredible that 3,000,000 folk ever drank their way through this appalling wilderness."

We are not concerned with refuting the foregoing statements, but with the solution offered by Dr. Fosdick of the difficulty which arises when the supernatural element (which the Bible distinctly presents) is eliminated. Dr. Fosdick is not willing to add a chapter to Ingersoll's *Mistakes of Moses*. He is not going to accuse Moses of exaggeration and falsification. He puts the blame for the difficulty on a mistake of the translators. But if he is correct in his interpretation, Moses is indeed not guilty of

exaggeration, but will have to be blamed for making glaring mistakes in arithmetic. This is the solution offered: "Perhaps, then, Doctor Petrie is correct. He says that the Hebrew word *alaf* has two meanings, 'a thousand' and 'a family,' and that all our trouble comes from translating it 'a thousand' here. He insists that the tribe of Manasseh, for example, did not have 'thirty and two thousand and two hundred' people, as our translation (Num. 1, 34. 35) says, but had thirty-two *families*, making two hundred people altogether. He presents an appealing argument, and the upshot is that, if you follow him, you get a total of about 5,500 who made the Exodus. At least that fits the possibilities."

Now let the ladies of the *Home Journal* take up their pencils and see what a poor hand at figures the Doctors Petrie and Fosdick make Moses out to be. Put "families" in place of "thousand," add the 46 "families" of Reuben, the 59 of Simeon, and all the other "families" of the sons of Israel, and we get 598 "families." But the census officials, whose figures Moses accepts, get the sum of 603 "families." Num. 1, 46. That's bad. The ladies will remember Fosdick's instruction as to how verse 35 is to be read: "Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Manasseh, were thirty and two families, that is, two hundred [individuals]." Adding these 200 to the 500 of Reuben, the 300 of Simeon, etc., we get 5,550, or, as Fosdick says, about 5,500. But verse 46, according to the new interpretation, reads: "Even all that were numbered were six hundred families and three families, that is, *five hundred and fifty* [individuals]." Just one little cipher disappeared! That's bad.

A family is computed here at 6. Six times 32, in verse 35, makes about 200 (to be exact, 192). But in verse 46 six times 603 makes, not 3,618, but a paltry 550. That's bad. Multiply the 46 in verse 21 by 6, and we ordinarily get 276. But the census reporter for the tribe of Reuben gave the figures as 500. He padded the figures. That's very bad. Gad did worse. Instead of 270 he reported 650. The national official tried to rectify these mistakes, and in verse 46, where he was entitled to 3,618, he put down only 550. Those men were poor in arithmetic. Gad multiplies 45 by 6 and gets 650, and Judah multiplies 74 by 6 and gets only 600. Nor have they advanced in chapter 2, verses 4—9. Add 74 and 54 and 57. The writer says that makes 186. It makes 185. That is not so bad. But adding 600 and 400 and 400, we get 1,400; the sacred writer, 400. That is very bad. Or, from a different angle, 185 times 6 makes 1,110, not 400.

Let us turn to Ex. 38, 25. 26. The sum raised by taxation was 301,775 shekels (100 talents and 1,775 shekels), at half a shekel for every man. The figures are correct if Israel numbered 603,750 men. Fosdick puts the figure at 5,500. And they were taxed 301,775 shekels! It is a miracle indeed that they were not taxed to death. And their voluntary gifts amounted to 29 talents of gold and 730 shekels! The commentators are at pains to show the source of the great wealth of Israel, of these 603,750 men, and they succeed in showing it. But where did Fosdick's 5,500 men get this immense wealth? A later Petrie may show that shekel stands for a half-penny.

Now turn to Gen. 46, 3: "Fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will there make of thee a great nation—" as it turned out to be, 598 families, 5,500 individuals, in two hundred years! That smacks of exaggeration. And read Ex. 1, 7! The children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly and multiplied and waxed exceeding mighty, getting to number even 5,500, and the land was filled with them! And how greatly poor Pharaoh exaggerated the danger threatening his great people and mighty army! "Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we" — these 5,500! (Ex. 1, 9. 10.)

Dr. Fosdick has the reputation of being a most learned theologian. We leave it to the readers of the *Ladies' Home Journal*.
