

vindicated. The prison, and the scaffold and the gallows, war and pestilence, vindicate God's government in this world and hell in the next. The fundamental idea at the bottom of that "philosophy" may, as the Review says, be grewsome and grim, but it is also more or less idiotic. "Hereditary guilt" is pronouncing sentence on a man after he has proved an alibi. Vicarious suffering is punishing the innocent and guilty both; for the innocent has already received his punishment, and the guilty (or some one in his place) is punished for inflicting it. Here is a case which the Christian Herald prints, to show God's tender care for his little children:

"A girl who died in Paterson, N. J., on October 3rd, made a charge against the matron of a school, which may involve that lady in a trial for manslaughter. The child was an inmate of the industrial school for girls at Trenton. She alleged, in an ante mortem statement, that one day she was charged with infringing on the rules. The matron had seized her by the throat and dragged her into the corridor, where she threw her down. A strong woman came to the matron's help, and sat upon the girl, while the matron beat her with a strap. A straight jacket was then put upon her, and she was then taken to a bare, dark room, known as the dungeon, where she was kept upon bread and water for forty-eight hours. The child probably seemed to the matron a friendless creature, who might be ill used with impunity; but it is never safe to injure the most helpless of God's creatures while he rules the world."

If God is a citizen of N. J., and he must be unless he has retired to Delaware, he is inditable for manslaughter himself. A god who will stand by and see two big women strangle, and sit upon, and pound, and imprison and starve a helpless little girl is of no sort of use outside Delaware, where they still retain the whipping-post. Undoubtedly God is silent, but the priests and preachers and theological professors are still voluble.

For the Torch of Reason.

The Biblical Puzzle is Yet a Puzzle.

BY MRS. M. M. TURNER.

[An Answer to J. P. Guild in Torch of August 31st.]

Terah, the eighth in descent from Noah, had a son whom he named Abram. When Abram was 99 years old God talked with him, and said "Thy name shall be Abraham." Sarai's name was changed to Sarah, she being then 90 years old. (Gen. xvii.)

Josh. xxiv. "Thus sayeth the Lord God of Israel: Your fathers

dwelt on the other side of the flood in the old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham. . . . and they served other gods. . . . I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood and led him throughout all the land of Canaan. . . . Jacob and his children went down into Egypt . . . and afterward I brought you out of Egypt . . . and brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side of Jordan."

God recites to the assembled people the history of the Israelites, beginning (perhaps in a fit of absence of mind), beyond the Noanian flood and bringing it down to the crossing of Jordan.

The word flood is used seven times in the account in Genesis, but deluge not once. It must have been this flood which was in the minds of the multitude.

The Jordan is not a mighty river, a flood; it is fordable. Josh. ii. 7. "And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords." Judges iii. "And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan towards Moab."

No passage of the Jordan, even though the waters were supernaturally parted, would have made a mark on the centuries; it must have been a natural cataclysm of some kind that the generations remembered, and which must have been in the speaker's mind.

God, unknown to anyone but himself, may have held Terah, his sons and Methuselah in the "hollow of his hand" until the waters of the flood were abated.

God seems to have been a personal friend of Abraham, approved of the falsehoods told to Pharaoh and Abimelech, and punished those gentlemen "because of Sarah, Abraham's wife," who was over 100 years old.

Abraham was doubtful about God's promise that he was going to give him large landed possessions, and said, "Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" He was doubtful also about the promise that a child should be born to him (a legitimate child). "He fell upon his face and laughed, and said in his heart, 'Shall a child be born to him that is an hundred years old?'" (Sarah was 127 years old when she died; Abraham, nine years older, took another wife who bore him six children.) Though having little faith in the promises of his God, he does not seem to have worshiped other gods.

Who were these other Gods of whom the Hebrew god was so jealous, and who were worshiped on the other side of the flood, not of the Jordan?

That the Bible is strictly a human book and full of human errors, is the only answer to the puzzle.

Under the banner of non-resistance the church has shed the blood of millions.—[Ingersoll.]

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