

It may not be possible for us in every instance to connect the private afflictions and public judgments which God sends among us, with specific sins as their provoking cause,—but that sin and suffering, whether viewed on a small or a large scale, stand related as cause and effect, is a position fully justified by the whole tenor of revelation. To connect each calamity which befalls the individual or the nation with some particular and provoking sin—were perhaps a presumptuous invasion of the divine prerogative—but to establish the point that sin is the provoking cause of all our ills, is easily proven. “Whosoever doeth wrong *shall* suffer for the wrong he doeth.” Every man whether righteous or wicked, whose conscience is not entirely destroyed, finds that *personal* sin brings down upon him personal suffering. The God of Providence, has left here more unequivocal proofs perhaps of his moral character than any where else—for the upbraiding voice of a natural conscience, cannot be hushed into silence so long as the burden of guilt hangs over it—the cry of murder pursues the refugee in his flight, and though he escape the detection of human law, he feels that he cannot flee from the avenger within—and not only so, but even without as well as within there is a system of moral retribution, by which the sinner is made to suffer for his crime. Jacob sinned, in the matter of Esau’s birth-right, and Jacob was made to suffer for his sin. David sinned in the matter of the Hittite, and sorely did he suffer for the sin. Judas sinned in the betrayal of our Lord, and for his sin he suffered desperately within—and finally he became his own executioner. Personal sins bring down personal judgments. The Saint and the sinner alike, experience the equity of Jehovah in the administration of his providence—the voice of God within and the judgment of God without—alike unite in vindicating Jehovah’s character and punishing sin in the moral universe; and from conscience within and from providence without no man whether saint or sinner can escape. Jonah may flee from Nineveh and from the command of God, but he cannot flee from his own conscience, nor yet from the providence of God—for while the voice of the hidden monitor upbraids him within, the tempest howls without.

But it is equally true that *family* sins provoke family judgments. Eli was a good man. Yet Eli neglected a very important element in the administration of family discipline—it was a family sin—and