

Doubtless a fair part of our suffering is from our own sins but the greater part of it is the result of sin in the world rather than of our own particular sin.

It is valuable to attempt to examine the various catastrophes of the O.T. or instances where God caused calamity or difficulty to come to an individual or a group, and to see how many cases there are in which these are the result of--are stated to be a result of the individual's sin. Since we can definitely say that there is no such thing as a worked out balance between a man's suffering in this life and a man's sin in this life, the purpose of such judgment cannot be to create such a balance. It is not the performance of ~~just~~ justice, because ~~that~~ it comes in the next life. What then is the purpose. Doubtless in many cases the purpose of God's judgment in this life is to show His holiness and His goodness, to lead people, seeing the judgment, to forsake their sin, and to escape the far greater judgment that is ahead for all who continue in sin. It is to lead those whom he desires--those who are His, to turn away from sin and to follow Him more fully. It is to present examples and illustrations of His righteousness for the effect they can have upon humanity.

There are many instances in which two nations fight and God permits one nation to win. This may be a judgment of God against the nation that loses or it may be done with a specific purpose in relation to the one that wins. Thus, when the Israelites are conquered by their enemies it usually is God's chastisement or punishment upon them for their sin. On the other hand, when they win over their enemies, it is usually God's deliverance of them as a result of their turning to God. In most of the O.T. History, His primary interest is with the Israelites. In how many of these cases, we can say that the interest was in bringing judgment or punishment upon the enemy, is difficult to say. We would certainly need a precise statement from Him before we could say so.