

because of it God threatened that he would do a thing in Israel which would cause the ears of every one to tingle—he would bring a judgment on the house of Eli—because of family sin—and the judgment came. Hophni and Phineas the two ill reared sons of Eli perished in one day, whilst their good old parent whose heart trembled for the ark of God sunk beneath the sad tidings of Philistia's proud triumphs. David sinned against his own family in the matter of Uriah—and God threatened that the sword should not depart from his house. The conspiracy of Absalom, moreover, is a proof that family sins bring family judgments—the lamented death of his child which kept him weeping three days and three nights in sack-cloth and ashes, is another proof of the same fact. The curse of God is threatened against "all the *families* that call not on his name"—and the history of many a prayerless, sabbath-breaking, and sinning family furnishes a melancholy proof of the fact that family sorrow, family wretchedness, family misfortune, family disgrace, have been provoked by the family sin of the family that live without the recognition of God, and if Jehovah be a God of justice, he must vindicate his own honour and character before the eyes of the families of the earth. Let the sinner say what he will, family sin will bring down family judgment on the house of the ungodly.

Let us extend the principle, and we shall see that *social* sins provoke social judgments. Sodom and Gomorrah sinned, their cry went up to heaven, and the Lord sent down fire and brimstone and destroyed them all. The sins of Sodom were marked by peculiar aggravation, and therefore the judgment was marked by peculiar severity, and except one praying family, every family in those cities perished, and perished by the artillery of heaven, shot forth with unrestrained and desperate fury by the hand of the living God. Similarly, when we look at Babylon, and Jerusalem, and Nineveh, and Pompei, and many other cities which were once the *emporiums* of our world's commerce, and the rendezvous of our world's iniquitous inhabitants, and ask where are they? we think we hear a voice issuing from the ruins and saying, "The hand of the Lord hath done it." When God visits our cities with commercial embarrassment, or with pestilence, or famine, or plague, or sickness, or death, are we to regard such evils as merely accidental? Ought we not the rather to seek for the provoking causes of such calamities in the