

Never Give Up!

“Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you” (1 Samuel 12:23).

The practical lesson of this is that when you are tempted to cease from pleading for certain persons you must not yield to the suggestion. They have ridiculed your prayers: they tell you that they do not want them: they have even made a taunt and a jest of your pious wishes on their behalf. Never mind. Retaliate by still greater love. Do not cease to wrestle with God for them. It may be you have been very disappointed in them; your heart breaks to see how they have gone aside, yet go with your deep anxieties to the mercy-seat, and cry out again for them. What will become of them if you leave them to themselves? Do not leave off interceding, my dear friends, though you are provoked to do so in ten thousand ways...

It may be that you think, partly in unbelief, and partly through trembling anxiety, that really their doom is sealed, and they will go on to perdition. Let this rather increase the intensity of your prayer than in the least degree diminish it. Till sinners are in hell cry to God for them. As long as there is breath in their bodies and in your body cause the voice of your supplication to be heard. When once souls pass into the spirit-world prayer is unavailing, but up to the last hour it may prevail. Perhaps you have sometimes been tempted to wish you could pray for the dead; let that vain wish stimulate you to be in earnest for the living. Agonise in prayer while your entreaties can be heard. Cry mightily unto God whatsoever happens to damp your hopes, considering that it is a temptation of Satan if it is suggested to you that you should cease to supplicate.

Your husband, good woman, what if he does grow more drunken and more profane, pray for him still; for God who can draw out leviathan as with a hook, can yet take this great sinner and make a saint of him. What if your son does seem to be more profligate than ever, follow him with many entreaties, and weep before God about him still.

Loving mother and gracious father, join your fervent cries day and night at the mercy-seat and you shall yet obtain your desire. Let nothing quench the flame upon the altar, nor the hope in your souls.

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(See the sermon in Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, volume 26, page 277)