

# The Oppressed Soul Seeking Divine Interposition.

by Edward Payson

---

*The sermon emphasizes the need for someone to undertake for us, and highlights the Lord Jesus Christ as the only one able and willing to do so.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 38:14, John 6:37, Ephesians 2:8, Hebrews 7:25, James 2:26

**Topics:** "Divine Intervention", "Faith In Christ"

---

## Description

Edward Payson preaches about the need for someone to undertake for us in various aspects of life, including supporting and comforting us through trials, guiding us, assisting in overcoming spiritual enemies, and pleading our cause in heaven. He emphasizes that the only one able and willing to undertake for us is the Lord Jesus Christ, who promises to help all who come to Him in faith. Payson urges the congregation to apply to Christ for help, emphasizing the importance of a living faith that manifests in obedience and active service to God.

---

## Transcript

"O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me."

Isaiah 38:14

words compose part of a psalm, penned by Hezekiah, king of Judah, on his miraculous recovery from a dangerous disease. In the first part of this psalm, he describes the views and feelings which occupied his mind when he saw himself apparently on the brink of the grave. From this description, it appears that, though he had been one of the best kings with which God ever blessed a nation, he viewed his sins as great and numerous, and felt that he was, on account of them, justly exposed to the divine displeasure.

Hence death appeared dreadful to him, and his dread of it was increased by the darkness which, at that time, before Christ had brought life and immortality to light, hung over a future state. Hence too he was assailed by fearful apprehensions of God's anger. I reckoned, says he, that as a lion he will crush me in pieces; he will cut me off with pining sickness; from day to night he will make an end of me. In consequence of these apprehensions he could neither look nor ask for help from God with confidence, as he had been accustomed to do.

My eyes, he exclaims, fail upward; that is, I cannot look upward, cannot look to heaven for relief and consolation, as I formerly could. And when he endeavored to pray, he found that he offered nothing which deserved the name of prayer; for unbelief and despondency prevailed. Like a crane or a swallow, says he, so did I chatter; that is, my prayers were little better than the complaints of a bird entangled in the snare of the fowler. Finally, he gave up all hope, and cried in bitterness of soul, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living.

But to the righteous there ariseth light in the darkness. There did in this case. And as soon as it began to dawn, faith revived, and he cried, though still with a feeble voice, O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me; that is, be my help and deliverer, make my cause thine own, and do all that for me which thou seest to be necessary. My hearers, if language was ever uttered by man, which all men ought to adopt; if a petition was ever presented by man, which all men ought to present before the mercy-seat, it is this.

It is the very language which every soul does in effect adopt, when it applies to Jesus Christ in the exercise of faith. Would to God, I could persuade you all to adopt it from the heart. Then would your salvation be secure. I must make the attempt, though I must confess with very feeble hopes of success. With this view I shall endeavor to show, I. That you all need someone to undertake for you; in other words, you need someone to make your cause his own, and to assist you in performing that work, on the performance of which your everlasting happiness depends.

You are not indeed, like Hezekiah, on the bed of sickness, and apparently on the brink of the grave; but you soon will be there; and even before that time arrives, as well as then, and afterwards, you will need, greatly need someone to make your cause and your work his own. But, more particularly, you need someone to undertake, 1. To support and comfort you under the trials of life, and carry you safely through them. None of you know how numerous or how severe may be the trials which await you.

This remark applies with particular force to all who have not far passed the meridian of life. If you live to old age, your afflictions, in all probability, will not be few. One thing at least is almost certain. If you live to that age, you will outlive nearly all the friends and companions of your youth; nearly all whose affection and society now make life pleasant. One after another, they will drop into the grave, and each successive loss will give your heart a pang. Some, who are now your friends, will become your enemies, or at least their friendship for you will cool, and this may give you a pang still more severe.

Some of you will lose children, perhaps all your children; others will see their children conduct in such a manner, that they will often wish, though in vain, that they had been written childless: others will meet with pecuniary losses and disappointments, and perhaps be constrained to leave their children almost or altogether unprovided for. Look back upon the history of this town for a few years, and you will not doubt that some who are now wealthy will be called in their old age to struggle with want, and die in poverty.

And those who escape these trials must encounter the unavoidable evils which wait upon declining years. You must suffer pain and sickness, your senses and faculties will decline; you will be eclipsed by younger rivals; you will begin to feel that you are becoming less useful, and perhaps less respected; you will gradually lose your capacity for exertion, and for enjoyment; and every year, as it passes over your heads, will take something from your diminishing gratifications, and add something to your increasing infirmities.

Youth, beauty, vivacity and vigor will be gone never to return; and the certainty that death is not far distant will, unless you are prepared for it, embitter your reflections, and prevent you from drawing comfort from within. Such is the common lot of man. But some of you will doubtless meet with afflictions still more

severe, --and all are liable to meet with them, --afflictions, which will wring your hearts with agony, and tempt you to seek relief by forbidden means. And do you not then, need someone to undertake that he will support and comfort you under these trials, that he will make them all work together for your good, and finally bring you out purified and refined, as gold out of the furnace?

When relatives, children, and friends shall die, or prove unkind, will you need no one to supply their place in your affections, and console you for their loss? When earthly possessions are taken away, will you need no one who can give you durable riches? When your body, or your mind, or both together, shall be diseased, will you need no kind physician to administer relief? Finally, when youth and sprightliness and vigor are gone, when heart and flesh fail, will you not need someone who can be the strength of your heart, and your portion forever.

Yes, my hearers, my frail, dying hearers, you do, indeed you do, need someone who can undertake to perform all these things for you. 2. You need someone who can undertake to be your guide through life. The Scriptures assure us, that it is not in man who walketh, to direct his own steps, and a very limited observation will convince us that this assertion is strictly true. We cannot look around us without seeing numberless instances, it, which passion, prejudice and evil example lead men astray; and we must be very young indeed, or very much favored, if the same causes have not already led us into errors.

Even if men were less under the influence of these pernicious counselors than they are, yet as they cannot look into futurity, nor foresee the consequences of events, they would greatly need a guide who can do both. Such a guide is necessary even to our happiness in the present life. For one proof of this, look at the connections which men form. As the young come forward on the stage of life, they connect themselves, and can scarcely avoid connecting themselves in various ways with their fellow creatures.

They choose associates, friends, partners in business, and perhaps partners for life. Much of their success and happiness in the world depends on their making a wise choice. Yet, as they cannot search the heart, they are exceedingly liable to be deceived in the character of those with whom they form connections, and to make a choice of which they will bitterly repent. They are especially liable to such mistakes, because they form most of their connections in early life, when they are, rash, inexperienced, and unacquainted with mankind.

And how fatal may such mistakes prove. We may choose friends who are vicious or impious, and who will corrupt our principles or our morals. We may choose partners in business, who will prove imprudent or dishonest, and plunge us into inextricable embarrassments. We may choose partners for life, whose temper and conduct will make life a burden. Even if we choose those whose characters are good, we may be deceived; for how many, whose morals are correct in youth, prove unkind or licentious or intemperate in after life.

For proofs of this, look at the many unhappy families which are every where to be found. Look at the many wives, whose lives are embittered by husbands improvident, or passionate, or unfaithful, or intemperate. Once they appeared moral, amiable, affectionate; but now how changed! Look too at the husbands whose peace is destroyed, whose home is disturbed by the temper or conduct of their partners; and who are driven to seek abroad that quiet which their own firesides do not afford.

Now who can assure you, my young friends, that you will not form connections which will prove productive of similar evils! Who can assure you that persons, who are now apparently all that you can wish them to be, will not hereafter adopt vicious courses, and pierce your hearts through with many sorrows? Surely

then you need a guide, a counsellor, who knows not only what is in man, but what every man will prove, to be in future life. Without such a guide, you are every day liable to mistakes which will shed a disastrous influence on all your succeeding days.

But if you need such a guide as it respects this world, how much more as it respects the world to come. You do not; I presume, doubt, that your happiness hereafter will depend upon the path which you pursue here. Now consider a moment how many different paths present themselves to your choice, each one of which is declared by those who walk in it to be right. Consider how numerous, and how various are the religions opinions which prevail in the world; and in how different a manner different interpreters explain the Scriptures.

Consider too, your own passions, inclinations and prejudices, and how powerful an influence they exert to lead you astray. Consider that, not your hearts only; but even your intellectual faculties are injuriously affected by sin, and that, ten thousand temptations and evil examples will assail you. Now who is to guard you against all these evils, who is to teach you which of all the ways that open before you, is the only right way? Who is to guide you in that way, and prevent you from turning aside; when you have found it?

Surely you need some infallible guide to do this; someone who can and will undertake to instruct and guide you in the way of peace. Not more does the helpless infant need a mother's care, than you need such a counsellor and guide. If any of you are still unconvinced of this truth, cast your eyes around upon your fellow travelers, and upon those who have preceded you in the journey of life. See how many of them have wandered and lost themselves. Hear the voice of inspiration assuring you, that comparatively few of them have found the straight and narrow way to life, and that none of them ever found it without a guide.

And are you wiser, can you hope to be more successful than all who have preceded you? Can you, alone and unguided, safely prosecute that journey which has proved fatal to so many thousands of your race? Still more do you need someone who will undertake to afford you effectual assistance in subduing your spiritual enemies, the enemies which oppose your salvation. These enemies are numerous and powerful, artful and indefatigable; they have already enslaved and destroyed myriads of your fellow creatures, and no man ever overcame them without assistance.

Of these enemies the first class is composed of your own sinful appetites, passions, and inclinations. If you know anything of yourselves you know that these are adversaries to your salvation. You know that they are perpetually aiming to lead you astray, to carry you far from God, to withdraw your attention from spiritual and eternal objects, and to oppose at every step your return to duty. You know that, if a man follows where they lead, he will never become religious. And is it easy to avoid following where they lead?

Is it easy to turn them, and make them point toward heaven? Is it easy to bring them into willing subjection to reason and revelation? If you ever made the attempt, you know it is not. You know it is like attempting to make water flow up an acclivity. And do you then need no one to assist you against these enemies? enemies who are seated and fortified in your own bosoms, who are a part of yourselves, who never sleep when you are awake, and who seem to be not only irritated but even strengthened by opposition?

Can even the most moral young person before me be sure that these enemies will not render him the slave of open vice and immorality before he dies? Can he be sure that his appetites will not lead him to gluttony, intemperance or sensuality? Can he be sure that his passions will not betray him into other vices equally ruinous? No; and he who feels most confident of his own strength, only betrays his own self-ignorance, and is most likely to fall. Hundreds have died drunkards, debauchees, and even

murderers, who once as little feared becoming such characters as any of you do now; and who, if their future conduct had been revealed to them, would have exclaimed with Hazeel, What! is the servant, a dog, that he should do this great thing?

And even if your appetites and passions should not lead to open ire, they may keep you in an irreligious state, and thus prevent your salvation. Another of these enemies is the world. I use the term in its most extensive sense, as including all worldly objects and Worldly men. It would require a volume to exhibit the various ways in which the world, used in this sense, opposes your salvation; I can now do little more than hint at them. I only ask, do not the pleasures and gratifications of the world allure you?

Do not its honors and possessions entangle your affections? Do not its cares and concerns occupy your mind? Does not the dread of its contempt influence you? Does not the weight of its example, the torrent of its customs press on you with a force almost irresistible? May not our Saviour say of thousands in every age, as St. Paul said of Demas, They have forsaken me, having loved this present world? In a word, does not the world weigh almost as heavily upon the souls of men, as this globe itself would weigh upon their bodies, were they placed under its pressure?

Say then, frail, sinful mortal, can you unassisted bear up against this pressure? Can you, single handed, withstand a world in arms, a world too, which has so strong a party in your own breasts, ever ready to betray you into its power? My friends, the man who supposes that he needs no assistance against this enemy, no mighty ally to undertake for him, never attempted to subdue it, but has ever been, and still is, its willing captive, its slave. I might mention the tempter, him whom inspiration emphatically styles the adversary, as another enemy who opposes your salvation; but those whom I am addressing would probably believe nothing that I could say on this subject, even though I should enforce it by quotations from the Scriptures.

I must however remind you of the inspired assertion, that those who would be soldiers of Jesus Christ, the Captain of our salvation, must wrestle not only against flesh and blood, not only against their own sinful passions and the opposition of sinful men, but against principalities, against powers, against spiritual wickedness, or the spirits of wickedness. And I must assure you that those, who were possessed by evil spirits in our Saviour's time, would as soon have freed themselves from these tyrants, as any man unassisted will free himself from those snares of the devil, in which he takes and holds men captive at his will.

But, 4. Most of all do you need someone who can and who will undertake to plead your cause in heaven, and effect a reconciliation between you and your justly offended God. You are all, my hearers, sinners. That you are so, at least in some degree, none of you will deny; and if you are sinners, even in the smallest degree, if you have ever committed one sin, you are condemned by that law, of which every sin is a transgression; your lives are forfeited, nor can you ever redeem the forfeiture.

Though you should offer thousands of sacrifices, and ten thousands of rivers of oil; though you should give your first-born for your transgression, the fruit of your bodies for the sin of your souls, it would not avail. The sentence is pronounced, and the decree has gone forth, it is graven in the records of heaven, and has from thence been copied into the Bible, that by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified, that in the sight of God no living man can be justified by any works or merits of his own.

No; the honor of God's violated law must be secured, the claims of inflexible justice must be satisfied, sufficient atonement must be made for sin, a mediator, who can negotiate peace between God and the

sinner on proper terms must be found, an intercessor, an advocate must be provided, whose voice can be heard in heaven, who can approach the burning, unsullied throne of the Eternal to plead your cause; who can enforce his plea by considerations, the efficacy of which God will acknowledge; who can throw the broad shield of his merits over your unworthiness and your sins, and on the ground of those merits obtain your pardon, your acceptance, your salvation.

Unless this can be done, unless such a mediator and intercessor will undertake for you, and make your cause his own, the cause must go against you, the sentence of condemnation already pronounced must stand irreversible. For yourselves you will be unable to plead. For yourselves you will not dare to plead, for every mouth shall be stopped, and the whole world stand guilty before God. O, then, how greatly do you need someone to undertake for you. When death approaches, with judgment and eternity just ready to burst upon you, how will you need one to whisper peace to your troubled conscience, and soothe you with assurances that he will make your cause his own.

How much will you need one to support and comfort and cheer you, when passing through the dark valley of the shadow of death. And when you shall stand naked and defenseless before the eye of your Judge, that eye from the terrors of which the heavens and the earth will flee affrighted; when the books shall be opened in which all your sins are recorded, and when your speechless tongue will have no word to utter in arrest of judgment, how much will you need one who can say with authority, Spare that sinner, I have undertaken to answer for him, I have made his cause my own.

Having thus shown that you all need someone to undertake for you, I would proceed to show, II. That there is no one on earth or in heaven, who is both able and willing to undertake for you, except the Lord Jesus Christ. On this point the Scriptures are full and explicit. They inure us that he alone is the light of the world; that he is the shepherd and Bishop of souls; that no man cometh to the Father but by him; that it is his grace, which is sufficient for us; that he is the only Mediator between God and man, and that there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved.

If you recollect the several things mentioned in this discourse, which he, who would undertake for us, must do, and the various offices which he must sustain, you will, I think, be convinced of this truth. You will be convinced that no one can possess both the ability and the disposition to undertake for you who is not, at once, God and man. He must be God or he cannot have the ability to do it. He must be omniscient and omnipresent, or how could he teach and guide with infallible skill millions of beings in different parts of the world, and at the same time manage their concerns in heaven?

He must be Almighty, or how could he support and comfort these millions under all their various trials, make them victorious over all their enemies, and finally raise their bodies and souls to heaven. He must be infinite in goodness, condescension, patience and compassion, or he would never consent to undertake for creatures so unworthy and perverse as we are. And while it is necessary that he, who would undertake for us must possess these perfections of God, it is equally necessary that he should be man.

No one could perform the work of a mediator between God and man in one person; nor could any other make satisfaction or atonement for our sins. He who would make atonement for the sins of man, must perfectly obey the divine law and suffer its penalty. He must die, must shed his blood in our stead; for inspiration declares that, without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. But as God, Christ could not die. As God, he had no blood to shed. It was therefore necessary that he should assume a nature which could die; a nature in which he could shed his blood; the nature of those beings who had

sinned, and for whom atonement was to be made.

Agreeably, we are told that, forasmuch as those for whom he died were flesh and blood, he also took part of the same, that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death. And while his human nature enabled him to die, his divinity gave worth and efficacy to his death, and qualified him to plead for his people efficaciously, as one who had authority. In him alone then, who was Immanuel, God with us, God manifest in the flesh, can we find one who is qualified to undertake for us.

In him alone do we find one, who can do all that for our bodies and our souls, for time and eternity, which our welfare requires. And all this, I remark, III. He will, he does undertake to do for every one who applies to him in the exercise of faith. To everyone, however vile, sinful, guilty, and wretched, who in faith comes to him crying, Lord, I am oppressed, ruined, lost, undertake for me, his promise is sure. He never did refuse to hear the cry of such a suppliant. Him that cometh unto me, he says, I will in no wise cast out.

To everyone that thus comes to him, his language is, What wilt thou that I should do for thee? Wouldst thou be enlightened, instructed, guided? Follow me, and I will teach thee the good and the right way; I will guide thee into all truth, I will guide thee even unto death. Wouldst thou be supported and consoled under the various trials which await thee in life, and carried safely through them? Trust in me; and I will be thy comforter; I will even cause thee to glory in affliction, and to be joyful in tribulation.

Wouldst thou be assisted to overcome thy sinful propensities, the world and the tempter? Rely on me and my grace shall be sufficient for thee and make thee more than conqueror. Wouldst thou have someone to care for thine eternal interests, and plead thy cause in heaven? Commit it to me, and I will plead it successfully, for I possess all power in heaven and on earth, and ever live to make intercession for all who trust in me. Wouldst thou have thy soul saved with an everlasting salvation?

Entrust it to my care, and I will undertake to save it, in defiance of all that can oppose. Cast all thy concerns, and care, and wants, upon me, and I will undertake to conduct and provide for them all; I will make with thee an everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things and sure. And now, my hearers, are not your understandings at least convinced that you need someone to undertake for you? Are you not convinced that the Lord Jesus Christ alone can effectually undertake for you?

And are you not convinced that, if you apply to him in the exercise of faith, he will undertake for you? Why will you not all then thus apply to him? Why not imitate St. Paul, and be enabled to say with him, I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day. What St. Paul had committed to Christ was his soul with all its concerns. And he knew that, in consequence of his committing it to Christ, Christ had undertaken to keep it, to save it: an undertaking which he would infallibly accomplish.

On this all the apostle's hope of salvation was founded. And no man can found a scriptural hope of salvation on any other ground. If St. Paul, after all his sufferings and sacrifices and labors, would trust in nothing but this, surely we can safely trust in nothing else. O, then, be persuaded to cry from the heart in the language of our text, Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me. By all the scenes of sorrow, and trial and affliction through which you must pass; by all the dangerous mistakes, the fatal errors into which, as frail, fallible, short-sighted creatures you are liable to fall; by the number, malice, and strength of the enemies which oppose your salvation, and which must be overcome; by all the sin of which you have been guilty, and for which pardon must be obtained; by your dying agonies; by that dread hour in which you must appear before God in judgment, I conjure you to secure, without delay, a comforter, a guide, a

protector; an intercessor, a Saviour, by applying believingly to Christ to undertake for you.

But perhaps some of you will say, we have already done this. We have long since believed in Christ for salvation, we rely upon the mercy of God through him; we have entrusted all our spiritual and immortal interests to his care, and therefore we need feel no anxiety respecting them. We trust that we are safe, and that all is well. My hearers, these things are easily said, but thousands say them who never trusted in Christ, and for whom he never undertook. To such an one an apostle said, Thou sayest, I have faith; but wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

The faith which applies to Christ is a living faith, that is, a faith which is alive, and which makes its possessor alive in the service of God; a faith which, while it relies on Christ alone, is as active, and diligent, and watchful, and prayerful, and self-denying, as if it relied entirely on itself. Let those, whose pretended faith is not of this kind, remember that Christ saves his people, not simply by working for them, but by working in them, and thus disposing and enabling them to work out their own salvation.

When he undertakes for a sinner, he undertakes not to save him without love, repentance, obedience, and a diligent, humble use of the means of grace, but he undertakes to make him perform all these duties. Be assured then that, if you live in the neglect of all these duties, Christ has not undertaken for you, and that, of course, you never truly applied to him. But apply to him in sincerity, and you will soon find a change in yourselves, which will prove that he has undertaken for you, that he has begun to work in your hearts, that he is guiding you into a knowledge of the truth; that he is interceding for you at the bar of God.

Yes, truly believe in him, and you will soon have evidence that he has undertaken for you; for every one that believeth hath the witness in himself. My hearers, will you not be persuaded to do this? Must we have the pain of seeing you struggling with afflictions, led astray by errors; subdued and carried captive by your spiritual enemies, and finally dying without hope, and appearing before God without an intercessor, when such a comforter, teacher, and helper, and intercessor as the Lord Jesus Christ, offers to undertake for you?

If I can prevail with no others, let me, at least, hope to prevail with those of you who are afflicted, with those of you who feel ignorant, with those of you who feel burdened by conscious sinfulness and guilt, with those who are asking, What shall we do to be saved? To all such, this ought to prove a word in season. O let them receive it as such. Let them at once repair to the almighty and compassionate Saviour of sinners, and earnestly cry, Lord Jesus have mercy on us, for we are oppressed.

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/edward-payson/the-oppressed-soul-seeking-divine-interposition/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**