

# The Cure for Unbelief

Horatius Bonar

*“And He said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.”*

—Mark 9:29

My dear brethren, I do not come to address you after the manner of man’s wisdom, nor with words of human eloquence, but to speak to your souls of the things which concern your eternity;—to stir you up to seek in good earnest salvation for yourselves and for others. It is a light thing that you should be attracted and pleased,—even were I able to do so,—but it is no light matter that you should be moved to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, God working in you to will and to do of His good pleasure. It is a light thing that the admiration of many should be obtained; but it is no light matter that the multitudes who are now far from God should be moved to return to Him from whom they “have revolted and gone” (Jer 5:23). The gratification of an hour is all that depends upon the one; but eternity,—a sinner’s eternity,—hangs upon the other.

Therefore it is that I have chosen for this day’s meditations, a subject which affords but little scope for eloquence or fancy, but which allows me a very full opportunity of speaking simply and with searching closeness of your present religious state, and of pointing out to you what our text suggests as the remedy for the very worst state of spiritual malady under which an individual, or a church, can labour. It is for this end that I have chosen these words to discourse from, on the occasion of my coming amongst you, that I may, at the very commencement of my ministry, declare what appears to be one of the chief causes of our low and languid condition;—that I may show you how much, how *very much* depends upon the people of God,—upon their “prayer and fasting,”—in the way of securing the divine remedy.

We have need, my brethren, to look well around us, and to consider the foundations upon which we are building for the life eternal. We have need to look within us, and consider well what sort of religion it really is which we profess; what sort of devotion it is with which we exercise our souls. For it is to be feared that much of what is called religion with us, is a mere outward name—a shadow, a spectre, with nothing of solidity or life. The kind of religion which men now prefer, is that which will not go very deep into their spiritual nature, nor search very narrowly the secret recesses of the heart. They love a religion somewhat softened in its aspect and outlines, whose doctrines may be well adorned and set forth in words of human eloquence, so as to gratify the ear and attract the fancy. They talk of prizing “the cross,” it may be,—but then it seems to them too rude and bare; they would have its nakedness covered over with something more of ornament. And thus adorned, it no doubt attracts the eye of many who deemed it foolishness before. But then it is the simple cross no more. The “enticing words of man’s wisdom” have made it of none effect. The faith of those who thus receive it, stands in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God. It speaks no more of Jesus only, and His all-sufficiency. It attracts many to Him now, who are not drawn of the Father (John 6:44).

These men, of whom we are speaking, have no objection to hear you discourse upon the doctrines of religion and mysteries of faith, provided you do this eloquently, so as to gratify their taste, and lead them smoothly along. But search their hearts; come close to their consciences; strike deep, strike home, and straightway they are offended. Speak to them of faith, and they will listen to you with attention, and perhaps commend your discourse; but tell them that faith is altogether a world-overcoming, self-renouncing principle that hangs upon God alone; tell them that if they have not cast off that world, renounced that self, and learned to hang entirely upon God, their religion is but a name, their faith a mockery, and they will turn away in weariness, if not in disgust. Speak to them of prayer,—its nature, its reasonableness, its duty,—and they will give all heed to your address; but call upon them solemnly to a *life of prayer* and heavenly fellowship,—tell them that prayer is the Christian’s vital breath, the Christian’s native air,—speak to them closely of the example of our Lord, who spent whole nights in prayer upon the solitary mountains, and they will smile at your enthusiasm, or be offended at your importunity.

Now, it is just in order to expose this false appetite in religion,—this false taste in devotion,—that we must bring the plain and naked truth to bear upon their consciences, that they may see how much of this religion of theirs consists merely in a desire to be gratified. We must go at once to the root of the matter,—to the very vitals of the Christian life, and lay them all before the eye. We must take men from general discoursing *about* Christ, to Christ Himself—to His life as the model of theirs. We must take them to His labours, to His prayers, to His

fastings, and ask them wherein they have walked in His footsteps, or approved themselves His followers. We must take them to the high examples of patriarchs, of prophets, and apostles, and show how they walked with God in prayer. We must take them to the Christian's closet, and show them his hidden life, his hidden intercourse with God, his joys and his sorrows, of which the world knows nothing, and with which it cannot intermeddle. When lamenting that there is such a melancholy deficiency in the warmth, the simplicity, the zeal of our day; when complaining of the abounding iniquity on every side, we would remind them that it is not by complaints and lamentations that this deficiency is to be supplied; that there is another and more efficacious remedy put into their hands by God,—that “this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.”

The original allusion in our text was, as you are aware, to the casting out of devils. A case had been brought to the disciples,—one of the most virulent and malignant kind. A father had brought his son to the disciples, possessed with a devil, and in the most deplorable circumstances. The disciples were unable to cast him out. It was a case too peculiar and too hard for them. The young man was then brought to Jesus immediately upon His descent from the Mount of Transfiguration. Jesus, after reproving the faithlessness of His disciples, spake to the unclean spirit, which came forth at His command. When He came into the house, after performing the cure, His disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast him out?” He told them, that this was a case of the worst and most hopeless kind, and that it, therefore, required greater faith than was necessary in other cases;—“This kind,” says He, “can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting.”

Though the circumstances of this case are different from anything which now takes place amongst us, yet the principle upon which our Lord's remark is founded remains the same. Though Satan is no longer permitted visibly to take possession of and exercise his cruel power over the bodies of men, there is a mighty influence which he still possesses. Though he was seen like lightning falling from heaven, yet it was only that he might come down to the earth, “having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time” (Rev 12:12). He is working with all the power of his consummate craft to lead men captive at his will, and to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. Manifold are his wiles. He works secretly now, indeed, not openly as in former ages; yet, not the less on that account are his snares to be dreaded, yea, all the more, because he has hidden from the eye of sense his own revolting aspect, and taken on the veil of an angel of light. He sees some professors careless, and he lulls them into still deeper slumber by making them believe that all is well. He sees others with a fair and honourable character among men, and he persuades them that, having this, they need no more. He sees others following the full external round of religious duty, that with the more contentment they may pursue their career of worldliness, and he persuades them that it is foolish and unscriptural to be righteous overmuch. He sees others zealous in the faith, and his plan is to lead them over the limits of sobriety into the paths of error and delusion. He sees others restless in feeling and unstable in opinion, and he urges them on in pursuit of novelties in doctrine in order to feed that excitement which may keep them from following “the footsteps of the flock” (Song 1:8). He sees others timorous and slothful, and by beguiling them into the belief that it would be presumption in them to adopt any opinions not sanctioned by “the majority,” he keeps them from founding their belief on Scripture alone, and causes them to steal the words of the Lord every one from his neighbour (Jer 23:30). He sees others zealous to maintain good works, and he tells them that private devotion is quite a secondary thing, to be gone about at leisure hours, and that their work can be accomplished as well without prayer and fasting as with it. Others he finds willing enough to do something, but afraid almost to stir a finger lest they offend others, and he strives to bring those men still more under the *slavery of public opinion*, so that, unless seconded by it, they are afraid to move a single step or utter a single word.

But let me make a fuller application of the text; showing how the expression, “this kind,” refers to our own spiritual circumstances, and pointing out the great and efficacious remedy suggested by our Lord for such cases,—“this kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting.” Now, as the irreligion of our day is of much deeper root and stronger texture than that of former times, so must the means for removing it be more vigorous and decisive. Whatever might have formerly availed for effecting the cure, nothing now will be of service but the strongest measures. The disease is more malignant; the obstacles to be overcome are greater than ever; for “in the last days perilous times shall come”: “Little children, it is the last time, and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time” (2 Tim 3:1; 1 John 2:18).

*First*, then, let me observe, the *unbelief* of our day is one of the most formidable obstacles which lie in our way. By unbelief, I do not mean that bold infidelity which has so extensively lifted its front amongst us. I speak of that subtlety of Satan whereby he has contrived to rob spiritual things of all their power and reality; and if not to lead us to doubt of their existence, at least to withdraw us from their close contact and immediate influence; to deprive them of their *personality*, and to present them to us as vague, airy abstractions, which float through the understanding, but which never close round the heart.

Unbelief is the opposite of faith; and faith is said by the apostle to be “the *substance* of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Unbelief, then, is that which reduces things hoped for to a shadow, and takes from us the demonstration of things not seen. It is this consummation of his hellish craft that Satan is now seeking to achieve. The world is not yet ripe for denying God with the open lip, and throwing off altogether the yoke of spiritual things. His object, therefore, is to remove the substance while he allows us to retain the shadow; to extract the jewels while he lets us keep the casket; to destroy “the power” while he suffers us to retain “the name.” This is unbelief in its subtlest and most specious form—eating out the vitals of religion, while the skeleton stands entire in every joint and bone. He seems, at last, to have discovered wherein the mighty strength of Christianity lay;—even in the closeness of that contact with the world unseen into which it brings us, and the consequent influence which things spiritual thus possess over every meaner hope and joy. He is, therefore, now busied in removing these realities to a distance, that he may neutralize the power of the religion of Christ. Both heaven and hell is he seeking to convert into shadows; and even to hide *himself* from the eye of men; persuading them to doubt his own existence, and to deny his personality; pointing the jest against himself, and scoffing at men’s notions of his power and presence, as the dreams of the credulous, the dregs of a darker time, too gross and irrational for an enlightened age like this!

He is interposing a veil between things possessed and things hoped for,—and that is *unbelief*. He is drawing an impassable gulf between things seen and unseen,—and that is unbelief. He is cutting off the communication between time and eternity, severing the link that bound the two together,—and that is unbelief. He is persuading us that the present is the only substantial reality, and the future but a dim and distant shadow,—a possibility, or, at the most, a probability, but not a certainty;—and that is unbelief. The mighty work of unbelief, however, which he is especially striving to effect, is to draw a veil between us and Christ. This is the grand design which he seems especially to be labouring to effect in these last days. To separate Christ from the world, and the world from Christ, yea, to take Christ out of the world altogether, and to make us believe we can do well enough without Him,—this, this is especially his aim! To take Christ out of our religion, out of our theology, out of our education, out of our government, out of our thoughts and hearts,—this he labours by every agency to effect!

Well has he succeeded! With the withering blight of this awful unbelief has he laid waste many a fair portion of the vineyard of the Lord. I appeal to you, my brethren, who know something of the reality of spiritual things, if you have not, in some measure, felt the ruinous influence of this devastating curse? There are some of you, I am sure, if not many, who have often said to yourselves, and, perhaps, remarked to others,—“surely something is wrong with us;—there is a chilling, straitening influence abroad,—the water of life flows languidly along, as if it were drying up,—the pastures are seared;—a cloud seems to be drawn over the Sun of righteousness, so that we feel not now, as once our fathers did, the genial warmth and brightness of His healing wings.” Have you not often, perhaps unconsciously, given vent to feelings such as these? And, when in much disquietude of soul, you have anxiously asked yourselves, what can be the reason of all this? you have made many a conjecture as to the cause of such a state of things, ascribing it to this circumstance and that,—to this and that event,—to your own deficiency or to the feebleness and remissness of those who were set over you. Have you not? Well, and were you satisfied with your reasons? were you convinced that you had discovered the very root of the evil? Or, were you not, after all, compelled to feel that there was still something about it which you could not comprehend?

In such circumstances, were you never led to conjecture that there might be a work of the evil one in all this;—a deep-laid and well-veiled device for marring your whole work without manifestly interfering at all? Were your eyes never opened to see the snare of unbelief in which he is now so skilfully entangling his thousands?—to see how his object is to cut off all communication between you and your God, to eat out the core of that faith which is the very substance of things hoped for? Yes, my brethren, search and see if this be not Satan’s mighty snare,—if this be not the influence with which he has infected the atmosphere all around you.

This is the reason why you draw the breath of spiritual life so heavily and with such an oppressive effort. This is the reason why your eye is oftentimes so dim and clouded that you cannot see afar off, nor realize, with any vividness of spiritual perception, the glory that is yet to be revealed. Satan has clouded the atmosphere with that hellish vapour which makes you breathe so heavily, and drawn over your eyes that specious veil which so effectually, though unconsciously, contracts your vision.

And what, my brethren, are you to do, with such a withering, darkening influence abroad? Who shall give you power to pierce these overshadowing clouds, and rise above the region of their oppressive vapours? How shall you once more breathe the fresh air of heaven, and rejoice in the purity of its blessed light,—regain your lost freshness of vision, and look freely out once more upon the morning star? My brethren, the remedy is at hand: “Prayer and *fasting*”;—here is the appointed cure,—the cure which God has put into your hands, and of whose efficacy He has assured you. I do not mean, at this time, to enter into the illustration of these particular duties,—*both* of which are too exactly specified to allow us to suppose that *either* can be spared. You understand generally what they are; and there is not so much necessity for explaining their nature as for enforcing their practice. It is to the latter, then, rather than to the former point that I wish to turn your thoughts.

Here, then, is the evil on the one hand, and here is the cure on the other. You feel and lament the disease, will you not put forth the hand and apply the remedy? You have often, it may be, said to yourselves in weariness and disappointment, “It is all in vain; I labour, but there is no fruit; I plan and strive, but there is no profit.” And why is it thus? why is your way hedged up with thorns (Hosea 2:6), and why are the steps of your strength straitened? (Job 18:7). Because you have stinted your prayers and *fastings*, and perhaps also worshipped the labour of your own hands. “Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My name.” You thought it enough if you were active and zealous; or, at least, if you asked the general, customary blessing upon your labours. But the heavens are iron and brass; hard and impenetrable: and how can you expect your customary, cold petitions to pierce so dark, so dense a mass of covering? No; it is not by a few general, formal prayers that this withering blight of unbelief is to be charmed out of our atmosphere. It is by being instant in prayer day and night; by redeeming many an hour for prayer which we are wont to spend in vanity, or even, it may be, in the acquisition of what we may call “useful knowledge”; it is by praying as individuals, by praying as families, by uniting in prayer with each other, that this great work is to be accomplished; “for this kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting.”

I have told you, my brethren, that there is a blight shed over us by Satan; that the Prince of the power of the air has infected the very atmosphere with his oppressive influence. But I would also tell you, that above and beyond this unbelieving atmosphere, there is a cloud charged with heaven’s own refreshing rain; a cloud which God has hung above this land of ours, and which in mercy He still keeps suspended there, full of genial showers. It is to draw down the riches of that cloud that we call you to prayer and fasting. And shall I tell you, that there is such a glorious cloud floating above you, and shall you not be anxious to draw down upon ourselves the plenteous showers of heaven, that “the parched ground may become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water”? Impossible! You must surely be desirous of blessings so rich and plenteous. Let then your prayer and fasting come up before God, like the prayer of Elijah upon Mount Carmel, even until seven times, and be assured there shall come an abundant rain. The showers of heaven shall descend upon us,—upon our church, upon our nation, upon our parish, upon our schools, upon our families! Is this not worth the praying for, even though our faith should be tried for many a weary day and hour? “Oh, it is already (to use the language of another) as if heaven had begun to close upon us. How sparingly does the dew of the Spirit fall. How few arise from the dead; and how long is it since a plenteous shower of heavenly rain has refreshed us. My friends, what is the cause of this? Has an Elijah stood forth in the midst of us with his word, ‘As the Lord liveth, there shall not be dew nor rain three years.’ Or does Elijah sleep, forgetting to reopen what was shut up? Church of God, thou little flock of Israel, thou people of His possession, thou art as Elijah! Yes, thy voice can call forth clouds of rain. Arise and call upon thy God.”

*Second.* The deadness and apathy of our day may be comprehended in the words of our text, as things which come not forth but by prayer and fasting. These points we shall touch but briefly, as we have already in part noticed them under our former head. Our valley is truly a valley of dry bones,—exceeding many and exceeding dry. There is not only a blight upon the pastures, but there is an absolute dearth. The absence of the Sun of righteousness is most deplorably felt in the utter coldness and lifelessness which are shed over us. The external

aspect of the frame is fair and goodly, but the pulse has ceased to throb, the blood has ceased to circulate, the living spirit is away. The outward form of the temple is still preserved;—its walls, its courts, its priests, its altars, its sacrifices;—but the Shekinah has departed.

We preach;—but where are the living words that once poured themselves from lips touched with fire from the ever-burning altar;—words which not merely “took with ravishment the thronging audience,” but which, sharper than a two-edged sword, penetrated the very soul and spirit? You hear;—but where are the hungry, thirsty souls that used to drink in refreshment from the preacher’s lips, and go home rejoicing in the goodness of God’s holy place? You receive the sacraments;—but where is the strength imparted from that consecrated bread,—the overflowing joy communicated by that hallowed wine;—when men’s feet were made “like hind’s feet” (Psa 18:33), treading upon the high places of the earth, and having the range of mountains for their pastures? (Job 39:8). You read the sacred word;—but where is the reviving power with which every syllable was wont to overflow? You pray;—but where is the breathing of the spirit, the bursting forth of the soul, the prostration of the whole man? You labour in your works of piety among old and young;—but where are the glorious effects once felt among us, when old and young were melted into penitence and dissolved in love? You name the name of Jesus;—but even that name seems to have lost its quickening power in your mouths.

This kind then can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting. It is only in this way that we can expect this death-like apathy to be removed, and life diffused once more through the chambers of death. And, oh, if the people of God who can prize in some measure the value of spiritual blessings, would but set themselves in good earnest by prayer and *fasting* to implore them; if they who fear the Lord would speak often one to another, then would the Lord hearken and hear (Mal 3:16), and they should receive for themselves, for their families, for their church, for their nation, for the world, the abundance of spiritual life and health according to our Saviour’s promise, which abides still the same to us as to the church of old,—“If *two* of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt 18:19). Ask, then, and ye shall receive. Ask life, and ye shall have it, both for yourselves and for as many as you intercede for. Ask a revival, and ye shall have it. Ask the Holy Spirit, and He shall be given unto you (Luke 11:13). All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing ye shall receive.

I intended to have gone over several other particulars, which we might include under the expression “this kind”;—several other evils which are not to be removed, several other blessings which are not to be obtained but by “prayer and fasting.” I intended to have laid before you the spirit of worldliness which prevails so fatally amongst us; the frivolity and folly, the vanity and show which scatter everything like serious thought and incapacitate the soul for communion with heavenly things; that false charity which thinks no man the worse for his religious opinions however unscriptural; that religious indifference which treats doctrinal opinions as the mere wranglings of controversy, which, while for the sake of peace and harmony it would exclude *religion* whenever *it* might give offence, would overturn the world sooner than give up one tittle of its opinions in any secular matter; that subtle scepticism,—Satan’s subtlest delusion as it is his last,—which says, “After all, there can be no certainty for fallible man, and perhaps I who believe in the Bible may be wrong, and my neighbour who denies it may be right.” These prevalent evils I might have noticed had time not failed me. But I must leave you to extract from what I have already said the application of my text to these different topics. These can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting.

In concluding, I cannot help again calling your thoughts to the solemn duties here set before you. They are duties which, however carelessly and imperfectly attended to by many, who have a high and fair profession, are yet duties without which we have no right to expect the blessings which we profess to desire. It is not mere bustling and speaking that will bring down the blessing. It is not the wisdom of our schemes, it is not the earnestness of our zeal, it is not the favourable position of our circumstances, it is not any nor all these together that will draw down the promised grace. They are right and praiseworthy, but they are not the blessing. It is a matter of devout acknowledgment to God that even those things remain,—but still they are not the promised Spirit. Therefore, while we plan and labour and are zealous in this best of works, let us never forget that the obstacles we have to encounter, the enemies we have to face, are not to be surmounted in this way alone. Let us remember that this kind cometh not out but by prayer and fasting.

Here then, my brethren, is your stronghold, your refuge, your weapons of war. Here is the “tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men” (Song 4:4),—of men

who through the prayer of faith have been made strong out of weakness, have waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens (Heb 11:34). By this we stand against the wiles of the devil. By this we wrestle, not merely with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with spiritual wickedness in high places. 'Tis prayer then that puts on the whole armour of God; 'tis prayer that girds up the loins of your mind; 'tis prayer that feeds your lamps and keeps them alway burning. 'Tis prayer that burnishes the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation. 'Tis prayer that edges the sword of the Spirit and makes it quick and powerful. 'Tis prayer that sustains us in every conflict and gives us at last the victory as it gave to Jacob of old, when, after wrestling all night with God at Peniel, he exclaimed, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me."

In coming amongst you here, my brethren, the first thing I ask of you is *your prayers*. Not your customary, your general, your formal prayers. Keep these idle compliments,—these regular, it may be, but too often unmeaning pieces of courtesy, to yourselves. These I ask not. If these are all you have to give, I shall be poor indeed. If I have nothing but these to hold up my feeble hands, how shall Israel's victory over Amalek be ours? What I ask is your earnest, your unwearied, your believing, wrestling prayers. Nothing else will do, for "this kind cometh out by nothing but by prayer and fasting."

Oh, my brethren, if thus we were to meet each other every Sabbath day, what might not these days of rest be to us?—days of refreshing,—days of unearthly joy, earnest of the everlasting day! If thus we were to come together into the sanctuary, what might not be the blessing expected, the wonders done in the midst of us by the right hand of God! If our sermons were, so to speak, the concentrated essence of a whole week's prayers; if your hearts were the prepared soil of a whole week's converse with your Bible and your God, what might not our meetings here be on each returning Sabbath! What might not this place be to us all,—"None other but the house of God, yea the very gate of heaven." What might not be the blessing which would overflow upon all around us;—upon the careless professor, upon the unconverted multitude, upon the old and upon the young; upon our church, our schools, our whole parish together! Thus would we grow in grace and strength, rising to the measure of the stature of perfect men in Christ. Thus would we triumph over every difficulty, every obstacle, every opposition. Thus would we silence the gainsayer, and find that "when a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov 16:7). Thus would we know the walk of faith, and learn the life of love,—that love which is the fulfilling of the law—that love which suffereth long and is kind, which envieth not, which vaunteth not itself, which is not puffed up, which doth not behave itself unseemly, which seeketh not her own, which is not easily provoked, which thinketh no evil, which rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, which never faileth (1 Cor 13:4-8). Thus would we be united in inseparable bonds, being of one heart and of one soul;—thus would we enjoy and impart the blessing.

To this, then, my brethren, I call you, at the very outset of my ministry among you, that through your prayers and the anointing of the Holy Ghost, I may come to you in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. It is to prayer I urge you—to prayer and *fasting*—to prayer as the appointed remedy for all those spiritual maladies which we profess to lament—to prayer as the means of a revival in the midst of us—to prayer in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the strength of that Holy Spirit who maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered—to prayer for yourselves, prayer for your nation, prayer for your church, prayer for your parish, *prayer for ME!*

Come then, my people, enter into thy chambers and shut thy doors about thee until the indignation be overpast (Isa 26:20). Amid the coldness of a decaying world, here find vitality and warmth. Amid the withering blight of a false-hearted profession, here find sincerity and vigour. Amid the unbelief and emptiness of a world that has forgotten its eternal destiny, here find reality and substance. Amid the profane indifference of men, who have cast off the love of Christ and make no difference between His friends and foes, here find decision and devotedness. Amid the vanity, the folly, the frivolity, the abounding wickedness of a world now ripe for judgment and preparing for the slaughter, here take your stand and be strong in the Lord. Amid the lukewarmness of a Laodicean church, here find animation and zeal. And in the prospect of the gathering storm, that is to desolate the earth, foretelling the speedy Advent of the Son of man (Luke 21:25-28; Rev 16:13-15), here find security and shelter, protection and peace; for "because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the

hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev 3:10).