

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No 89

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Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters and Reader Friends, Greetings in the name of Jesus.

Thank you for your letters and messages received during the past month; they are very much appreciated.

It is nice to see signs of Spring after the severe Winter weather we have had, our spirits are lifted with hope of better conditions to come, and as in the natural so also in the spiritual as we see the signs of the times and those things spoken of by the prophets being fulfilled we should lift up our hearts towards the consummation, even Eternal Life in the Kingdom of God when if we are faithful we shall not be affected by extremes of cold or heat nor the many restrictions, sorrows and pain of this natural life. As the Apostle has said the sufferings of the present are not to be compared with the Glory which will be revealed in us. Last week I was able to visit our sister May Lockett who sends her love to all brethren and sisters.

In this issue we have another instalment of “Jesus at the Bar” by our late brother A.L.Wilson and an exhortation by Brother Leo Dreifuss. The following is a letter by Brother R. Gregory to members of the Ecclesia to which recently he belonged and an article entitled “Redeemed.”

“While I am barred from meeting with you around the Table of the Lord on Sunday mornings I am persuaded to write again expressing the simple truths of scripture showing what great things Jesus Christ has done for us. As always, any correspondence is most welcome. Your views are important to me. We take courage in knowing “whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope”.

Sincerely your Brother in Christ. Russell Gregory.

Regarding the article entitled ‘Redeemed,’ we are in agreement except for the debatable point concerning Adam and whether he ever ate of the Tree of Life, this is doubtful as other scriptures tell us that those who eat of this tree have Eternal Life. See Genesis 3:22, Revelation 2:7 etc., it is typical of something to be attained to by faithfulness; probably the tree was not desirable to Adam until the possibility of death overtook him. However we should be interested to hear what others think on this matter.

Meanwhile we pray for your welfare, with our Sincere Love in the service of the Master.

Harvey and Evelyn Linggood.

Continued from March ...

Jesus At The Bar.

There is here a “blank contradiction, a violation of the fundamental laws of thought. If the law cursed Jesus, either as a malefactor or for physical sin, He would be cursed; but this witness is deceived, as Paul declares: “He speaks not by the Spirit of God.” Neither must we condemn Jesus by detaching a passage from its connection and compounding it with another isolated passage after the process of this witness. If logic granted this licence, we might place this witness in a critical situation, e.g. Judas went out and hanged himself (Matthew 27:5) Go thou and do likewise (Luke 10:57). We must therefore, in justice to Jesus, analyse the evidence and examine it separately. “God hath made Him sin for us.” Then follows an adjectival clause to “Him,” viz. “who knew no sin.” The meanest grammarian will observe that the verb of this clause goes a tense further back than that of the principal, indicating that Jesus, prior to His being “made sin” had victoriously conquered every trial. Then follows an adverbial of purpose, viz. “that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” This evidence shows, then, that Jesus was no more made sin by His birth of a woman, than that we are made the righteousness of God by our birth of a woman; but that God made Jesus, who knew no sin, a sin-offering for us, when Jesus was thirty-three years of age, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him “when we are baptised into that Sacrificial Death.” Let us now examine that other Scripture. “God sent forth ‘His Son’ made of a woman, made under law.” Did this Son of God”, then, ever violate the law? Where, then does condemnation come in? Then follows an infinitive of purpose: “To redeem them that were under law.” A condemned one would have proved lamentably deficient for this purpose. But there is yet an adverbial of purpose: “That we might receive the Sonship.” This is a most glorious consummation! If the ‘Son’ shall make you ‘Free’ ye shall be Tree indeed. How shall words express the gratitude we owe to this” One among ten thousand, and altogether lovely”? He is the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the Valley. My beloved said unto me: “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him.” Where shall we turn to find that “The Prince of Life” was under “condemnation to death”? Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Shall we outrage language by attempting to reconcile “lay down his life,” with “condemnation to death”? Is a condemned foundation the sign by which we shall identify the House of God? Never while words retain their meaning, and reason her seat, “Behold, I lay in Zion a stone, a tried stone, a precious comer stone, a sure-foundation: Judgment also is laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the shall overflow the hiding place, and your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with Sheol shall not stand.” (Isaiah 28). “Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no Physician there?” (Jeremiah 8:22).

Then Hebrews 2:14 is said to condemn Jesus. Let us see: “Forasmuch then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood He, likewise, partook of the same.” Were the children condemned merely because they were flesh? Contemptible Logic, since this is exactly what God made them. It is, therefore, false to condemn Jesus “because He was flesh.” Why, then, did Jesus partake of flesh? Let the following adverbial of purpose be noted here, viz: “That through death He might render powerless him that had the power of death.” If, then, He had not been made flesh, He could not have ‘died,’ and, therefore, redemption had failed; but we are asked to believe that the flesh of which the children and Jesus partook was Sinful. We defy them to prove that sinful flesh has yet been created, and this scripture is, certainly, as silent as death regarding such. But there is another adverbial, viz. “And deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime in bondage.” A condemned one had been lamentably deficient for this purpose. How then, were the children in Bondage, and Jesus free? Simplicity itself. They were under Sin, not because they were flesh, but because they were transgressors, as also their father, Adam; therefore, justly in bondage; but Jesus never sinned, neither did His Father, therefore Jesus stands before the world justly “Clear at the Bar.”

“How can he be clean that is born of a woman”? Here the witnesses are jubilant in a ‘polluted Christ’; but though they apply the X-rays, they shall fail to find “physical sin” even in Judas, to say nothing of Jesus. This is not even a categorical proposition, but an interrogation, and. admits of a solution beyond all cavil, and that out of the mouth of the Lord Jesus: “Now are ye clean through the

word I have spoken unto you.” Thus the ‘word’ is the cleansing power, and Jesus was “the word made flesh.” Will you then, say that the very word of God was unclean? Though we resolve Job’s question into the categorical form, and subject it to the syllogistic test, it will prove bad logic. When a universal proposition is claimed, the utmost peril of the inductive hazard is incurred. Such will admit of no exception. Can you find an exception? We shall show by two examples that Jesus is the Grand exception. All men have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, Jesus was a man. Therefore Jesus sinned, and came short of the glory of God. How does this sound? It is a valid conclusion, yet there is something blasphemously false. Where does it lie? Well, from other evidence we find that Jesus did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. We must, therefore, exclude Him from the major premise. Take a negative example, then none is clean who is “born of a woman. Jesus was born of a woman. Therefore Jesus was not clean. This is also valid, and the witnesses are jubilant; but this, like its neighbour, is false, by the following witness: “Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.”

“O yes,” reply the witnesses, “but this applies to His character.” Precisely so, and it is character all through. The Lord persuaded Paul that “physically” nothing was unclean of itself. The Lord reprimanded Peter for calling any man unclean. So did He the writer, (Romans 14:14, Acts 10:28 and 11:9). Every creation of God is good (I Timothy 4:4). To the pure, all things are pure; but to them who are (legally and mentally) defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure: not even the Lord Jesus (Titus 1:15). Ye fools, did not He who made that without, make that within also? When therefore, ye do His will, behold “all things are clean unto you.” Then Zachariah 3 is said to be conclusive, that as Joshua was clothed with “filthy garments”, this is said to represent Christ’s “Sinful flesh.” But in this Scripture we see a change of “the Priesthood,” and not a “condemned Christ;” and in the “raiment” we see righteousness. All our “righteousness” is as filthy rags; and the “white Linen” is the righteousness of saints. In verse 8, then, we find God, the first person, addressing Joshua, the second person, regarding a third person whom He styles “My Servant The Branch,” who would remove, not the supposed “Sinful flesh”, but the iniquity of that land in one day. It is not, then, a question of flesh, polluted or otherwise; but if they persist, then let us examine this “garment” argument more minutely. Remarkable phenomena have been known in nature; the writer has seen a lamb with two heads, and has heard of children being born with teeth; but never in creation was it known of a child being born with “garments,” so whatever the garments may mean, they must refer to something put on Jesus, sometime at least “subsequent to His birth”; and we think this agrees with the prophet who declares: “The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

Is Ephraim joined to his idols? Shall we let him alone? Who will go up with me to Ramoth Gilead and thunder that every creation of God is good? That though we can defile the flesh, that defilement is not “the sin”, but the result. When shall they discern between cause and effect? When shall they learn that it is not a question of “flesh” but character? That it is a question of bought or sold; life or death; enemies or reconciled; legally clean or unclean; the property of sin or of God; naked or clothed. “Who are these that are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? These are they who came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” It should “be patent to the dullest that “condemned blood” is outrageously deficient to accomplish this. Wherefore we counsel thee to buy of Him “white raiment” that thou mayest be clothed, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear. Why had Mary to comply with the law of purification, and Jesus to be circumcised and baptised? The Masters own reply is: “To fulfil all righteousness.” How simple! To have failed this, then, would have simply have been a second calamity. But one of the opposing witnesses writes and tells us that “as He was made sin, and thereby cursed by the law, He had to show by the sign of baptism His own condemnation.” Just imagine the Lord to have said: “Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh ‘me’ to be baptised for the remission of MY sinful, condemned flesh. If they will not quit this delusion, we wash our hands from their blood, and utter threefold “Thank God” for the morning we awoke to be associated with the so called “Renunciationist Heresy.” And in passionate apostrophe to the dauntless defender, the late Bro. Edward Turney, we say R.I.P. “Till the day dawn and the shadows flee away.” Then the disputed Hebrews 13:20. The most of exponents we have consulted contend that it was “through the blood of the covenant” that Jesus earned the title “Great Shepherd.” The witnesses for the condemnation of Jesus contend that it was through that blood “He was brought from the dead.” We discard both theories, because, first, God declared through the prophet: “I will smite the shepherd and the

sheep shall be scattered.” On the authority of God, therefore, we say Jesus was the Shepherd ‘before’ the smiting. Jesus says “I am the good Shepherd.” The hireling fleeth when he seeth the wolf coming, he fleeth because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd and I lay down My life for the sheep. On the authority of Jesus we also say He was the good Shepherd before He laid down His life. Second, we have not yet found in Scripture where ‘blood’ had anything to do with the resuscitation of Jesus; but we do find that it was because Jesus loved righteousness, and hated iniquity (Hebrews 1:9), that God could not suffer His Holy One to see corruption (Acts 2:27). Third, the blunder consists in the theorists applying the adverbial phrase “in the blood of the everlasting covenant” to the verb of an adjectival clause, instead of the verb of the ‘principal sentence. This will be seen if we strike out the subordinate clauses, viz. “Now the God of peace make you perfect,” etc. If we ask how or by what means God accomplishes this, then the phrase “in the blood of the everlasting covenant” at once settles the question. Fourth, if Paul had wished us to understand, either that Jesus earned the title “Great Shepherd,” or that He was brought again from the dead “through that blood”, he would have employed the preposition through, but he did not. Why then, do all the expounders employ the term “through”? How consistent, then to read:

to be continued

Exhortation.

Matthew 17: 1-6.

We are all acquainted with the incident in which Moses and Elijah appeared in a vision to Christ and two of His disciples on the mount of transfiguration. Moses and Elijah occupy two special positions in the Word of God. They are symbolic of two dispensations, Moses’ service introduced the dispensation of the Mosaic Law which was to be observed by the Children of Israel. The tabernacle which was then the centre of worship. Elijah is a typical example of the ministration of the prophets although it must not be overlooked that Moses, too, was a prophet. At the time of Elijah’s ministry, the tabernacle had been superseded by the more permanent temple. At that period, the prophets were the only messengers of God apart from the angels, among the children of Israel. At the time of the vision on the mount of transfiguration, the third dispensation was about to start, the one that has gone on to our day and will continue up to Christ’s return. The “Gentile dispensation” as it is called, because all believers. Gentiles as well as Jews, have now the opportunity to have a part in the blessings of faithful Abraham.

Today I want to consider one incident in the lives of each: Moses: Elijah and Christ. They were different incidents, but the circumstances under which they happened were somewhat similar. In each case, there was some crisis at which God openly intervened in order to show that the servant whom He had sent did the miracles not on his own account, but that it was God who worked through him. The first incident happened in the wilderness of Sin (Numbers 20), during the 40 years of wandering of the children of Israel in the wilderness. They were 40 hard years. Many sorrowful things had happened before. Repeatedly the children of Israel had shown their discontent, they provoked God, questioned the authority of Moses and Aaron. They had been severely punished on many occasions. Yet they had not learnt their lesson. There was lack of water. Although on so many previous occasions God had provided them with food and drink. He sent them Manna and quails, yet they strove with Aaron and Moses. Here was a climax: once and for all God intended to show that His hand was not shortened, that it was He who provided all their needs. And Moses was His chosen servant. God commanded Moses to speak to the rock. He did not command him to smite it. On a similar occasion previously (Exodus 17), shortly after they had come out of Egypt, Moses was indeed commanded to smite the rock. But on this occasion, he was to speak to “it. However Moses smote the rock twice, as well as spake. It appears that Moses was very angry and that in his anger he failed to acknowledge God when he spake. He said “Hear now ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?” And God answered “Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.” Yes this was Moses sin, he failed, to sanctify God and. to show forth His power and His might in the sight of the congregation. Instead he gave the impression that it was he

himself and Aaron who “brought the water out of the rock. Failing to acknowledge God, especially at a moment of crisis, is a grave sin in His sight. And of this Moses was guilty on this occasion.

We now move in our thoughts a few centuries further forward, to the time of king Ahab of Israel, and the ministry of Elijah. There was a great falling away at that time from following the Lord God. The children of Israel had gone after Baal, and only Elijah with a small remnant of faithful people served the Lord. God as a punishment, withheld rain. The drought had by then become unbearable. But the children of Israel still would not recognise that all this was of God, that they themselves were the cause of the trouble. So it fell to Elijah to bring them back to God. As always in God’s dealing with man, God does not expect a blind faith from anybody, but He manifests His power by signs and wonders wrought through His chosen servants, the prophets. This time it fell to Elijah to show before all people who was God: Jehovah, and not Baal. We all know what happened on the mount of Carmel, and need not dwell on that in detail. But let us just look at Elijah’s prayer and compare it with the words of Moses under somewhat similar circumstances. Here are Elijah’s words (I Kings 18:36-37), “Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.” How different from Moses’ words!

First he said “Let it be known this day that thou art God.” Yes the first thing in any prayer is to recognise God as the supreme Lord and power. Then he requests Him to let this fact be known, Elijah as a faithful servant wanted to manifest God’s presence before all people. He did not want to glorify himself. He wanted it to be quite clear to all people that it was not he, but God, whose servant he was, who did the works. It was God in whose power is the sun and the rain who withheld rain all these years in order to bring the children of Israel back to Him, and who was shortly to send rain in great abundance. And then in his last words Elijah, a man of faith, looks into the future and sees his prayer already fulfilled. He closes with the words “that this people may know that thou art the Lord God and that thou hast turned their heart back again.” We know that God had indeed turned their heart back again. Elijah, Abraham, and all other men of faith look into the future with a certainty of God’s will being fulfilled. Abraham in faith saw himself in the future kingdom with Christ in the land in which he was a stranger. “Abraham rejoiced to see my day,” Jesus said, “and he saw it and was glad.” David in prophesying of Christ’s resurrection saw himself raised bodily to everlasting life. “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption.” Job had the same strong faith when he said “and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” And here we have Elijah speaking of a future event as though it were already accomplished (like God Himself speaks of future events) “hear me that the people may know that thou hast turned their heart back again”.

Another few centuries later, at the time of Christ’s ministry, there was another crisis. This time not a crisis which affected the whole nation of Israel, but only one family: Martha and Mary had just lost their brother Lazarus. And Jesus was sent by God to raise him. That God had sent Jesus we gather from the conversation between Him and His disciples, for He said “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.” Like Elijah before him, only this time not before a large congregation, but only before a small circle of friends and relations of the dead-man. Jesus prayed to God to manifest before all people that it was God who through His Son wrought all these miracles. He said, “Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe thou hast sent me.” The prayer is rather similar to Elijah’s prayer. It is a prayer of supreme faith. He said: “I thank thee that thou hast heard me,” speaking of the future as if it was already past. And then like Elijah, He prays that God may manifest that He had sent Him. With these two prayers of Elijah and Jesus before us, what lesson can we derive therefrom? Well, although we are not likely to be called upon to do as great things as Moses, Elijah and Christ, we have nevertheless to recognise God first in all our prayers. One thing that stands out in the case of Elijah and Christ, and also in the case of Moses apart from this one failure, is that as they were standing in front of a great crowd, knowing that some unusual event was about to happen, they did not fail to acknowledge God as the prime cause of the miracle. Suppose some of us would have been in their place. Would we have declared in front of a faithless crowd with that certainty that God was about to perform a great miracle? or would we have tried to give the impression that at least in part, our own ability in a certain direction, played its part as well. Part of our emotions which

may be used rightly or wrongly is vanity. We all like to be respected by our fellow men. We all like to be patted on the back, and we all dislike to some extent our faults and failures pointed out. But it is when we stand in front of a crowd that if we don't guard ourselves, our vanity may become most apparent. When we go in front of a congregation to speak, it is right for the audience to look upon us as the centre, for the time being; it is right that while we speak all the attention of the audience should be centred upon us. But let us beware lest this concentrated attention play on our vanity. Let us make it clear to the congregation that what we preach is not our own wisdom, but God's wisdom as recorded in His Word. Let us make it clearly understood, that while we speak, we do so as the ministers of God. And let us be clear about the motive of our speaking. It should be with the aim of proclaiming the word of God, and not of making ourselves seen and heard, and occupying the centre of everybody's attention.

I think it a good idea that when we speak to let the prayers of Christ and Elijah serve as examples. Their action did not show the least sign of vanity. They did not fail to let it be known that they were merely the Divine tools used for the work in hand. Moses on the occasion mentioned acted unwisely. He said "must we (Moses himself and Aaron) fetch you water out of this rock? But let us not judge harshly. Moses only failed on this one occasion, and then it was in a moment of being overwrought and in great anger. As far as Moses was concerned, it was certainly not vanity. Both these incidents are recorded for our learning. And the lesson to be learnt we have already stressed: To glorify God and not ourselves; to recognise God as the doer of all the works.

This applies of course not only when speaking, it applies throughout our lives. Let us then follow the example of Noah, Abraham, David, Elijah, Daniel, and Christ, and walk with God to glorify Him in all our actions and utterances. So that people may look upon us as God's ministers.

Bro. G.L.Dreifuss.

Redeemed

It is our Maker who said "Come now, and let us reason together... though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be as red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isaiah 1:18). We can reason with God only according to His Word. When discussing these things with one another we do so in a spirit of loving fellowship. Only in this way can we hope to overcome prejudice, confusion and false accusation. We may encounter contradiction and suppression of discussion, but let love overcome such fear and reach out to willing minds anxious to increase their knowledge of Jesus Christ and of His Father who sent Him.

Let us begin at the beginning. In the Garden of Eden we take our first steps either on the right path or a wrong one. Should we find ourselves on a wrong path we can only get on to the right by going back to the beginning and starting afresh. First, let us consider what we read in Scripture and make a few observations :

1. Adam was told he could eat of all the trees of the Garden except of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.
2. He could eat freely of the Tree of Life.
3. Eating of the Tree of Life did not give him eternal life, but led to it if faithful.
4. God did not want Adam to die.
5. He could obey God and live for ever.
6. Temptation was with Adam daily.
7. He sinned when he ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.
8. The penalty of death that day was not carried out.
9. From this time on Adam no longer had access to the Tree of Life.
10. An animal's death that day gave Adam a temporary covering.
11. Adam was given a promise of a taking away of his sin in the future.

Now let us see some steps we might have taken:-

- A. We might assume Adam never ate of the Tree of Life.
- B. We might assume eating of the Tree of Life would have given Adam eternal life.
- C. We might assume the natural death of Adam hundreds of years later was his punishment for disobedience.
- D. We might assume the very flesh of Adam was in some way changed and became sinful flesh, or had sin-in-the-flesh.

Let us realise these are assumptions.

We know Adam was made corruptible and his life continued indefinitely while he had access to the Tree of Life, for this was his position all the time he remained obedient to God's law. However, when he disobeyed several events took place which he had not been told would happen, and the one event he was told would happen, didn't. WHY?

Adam had been told that in the day he ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil he would surely die. The fear of death was the greatest incentive he could have had to persuade him to fight against temptation. The Tree was in the midst of the garden - not hidden away in some rarely visited spot. The temptation was with him as he tended the Garden. Finally, he, with Eve, gave way to temptation and ate of the forbidden fruit. Now they feared, feared for their lives and tried to hide from God.

However, God is very merciful and He did not wish Adam to die; He did not want the human race to end here, and there was no need for Adam to die if He provided a Redeemer, someone to take his place in death, a substitute. In His loving kindness and mercy God provided Adam with a temporary covering and the first animal sacrifice was slain to provide it. Adam knew the animal's life had been taken because of his sin, a life taken instead of his own, but this was only a covering of his sin which had still to be taken away. So Adam was promised a Redeemer who would one day come into the world and, taking his place, would take away sin altogether, and in taking away his sin would give him eternal life God wished him to have from the very beginning.

Now that Adam had sinned it was no longer possible for him to receive eternal life as a reward for complete obedience to the law, so from this time on eternal life was offered as a reward for faithfulness, Adam was turned out of the Garden of Eden and a sword turned every way to keep the way of the Tree of Life; no longer was he able to sustain his life by eating of it. His natural state in which he was made, of aging and consequent death, took its course. Children born to him, and the whole human race, with one exception, were now under the natural laws as are all creatures of the animal kingdom. "As the one dieth, so dieth the other." (Ecclesiastes 3:19). The one exception is, of course, Jesus Christ, the "Holy Thing" born of His mother Mary, the spotless "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." God loved the world and gave His Son to take the place of Adam in death, if He would. Jesus was not compelled to take Adams place but we know now He was willing, and the whole human race owes its very existence to Jesus, "The Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." (I Timothy 4:10). Those who have faith in Him are baptised into Him, that is, they are baptised into His death, and as He rose from the dead, so too will they. These are His friends for whom He gave His life so willingly; for whom He laid down His Life of His own free will, for no one took it from Him. Jesus' life was His own to lay down or not, as He alone should choose, for "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone."

Had Jesus not laid down His life He would abide alone, for His own eternal life was secure through obedience. Jesus was the second Adam and He started His fight against sin and death from a similar position to the first Adam. Jesus was not "born under sentence of death and as He did no sin He did not lose His reward of eternal life for complete obedience to the law, for before His crucifixion He said "I have finished the work which Thou hast given me to do." There was nothing to stop Him receiving His reward of eternal life at this time, for Jesus could have received help of over twelve legions of angels,

which His Father was willing to send Him, if asked, and save Him from the dreadful ordeal of crucifixion which was imminent. This should be proof enough for anyone to realise that the laying down of Jesus' life was a voluntary act of love for us and in no way would it have broken any of God's laws had He declined to go to the cross. Here is scripture confirmation that Jesus did not die for Himself. The thought that Jesus must die on the cross in order to avoid being a sinner would make God an accessory to Christ breaking a Divine commandment had He accepted God's willingness to send the angels to defend Him. This point is most incontestable. It was not a Divine commandment that Jesus must die by crucifixion, for the precept He received of His Father did not carry with it any mention of transgression or punishment had He not carried it out. This precept reads "This commandment have I received of My Father" (John 10:18). The word commandment is translated from the Greek word 'Entol' and its meaning is 'A thing given in charge.' We cannot conclude Christ would have been a transgressor worthy of death had He not died on the cross. Jesus did not die to redeem Himself. He died to redeem us. He gave His life for us "for the joy that was set before Him" (Hebrews 12:2). In prayer to His Father His request for His disciples was "that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which Thou hast given me." (John 17:24). The cost to Jesus in anguish of mind and body is hard for us to imagine.

"We may not know, we cannot tell what pains He had to bear;
But we believe it was for us He hung and suffered there.
There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the gate of life and let us in.
O dearly, dearly has He loved, and we must love Him too,
And trust in His Redeeming blood, and strive His works to do".

Russell Gregory