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NUMBERS 6:1 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

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The vow of the Nazarite, Num 6:1, Num 6:2. In what it consisted, Num 6:3-8. When accidentally defiled, how he is to be purified, Num 6:9-12. The sacrifices he is to bring, and the rites he is to perform, when the vow of his separation is fulfilled, Num 6:13-21. The manner in which the priests are to bless the people, Num 6:22-26. The name of the Lord is to be put on the children of Israel, whom He promises to bless, Num 6:27.

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NUMBERS 6:2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and tell them: 'When either man or woman shall make a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD,

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Verse 2

When either man or woman shall separate, etc. - The word נזיר nazir, from נזר nazar, to separate, signifies merely a separated person, i. e., one peculiarly devoted to the service of God by being separated from all servile employments. From the Nazarites sprang the Rechabites, from the Rechabites the Essenes, from the Essenes the Anchorites or Hermits, and in imitation of those, the different monastic orders. Some contend strongly that the Nazarite was a type of our Lord; but neither analogy nor proof can be produced. Our blessed Lord both drank wine and touched the dead, which no Nazarite would do: as to his either shaving his hair or letting it grow, we know nothing. His being called a Nazarene, Mat 2:23, is nothing to the purpose, as it can mean no more than either that he was an inhabitant of Nazareth, which was a place of no credit, and therefore used as a term of reproach; or that he was in a general sense consecrated to the service of God - so were Samson, Samuel, Jeremiah, and John Baptist; or rather, that he was the נצר netser or Branch, Isa 11:1, and צמח tsemach, Zac 3:8; Zac 6:12, which is quite a different word; but this title is expressly applied to our blessed Lord by the above prophets; but in no place do they or any other prophets call him a Nazarite, in the sense in which נזיר nazir is used. Indeed it could not in truth be applied to him, as the distinguishing marks of a Nazarite never belonged to him. He was, it is true, the נצר netser or branch out of the root of Jesse, the genuine heir to the throne of David, whose dominion should extend over the universe, who should be King of kings, and Lord of Lords; but the word Ναζωραεος, Mat 2:23, signifies merely a Nazoraean, or inhabitant of Nazareth.

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NUMBERS 6:3 he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink. He shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of fermented drink, neither shall he drink any juice of grapes, nor eat fresh grapes or dried.

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Verse 3

No vinegar of wine, etc. - חמץ chomets signifies fermented wine, and is probably used here to signify wine of a strong body, or any highly intoxicating liquor. Dr. Lightfoot supposes that the Leper being the most defiled and loathsome of creatures, was an emblem of the wretched, miserable state of man by the fall; and that the Nazarite was the emblem of man in his state of innocence. Wine and

grapes are here particularly forbidden to the Nazarite because, as the doctor thinks, being an emblem of man in his paradisiacal state, he was forbidden that tree and its fruits by eating of which Adam fell; for the doctor, as well as the Jewish rabbins, believed the tree of knowledge to have been none other than the vine.

Vinegar of strong drink - See the note on Lev 10:9.

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NUMBERS 6:4 All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is made of the grapevine, from the seeds even to the skins.

NUMBERS 6:5 "All the days of his vow of separation no razor shall come on his head, until the days are fulfilled, in which he separates himself to the LORD. He shall be holy. He shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow long.

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#### Verse 5

There shall no razor come upon his head - The vow of the Nazarite consisted in the following particulars: -

1. He consecrated himself in a very especial and extraordinary manner to God.
2. This was to continue for a certain season, probably never less than a whole year, that he might have a full growth of hair to burn in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace-offering, Num 6:18.
3. During the time of his separation, or nazarate, he drank no wine nor strong drink; nor used any vinegar formed from any inebriating liquor, nor ate the flesh or dried grapes, nor tasted even the kernels or husks of any thing that had grown upon the vine.
4. He never shaved his head, but let his hair grow, as the proof of his being in this separated state, and under vows of peculiar austerity.
5. He never touched any dead body, nor did any of the last offices, even to his nearest kin; but was considered as the priests, who were wholly taken up with the service of God, and regarded nothing else.
6. All the days of his separation he was holy, Num 6:8.

During the whole time he was to be incessantly employed in religious acts.

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NUMBERS 6:6 "All the days that he separates himself to the LORD he shall not go near a dead body.

NUMBERS 6:7 He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die; because his separation to God is on his head.

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#### Verse 7

The consecration of his God is upon his head - Literally, The separation of his God is upon his head; meaning his hair, which was the proof and emblem of his separation. Now as the hair of the Nazarite

was a token of his subjection to God through all the peculiarities of his nazarate, a woman, who is married, is considered as a Nazarite for life, i. e., separated from all others, and joined to one husband who is her lord; hence St. Paul, probably alluding to this circumstance, says, 1Cor 11:10 : The woman ought to have power upon her head, i.e., wear her hair and veil; for this hair is a proof of her nazarate, and of her being in subjection to her husband, as the Nazarite was under subjection to the Lord by the rule of his order.

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NUMBERS 6:8 All the days of his separation he is holy to the LORD.

NUMBERS 6:9 “If any man dies very suddenly beside him, and he defiles the head of his separation; then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing. On the seventh day he shall shave it.

NUMBERS 6:10 On the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest, to the door of the Tent of Meeting.

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Verse 10

Two turtles, or two young pigeons - The same kind of offering made by him who had an issue, Lev 15:14, etc.

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NUMBERS 6:11 The priest shall offer one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, and make atonement for him, because he sinned by reason of the dead, and shall make his head holy that same day.

NUMBERS 6:12 He shall separate to the LORD the days of his separation, and shall bring a male lamb a year old for a trespass offering; but the former days shall be void, because his separation was defiled.

NUMBERS 6:13 “This is the law of the Nazirite: when the days of his separation are fulfilled, he shall be brought to the door of the Tent of Meeting,

NUMBERS 6:14 and he shall offer his offering to the LORD, one male lamb a year old without defect for a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb a year old without defect for a sin offering, and one ram without defect for peace offerings,

NUMBERS 6:15 and a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and their meal offering, and their drink offerings.

NUMBERS 6:16 The priest shall present them before the LORD, and shall offer his sin offering, and his burnt offering.

NUMBERS 6:17 He shall offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread. The priest shall offer also its meal offering, and its drink offering.

NUMBERS 6:18 The Nazirite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the Tent of Meeting, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it on the fire which is under the sacrifice of peace offerings.

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## Verse 18

Shall take the hair - and put it in the fire - The hair was permitted to grow for this purpose; and as the Nazarite was a kind of sacrifice, offered to God through the whole term of his nazarate or separation, and no human flesh or blood could be offered on the altar of the Lord, he offered his hair at the conclusion of his separation, as a sacrifice - that hair which was the token of his complete subjection to the Lord, and which was now considered as the Lord's property. The Hindoos, after a vow, do not cut their hair during the term of their vow; but at the expiration of it they shave it off at the place where the vow was made.

That the hair of the head was superstitiously used among different nations, we have already had occasion to remark; (See the notes on Lev 19:27); and that the Gentiles might have learned this from the Jews is possible, though some learned men think that this consecration of the hair to a deity was in use among the heathens before the time of Moses, and in nations who had no intercourse or connection with the Jews.

NUMBERS 6:19 The priest shall take the boiled shoulder of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them on the hands of the Nazirite, after he has shaved the head of his separation;

NUMBERS 6:20 and the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the LORD. This is holy for the priest, together with the breast that is waved and the thigh that is offered. After that the Nazirite may drink wine.

NUMBERS 6:21 "This is the law of the Nazirite who vows, and of his offering to the LORD for his separation, besides that which he is able to get. According to his vow which he vows, so he must do after the law of his separation."

## Verse 21

This is the law of the Nazarite - We learn from Maimonides, in his Treatise of the Nazarite, that a man might become a Nazarite in behalf of another; that is, might assist him in bearing the expenses of the sacrifices, etc. "A son may fulfill the vow his deceased father hath made, but did not live to accomplish: - He that saith, upon me be the shaving of a Nazarite, he is bound to bring the offerings of shaving for cleanness, and may offer them by the hand of what Nazarite he will. If he say, Upon me be half the oblations of a Nazarite, then he bringeth half the offerings by what Nazarite he will, and that Nazarite payeth his offerings out of that which is his." "By this," says Mr. Ainsworth, "we may see the reason of that which James said to Paul, though he had no Nazarite's vow upon him: 'We have four men who have a vow on them; them take and sanctify thyself with them, and Be At Charges With Them, that they may shave their heads, etc. Then Paul took the men, and the next day, sanctifying himself with them, entered into the temple to signify the accomplishment of the days of sanctification, (or Nazariteship), until that an offering should be offered for every one of them;' see Act 21:23-26. For though Paul had not vowed or fulfilled a Nazariteship himself, yet might he contribute with them, and partake of their charges about the sacrifices."

NUMBERS 6:22 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

NUMBERS 6:23 “Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, ‘This is how you shall bless the children of Israel.’ You shall tell them,

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#### Verse 23

On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel - The prayer which God makes for his followers, and puts into their mouth, we are sure must be right; and to it, when sincerely, faithfully, and fervently offered, we may confidently expect an answer. If he condescended to give us a form of blessings or a form of prayer, we may rest assured that he will accept what he himself has made. This consideration may produce great confidence in them who come with either prayer or praise to the throne of grace, both of which should be, as far as circumstances will admit, in the very words of Scripture; for we can readily attach a consequence to the words of God, which we shall find difficult to attach to the best ordered words of men. Take with you words, and turn unto the Lord. What words? Why those which God immediately puts into their mouths. Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously; so will we render the calves of our lips; we shall then give the sacrifices of which our lips have spoken, when we made our vows unto thee. See Hos 14:2.

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NUMBERS 6:24 ‘The LORD bless you, and keep you.

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#### Verse 24

The Lord bless thee - There are three forms of blessing here, any or all of which the priests might use on any occasion. The following is a verbal translation: -

1. May Jehovah bless thee and preserve thee!
2. May Jehovah cause his faces to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee!
3. May Jehovah lift up his faces upon thee, and may be put prosperity unto thee!

This is a very comprehensive and excellent prayer, and may be paraphrased thus: -

1. May God speak good unto thee, by giving thee his excellent promises! (See the note on Gen 2:3). May he preserve thee in the possession of all the good thou hast, and from all the evil with which thou art threatened!
2. May the Holy Trinity illuminate thy heart, giving thee the true knowledge of thyself and of thy Maker; and may he show thee his graciousness in pardoning thy sins, and supporting thy soul!
3. May God give thee communion with the Father, Son, and Spirit, with a constant sense of his approbation; and grant thee prosperity in thy soul, and in all thy secular affairs!

This I suppose to be the spirit and design of this form of benediction. Others will doubtless interpret it after their manner. Several wise and learned men believe that the mystery of the Holy Trinity is not obscurely hinted at in it. God the Father blesses and keeps his followers. God the Son is gracious unto sinners in remitting their offenses, which he died to blot out. God the Holy Spirit takes of the things which are Christ's, and shows them unto genuine Christians, and diffuses the peace of God in their hearts. In a word, Christ, the gift of the Father by the energy of the Holy Spirit, came to bless every one of us by turning us away from our iniquities.

1. Every genuine Christian is a true Nazarite. He is separated from the world, and dedicated solely to the service of God.
2. His life is a life of self-denial; he mortifies and keeps the flesh in obedience to the Spirit.
3. All this enters into the spirit of his baptismal vow; for in that he promises to renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh - to keep God's holy word and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of his life.
4. The person who is faithful has the blessing of God entailed upon him. Thus shall ye bless the children of Israel, etc., etc. See the notes on Num 6:5-7 (note).

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NUMBERS 6:25 The LORD make his face to shine on you, and be gracious to you.

NUMBERS 6:26 The LORD lift up his face toward you, and give you peace.'

NUMBERS 6:27 "So they shall put my name on the children of Israel; and I will bless them."

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