NUMBERS 30:1 Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the children of Israel, saying, "This is the thing which the LORD has commanded.

The law concerning vows of men, Num 30:1, Num 30:2. Of women under age, and in what cases the father may annul them, Num 30:3-5. The vows of a wife, and in what cases the husband may annul them, Num 30:6-8. The vows of a widow, or divorced woman, in what cases they may be considered either as confirmed or annulled, Num 30:9-15. Recapitulation of these ordinances, Num 30:16.

NUMBERS 30:2 When a man vows a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

Verse 2

If a man vow a vow - A vow is a religious promise made to God. Vows were of several kinds: -

- 1. Of abstinence or humiliation, see Num 30:13;
- 2. Of the Nazarite, see Numbers 6;
- 3. Of giving certain things or sacrifices to the Lord, Lev 7:16;
- 4. Of alms given to the poor, see Deu 23:21.

The law in this chapter must have been very useful, as it both prevented and annulled rash vows, and provided a proper sanction for the support and performance of those that were rationally and piously made. Besides, this law must have acted as a great preventive of lying and hypocrisy. If a vow was properly made, a man or woman was bound, under penalty of the displeasure of God, to fulfill it.

NUMBERS 30:3 "Also when a woman vows a vow to the LORD, and binds herself by a bond, being in her father's house, in her youth,

Verse 3

In her youth - That is, say the rabbins, under twelve years of age; and under thirteen in case of a young man. Young persons of this age were considered to be under the authority of their parents, and had consequently no power to vow away the property of another. A married woman was in the same circumstances, because she was under the authority of her husband. If however the parents or the husband heard of the vow, and objected to it in the same day in which they heard of it, (Num 30:5), then the vow was annulled; or, if having heard of it, they held their peace, this was considered a ratification of the vow.

A rash vow was never to be kept; "for," says Philo, and common sense and justice say the same, "he who commits an unjust action because of his vow adds one crime to another,

- 1. By making an unlawful vow;
- 2. By doing an unlawful action."

NUMBERS 30:4 and her father hears her vow, and her bond with which she has bound her soul, and her father holds his peace at her; then all her vows shall stand, and every bond with which she has bound her soul shall stand.

NUMBERS 30:5 But if her father forbids her in the day that he hears, none of her vows, or of her bonds with which she has bound her soul, shall stand. the LORD will forgive her, because her father has forbidden her.

NUMBERS 30:6 "If she has a husband, while her vows are on her, or the rash utterance of her lips, with which she has bound her soul,

NUMBERS 30:7 and her husband hears it, and hold his peace at her in the day that he hears it; then her vows shall stand, and her bonds with which she has bound her soul shall stand.

NUMBERS 30:8 But if her husband forbids her in the day that he hears it, then he shall make void her vow which is on her, and the rash utterance of her lips, with which she has bound her soul. the LORD will forgive her.

NUMBERS 30:9 "But the vow of a widow, or of her who is divorced, everything with which she has bound her soul, shall stand against her.

NUMBERS 30:10 "If she vowed in her husband's house, or bound her soul by a bond with an oath,

NUMBERS 30:11 and her husband heard it, and held his peace at her, and didn't disallow her; then all her vows shall stand, and every bond with which she bound her soul shall stand.

NUMBERS 30:12 But if her husband made them null and void in the day that he heard them, then whatever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand. Her husband has made them void. the LORD will forgive her.

Verse 12

Concerning the bond of her soul - Her life is at stake if she fulfill not the obligation under which she has laid herself.

NUMBERS 30:13 Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void.

NUMBERS 30:14 But if her husband altogether hold his peace at her from day to day, then he establishes all her vows, or all her bonds, which are on her. He has established them, because he held his peace at her in the day that he heard them.

NUMBERS 30:15 But if he shall make them null and void after that he has heard them, then he shall bear her iniquity."

NUMBERS 30:16 These are the statutes which the LORD commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between a father and his daughter, being in her youth, in her father's house.

Verse 16

These are the statutes - It is very probable that this law, like that concerning the succession of daughters, (Numbers 27)., rose from the exigency of some particular case that had just then occurred.

Making vows, in almost any case, is a dangerous business; they seldom do any good, and often much evil. He who does not feel himself bound to do what is fit, right, and just, from the standing testimony of God's word, is not likely to do it from any obligation he may lay upon his own conscience. If God's word lack weight with him, his own will prove lighter than vanity. Every man who professes the Christian religion is under the most solemn obligation to devote body, soul, and spirit to God, not only to the utmost extent of his powers, but also as long as he exists. Being baptized, and receiving the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, are additional ratifications of the great, general, Christian vow; but every true follower of Christ should always remember, and frequently renew, his covenant with God.