



THE
Nazarite's Vow.

*AN ADDRESS
TO CHRISTIAN YOUNG MEN.*

BY
C. A. C.

NEWPORT (MON.):
STOW HILL TRACT DEPÔT.
LONDON:
20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

—
One Penny each.

The Nazarite's Vow

**The Nazarite's Vow
Numbers VI**

An Address to Young Christians

Part I

BEFORE entering upon the subject of the Nazarite's Vow, I should like to say very plainly that the salvation of a sinner depends *altogether* upon Christ and His perfect work on the cross, and it is received *only by faith*. The prayers, works, self-denial, and devotedness of the believer add nothing whatever to his salvation. To suppose that our salvation depends in any way upon ourselves is to be "fallen from grace," and to be in darkness and uncertainty as to the whole matter. But when we see that Christ is the Alpha and Omega of our salvation, that His atoning work has settled every question that sin had raised between God and our souls, that His blood "cleanseth us from *all sin*," and that we are on the shoulder of the Good Shepherd who has pledged His word that we "*shall never perish*," we find ourselves upon solid ground, and divine assurance takes the place of alternating hope and fear.

The question of salvation was settled for me fifteen years ago. Has it been settled for *you*?... Has the momentous inquiry been wrung from your heart, "What must I do to be saved?" Is the great transaction done?... I trust it is so with each one in this company!

An important fact in connection with salvation is sometimes overlooked, viz. that salvation is linked with the recognition of the rights of the Lord Jesus. It is written, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth THE LORD JESUS, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 9). In a coming day every knee will be made to bow to Him, and every tongue will have to confess THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, but the believer does it now. By-and-by the rightful but now rejected King will have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; but to-day His authority is only acknowledged and confessed by those who believe on His Name. A little millennium is set up in the heart of the believer, and he confesses Jesus as Lord.

But at this point I fear the screw is often loose. Jesus is trusted as the Saviour but not fully recognised as Lord. He is taken on board more as a passenger than as captain of the ship. The captain has authority from stem to stern; the ship sails "whithersoever" he "listeth;" everything about the vessel and her voyage is under his control. Now let each of us ask himself the question, Have I got Christ on board as a Passenger, or as Captain of the ship?

Some - Jacob-like - will give Christ the tenth part; others will offer Him a larger proportion; but giving Him one-tenth or nine-tenths is not really owning His rights. The inhabitants of a besieged city wanted to make terms with their enemies, but the answer was, "No terms: *unconditional surrender*." That is what we must have if we want to be Christians worthy of the name. No *terms* with Christ, but unconditional surrender to Him - the loyal and unreserved recognition of His rights as LORD!

And is He not worthy? Think of His unconditional surrender for us! See the Lord of glory stooping down into the dust of death! He sacrificed everything and laid down His life to make us His own. The love of Christ, expressed in death, has a constraining power over every heart that really knows it; and it argues with a cogency which nothing but the hardness of unbelief can resist, that we should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto Him. Do we believe that "*he gave himself*?" Then how can we make reserves in our surrender to Him? Shall we not fervently exclaim -

"Higher than the highest heavens,
Deeper than the deepest sea,
Lord, Thy love at last hath conquered.
Grant me now my spirit's longing,
'None of self and all of Thee!'"

May all bargaining and compromise and reserve cease from our hearts here and now, and may that short but all-comprehensive prayer of a surrendered and subject heart - "Lord, what wilt THOU have me to do?" - be our soul's utterance to-night and evermore!

Surely none of us could be content to quietly assume that because our sins are forgiven we need not concern ourselves as to whether we are devoted to Christ or not! Let us not forget the judgement seat! Let us remember that there is such a thing as being "saved yet so as by fire!" My brother, your present happiness and your future place in the kingdom glory depend on your loyalty to Christ here on earth. May God touch us with a little of the fire that burned in the soul of a true Nazarite!

The Nazarite's Vow

No one was compelled to be a Nazarite. The Lord wants volunteers, not pressed men. The Nazarite was one who voluntarily devoted himself to the Lord - not of necessity, but of a willing mind. Grace wrought in his heart the desire to be wholly for the Lord, and then grace provided a way in which that devotedness could be expressed. The great need of the Israel of God to-day is more Nazarites - more thoroughly devoted men and women. Spiritual *young people* are a great testimony for Christ in these days of secularised Christianity, and I should like every young person here to have it impressed upon his heart that God has committed to him a stewardship of the interests and glory of CHRIST. If we have not an intense longing to be really *for Christ*, may God give it to us now!

Notice the three words - eight times repeated in this chapter -

"UNTO THE LORD."

These words are the key to the chapter. It is not "under the law," but "UNTO THE LORD." There was no servile constraint - no legal bondage - about the Nazarite's Vow. He was one whose heart burned with a desire to be wholly devoted "unto the Lord." Now I confess I know no arguments, and I am acquainted with no power that will move the heart to devotedness except the knowledge of the Lord Himself and of His love. It is possible to read books by the score, and to listen to the most faithful and blessed ministry for years together, and yet never know the Lord as a present living Object in heavenly glory. I venture to say that it is impossible to see and know Him there by faith without having an intense desire to be wholly devoted to Him here. Do you think that we could gaze upon the glory-crowned Person to whom angels and principalities are subject, and yet withhold the allegiance of our poor hearts? Do you suppose for a moment that we could see the hands, the feet, the side, that bear the everlasting tokens of His love to us, and remain in a state of passive indifference to His glory here? Could we see Him there - the exalted Object of the worship of delighted heaven, and at the same time be content to compromise His glory and dishonour His Name by conformity to the world which still sets Him at naught?

A sight of that MAN in the glory takes the glitter from this corrupt and godless world. Its charms attract and its shams deceive no more. The heart says, "What have I to do any more with idols?" The ONE in glory becomes the "Object bright and fair, to fill and satisfy the heart," and the one who thus knows Him begins a new life. Instead of the affections and energies finding their home and object in the world and self, they begin to flow in the current of Numbers vi., "*unto the Lord.*" It is not that we deny ourselves for an indefinite reason, or to improve our spiritual standing or reputation, but there is a positive Object - a Person of infinite worth - before our souls, and for the sake and for the love of that Person what would otherwise be painful, self-denial becomes a source of deepest happiness to our souls. I am bold to say that the Nazarite who really devoted himself "unto the Lord" got overwhelmingly repaid for his self-denial in the blessing and joy of his soul. Now, my brethren, are you prepared to be true Nazarites? Does the Person of the Lord and His love so command you, that the deepest and most cherished desire of your heart is to be devoted entirely to Him?

There were three things the Nazarite was not to do; these three negatives being simply the fruit and the expression of the positive fact that he was a man devoted "UNTO THE LORD."

1. He was not to eat or drink any part or product of the vine.
2. He was not to cut his hair.
3. He was not to come in contact with a dead body.

1. The Nazarite willingly devoted himself to a life of

SELF-DENIAL,

and for the Lord's sake he abstained from that which would have been naturally pleasant to him. The testimony of Scripture is that "wine maketh merry" (Eccles. x. 19), and "maketh glad the heart of man" (Ps. civ. 15), and hence wine becomes the type of those earthly and worldly things that elevate and give pleasure to the heart and mind of man. The ordinary Israelite might indulge in wine and keep a good conscience; not so the Nazarite. The one who desired to be wholly for the Lord must abstain so totally that "from the kernels even to the husk" not a particle or a drop that came from the vine of the earth must pass his lips.

Alas! my friends, there are thousands in the spiritual Israel to-day who are not Nazarites; carnal believers who have never seen the Lord in glory or known the power of His cross, and whose joys are earthly and not heavenly. I only mention them to warn you that if you mean, through grace, to be a Nazarite, their example must be no standard for you. Professing Christians to-day are ready to drink every drop of the vine of earthly pleasure that they can get. They are ready to eat the whole vine - kernel and husks and all. The strait-laced legality of Puritan times has given place to a corrupt taste for pleasure and amusement, which is being gratified to the full by a sickly, effeminate, and

The Nazarite's Vow

unfaithful church, so that there is hardly any form of earthly or worldly pleasure which is not indulged in by professed people of God. My brethren if you are set for the Lord, you will very soon find out that you cannot go to a cricket or football match, to a dramatic or musical entertainment, or to a worldly party, and you cannot read light or fictitious literature, without defiling the head of your consecration. If you indulge in such things you will find that they destroy your appetite for the word of God, they take away your liberty in prayer, they bring a shade upon your spiritual joy, and very soon - unless you repent - they will deprive you of all power to be a living witness for Christ.

I speak plainly because I do not believe that any of you want to be merely theoretical Christians. The things which I have already mentioned carry so evidently the stamp of *the world* upon them that you have probably shunned them ever since you were converted. Perhaps the girdle of truth needs to be drawn a little tighter than this around the loins of our minds. There are many things which could not be pronounced *sinful* from which a thoroughly devoted heart would hold itself aloof. Each of us has got tastes and tendencies of thought which if we had remained unconverted would have dominated and coloured our lives. With one it is a love for the society of friends, with another a taste for music, a third is held spellbound under the magician's wand of the poet, the mind of a fourth is absorbed by mechanical or scientific ideas, and so on. Remember I am not now speaking of what a man is engaged in as his business or profession, but of the source to which he turns for the pleasure of his heart when the claims of duty are discharged. Each of us, perhaps, could tell what he was naturally fond of, and each could perhaps also say that he had found by experience that the gratification of these natural tastes was not helpful to his spiritual life. All such things are products of the earthly vine - not always evil in themselves, but when the heart's affections are entwined round them, and the heart looks for its solace and joy in them, they have diverted us from the true Source of our joy; they have displaced the Lord from His true place as our heart's absorbing Object, and the Nazarite is defiled.

Suppose that a widow was passing through a place where her husband had been murdered a few years before, you would hardly expect her to find much to gratify her heart there, however interesting the occupations and however innocent and entertaining the amusements of the place might be! Now do we look upon this world as the place where the One we love best was murdered? The earth did not yield HIM wine, but vinegar and gall, and He - the true Nazarite - has turned His back upon all earthly joys, saying, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come" (Luke xxii. 18). *His joys are with the Father and in heaven, and He would have us so to know and to share them that we might count it a gain to turn aside from the vine of the earth.*

"Thy love is *better than wine*... we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love *more than wine*," is the language of a heart truly attached to the Lord (Song of Sol. i. 2, 4); and David could say, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased" (Ps. iv. 7). Bear witness, every Christian heart! Have you not had seasons of joy in the Lord which have infinitely surpassed everything that the vines of earth can afford? Would you willingly and deliberately sacrifice the former for the sake of the latter? I think not. Then take heed that you are not beguiled by the serpent, who ever seeks to rob us of our true joys by turning us aside to things which promise fair, but which yield no real satisfaction to the heart. It is a real loss to us when we turn aside to these things, and we have to prove it so in the end; even as it is said of Israel, "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, *broken cisterns, that can hold no water*" (Jer. ii. 13).

Of course, Mr. Self, who wants to enjoy everything in heaven and on earth - particularly the latter - without caring much in what relation things stand to CHRIST, will lift up both hands in great surprise, and protest against being "deprived of innocent pleasures," and will tell us very emphatically that he cannot "see any harm" in these things. Well, we shall have to let him take his own course, but the true Nazarite will know very well who has the best of it even now; and a day is fast approaching when Mr. Self himself may find out that a different course would have been more to his advantage.

Deuteronomy xxix. 6 has been instructive to me in connection with this subject: "Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink: that ye might know that I am the Lord your God." In the wilderness the Lord would make Himself *the only Source*, whether of sustenance or joy to His people. In the true spirit of this the altogether Perfect One refused both the bread (Luke iv. 4) and the wine (Mark xv. 23). He would only accept support *from God*. He would only have the solace and joy ministered by His God and Father. He was the true Nazarite. Even so He would have us to prove that He can carry us through this wilderness world without either its support or its solace. He would *make Himself our bread and our wine*, and instead of being worse off we should be infinitely better off, like Daniel's band, who were "fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat." The devil is always ready to suggest that an out-and-out Christian is a melancholy creature who does not enjoy life at all. Every thread of that suggestion, warp and woof, is a lie. I will show you directly what it is that makes the long faces and the sad hearts, but you may take it for granted in the meantime that it is not whole-hearted separation to the Lord that makes a man unhappy.

The Nazarite's Vow

Leviticus x. 9-10 is another suggestive scripture as to this matter: "Do not drink wine nor strong drink... that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean." A man cannot indulge in earth-born joys without having his spiritual perceptions blunted. If he goes on with them, he will presently tolerate what he would have once judged to be evil. Then godly watchfulness as to the little everyday details of life gives place to carelessness and laxity. Week by week the line of separation from the world becomes less distinct. Solidity and force of spiritual character is lost. The holy is not sought, nor the unholy shunned, with that intensity of purpose which once burned brightly in the soul; and ere long the once devoted saint drifts along with the circumstances by which he is surrounded, with little exercise and less joy, and completely shorn of the beauty of his Nazariteship.

Another solemn voice reaches us from Lamentations iv. 7: "Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire: their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets: their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick." How sad to think that the once lovely Nazarite may be reduced to such a condition as this! Have you never seen a blighted and withered Nazarite - a man who has lost the simplicity that is in Christ, and the beauty of holiness, and all the devotedness and heavenly-mindedness that once shone so brightly in him? Now nobody can read Christ in him. True, his name is on a church-roll somewhere; he attends meetings perhaps; but he is not known in the streets. The men where he works don't know that he is a Christian, and it is as well they don't, for he is now more like a spiritual scarecrow than anything else. A man in that condition, instead of attracting souls to Christ, only scares them away. Let that man be a beacon-light to warn you from the rock on which he has made shipwreck. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the Nazarite's decline and fall *begins* by his turning aside to find pleasure in some joy that is of earth and not of heaven. The Lord loses for the moment His all-commanding and unrivalled place as the Object of the heart. This opens a crack - very small, probably, at first - but the devil has got wedges which are small enough at one end to get into the smallest crack; and when they are once in he knows how to drive them home, unless divine grace works repentance and restoration. Then you get a man like one of Jeremiah's Nazarites - worldly, conscience-smitten, and unhappy - a man who, sooner or later, will feel his thorough wretchedness; for if he is a converted man the Holy Ghost can neither give him the joys of heaven nor suffer him to be happy with the joys of earth. Thus, in seeking to enjoy two worlds, he for the present loses both. Alas! poor man, may God make thee a warning to us all!

Part II

But the fearful results of a defiled Nazariteship have also another voice to us. We should be not only constrained thereby to keep ourselves pure, but we should be also reminded of our responsibilities in regard to others. "I raised up... of your young men for Nazarites... but ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink' (Amos ii. 12). I believe I am right in saying that the temptations which prevail most easily with the young in Christ are those which come from professing Christians. I have seen many a promising spiritual life blighted by the company and example of professed believers. In this respect, "woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink!" Remember the Saviour's solemn words about an offence (or cause of stumbling) given to one of His little ones.

2. I think we may find a key to the significance of the unshorn locks of the Nazarite in a sentence from the Apostle Paul: "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, *it is a shame unto him?*" (i Cor. xi. 14). The Nazarite was found in a condition which, according to the thoughts of nature, was one of reproach and shame. In connection with this I should like to read Hebrews xi. 24-26: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming

THE REPROACH OF CHRIST

greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Here was a man most singularly favoured by Providence as to his position in this world, who deliberately turned his back upon wealth, power, and honours, when all these things were within his grasp, and threw in his lot with people who were in circumstances of the lowest degradation. No doubt he made himself a laughing-stock for Egypt, but the laughing did not last very long, while the gain on the other side can never be calculated. To use the figure, Moses presented himself to Egypt with the unshorn locks of a true Nazariteship. He did not shrink from shame and reproach.

To "refuse" and to "choose" as Moses did requires uncompromising *decision*, or what the New Testament calls "PURPOSE OF HEART." Jonathan's armour-bearer presents a fine example of a decided and devoted servant. "Do

The Nazarite's Vow

all that is in thine heart," said he to his master: "behold, I am with thee according to thy heart" (I Sam. xiv. 7). He was thoroughly one with his master, regardless of consequences. It looked like tempting Providence, as people say, for two men to attack an army. Common sense would say, They will certainly be defeated, perhaps slain, or at any rate taken captive. The odds were fearful. The field of battle was a precipitous and unlikely place. Everything was against them. Nevertheless he says, "I am with thee according to thy heart."

This is the spirit in which Moses acted. He recognised in the toiling brick-makers the chosen people of the Lord. If God's heart was with these poor toilers, Moses' heart would be with them too. Not simply to pity and patronise them. but to suffer affliction and bear reproach along with them. No doubt people thought he was carrying things to extremes, and making a fool of himself. So he was, from Egypt's point of view, but he does not regret it to-day. We were singing just now

Saviour, I long to follow Thee,
Daily Thy cross to bear!"

When a man was seen bearing his cross, everybody knew that he had done with the world, and as long as he remained in it he was an object of contempt. Now is that what we covet and expect? It is all very well to talk and sing about it here in barracks, but how do we feel on the battle-field? We can all be very valiant for the truth when it costs us nothing. But a soldier must be prepared to stand fire, as well as to shine on the parade ground. It is at home, in the office, behind the counter, in the workshop, and on the street, in ten thousand details of everyday life, that the test comes. Are we prepared to face the Egyptians and the Philistines and all the foes of our Lord, ever saying to Him in loyalty of spirit, "I am with thee according to thy heart"?

Do we really look upon the sneers and scorn of the world as our greatest treasure upon earth? We are not told that Moses "submitted" to the reproach or bore it well when it came, but that he *chose* it and esteemed it "*greater riches* than the treasures in Egypt." The spiritual millionaires are the men and women who have most of the reproach of Christ. In the coming day of kingdom glory, I have no doubt, many of the brightest crowns will be found upon the brows of people unknown to fame. Many an obscure saint has to face from morning to night the full, fierce tide of "the reproach of Christ." I have no doubt theirs will be a rich reward, while many a bit of showy service will be found in that day to have yielded "nothing but leaves."

There is another scripture which I dare say has already occurred to your minds in connection with this subject: "Let us go forth therefore UNTO HIM without the camp, *bearing his reproach*" (Heb. xiii. 13). This scripture appeals directly to the true Nazarite by the introduction of these two central words - "UNTO HIM." But here a much narrower circle is in question. It is not now "Egypt," but "the camp"; *i.e.*, the professed people of God. I cannot enter upon the subject now, but it would be easy to prove to you that the great religious bodies of Christendom occupy a position almost identical with the Jewish "camp" referred to here. In fact, much of the Christianity of today is only Judaism with Christian terms introduced into it, and there is as little true subjection to Christ and obedience to the will of God as there was in Israel when Moses pitched the tabernacle "outside the camp." The Nazarite would not be true to his consecration "unto the Lord" if he were to acquiesce in this kind of thing. Hence he is called to "go forth therefore unto him *without the camp*." But let him not suppose that his action will be either understood or commended by the "ten thousands of Israel!" He will be roundly abused by many. "Pharisee" and "Bigot" will be the names hurled at him by some; while others will say that he is "peculiar," "narrow-minded," and "a man of very extreme views." In short, he must be prepared to carry his locks unshorn, and to bear "the reproach of Christ."

It is an evil day for the Nazarite when the questions begin to rise in his heart, "Whatever will they think?" "What will Mr. ___ say?" When he begins to consider the opinions of others, and to shape his course to please men, whether they be friends or foes, the locks of his Nazariteship will soon be shorn. His spiritual strength will depart from him, and then woe be unto him when the Philistines come upon him!

A devoted Christian must be a fool in the eyes of the world and of carnal believers. He is impelled by unknown motives; he suffers loss with no visible compensation in any form; he goes calmly and steadily in the opposite direction to everybody else; he despises the advantages which all others are eager to pursue; he spends his time, his talents, and his means in the service and for the glory of One who is only a myth to men of the world. In a word, he lives "UNTO THE LORD," and he is glad to be a "fool *for Christ's sake*."

3. Finally, the Nazarite was not under any circumstances to touch a dead body. In connection with this let us read Romans viii. 12-13: "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Nothing could be more solemn than this scripture and its context, for it shows the absolute impossibility of *living to God* as men in the flesh. The lesson learnt by the painful exercises of Romans vii. is that "in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth *no good*

The Nazarite's Vow

thing," and the soul cries bitterly, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from *this body of death?*" The figure present to the writer's mind was that of the dreadful punishment of lashing a criminal to a dead body in such a way that it was impossible for him to free himself, and then leaving him to die. What was the dead body from which Paul had sought to be delivered? Was it not *himself*, and all that he was as a man in the flesh? Nor did he look for deliverance in vain. Having given himself up - as a man in the flesh - as being "a body of death," he looked outside himself for deliverance, and could immediately exclaim, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." He saw that the judgement of death had passed upon him at the cross, and that grace now gave him a perfect title to take the new ground that he was "IN CHRIST JESUS." A door of life and liberty was thus opened to him - for "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are IN CHRIST JESUS" - and, along with this, power by the Holy Ghost, so that he could say, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

Do not run away with the idea that I mean anything mystical or visionary when I say that the true Nazarite must live

MORALLY APART FROM HIMSELF

as a man in the flesh. In saying this, I am speaking the sober and practical truth of the word of God. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Gal. vi. 8). You cannot come *morally* into contact with the flesh without being defiled. The Holy Ghost wages perpetual warfare against the flesh, and we are plainly told that if we walk in the Spirit we shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh (Gal. v. 16). The Holy Ghost is dwelling in us to maintain us in freedom from that "law of sin and death" to which we were in bondage when we were "in the flesh." When a Christian thinks or speaks or acts according to the flesh, he is practically acknowledging the man who is under death - the man who was set aside at the cross. To use the figure, he touches the dead body and defiles the head of his consecration. And, inasmuch as he is allowing that upon which death has passed in the sight of God, he has to reap from it death and corruption. We have to learn - it takes some of us a long time - that *it does not pay* to live after the flesh; to do so brings darkness into the soul, robs the heart of its divine joys, and entails the misery of an accusing conscience. Brethren, we cannot afford to embrace or cherish that "dead body" any longer. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affection and lusts" (Gal. v. 24).

But if we refuse the vileness and wickedness of the flesh, let us not forget that the flesh has a moral and religious side which is equally defiling to the true Nazarite. We are often, like Saul (1 Sam. xv. 9) ready to spare "the best" and "the good" of Amalek, while we would "destroy utterly everything that is vile and refuse." The Galatians, having begun in the Spirit, were seeking to be made perfect by the flesh. Some were insisting on the necessity for circumcision and of keeping the law; they were observing days, months, times, and years, and were glorying in the flesh in a religious way. They were putting themselves again in moral contact with the "dead body" of the flesh, and Paul could hardly find language strong enough in which to describe their defilement thereby. He speaks of them as being "troubled," "bewitched," "foolish," "turned away to weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage," "fallen from grace."

The Colossians, too, needed to be warned against those who would spoil them "through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ"; and they had to be asked, "Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances? The Holy Ghost had to tell them that spiritual circumcision was "the putting off *the body of the flesh* by the circumcision of Christ." Christianity is not the flesh educated, or regulated, or decorated, but a *new creation in Christ Jesus*. If you see a man setting himself off with a religious title, or a religious dress, or even a bit of blue ribbon, you may be sure that he is not quite clear of the "dead body." He is not walking according to the rule of the new creation, but according to a rule which can be equally well carried out by an unconverted man. It seems a most admirable thing for a man to pledge himself to "touch not, taste not, handle not" some evil thing; but the very fact that he puts himself under an ordinance as to it shows that he is upon the old ground of a man in the flesh, *on which ground he can never live unto God, or be a true Nazarite*. However fair it may promise, the flesh can never yield anything but defilement, death, and corruption.

Then by what power can the spiritual Nazarite hold himself aloof from the "dead body" of his former self as a man in the flesh? *Only by the Spirit of God*. If we had not the Spirit, or if, having Him, we grieve Him, nothing can preserve us from living after the flesh. We naturally gravitate in that direction, and it is only as the counteracting "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" is in operation that we are maintained in freedom "from the law of sin and death." The spiritual Nazarite has no power to hold himself aloof from the "dead body" save as he walks in the Spirit. No words of mine can convey the importance and solemnity of this to your hearts, but I trust God will impress it upon us all. "Through *the Spirit*," and only thus, can we "mortify the deeds of the body," and keep ourselves morally clear of the flesh both in its carnal and legal aspects. There *seems* to be a great difference between flesh that is licentious and self-indulgent and flesh that is exemplary, self-controlled, and ascetic. But flesh is flesh, and it is always opposed to

The Nazarite's Vow

what is of the Spirit of God; and the better it looks, the more it is to be dreaded.

In England the dissenting bodies have gone in for the cultivation of man's intellect as a chief part of preparation for the ministry. What is the result? Under cover of "higher criticism" *infidelity* is now sown broadcast from many a pulpit from which a few years ago the word of God was faithfully preached. On the other hand, the Establishment, under the influence of Puseyism, has laid itself out to cultivate the religious sentiment of the people. With what effect? Popery, in everything but the name, has spread itself over the land. Both have sown to the flesh, and of the flesh have they reaped corruption. Rationalism appeals to man as an intellectual being, and Ritualism appeals to him as a religious being. But *both* ignore the fact that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God"; both are clinging to the "dead body" which can only defile.

What happens on a large scale in Christendom is just what will happen in the smaller circle of our own lives if we do not walk in the Spirit, and as those who are alive unto God IN CHRIST JESUS. May God keep us clear alike of the self-indulgence, the wisdom, and the religiousness of the flesh! May He keep us by His Spirit morally apart from that defiling "dead body!"

But what if the Nazarite be defiled? I think everyone present will be profoundly thankful to know that grace has anticipated the possibility of defilement, and has made provision for it. Yet let none of us overlook or think lightly of the solemnity of such a thing. Indeed, this scripture is one of peculiar impressiveness in the solemn light which it throws upon the consequences of defilement. The brief hints which I can give you in the few moments that remain will, I trust, be followed up and searched out for yourselves.

The defiled Nazarite has, so to speak, to begin again. He shaves his head, and he brings a sin-offering, a burnt-offering, and a trespass-offering to the Lord. When we defile the head of our consecration there is no restoration until God brings us back morally to the basis of all our blessing. The only ground whether of our clearance from sin and judgement or of our acceptance with God is the death of Christ, and our hearts have to return to a sense of the infinite cost at which our clearance and acceptance have been secured. While this is in one way deeply blessed, and calls forth the full praise and worship of our hearts; it must, on the other hand, inevitably lead to the most profound self-judgement as we are brought to see in God's presence that we have allowed that which Christ died to remove, and from the judgement of which nothing but His death could save us. Do you think it is a light matter to discover that we have allowed the very thing which cost the Son of God His life?

But there is another thing! "The days that were before *shall be lost*, because his separation was defiled." Is not this very solemn? The longer a Nazarite maintained his consecration, the more serious it was for him if he suffered himself to be defiled. I believe the longer we go on right, the more serious it is for us if we turn aside. We have to make it up in *moral time*, which is not reckoned in days and months and years, but *in exercise of soul*.

I trust that the Lord will set our hearts very distinctly for Himself in this world, and that He will use what has come before us to warn us against the things that would defile the head of our consecration! It is worth our while to be out-and-out for Christ. There is not only "the recompense of the reward" by-and-by, but an immense return in spiritual blessing even now. It is at the end of this chapter - descriptive of a devoted man - that we find one of the most glorious benedictions that the Old Testament affords: "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." A devoted man is always a prosperous and happy man - of course, I mean spiritually. He honours the Lord with his substance, and with the firstfruits of all his increase, and the result is that his barns are filled with plenty, and his presses burst out with new wine. Your melancholy and long-faced Christians are not the out-and-outers but half-and-half men - those who want to "fear the Lord and serve their own graven images," to make the best of both worlds, or to be pious according to the flesh. They have never learnt in their souls' experience the truth of Luther's definition of a Christian - that he is "a new man in a new world." At any rate, they are not practically owning that "new man" and living in that "new world."

Numbers v. tells us about the bitter water of jealousy, and ends with a curse upon the *unfaithful* one; but Numbers vi. describes one who is loyal to the core, and ends with a blessing. It is even so with us. We are reaping governmentally day by day either the curse or the blessing. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but HE THAT SOWETH TO THE SPIRIT SHALL OF THE SPIRIT REAP LIFE EVERLASTING."

C.A.C.

John Herbert

Stow Hill Tract Depot, Newport, Mon. England.