

Genesis 30:8 (A.E. B.) 53270

Christian Truth: Volume 20, Are We Naphtalis? Rachel's Son (30:8)

God is pleased at times to teach us very sweet lessons in His Word from the characters of men, and one such as Naphtali comes home to us with such force and fullness that should make our hearts rejoice and long to be much more like what is said of him. Gen. 30:8 gives what is first said of him—his birth—"Rachel said, With great wrestlings [wrestlings of God] have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed: and she called his name Naphtali." Naphtali means "my wrestling." We may forget things, but our names we never do; so his name would always keep fresh in his memory the wrestling through which he received it. Do we, in our souls, beloved, ever forget the "great wrestlings" of our adorable Lord on the cross—the deep travail of His soul in the day He took our place in death, that we might sing together, "Happy day! When Jesus washed my sins away"? His wrestlings are pictured in Heb. 5:7: "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from [out of] death." (R.V.)

Next, Gen. 49:21—"Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words." And Hab. 3:19—a hind walks upon "high places." Beloved, if we have been born of God (from above), our walk should be "as our native clime—above the fading things of time," "heavenly," on high places. A high standing calls for a high state. First, then, our birth is heavenly (John 3:7); our inheritance heavenly (1 Pet. 1:3, 4); our blessings are heavenly (Eph. 1:3); and also "our conversation [or citizenship] is in heaven.; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Phil. 3:20. Thus our new birth, and His Spirit given to us, is to us a setting free, "a hind let loose"—free, not to serve self, but free to live and speak for Christ. "A word spoken in due season, how good is it!" (Prov. 15:23). And Naphtali "giveth goodly words," and we are exhorted to hold "forth the word of life."

Beloved, this is what is said of Naphtali—can it be said of us? are we daily walking on those high places before the world, before our brethren, in our families, and at work? And while walking on "high places," we are "let loose," free from bondage, shackles, and all of the flesh—free to serve, obey, and speak "goodly words" until our pilgrimage is over; then to be with Himself forever.

Last, Deut. 33:23: "O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, and full with the blessing of the LORD." "Satisfied," not with self, but grace, or favor—how much here for our meditation! A Paul might wish a thorn in the flesh to be removed; but the Lord, who is wiser than man, answered, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Yes, that honored servant learned, like Naphtali, to be satisfied with favor (2 Cor. 12:9, 10).

[Beautiful it is to find, in a dark day of Israel's history (Judges 5), that Naphtali was "a people that jeopardized their lives unto the death in the high places of the field." How plainly suggestive of the devotedness of soul which becomes those whose life they owe to the "great wrestlings" of Another! "We thus judge," says the Apostle, "that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." 2 Cor. 5:14, 15.]

We need much to appear before Him empty, walk on high places, speak goodly words, learn that His grace is sufficient for us, become satisfied with favor; then, out of all its fullness, thou wilt be filled, O my soul, with the blessing of the Lord (Psalm 16:11; 23:5).