

A Quieted Soul

“Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, Like a weaned child with his mother, Like a weaned child is my soul within me. O Israel, hope in the Lord from this time forth and forever”. (Psalm 131.2-3)

A most appropriate figure! We likely do not remember it, but there is no time in our lives when we were more restless, fretful, more noisy and complaining, more inconsolable than during our being weaned from our mother’s breast. Having that blessed, warm, comforting bosom pressed to our faces, that sweet nourishment coursing into our bodies, suddenly and heartlessly taken away was our first cruel shock of reality, a harbinger of life in a sin-cursed world. After it is over, here is that same child, having reconciled himself to the fact that nursing is over, it is history, taking this first step of growing up and getting on to what comes next, sitting perfectly quiet and content in his mother’s lap. The breast is only inches from his mouth, but he is now weaned and quiet.

“I have calmed and quieted my soul”. The mother must do her part, but the ultimate quieting of the child is the child’s alone. None can quiet our souls but ourselves. It is always hard continuous work. There is no easy quick fix. We must groan our way through it. For being weaned from the breast is only the first of a life-long pattern. Our weanings will not be over until our life is over. A calm and quiet soul can arise out of nothing less than the sort of demeanor seen in verse one above: Humility, meekness, and contentment in all our circumstances and limitations.

We must lose our childhood, our “innocence”, and begin to take responsibility for ourselves. Then we lose our youth, the vibrant, strength of our bodies, the abilities to undertake some physically demanding activities, feats we may have exulted in. “Fun things”, hobbies, grow boring and dull, and we wonder what there is to take their place. Someone slanders us, we lose respect of certain persons and we are unable to set the record straight or expose the wickedness or our tormentor. If we are vain we shall be terribly dismayed when the beauty is gone, and make fools of ourselves trying to retain it until we quiet our souls about it. We lose our parents, counselors, and mentors, the access to whom we have become accustomed. As we grow older we lose faculties. We peer through tri-focal lenses. We must work hard to understand conversation and then only pick up snatches of words, feeling left out when everyone else understands and responds heartily to the speech or sermon and we don’t even know what was said. We may even lose our homes, our savings, and wonder how we shall survive in the “golden years”, during which we shall surely lose our independence and others will make decisions for us and determine how and where we shall spend our last days.

How important then it is for us to early learn to quiet our souls. How blessed and priceless to rest contentedly in our blessed God’s ordained path. These blessed plateaus can only result in a zeal to persuade the saints to trust in the Lord’s wise providence for now, tomorrow...and whatever might come. He will withhold from us no good thing. And what He takes away, we no longer need. -C. M.