The Expulsive Power of a New Affection ~ Chalmers - posted by BrokenOne (), on: 2008/8/30 16:48

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Â‘THERE are two ways in which a practical moralist may attempt to displace from the human heart its love of the world - either by a demonstration of the world's vanity, so as that the heart shall be prevailed upon simply to withdraw its regard from an object that is not worthy of it; or, by setting forth another object, even God, as more worthy of its attachment, so as that the heart shall be prevailed upon not to resign an old affection, which shall have nothing to succeed it, but to exchange an old affection for a new one.Â”

Â‘A man will no more consent to the misery of being without an object, because that object is a trifle, or of being without a pursuit, because that pursuit terminates in some frivolous or fugitive acquirement, than he will voluntarily submit himself to the torture, because that torture is to be of short duration. If to be without desire and without exertion altogether, is a state of violence and discomfort, then the present desire, with its correspondent train of exertion, is not to be got rid of simply by destroying it. It must be by substituting another desire, and another line or habit of exertion in its place - and the most effectual way of withdrawing the mind from one object, is not by turning it away upon desolate and unpeopled vacancy - but by presenting to its regards another object still more alluring.Â”

Â‘We know not a more sweeping interdict upon the affections of Nature, than that which is delivered by the Apostle in the verse before us. To bid a man into whom there has not yet entered the great and ascendant influence of the principle of regeneration, to bid him withdraw his love from all the things that are in the world, is to bid him give up all the affection that are in his heart. The world is the all of a natural man. He has not a taste nor a desire, that points not to a somethin placed within the confines of its visible horizon. He loves nothing above it, and he cares for nothing beyond it; and to bid him love not the world, is to pass a sentence of expulsion on all the inmates of his bosom. To estimate the magnitude and the difficulty of such a surrender, let us only think that it were just as arduous to prevail on him not to love wealth, which is but one of the things in the world, as to prevail on him to set willful fire to his own property. This he might do with sore and painful reluctance, if he saw that the salvation of his life hung upon it. But this he would do willingly, if he saw that a new property of tenfold value was instantly to emerge from the wreck of the old one.Â”

Â‘The love of God and the love of the world cannot be expunged by a mere demonstration of the world's worthlessness. But may it not be supplemented by the love of that which is more worthy than itself? The heart cannot be prevailed upon to part with the world, by a simple act of resignation. But may not the heart be prevailed upon to admit into its preference another, who shall subordinate the world, and bring it down from its wonted ascendency? If the throne which is placed there must have an occuper, and the tyrant that now reigns has occupied it wrongfully, he may not leave a bosom which would rather detain him than be left in desolation. But may he not give way to the lawful sovereign, appearing with every charm that can secure His willing admittance, and taking unto himself His great power to subdue the moral nature of man, and to reign over it? In what way, if the way to disengage the heart from the positive love of one great and ascendant object, is to fasten it in positive love to another, then it is not by exposing the worthlessness of the former, but by addressing to the mental eye the worth and excellence of the latter, that all old things are to be done away and all things are to become new.Â”

Â‘The love of God and the love of the world, are two affections, not merely in a state of rivalry, but in a state of enmity - and that so irreconcilable, that they cannot dwell together in the same bosom. We have already affirmed how impossible it were for the heart, by any innate elasticity of its own, to cast the world away from it; and thus reduce itself to a wilderness. The heart is not so constituted; and the only way to dispossess it of an old affection, is by the expulsive power of a new one. Nothing can exceed the magnitude of the required change in a man's character - when bidden as he is in the New Testament, to love not the world; no, nor any of the things that are in the world for this so comprehends all that is dear to him in existence, as to be equivalent to a command of self-annihilation.

But the same revelation which dictates so mighty an obedience, places within our reach as mighty an instrument of obedience. It brings for admittance to the very door of our heart, an affection which once seated upon its throne, will either subordinate every previous inmate, or bid it away. Beside the world, it places before the eye of the mind Him who made the world and with this peculiarity, which is all its own - that in the Gospel do we so behold God, as that we may love God.
It is there, and there only, where God stands revealed as an object of confidence to sinners and where our desire after Him is not chilled into apathy, by that barrier of human guilt which intercepts every approach that is not made to Him through the appointed Mediator. It is the bringing in of this better hope, whereby we draw nigh unto God - and to live without hope, is to live without God; and if the heart be without God, then world will then have all the ascendancy. It is God apprised by the believer as God in Christ, who alone can dispose it from this ascendancy. It is when He stands dismantle of the terrors which belong to Him as an offended lawgiver and when we are enabled by faith, which is His own gift, to see His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, and to hear His beseeching voice, as it protests good will to men, and entreats the return of all who will to a full pardon and a gracious acceptance it is then, that a love paramount to the love of the world, and at length expansive of it, first arises in the regenerated bosom. It is when released from the spirit of bondage with which love cannot dwell, and when admitted into the number of God's children through the faith that is in Christ Jesus, the spirit of adoption is poured upon us - it is then that the heart, brought under the mastery of one great and predominant affection, is delivered from the tyranny of its former desires, in the only way in which deliverance is possible. And that fait h which is revealed to us from heaven, as indispensable to a sinner's justification in the sight of God, is also the instrument of the greatest of all moral and spiritual achievements on a nature dead to the influence, and beyond the reach of every other application. Â”