

## February 28

"Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." &mdash; John 13:1.

These words refer immediately to the twelve disciples of our Lord. But what said he in his intercessory prayer? "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." And what part of the statement before us will not extend beyond his first followers?

Is it the relation? Those are called "His own;" and they were indeed his own by extraordinary office, but they were far more importantly his own, by saving grace. And thus he has a propriety in all Christians. If ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed. They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh. He has a peculiar right to them, from covenant donation, and the execution of his trust. They were given him as so many sheep to feed; as so many scholars to teach; as so many patients to heal; as so many captives to redeem. They are therefore not their own, but bought with a price; and the ransom was no less than his own blood. The connexion between Him and them is so intimate and entire, that they are called his heritage, his children, his bride; the members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones; yea, they are joined to the Lord, and of one spirit with him.

Is it the condition? They "were in the world." He was leaving it, and they were to be left in it, and from what it had been to him, they could judge what it would be to them, according to his own intimation, "The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." They found themselves, therefore, as lilies among thorns, as sheep among wolves. And he prayed not to have them taken out of the world, but only kept from the evil. And thus it is with his people now. They are in the world, and this is their field of action and this is their sphere of duty and trial for a season. There they are to serve their generation, there they are to glorify God, by doing and suffering his will. The world has advanced much in science and civilization, but it retains the same disposition towards real godliness as formerly, and is more perilous in its smiles than in its frowns, in its treacherous embraces than in its avowed hostilities. But if you are "His own," while you are "in the world," you will not be of it; and He, whose you are, will not only keep you from falling, but render you useful in it, and bring you honourably out of it. Be of good cheer, says He, I have overcome the world.

Is it the reality of his regard? "He had loved his own which were in the world." What other principle could have actuated him in selecting them, calling them, informing them, employing them, adopting them, honouring them, blessing them with his constant intimacy? They had not chosen him, but he had chosen them, and ordained them, that they should go and bring forth fruit. He treated them not as servants, but as friends, and all things that he had heard of the Father, he made known unto them. He could say, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." And is not this true of all his people? Who said, Deliver them from going down into the pit? Who bore their sins in his own body on the tree? Who shut the mouth of hell? Who opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers? O Christian, who sought thee, and who saved thee? Whatever you are, whatever you have, is the effect of the love of Christ, that passeth knowledge.

Is it the permanency of this affection? Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. They tried him, and proved themselves very unworthy of his continued attachment. Yet he bore with their dullness and imperfections. He chided and reprov'd them indeed, but this was not only compatible with his constancy, but resulted from it; for as many as he loves he rebukes and chastens; and faithful are the wounds of this Friend. And now we see him at the last, all alive to their welfare, teaching and comforting them, washing their feet, and praying for them. In the garden, when he found them sleeping, he extenuated the infirmity: The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. When he surrendered himself to his enemies, he stipulated for their exemption: Let these go their way. He died with them in his heart. He rose, and appeared to them; and though they had all forsaken him and fled in the hour of trial, he said, Be not afraid, Peace be to you. He laid his hands upon them, and while he blessed them, he was taken up into heaven. And did he forget them then? He sent them another Comforter, that should abide with them for ever. And was this peculiar to them? He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." He rests in his love. He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. A true friend loveth at all times. There are indeed few such friends to be found. But he abideth faithful. Job's brethren proved like a summer's brook. One told David in his distress, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. At my first answer, no one, says Paul, stood by me, but all men forsook me; but he adds, nevertheless the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me. So will it be with all those who trust in him: "They shall not be ashamed or confounded, world without end." "This God is the God we adore,  
Our faithful unchangeable friend:  
Whose love is as great as his power;  
And neither knows measure nor end  
'Tis Jesus, the first and the last,  
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home:  
We'll praise him for all that is past,  
And trust him for all that's to come."

Morning Exercises For Everyday In The Year  
By Rev. William Jay