

March 11

"I will mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord." — Isaiah 63:7.

There are three ways in which we should resolve to do this.

We should mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord to others. We should do this in a way of conversation. "Let no corrupt communication," says the Apostle, "proceed out of your mouth." Where there is nothing immoral or indecent, there may yet be much that is trifling and vain; he therefore adds, "But that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers." And here is a subject for discourse, not only innocent, but profitable; a saying, not only faithful, but worthy of all acceptation; and such as Moses and Elias would delight to join in, were they in company with us. We should also mention them to others, in a way of recommendation. Some are convinced of sin, and ready to despair; and nothing but the exceeding riches of divine grace can keep them from it. And some are seeking happiness where we know they can never find it. Let us, therefore, say to them, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him." This, coming from our own experience, and enforced by our own example, may save a soul from death. Especially, too, if we can bear a final testimony to the truth, and say, with the departing Henry, "You have heard the dying words of many — these are mine: I have found a life of communion with Christ the happiest life in the world."

We should also mention the loving-kindnesses of God to ourselves. There is such a thing as self-converse; and would God it were more common. It is said, fools talk much to themselves; but wise men will talk more. David enjoins this: "Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still." And he also was an example of it: "I commune with mine own heart:, and amy spirit made diligent search." "Yet the Lord will command his loving-kindness in the day-time, and in the night his song shall be with me." Hence he chides his own soul: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." Are you discouraged by your unworthiness, and the greatness of your guilt? Bring before your minds the freeness and the fulness of his mercy, and his loving-kindnesses to others, who had no more claim upon him than yourselves. Are you in trouble? Recall his goodness in former difficulties, and say, O my desponding soul, "Did ever trouble yet befall, And he refuse to hear thy call?
And has he not his promise pass'd,
That thou shalt overcome at last?"

Mention them also to yourselves, to excite you to imitation. Has he been so ready to forgive, and has he daily loaded me with his benefits; and shall I, O my soul, be implacable and uncharitable? Let me be a follower of God. Let me be merciful, even as my Father who is in heaven is merciful.

We should mention his loving-kindnesses to God himself, in the various exercises of devotion. In expostulating with him: "Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory. Where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained?" In pleading with him: if we fill our mouth with arguments, they must be fetched from his own goodness: "For thy Name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great." In praying for ourselves: "Hear me speedily, O Lord: my spirit faileth; hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit. Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee. Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies. I flee unto thee to hide me. Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God: thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness." In interceding for others — the conversion of our kindred, the salvation of sinners, the prosperity of the Church: "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion, build thou the walls of Jerusalem." In thanksgiving: "O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me."

Alas, how seldom does God hear this from us! There was a time when this heavenly exercise commenced; O that it had been earlier! But it will never end. They that dwell in His house will be still praising Him.

Because my finite capacity will not admit of blessedness infinite in the degree, it shall be infinite in the duration; and, by happy reviews of the past, and unbounded prospects of the future, I shall feel perpetually growing beatitudes, and shall be always singing a new song. My mourning days, and my warring days; and my waiting days, and watching days, and my praying days, will soon be past: but "My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, or breath, or being last,
Or immortality endures."

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