

PROVERBS 27

DON'T COUNT ON TOMORROW

Don't count on tomorrow! (verse 1)

“Boast not thyself of tomorrow: for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.”

Tomorrow may come, but will you be here to meet it? The day may be sure, but your interest in it is entirely uncertain. We have the ability to know the past and to experience the present, but we cannot discern the future. To count on *tomorrow*, so as to neglect the duty of *today*, is – in many respects – the greatest practical error among mankind. No other mistake has a wider range, nor is any other charged with more dreadful consequences. It does not matter whether the work in hand pertains to small matters or great ones. For every lone person who deliberately resolves not to do the work at all, a hundred others tread the same path and suffer the same loss at last, who only postponed the work *today* with the intention of performing it *tomorrow*.

This Proverb contains only the negative side of the precept, but it is made hollow (so to speak) for the very purpose of holding the positive promise within it. The Old Testament sweeps away the widespread error, and the New Testament then deposits its saving truth upon the same spot. The Law declares that *tomorrow* is the worst time for making our peace with God, and the Gospel proposes *today* as the best. “Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation!” *Tomorrow* is the devil’s best friend; it is the Goliath in which he trusts for victory. But *Now* is the David whom God sends forth against him. A great significance lies in that little word! That spot is the place where the victory in life’s battle is lost or won. Many people resist Jesus’ claim to be admitted *now*, just as a rocky shore resists the onset of the waves. The worldly person will freely agree to be a Christian *tomorrow*, if Christ will only permit him or her to still be worldly *today*.

These two things are terribly clear: the time is short to all, and that short time is uncertain to each! An artist once requested permission to paint a portrait of the Queen. The favor was granted – and the favor was a great one, for it would probably make the fortune of the man. So a certain place and time were agreed upon, and the Queen was faithful to the appointment. But the artist was not there; he was not ready yet. When he finally arrived, a message was communicated to him that Her Majesty had departed and would not return. Let this story serve as a parable of a heavenly lesson. The Eternal King has consented to meet with mankind. In His Covenant, He has fixed the objective, the place, and the time of the meeting; and He has proclaimed them in His Word. The objective of the meeting is for salvation; the place is in Christ; the time is *now*. The faithful Creator has been true to His own appointment. He came – not to condemn, but to save. He came in Christ, and made Himself manifest in human flesh. He waits now to embrace returning prodigals. If they abide among their husks and swine today, and come running and panting tomorrow; they may find that the door of

mercy is shut, and the day of redemption is past. Have you ever felt a fainting of heart and a bitterness of spirit when – after much preparation for an important journey – you arrived at the appointed place, and found that the bus or train by which you had intended to travel had gone with all who were ready at the scheduled time, and left you behind? And can you imagine the dismay which will fill your soul, if you come too late to the closed door of heaven, and begin to hopelessly cry, “Lord, Lord, open to us!”



Iron sharpens iron (verse 17)

“Iron sharpeneth iron: so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”

When an iron tool becomes blunt, an instrument of the same material is sometimes employed to restore its edge. In such a case, literally, “iron sharpeneth iron.” This process is compared to the refreshing influence which a person’s countenance may exert upon the drooping spirit of his friend. Everyone who knows what trouble is has experienced the process of blunting. And everyone who has a true friend knows how much power there is in human sympathy to touch the soul that has become heavy and dull, and to sharpen it into hopeful activity again.

When the Creator had made the sun, He hung it in the midst of heaven, so that all the world might see its beauty and bask in its rays. So also, when the Lord makes a “lesser light” of equal brilliancy – that is, a loving human face – He intends that it should shine upon hearts that have grown dark and cold. When the people of God are assembled together, they mutually exchange rays as sweet as sunlight from the faces of true friends! Why should not the sons and daughters of God meet thus, and bless each other as siblings, while they are loved by the same Heavenly Father? Let “HOLINESS TO THE LORD” be written upon our friendships, and then we may freely enjoy them. We may fellowship together, and look upon each other’s faces, and thank God for His goodness! Here is a work to be done, a battle to be fought, and a victory to be won. Wrench friendships and fellowships away from Satan’s hands, and let the children of God – for whom they are provided – enjoy that which is their own again!

When our spirits are sorely blunted by all the hardship and temptations of this life, how shall they acquire a keenness to slice through the armor of death and gain the victory? The sharpener that is provided for this extremity is still the countenance of a Friend! As iron sharpens iron, a Man is provided even in that last hard time, when our souls are sinking! For our adversity, a Brother is born! It is Christ’s countenance which – being lifted up, and looking lovingly upon us in the hour of our need – will revive our downcast spirits, and put a new song into our fainting lips.

Thank You, Lord, for the privilege of meeting together as Your sons and daughters, reciprocating sweetness as siblings, while being loved and blessed by You. Amen.