

June 15, 2014
Proverbs 27:1-27

**“Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth;
a stranger, and not thine own lips.” Proverbs 27:2**

The instruction “Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (27:1) continues in this verse, for boasting about the future is another form of self-praise. Both originate in an evil heart (Jas. 1:14; Mark 7:21, 11) that is thinking about self to the exclusion of God. Both arise from a swollen self-estimate which leaves little or no room for veneration of the only One to whom all praise is due.

Lucifer (Isa. 14:12-14), Absalom (II Sam. 15:1-6), Haman (Est. 5:11; 6:6-9), and the Publican (Luke 18:11-13) were all guilty of self-praise, yet are remembered in disgrace. Those upon whom the wrath of God is falling are described in Scripture as being “vain in their imagination . . . Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Rom. 1:21, 22). When the Apostle Paul was pressed by adversaries to explain the rigor, sacrifice and sufferings of his toils, he wrote, “I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me” (II Cor. 11:5-12; 12:11). The pride that expresses itself in self-praise is usually not observed by the boaster, but is very real. It takes honor that is God’s, not ours.

“Praise is a comely garment. But though you, yourself, wear it, another must put it on, or else it will never fit well. Praise is sweet music, but it is never tuneable in your own mouth. If it comes from the mouth of another, it sounds in tune to all ears that hear it. Praise is a rich treasure, but it will never make you rich, unless another tell the same. Indeed—except as the vindication of our character, or our Master’s honor, may require—nothing lowers a man so much in the eyes of his fellowmen as singing his own praises, for though every man is his own flatterer, yet men usually despise pride in others, while they cherish it in themselves” (Charles Bridges).

Self-praise takes subtle forms, for most who indulge know how obnoxious it is to their hearer. Usually, the form is nothing more than talking about “beloved” self. We are all inclined to this. So inclined are we to self-centeredness that we do so without contemplating that talking about ourselves is an expression of inflated self-estimate. In this age of “social media,” the internet has become an auditorium in which many divulge details of their lives that do not need to be known by others. In all forms of self-promotion, the most conspicuous and grievous omission is Jesus Christ.

“Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men” (Psa. 107:8, 15, 21, 31). “Sing unto him sing psalms unto him; talk ye of all his wondrous works” (Psa. 105:2).

How different Christ’s life among men was than ours is! Although he was the very revelation of God to man, He did not grasp after the glory inherent in this, but “made himself of no reputation.” He took upon himself the form of a slave, and humbled Himself, for “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble” (Jas. 4:8). “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5).