

No.  
213.

"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS  
WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE  
RIGHT HAND OF GOD." COL. 3. 1.

P S A L M 141. 3.  
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*An Address (revised) at*

FOREST GATE,

25th December, 1923,

by

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Address by Mr. P. W. Heward,

Forest Gate, 25th Dec. 1923.

"Set a watch" - a striking prayer. "Set a watch", said the Psalmist, "O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips". The psalmist has just been speaking of prayer, and at once goes on to refer to the mouth in its OTHER uses. The one who prays may rise up from his knees to grieve God with the misuse of his lips. Many met to pray for Peter. God answered their prayer, and Peter knocked at the door. Rhoda says, Peter is here. They say, THOU ART MAD. Strange aspect! Getting up from their knees to say, Thou art mad. When we are praying we need to be kept, or we shall get up from our knees to dishonour the Lord with our tongues. "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips". Yea, there is a danger, even WHEN we are praying. Who is there who has not felt when on his knees, - yea, earnestly praying, - felt a power coming over him, intense longing, and suddenly he realises he is asking for something which is not the will of God? Is it a known fact among believers that when they are praying, Satan's representatives are at hand to try and get hold of the unbalanced believer, carried away by emotionalism, to make him say wrong things? Deep feelings, earnest wishes, but not the will of God! We need, therefore, God's gracious control of our mouths with respect to PRAYER. "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth;

keep the door of my lips". The context must also be noticed. "Lord", says David, "I cry unto Thee; make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto Thee". It is evident he is in trouble. He has problems, and he adds in verse 4, "Incline not my heart to any evil word". The expression "thing" is really "word". "Incline not my heart to any evil word". In verse 9, "Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity." See now another aspect. David wants to be kept from any evil word, when he is in the MIDST of those who are laying snares for him. "Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense" - a beautiful, contrasted fragrance, - "The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice" - the intensity of the whole being. "The lifting up of my hands" - I cannot protect myself; both my hands are praying; I cannot scheme for myself. "The lifting up of my hands" with which I should naturally do other work of self defence, to clear myself from these problems. They are to be UNTO THEE as the evening sacrifice. "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth". Let me not complain of the difficulties, let me not have an ugly word against those who are unkind to me. "A watch before my mouth".

Our dear brother just now urged us as to our EARS, and showed how the Lord Jesus Christ with the opened ears, was the One Who had the body prepared, the Perfect Lord, - and also, that if there is in us the BRIDLED tongue there is the

control of the whole BODY. It is important to realise this. The book of Proverbs is filled full with references to the BODY, and the tongue comes in for a large share. For "Death and life are in the power of the tongue", and if only we can keep our tongue, we can keep our soul. So much depends on the right use of the tongue. So much mischief can be brought about through the misuse of the tongue. Scripture tells us how that the tongue of some pours forth foolishness, and feeds on foolishness. Ecclesiastes reminds us that our tongue may make our body to sin, and the words ring out, Be not rash. Even Moses, a man of God, when he was provoked, spake unadvisedly with his lips. They provoked his spirit, and his lips sinned. Ah, here is the key. Whence come evil speakings? Out from the HEART. The contrast is very blessed. The heart of the wise teacheth his lips. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh". "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things". When his spirit was provoked he spake unadvisedly. Of Job we first read, "In all this Job sinned not nor charged God foolishly". A little later on it is written "In all this did not Job sin WITH HIS LIPS". There is something wrong. The lips are restrained; but why that limitation? The heart has begun to murmur. Soon after it is written, Then Job opened his mouth. The battle was lost when there was the limitation "He did not sin with his lips". The evil was welling up in the heart. "Keep thine HEART with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life", and there

we have the twofold aspect - the kept heart, in the power of the Holy Spirit, AND the setting of a watch before the mouth, the keeping of the door of the lips. Do we realise this twofold aspect? It is our responsibility to be concerned about our heart much more than we have been concerned, that, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, we may have a right condition of heart to affect our lips, but beyond this we need to cry unto God to put a watch with respect to our mouth, to censor all our words. Even though we seek for a godly heart, and godly meditation, we shall still need to cry unto our heavenly Father to keep the door of our lips. Have you not felt the NEED for this? Have you not BEGUN to say something, and have half wondered if it is wise, and yet have realised a strange feeling come over you that almost refuses to ponder TILL it is finished. It seems to MAKE the words come out, and you are willing to consider them AFTERWARDS, but the evil is done then. There is a strange impelling, a weird constraint, unless the spell is broken by grace. They may be words of impatience, they may be words of criticism, they may be words of unkindness. Ponder everything, and ask God to put a watch. "Keep the door of my lips". O, beloved friends, we need that God should keep the door of our lips. Many words are spoken which are NOT particularly wicked from the world's standpoint, but are they positively blessed? The lips of the righteous FEED many. "Let your speech be ALWAYS with GRACE", like Him of Whom it is

written "Grace is poured over Thy lips". "Seasoned with salt". The word "seasoned" implies "prepared", and particularly prepared as FOOD. "Seasoned with salt". "Let your speech be always with grace". It is not enough to have a NEGATIVE holding back from wrong things; there should be a POSITIVE rightness. What food is there? Do you feed others with your words? Is it not a sad fact that oftentimes one has to say "I have received NO FOOD from that conversation: I have given no food" Oh, you say, we read the Scriptures to get food. Granted. A blessed privilege. You say, We go to a meeting to get food. I hope you do. Thanks be unto God for that. But there is the lost privilege of conversation. Sometimes a great man has been famed for conversation, and after-writers have collected his table talk. Beloved friends, what about our table talk? Is the book of remembrance full of extracts from our table talk? "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt". Do you find food from the words of other saved ones? and do you seek to give them food? That is the important matter. Do not speak for speaking's sake. "Slow to speak". Let the lips speak because the heart teaches them. The heart is a wellspring, and so the tongue is to be a wellspring. That is the Divine aspect in the book of Proverbs. We have a treasure within that we may bring forth a treasure for others. O how precious the words should be. The saint's GREETING should be holy. DETAILS should bring God glory. So much

depends on the tone. I have heard an ORDINARY word sound with an extraordinary unkindness. May we not sound it with EXTRA-ORDINARY GRACE? If you can show you are irritated even by the word "Yes", can you not show Christ even by the word "Yes"? "Seasoned with salt". Let your words be dished up in a way that will be appetizing for the one who desires food from your conversation, and do not mix things. Do not mix things. Oh, beloved friends, what would you think if you were invited to a meal, and on the table you found everything mingled? - one plate of delicious food, so appetizing; next to it a plate of mud; and you were asked to have a spoonful of the plate of mud? Would it not turn you against the OTHER food? If you invite another for a little conversation, and have a few words of mud and slander and scandal, what is the value of your appetizing dish afterwards? I do not want your appetizing dish if you have given me mud to eat first. I want to get rid of that mud. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt". Do not MIX things. "Walk in the Spirit". Continue, continue. Ask the Lord to censor all the words, that you may never present a poisoned dish, or an unsavoury dish, and remember if the FEW "flies of death" can SPOIL the ointment of the apothecary, a few mistaken words can SPOIL the whole spiritual dinner!

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