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Substance of Sermon preached by our Pastor Mr. J. W. Spaulding-Tyler
on Sunday Afternoon, May 14, 1978. at The Dickers

Lesson. Psalm 107.

And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed. Deuteronomy 31 8.

Moses delivered this sacred promise to his successor, Joshua, which entered his soul with sovereign, divine efficacy and unctuous power, and so it became to Joshua as a staff to lean on to complete the whole of his ministry and journey. The whole concept is that those who are bound for a Better Country, that is, a heavenly, are on a journey; they have a course to run, a pilgrimage by divine grace to undertake, a glorious object in view. How could any attempt a course satisfactorily without an object in view? So these precious characters have an object in view, - Christ: and the concept is, they see His track. That is where you will be happy. You see His track from Heaven to the virgin's womb, to the manger, to the waters of Jordan, to His ministry, His miracles, to the perfection of holy obedience, to the Mount of Transfiguration, to Gethsemane and to the scourging at the pillar, to the crown of thorns and the cross. This is their glorious Object. "And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee." This is how He went before us; to His sacred, voluntary, sacrificial death and burial. When we come to the end of our mortal life, and we all shall and soon: think of the grave; but He has gone before you. "He it is that doth go before thee." You have a grave before you: there is no sting or terror: there is victory in the grave, because He has gone before you. The sweetest thing to those who know the love of Christ is to be where He was and to know He has gone before them, so when their precious dust is laid softly in the tomb Christ was there before them and He conquered death. He rose on the third day, but continued with His dear ones for forty days. Think of how they conversed; the deeper teaching, the fuller understanding of all they had been so comparatively ignorant of, and the Lord equipping them ~~them~~ for what lay before them. The Lord qualifies His people, and gives an enabling.

Let us take the promises of the four clauses of the Text,- what the Lord will do; and the two exhortations. "And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee." The secret is, "Looking unto Jesus," "To keep your eyes on Jesus fixed." He will not hide His face from these dear souls. They will see the glorious Object of faith, know His sweet countenance, His lovely smile, His sweet voice. They will know His track,- where to look. That is the secret. Two syllables describe the exhortations of the Lord to His people: "Follow Me." Can you see in every conceivable way, and inconceivable way, "He it is that doth go before thee."? He went before you in the Councils of Peace that related to sinners who would be reconciled. He went before you in the Covenant of Grace, when all was settled by the Father on the elect in Christ. Every blessing Christ merited for you by His priestly work of atonement is in the Covenant of Grace for you,- all the riches of His grace; pardon, peace, justification, wisdom, strength. So He went before you. Take a wise husband or father: it is certain he will make provision for his loved ones, and study his wife so if he is taken there will be provision for her and the children. When the Lord Jesus died, think of the legacy! It is the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. There is everything provided for soul, body, needs, desires. There is infinite fulness.

He has gone before you. Is there anything you need? It is there to be dispensed. He has gone before you. Are you a guilty, confessing sinner? There is pardon for you. Do you realise you have lost the primitive righteousness man had prior to the fall so you are naked? There is a royal robe. Do you lack wisdom? It is there. Are you weak? There is strength there. Do you know the sore conflict of life and the turmoil of life? There is heavenly peace. It is all there. He has gone before you. And in all the phases of life. Are you young and knowing anxiety, or becoming conscious of what life means? or anxious concerning a situation, or a career, or a friend, or husband or wife? He has gone before you. You say, "The dear man by my side was decreed, and the dear children." It is His heavenly decree. He has gone before you. This is an enormous subject. As we have with us widows and widowers,- O the gloomy forebodings! "What shall I do?" He has made provision. And for those in advanced years anxiety rises as the years pass. "What will happen to me

in my last days if I am ill? or if I am bereaved, who will look after me?" and oh, the concern of one's last days! "And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee." So this word is fulfilled, "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." Child of God, if you are walking by faith, and this includes prayer that will attend it, your great prayer will be to be led by the Spirit, divinely guided; for the Lord to direct your way and lead you forth in the right way. There are things emerge that are not anticipated, but you will prove the dear Lord goes before you. At the end of the day you will say, "It is so evident that before I set foot out of the house the dear Lord went before me." "And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee." He can silence an enemy; change a belligerent attitude to a friendly one.

"And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee." Very sweet this is. Take the ministry in several ways: as led by the Spirit, a man is shown where to preach and as to a pastorate. The Lord goes before us. He knows how to qualify us for the sacred work we have to do, and He knows how to fill His dear people's hearts with prayer and love, and it is the Lord going before us. And He knows how to open a Lydia's heart so it becomes receptive of what is preached by the unction of the Spirit. And there is another way: the whole of the ministry is the Lord's method of going before Israel to the promised rest. You no longer look to the firmament and see the pillar, but you still look as you behold the glory of Christ and recognise the divine power and holy influence that guides you to the promised rest. "And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee." He has promised that we shall remember all the way He has led us. It is full of warmth and sunshine, but of shame in relation to us but all glory to the Lord. He will take you back over the way, and you will see that He has gone before you. I like the couplet,

"In darkest nights He makes a way,
And turns the gloomy shade to day." (513)

He goes before you. You come into affliction; He has gone before you. Many of the Lord's people have found the Lord has gone before them in a hospital. The sister shows them the end bed in the ward, next to a wall, and the Lord speaks, and puts His everlasting arms them and brings them through, and, "A word of Thy supporting breath

Drives all (their) fears away." (139)

The Lord has gone before you. There are those who are so kind to you: it is the dear Lord who has gone before you. And this applies to your home: you do not want to take a wrong step. He makes it clear He has gone before you.

If you have proof that the dear Lord has gone before you, you will go to Heaven. He will not leave you to perish in the wilderness. He will land you safe above. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way." This is a delight to me. It is so unique to those who fear God: the worldling knows nothing of it. You not only have the experience of the Lord going before you from the first moment of the day to the last, but you will come to live closer to Him. You want Him to guide you and to know He has gone before you. The preacher has proved it many years. It is not accidental that you met your wife or husband. Think of the circumstances, and the overruling providence of God, that 'wisely marshals every circumstance.' "And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee."

And there is another way. Take the example of Jacob: he was taught to leave home and undertake a long journey. The first night with his head on a stone, the Lord gave him a vision and took him through life to Glory. There are many views of the ladder and the cluster of promises. The Lord gave him a cluster of grapes from ~~Eshcol~~ Eshcol and he saw his way up the shining course to Heaven. The Lord said to him, "I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." When some of you beloved friends ~~when you~~ were baptised or married the Lord gave you a promise that covered the whole of the journey to Heaven, and you saw this track and believed you would be landed in eternal bliss. The Lord went before you. If you are in the right path and living a life of faith and prayer you will have such comfort. You will have the approbation of God. You will say, "The way I take cannot be wrong because Jesus is here." You have such peace because you know it is the path of God's own leading. It is not your way: it is His. "and he led them forth by the right way." Is there a destination? "that they might go to a city of habitation." "And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee." He gives His people sweet acquiescence with His divine will. "Thy will be done." and you will flow into it when the Lord comes, and find

active delight in the will of God, You will be submissive: there will be peace in your spirit and answers to prayer. Wondrous this is.

"And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee:" At the end of the four promises there are two exhortations. O child of God, hear these exhortations, who are being led by the Lord. "Fear not," There is nothing to fear if 'the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee.' He will never abandon you. "He will not fail thee." You may look at the calendar and wonder if you will get through the summer because of the difficulties and dilemmas. O the dread that fills your mind as you look at Everest! The Lord says, "fear not, neither be dismayed." Dismayed means, do not lose heart,- there is such a thing. You feel you have no heart left to continue. "The will to rise, the power to live," We need it: there ^{are} things that seem to take it away. "And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee." You will rejoice together presently. You will rejoice with Christ and He with you when you are on the Happy Shore. What about it?

"And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee." He will not go before you 75% of the journey: it will be all the way. "And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee." and when He brings you through,

"With what raptures He'll embrace us,

Wipe away each falling tear!

Near Himself for ever place us," (769)

You will rejoice together: and all the heavenly hosts will rejoice; all the spirits of just men made perfect. Think what awaits you! The Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and all the glorified saints will rejoice with you. "And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee." If you come into a dark night you will prove that He has gone before you because He is risen, and He makes a way, and turns the gloomy shade to day because of the sunshine of His victory. When you come into the water and the furnace, what will you prove? "And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee." Take a child of God coming to a dying bed,- you hope and trust you will die in your own bed, if the Lord will- with His dear people He gives them a promise that He will make their bed in sickness, and He is there because He has gone before you. When death comes,- you may dread it, but with some of the people of God fear has been removed. The pains

of death in your body you may dread. The point is, when you see death it will be as though he is a friend, not an enemy. The King has sent him to open the gate to let the pilgrims in. Do you see the secret? He has gone before you. O the wonder of it! yet we live so much with slavish fear and temptation, but He says He will go before you. Here is safety and security, peace, happiness, provision, protection, support, upholding, wisdom, glory itself. And it reveals close union and communion between Christ and you.

"And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee." This is further expounded in the clause, "He will be with thee." The presence of God is the surest, most positive proof of sonship and salvation, and it will be your highest priority to have the dear Lord with you. While we esteem it a favour to be helped through,- and you have the same in life day by day and night by night, you will say, "Dear Lord, I seek the enjoyment of thy sweet presence; to get my heart melted, and to feel Thy love shed abroad in my soul: to really feel the sweet presence of the Lord!" He says He will be with thee, and in the storms of life. When you were married, did you feel the Lord came? When you ventured on the Lord to be baptised, did you feel His sweet presence? In the Church Meeting I felt immediately I ventured such divine peace in my spirit as a river. O the presence of the dear Lord! You will ^{know} His presence. It liberates you, enriches you, delivers you, satisfies you. O the loving, gracious presence of the dear Lord in your soul! Could you give a testimony as to the enjoyment of His presence? You went to bed and you were so happy; your head was on the bosom of Christ, and you felt, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. It is well. If the Lord takes me before the morning I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with His likeness." The dear Lord is with you. You so mourn when you do not feel His presence as you would. You do not wait long, do you? When you do not feel His sweet presence you mourn, but there is a purpose in it. It is to strip you of self, flesh and pride, and all of that. You will remember a slip in thought, or speech, or something you glanced at. How you mourn over your sins and after Him! You will know His presence. It is the beginning of Heaven.

"He will be with thee."-your Husband, Father, Friend, Counsellor, Advocate, Intercessor, Prophet, Priest, King. What do you think of

your Beloved? Can you speak of Him? "He will be with thee." He will bring you to His House of Wine, and His banner of love will be over you. "He will not fail thee." All else fails: we do; the arm of flesh fails. There is deterioration because of age and infirmity: everything fails but Christ. You look at yourself as a fallen creature and feel a dismal failure. The Lord does not fail. We fail. You go forward in life, and you say, "I have failed." It does not matter what it is, you feel you have failed. He will not fail. I do not understand why He is so good and gracious to me. I do not merit it, only on the ground of Christ's merit. "He will not fail thee." You may be solitary, stripped, lonely, as though there is no one on earth to love you. There are some like that. "He will not fail thee." You have been such a sinner: it will break your heart because He does not fail you though you have failed Him. You come into emergencies, difficulties,- He will not fail thee. He does not deal with us according to our sins but according to His mercy. Some are looking to the time when their parents will be gone: some see all the members of the family gone, and their contemporaries gone, and they are very anxious concerning this. "He will not fail thee." And there those who deteriorate in many ways, and some in their minds, and they are pitiful objects of humanity. The Lord will not fail them.

"neither forsake thee." We forsake Him. "They all forsook Him, and fled." They were our representatives. We have forsaken Him. He will never abandon you, never leave you to sink without His blessed aid. Blessed be God. Amen.