

The background of the cover is a photograph of a desert landscape at sunset. The sky is a warm, golden-orange color, and the sun is low on the horizon, casting a long, soft glow over the scene. In the foreground, a path of footprints is visible, leading from the bottom center towards the middle ground. The sand is rippled, and the footprints are dark against the lighter sand. In the distance, there are low, rounded hills or mountains, also bathed in the warm light of the setting sun.

In His Steps...

Charles M. Sheldon

Author's Foreword

The story "In His Steps" was written in 1896, and it was read a chapter at a time to my young people, Sunday evenings in the Central Congregational Church, Topeka, Kansas. While it was being read it was being published in the Chicago Advance, a religious weekly, as a serial. The publisher did not know the conditions of the copyright law, and he filed only one copy of the advance each week with the department, instead of two, which the law required. On that account the copyright was defective, and the story was thrown into the "public domain" when the Advance Company put it out in a ten cent paper edition. Owing to the fact that no one had any legal ownership in the book, sixteen different publishers in America and fifty in Europe and Australia put out the book in various editions from an English penny to eight shillings. Mr. Bowden, the London publisher, sold over 3,000,000 copies of the penny edition on the streets of London. The book has been translated into twenty-one languages, including a Russian publication which was banned by the Soviet. A Turkish Translation in Arabic is permitted circulation by the government and is being read all over Turkey.

The Story has been made into the drama form and is being used by groups of young church people and by college students. And while conditions have changed in the years since the story was written, the principle of human conduct remains the same. I do not need to say that I am very thankful that owing to the defective copyright the book has had a larger reading on account of the great number of publishers. I find readers in every part of the world where I go. And I am informed by the Publishers' Weekly that the book has had more circulation than any other book except the Bible. If that is true, no one is more grateful than I am, as it confirms the faith I have always held that no subject is more interesting and vital to the human race than religion.

***In His Steps* by Charles Sheldon**

May I be allowed to add a word of appreciation for the courtesy of the publishers of this authorized edition who through these years recognized the moral rights of the author and have kindly permitted him a share in the financial sales of the book. I hope for this edition a hearty and kindly welcome from the readers, old and young, who believe that in the end of human history Jesus will be the standard of human conduct for the entire human race.

Charles M. Sheldon
Topeka, Kansas, 1935

Note on This Edition

In preparing this edition of *In His Steps*, I took the liberty of changing the Bible quotations to a modern-speech translation (the New International Version) in an effort to make the Scriptures, the source of inspiration for Sheldon's classic, more accessible to a modern audience that is less literate in Elizabethan language. I have also provided the chapter-and-verse references.

Steve Singleton
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Chapter One

Henry Maxwell's Visitor

"For to this you were called; because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps."—1 Peter 2:21

It was Friday morning and the Rev. Henry Maxwell was trying to finish his Sunday morning sermon. He had been interrupted several times and was growing nervous as the morning wore away, and the sermon grew very slowly toward a satisfactory finish.

"Mary," he called to his wife, as he went upstairs after the last interruption, "if any one comes after this, I wish you would say I am very busy and cannot come down unless it is something very important."

"Yes, Henry. But I am going over to visit the kindergarten and you will have the house all to yourself."

The minister went up into his study and shut the door. In a few minutes he heard his wife go out, and then everything was quiet. He settled himself at his desk with a sigh of relief and began to write. His text was from 1 Peter 2:21: "For to this you were called; because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps."

He had emphasized in the first part of the sermon the Atonement as a personal sacrifice, calling attention to the fact of Jesus' suffering in various ways, in His life as well as in His death. He had then gone on to emphasize the Atonement from the side of example, giving illustrations from the life and

teachings of Jesus to show how faith in the Christ helped to save men because of the pattern or character He displayed for their imitation. He was now on the third and last point, the necessity of following Jesus in His sacrifice and example.

He had put down "Three Steps. What are they?" and was about to enumerate them in logical order when the bell rang sharply. It was one of those clockwork bells, and always went off as a clock might go if it tried to strike twelve all at once.

Henry Maxwell sat at his desk and frowned a little. He made no movement to answer the bell. Very soon it rang again; then he rose and walked over to one of his windows which commanded the view of the front door. A man was standing on the steps. He was a young man, very shabbily dressed.

"Looks like a tramp," said the minister. "I suppose I'll have to go down and..."

He did not finish his sentence but he went downstairs and opened the front door. There was a moment's pause as the two men stood facing each other, then the shabby-looking young man said:

"I'm out of a job, sir, and thought maybe you might put me in the way of getting something."

"I don't know of anything. Jobs are scarce..." replied the minister, beginning to shut the door slowly.

"I didn't know but you might perhaps be able to give me a line to the city railway or the superintendent of the shops, or something," continued the young man, shifting his faded hat from one hand to the other nervously.

"It would be of no use. You will have to excuse me. I am very busy this morning. I hope you will find something. Sorry I can't give you something to do here. But I keep only a horse and a cow and do the work myself."