



21 The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth. 22 For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off. 23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. 24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand. 25 I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. 26 He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed. 27 Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore. (Psalm 37:21-27)

Following Those Prints

*Once on a day of Joyful Beauty and air pristine
I happened on the trail, at Jordan Banks, where our Lord had trod,
And saw there in the stony edge a gleam
The footprints of his nail-pierced feet upon the sod.*

*Along the shore of Galilee's coast
A fishing boat with sides weathered by the tempest's blast
Lay anchored now in quiet repose
Silent witness to the Stormy past.*

*Onward down the River Valley green
The Footprints led to Bethany
And on the way an opened Tomb
Whose owner rose as beckoned lovingly.*

*On across the western plains to Sychar's well
That Jacob dug for all to quench a thirst
The prints paused briefly for a Woman Lost
Mixed there with others who came as did the first.*

*Quite steady on the prints led to the Temple Mount
Where tables, overturned in fury hot,
At which the money changers made their count
And fled the Master's blistering reproach of all their lot.*

*Straight on the steps led through the narrow Way
To Pilate's seat foreboding, proud and dark,
Past judgment seat where Peter thrice on that last Day
Denied his love for Christ and missed the mark.*

*Now haltingly they merge on Dolorosa's rocky lane
Where Jesus bore His heavy cross alone
Up Calvary's granite slopes of Crimson Stain
Where last He bled and for our sin atoned.*

*From out the tomb in Garden fair and sweet
The prints led on to Glory high and Great
And up beyond the heavens' pearl-decked gates
He now commands the hearts of all of Faith.*

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Traditionally speaking, there are 13 steps up to the gallows. But those steps of perdition did not begin at the base of the gallows, but long before when its victim chose a path of lawlessness rather than of righteousness. If his steps had been ordered by the Lord, he would not have found himself at the base of the gallows. I would not recommend that any aspire to take those final steps in life. The steps of the unrighteous will always lead to the gallows – either in this life or the next.

When I was a very young lad, I remember trying to place my steps in the exact footprints of my father. His stride was long and I suspect he shortened his gait to accommodate my inadequacy. It reminds me of how much we at first need to follow Christ and His footsteps, and then to try and take the exact steps that He has taken. The steps of Christ are mighty and great steps. We can never find them a fit for our own feeble efforts. We will find that we must, first of all, concentrate on the effort so as to make our steps congruent with His. In the second place, we must stretch our spiritual muscles to the limit. In the third place, we must keep our eyes fixed on the Lord. *3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. 4 Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.* (Isaiah 26:3-4) – not only mind, but all of our being! *6 Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. 7 He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD. 8 His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies.”* (Psalm 112:6-8)

One glaring fact that escapes the mind, or even the mention, of many clergy and professors of the faith and that is cardinal to the faith is this great truth: *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.* (Luke 9:23-24) It seems easy, on the face of it, to deny ourselves; but let us not halt at that one purview. Let us examine the words of the Lord in greater depth. He commands those who desire to come after Him to *follow Him*. To follow Christ is to save one's life even in the losing of it. Every American soldier, seaman, and airman takes an oath to defend the Constitution of the United States against ALL enemies, both foreign and domestic. Some give their very lives on the altar of Freedom, but not all. But all did place their lives on that altar for the taking if required of them.

The same is true of the steps of Christ. From His baptism on the Banks of Jordan Waters; to the Wilderness temptation; to the shores of peaceful Galilee; to the stormy

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encounters in the Temple at Jerusalem; to Jacob's Well in Samaria; to the Last Supper; to the Garden prayer of Gethsemane; to the kangaroo courts of Caiaphas, Herod, and Pilate; and then on to Golgotha's scolding brow – these are the steps of our Lord. His footprints are deeply graved upon the sands of the Holy Land. These are the steps we must take in following. As he bore His cross, so must we follow on bearing our cross which He has given us. Must we die as well? Yes, we MUST die to self in order to live for Him. But the steps of Christ do not end at the base of the cross, and ours need not end at the base of the world's unjust gallows.

Jesus was confined in a garden tomb which was simply borrowed. As Jonah spent three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so did the Lord spend three days and three nights in that Tomb. But death is powerless before the face of God. It could not hold our Lord. He defeated death and hell while in the Tomb over the Sabbath of the Lord. He arose from that tomb and walked the streets of Jerusalem and, finally, along those familiar sands of the shore of the Sea of Galilee. From thence, His footsteps led to the Mount of Ascension and far beyond. If we take up our crosses daily and follow Him, we will meet with rejection, disappointment, and scorn from the world. We die to self by placing the love of others above that of self, and we shall die and be confined to a borrowed tomb just as was our Lord. But then we shall joyfully follow those steps out of the tomb and to another Mount of Ascension to be with Him and the Father forever and ever.

Heed the Counsel of Scripture: *11 My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. 12 Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. (Job 23:11-12) 133 Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me. (Psalms 119:133) 105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. (Psalm 119:105)*