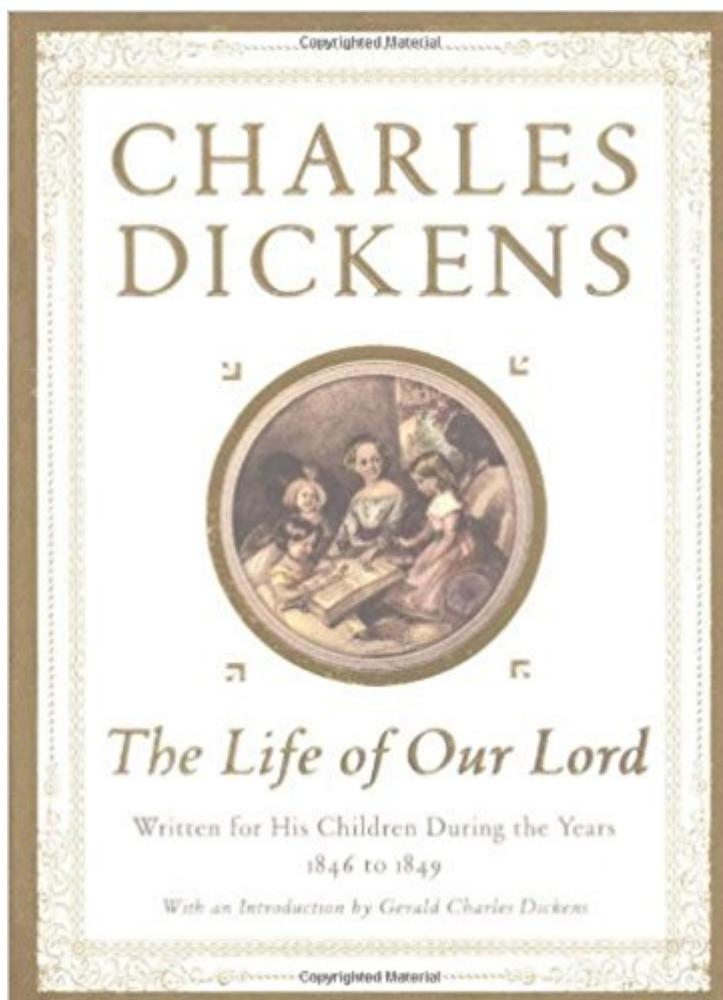


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# The Life Of Our Lord: Written For His Children During The Years 1846 To 1849



## **Synopsis**

Charles Dickens's other Christmas classic, with a new introduction by Dickens's great-great-grandson, Gerald Charles Dickens. Charles Dickens wrote *The Life of Our Lord* during the years 1846-1849, just about the time he was completing *David Copperfield*. In this charming, simple retelling of the life of Jesus Christ, adapted from the Gospel of St. Luke, Dickens hoped to teach his young children about religion and faith. Since he wrote it exclusively for his children, Dickens refused to allow publication. For eighty-five years the manuscript was guarded as a precious family secret, and it was handed down from one relative to the next. When Dickens died in 1870, it was left to his sister-in-law, Georgina Hogarth. From there it fell to Dickens's son, Sir Henry Fielding Dickens, with the admonition that it should not be published while any child of Dickens lived. Just before the 1933 holidays, Sir Henry, then the only living child of Dickens, died, leaving his father's manuscript to his wife and children. He also bequeathed to them the right to make the decision to publish *The Life of Our Lord*. By majority vote, Sir Henry's widow and children decided to publish the book in London. In 1934, Simon & Schuster published the first American edition, which became one of the year's biggest bestsellers.

## **Book Information**

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Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## **Customer Reviews**

Charles Dickens wrote *The Life of Our Lord* around the same time he was finishing up *David Copperfield*, but to readers raised on a diet of Dickensian wit and indignation, his rendering of

Jesus' life may come as something of a surprise. You won't find even the shadow of a Micawber or a Mrs. Gamp anywhere in this brief volume; no Pecksniffs, Podsnaps, or Mulberries, either. Instead, Dickens approaches his subject with simple reverence, retelling the New Testament in a manner suitable for his own young children--who were, in fact, his only intended audience. Indeed, he strictly forbade publication of *The Life* during his lifetime and begged his sister to make sure that they "would never even hand the manuscript, or a copy of it, to anyone to take out of the house." It wasn't until the death of Dickens's last living son that the manuscript was finally published in 1934. Though he left his trademark comedy behind, Dickens's liberal social conscience is still evident in what he chooses to emphasize about Jesus: "My Dear Children," he begins, I am very anxious that you should know something about the History of Jesus Christ. For everybody ought to know about Him. No one ever lived who was so good, so kind, so gentle, and so sorry for all people who did wrong, or were in any way ill or miserable, as He was. This is a simple, straightforward account of Jesus' life and teachings, with an occasional touch of whimsy: "You never saw a locust, because they belong to that country near Jerusalem, which is a great way off. So do camels, but I think you have seen a camel. At all events, they are brought over here, sometimes; and if you would like to see one, I will show you one." Occasionally, Victorian attitudes and prejudices creep through--Dickens writes that the Jewish Sabbath was Sunday, that Jews were "very ignorant and passionate," and also that "they were very proud, and believed that no people were good but themselves." Fortunately, such comments are few and far between, and for the most part the author focuses on the miracles Jesus performed and on the lessons in charity, forgiveness, and compassion that Christians can take away from them. This may not be among the greatest of Charles Dickens's literary accomplishments, but it is certainly one of his most heartfelt. --Sheila Bright

Grade 3 Up Until 1934, when the last of Dickens' children died, this remained a private document, unpublished at the author's wish. It was written for his own children as a simple introduction to Jesus Christ. Always a rebel against religious pomposity and high-flown theology, Dickens intended his family to learn about the human Christ who served the poor, loved children, and lived a beautiful and blameless life. He seldom alludes to Christ's divinity. Since this is a father's personal statement and not a faithful version of Gospels and Acts, perhaps he can be forgiven the condescensions and discrepancies appearing in the manuscript, such as confusing Herodias with Salome and Mary Magdalene with Mary of Bethany, stating that the Hebrew Sabbath occurs on Sunday, and eliminating Moses and Elijah from the Transfiguration. Unfortunately, however, an anti-Semitic tone

appears whenever he mentions the Jews by name. He both ignores Jesus' Jewishness and the fact that his followers were largely Jewish. The work is probably best viewed as a period piece done with the author's usual charm and fervor, including earnest asides to his audience, but not polished with his usual care. The format is handsome. Each page of text is framed with a decorative border. The full-page illustrations, done in warm soft colors, are crisp and solid. There are no references to specific New Testament sources. Foreward, afterward, facsimiles of pages from the manuscript, and several prayers of the Dickens family are also included. Patricia Pearl, First Presbyterian School, Martinsville, Va. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

This book is for those who want to know if the famous writer Charles Dickens believed in and followed Jesus Christ. The title, "The Life of Our Lord," in itself shows he considers Jesus to be his Lord too. Inside the covers, he speaks in adoration of Christ and what He did for us. It is his account of the life or mission of Jesus, written strictly for his children, not for publication. He finished it in 1849. He died in 1870. His family allowed it to be published in 1934. To further identify Dickens, he wrote A Christmas Carol, Oliver Twist, Les Miserables and more. The book came to me slowly from London by ground mail. I ordered it before Christmas. It arrived January 22. You can have it shipped faster if you want to pay for it. Love the way it is put together. It looks old. It is Hard cover. It has a plain paper book jacket without the photo of Dickens that you see advertised. Mine appears to be a copy given as an award in 1938 by a Vicar to a parishioner, Noel Lewis, for Sunday school attendance. It bears that hand written inscription. So did I get that particular used copy? Hmmmm, I am thinking it must be a copy of it. The jacket is torn in two places by usage, showing this is indeed used. The inside, however, is pristine. I did not know I was buying something used. But it makes no difference. What I got is more interesting. It is printed with a frame around each page, making it appear to be written in segments like devotionals, but it is not: the narrative flows page to page. There are nine illustrations depicting events in the life of Jesus. There is a rendering of Dickens inside, looking 40ish, with a stylish beard of that era. There is a photo of the first hand written page of his original manuscript, which he never edited, so that means what we read is his first and only draft. He evidently used a feather pen that dips in an ink well. Just like the one Bob Crachet used as a clerk in Scrooge's company office. Now to read it through... You can tell I am pleased with what finally came in the mail. I am satisfied that when I get to Heaven, Mr. Dickens will be there. You can see his love for "our Lord."

How can you NOT love Charles Dickens. This little book is so simply written but so profound. The voice is that of Ebenezer Scrooge's nephew Fred as he was gently chiding Scrooge, "Though Christmas has not put a scrap of gold in my pocket, I dare say it has done me good, and so I say, God bless it." The lessons about kindness toward the poor go straight to the heart. "Never be proud or unkind, my dears, to any poor man, woman, or child. If they are bad, think that they would have been better if they had had kind friends, and good homes, and had been better taught. So, always try to make them better by kind persuading words; and always try to teach and relieve them if you can. And when people speak ill of the poor and miserable, think how Jesus Christ went among them, and taught them, and thought them worthy of His care." While there may be some theological misconceptions, (that people become angels when they die, for example,) it is still a jewel.

Interesting. You can just read the Bible but the idea that he rewrote the account of Christ for his children. Cool that we can read it but almost sad something meant to be private for his children is now for everyone. I hope it is appreciated. We got this book from a song Come thou Font of Every Blessing. In it there is a line of here I raise my Ebeneezer. We wondered what that meant. We found it meant stone of help - from the Bible. Which led us to wonder if Charles Dickens was a religious man and named Ebeneezer Scrooge with a purpose. This book definitely indicates he was religious, further study shows many names had meanings.

Dickens' "Life of Our Lord" is a superb publication, a somewhat hidden gem in his literature, written to teach his own children about Jesus. My purpose in writing this evaluation is not re. the work specifically, but the 1991 Nelson edition (green dust jacket, gold lettering), and the way it is described (or really, is not adequately described) by . It is a fine edition if purchased for adult use. But as a children's book, my complaint lies with the illustrations, beautiful flowers that have nothing to do with the text, or the life of Jesus. Children have always benefitted from illustrations, especially those who are visual learners (most!). With youngsters today, this is even more essential, as they are constantly bombarded by visual images in media and technology, from a very early age. I doubt these beautiful pastel floral prints will do anything to hold their interest. There are many other editions of "Life of Our Lord," some with wonderful pictures following the text, but it is difficult to ascertain how the myriad of 's offerings are illustrated.

This is a beautifully written book. I have always had a difficult time reading Dickens, but this book is just beautifully written, lovingly written to his children about the life of Jesus. It's a quick-read.

Something that could be read out-loud on a yearly basis as a Christmas tradition.

I felt that Charles Dickens did himself proud when he wrote this book for his children, to help them learn and understand the Bible. I am also greatful that Dickens last son who died in 1932, left in his will that if his children and wife wanted to have the book put to print that it was okay to do, not just for themselves, but for a new generation of people, so they can understand the Bible when they read this little book. It was well done, I read it to my grandchildren, and they follow me reading it with their own copy. It is a good buy and a excellence read of Scripture in a language they can understand.

Glad I bought it, excellent read

A short book on the Christmas stories from the Bible and as told by Charles Dickens to his children. Never published before. I loved reading it and felt closer in the Christmas season.

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