CHARLES DICKENS' "THE LIFE OF OUR LORD"

AS A PRIMER FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

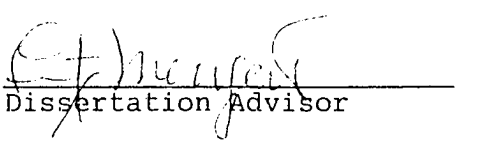
by

Robert Conrad Hanna

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Greensboro
1995

Approved by



Dissertation Advisor

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Dissertation Advisor _____

Co-chair _____

Committee Members _____

_____

March 27, 95
Date of Acceptance by Committee

March 27 95
Date of Final Oral Examination

HANNA, ROBERT CONRAD, Ph.D. Charles Dickens' "The Life of Our Lord" as a Primer for Christian Education. (1995) Directed by R. Fritz Mengert, 231pp.

Charles Dickens' The Life of Our Lord, largely a simplification of parts of the four Gospels and the Book of Acts, was written for his children as an integral part of their Christian and moral education. He never published the manuscript or gave the text a formal title.

In the more than sixty years since its initial publication, the book has appeared in over forty editions worldwide. Not one, however, has been designed to recapture the spirit of the manuscript's original and, prior to Dickens' death, implemented value as a primer for nondenominational Christian moral education.

Chapter One provides a standard review of academia's literature, with an emphasis placed on scholarship which has acknowledged or suggested Dickens' pedagogical intent in writing and utilizing the manuscript. Chapter Two expands the review of literature to both popular press book reviews and critiques contained within editions of The Life of Our Lord, the first systematic and thorough review of such sources ever undertaken. Criticisms of the text are duly noted and evaluated in a pedagogical context. Chapter Three examines all known primary sources left by Dickens and his children which speak either to Dickens' manuscript or to the religious upbringing of

his children at home. Dickens' professed moral creed is analyzed, as well, for consistency with the moral dimension of his manuscript. Chapter Four consists of the first curricular edition for today's Sunday schools, containing as it does twelve lessons for grades three through six, based on excerpts from Dickens' manuscript, supplemented with small group activities, and enhanced by illustrative readings from additional writings by Dickens. An appendix contains the first annotated bibliography of book and magazine editions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I could not have written this dissertation in its final version without the assistance of the following persons and organizations, and to each I am grateful.

Dissertation Committee, UNC-Greensboro

Dr. R. Fritz Mengert, Advisor
Dr. H. Svi Shapiro, Co-chair
Dr. Jeutonne P. Brewer
Dr. David E. Purpel

Research

Dickens Fellowship, Raleigh, North Carolina, which provided me with a grant to undertake research in London
Mr. Jake Baxter, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin
Mr. Steve Nielsen, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota
Mr. Heinrich Simons, Pius Gymnasium, Aachen, Germany
Dr. Michael Slater, Birkbeck College, University of London
Dr. Dennis Walder, The Open Univeristy

Translations

Mr. James F. Andersen, Jr., Gaston Day School, Gastonia, North Carolina
Dr. Joachim T. Baer, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Mrs. Lesley H. Hanna, Gardner Park Elementary School, Gastonia, North Carolina
Mr. John M. Robinson, Gaston Day School, Gastonia, North Carolina
Mr. Patrick J. Stevens, Fiske Icelandic Collection, Kroch Library, Cornell University

Content

Dr. Kenneth C. Bennett, Jr., Lake Forest College
Dr. Elliot Engel, North Carolina State University
Dr. David Parker, Dickens House, London
Mr. Alan Watts, Beckenham, England

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

I can never write about Charles Dickens without fondly remembering my mother's request when I started high school in 1966 that I borrow a copy of Oliver Twist from the school's library. That she, an avid reader, could have sooner borrowed a copy from the public library or purchased a copy from our town's bookstore seems not to have occurred to me. That the novel was for her reading pleasure was never in doubt, until I handed her the novel. She gave me a puzzled look and handed it right back, saying that it was for me to read. She had already read it. I then began both the first page and my lifetime love of the fiction of Charles Dickens.

Why, then, have I written a dissertation centered on one of Dickens' works of nonfiction, a partial rewriting of the New Testament solely for his own children? I have not done so out of a concern that this work, referred to in a letter by Dickens as "the children's New Testament" (Forster, 1873, p. 215) and published some eighty-eight years later as The Life of Our Lord, has been neglected by scholars. Such a claim is no longer defensible in terms of quality of scholarship. Rather, I have done so out of a concern

that editors and publishers of this particular work throughout its sixty year history have never captured the spirit of its original and, prior to Dickens' death, implemented value as a primer for Christian moral education. On the basis of the pedagogical focus of this dissertation, my great expectation is to publish a version of my final chapter, the first ever curricular edition of Dickens' manuscript in English. I seek to provide third through sixth grade Sunday school classes with Gospel lessons selected, interpreted, and utilized by Dickens for his own children's moral education, free from denominational "forms of restraint" (Hogarth, Dickens, & Hutton, 1903b, p. 305), as he later attested to the son who would come to possess the manuscript. It will be additionally gratifying to know that I have helped place a work of Dickens into even younger hands than mine were in 1966.

Chapter One features a standard review of literature found in scholarly publications, which, as such, has not been comprehensively brought up to date since 1983. Specifically, I begin by exploring academia's formal reception of The Life of Our Lord upon its initial publication in March 1934. This entails in part a review of literature on the general topic of Dickens and religion prior to 1934. I then trace the history of major scholarship on this particular work, as it gradually

leads to the pedagogical focus of this dissertation.

The second chapter continues the review of literature, while establishing the need to consider popular press writers as well as those who are purely academicians. It does so by first examining commentaries contained within editions of The Life of Our Lord, some of which are more akin to the academic focus of the authors in Chapter One and some of which more closely resemble the popular press book reviews analyzed in the latter part of Chapter Two. Several of the popular press reviews are themselves authored by university professors. This chapter serves three purposes. It continues the search initiated in the previous chapter for understandings outside of the Dickens family that the manuscript of the children's New Testament was designed and used pedagogically. It also documents collectively for the first time these additional commentaries and critiques, most of which have been overlooked or ignored by scholars before me. Finally, it duly notes perceived strengths and weaknesses of the text, which are taken into account in the preparation of the curricular edition in Chapter Four.

The third chapter turns to perspectives provided by Dickens and his immediate family on the purpose and implementation of the manuscript. I begin with surviving letters written by Dickens himself and follow with a

report on my examination of memoirs left by his children. I then consider Dickens' general views on pedagogy, theology, and morality as stated in his own words. Consistency in these areas further guides me in selecting passages for the pedagogical text in Chapter Four, while identified family insights help me be faithful to the spirit in which Dickens shared his manuscript with his children.

My curricular version of Dickens' text in the fourth chapter, then, seeks to address criticisms of the full text by presenting an abridgment which emphasizes Christian moral instruction. I supplement the abridged text with comparable excerpts from other of Dickens' writings. These supplementary writings are selected to reinforce a lesson derived from the text, in a manner which Dickens might have chosen himself, based on his life experiences and literature.

An appendix lists and describes extant and planned book and magazine editions of The Life of Our Lord, the first such listing ever to be compiled. For the reader interested in the history of the ownership of the manuscript itself I provide here a brief history, correcting several inaccuracies in the first chapter of Madonna Egan's dissertation Telling "The Blessed History": Charles Dickens's "The Life of Our Lord" (1983), which heretofore has been the most authoritative source

on this aspect of the document.

Egan properly traces Dickens' completion of the manuscript in Lausanne, Switzerland, in June 1846 to its bequeathal, upon his death in June 1870, to his sister-in-law Georgiana Hogarth, as an otherwise unpublished paper. She then makes a strong enough case for possession passing from Georgiana to Dickens' daughter Mamie, but she does not document her next claim that ownership proceeded to Mamie's sister Kate. Without having the source of her claim, I must infer that she has misread Winifred Matz's article in The Dickensian titled "My Copy of 'The Children's New Testament,'" in which the author writes, "It must be more than twenty years ago that Mrs. Perugini [Kate Dickens] allowed my father to make a copy of it from Mark Lemon's copy (then in her possession) . . ." (1934, p. 89). The Lemon copy is found today in The Dickens House Museum, and it is in Georgiana's, not Dickens', handwriting.

Egan herself provides reason to place ownership back with Georgiana, although on page 45 of her chronology she bypasses Georgiana and sends the manuscript directly from Kate to brother Henry. When she subsequently quotes from Henry's will, she seems to have overlooked the absence of Kate's possession apparent in his comment that:

> I give and bequeath to my wife the original manuscript of my father's "Life of Our Lord" which was bequeathed to my aunt Georgiana Hogarth in my father's will, and given by her to me to hold . . . (1983, p. 46)

A family tradition, documented as early as September 1870 (De Wolfe Howe, 1922), that Dickens had unequivocally orally stated that the manuscript was never be published or privately printed led to an additional clause in Henry's will leaving the question of publication entirely up to his surviving wife and children. They chose to have it published, and the first serial edition came out in several hundred newspapers in March 1934, a few months after Henry's death, followed shortly by the first book editions.

Egan's next omission regarding sequence of ownership of the manuscript occurs at this point. On June 7, 1934, The New York Times reported in an article titled "Dickens Kin Lose Right to 'Life of Our Lord'":

> LONDON, June 6.--The family of the late Sir Henry Dickens, son of the novelist, Charles Dickens, lost today their rights to ownership of the newly published "Life of Our Lord."
>
> Justice Bennett, in Chancery Division Court, ruled that the manuscript came within the gift of "all my private papers" which Charles Dickens bequeathed to his sister-in-law, Mrs. Georgiana Hogarth.
>
> The fact that it had been written for the instruction of the novelist's children and that several copies had been made did not alter the Hogarth family's rights to it, he declared.
>
> The court ruled that Mrs. Hogarth's descendants were entitled not only to possession of the

> manuscript, but to the copyright as well. (p. 4)

Egan continues her review under the assumption that the manuscript had never passed out of the hands of Henry's wife, Marie, and so writes that:

> The Life of Our Lord was not mentioned again in print for several years, until the Dickensian noted, in 1939, that Lady Dickens had sold the manuscript, at Sotheby's, for fourteen hundred pounds, to William Louchheim of Philadelphia. (1983, p. 49)

In mentioning William Louchheim, Egan has confused The Dickensian's 1939 two line notice which reads: "At Sotheby & Co., London, July: Manuscript, The Life of Our Lord, 46 pp., 1846, 1,400 [pounds]" ("Unique items," p. 278) with the same journal's 1961 article titled "The Life of Our Lord." This latter article, while not naming the descendants of Georgiana Hogarth as those responsible for having put the manuscript up for auction, certainly neither states nor suggests "that Lady Dickens had sold the manuscript." The article actually reads:

> We were recently asked what had happened to the manuscript of Dickens's Life of Our Lord. After being sold at Sotheby's in 1939 for 1,400 [pounds], it was left by the purchaser, Mr. William Louchheim of Philadelphia, in a safe-deposit box at Rosenbach's book-store, where it remained until just before the famous bookseller's death in 1952. (1961, p. 67)

Finally, Egan correctly brings the manuscript's ownership up to date by reporting its donation by the

Louchheim family to The Free Library of Philadelphia. The library's Rare Book Department accepts applications for personal examination of the pages on its premises. A microfilm version is also available for purchase.

CHAPTER ONE

REVIEW OF ACADEMIA'S LITERATURE

The Life of Our Lord, otherwise known by Dickens' appellation in a letter as "the children's New Testament" (Forster, 1873, p. 215), is the last published work in the Dickens canon. As explained in the introduction to this dissertation, the text was first made known to scholars and the public alike in March 1934. That academia largely ignored the text upon its initial publication is easily demonstrated. The "Combined Retrospective Index 1802-1974" of An Index to Book Reviews in the Humanities contains no entries whatsoever on The Life of Our Lord. Even if this index had included publications in popular magazines by its select group of authors, it would then have included only three book reviews, two by professors of English and one by a professor of political science. These three reviews are examined with other popular press reviews in the following chapter. What little contemporary commentary does exist in scholarly publications is clearly suspect, as the review of this type of literature will now reveal.

In the Spring 1934 issue of The Dickensian, editor Walter Dexter, without waiting to peruse The Life of

Our Lord, first demonstrated his extraordinary bias by writing that "it is no exaggeration to say that the whole world is anxiously looking forward to reading it. . . . It is probably the most remarkable of all the Dickens manuscripts" (1934a, p. 86). In the Summer 1934 issue, he then told readers that "'The Life of Our Lord' had world-wide publicity in the press during March" (1934b, p. 157) before revealing that "worldwide" meant some five hundred American newspapers which ran the syndicated text. The New York Times issue of May 15, 1934, perhaps more accurately, accounted for syndication only "in some 300 newspapers in this country" (Chamberlain, p. 19).

As for Dexter's use of the word "publicity," one would expect dissemination of literary information, such as had already occurred on the front page of The New York Time's January 21, 1934 issue in its article titled "Family Votes to Publish Dickens 'Life of Our Lord.' What occurred in March, however, is more accurately described as "the advertisements of the daily newspapers with their appalling unreserve, the glare of the usual sensationalism suddenly turned on Our Lord Himself" (Lahey, 1934, p. 366). Even in London, "publicity" included "[p]osters [which] appeared in the tube stations and other prominent places of Dickens's head looking out from a crown of thorns . . ." (Muggeridge, 1940,

p. 87).

Behind this sensationalism was an attempt to sell enough newspapers to profit from The Daily Mail and United Feature Syndicate's investment of "the record-breaking price of $15 a word" (Hopkins, 1934, p. 797). Indeed, the May 15, 1934 The New York Times article further reported that

> editors were gratified to see a direct 10 per cent increase in the readers to 11,000,000 resulting from publication of the feature. Many papers were unable to supply potential readers; their press runs were exhausted before the limit of saturation was reached. (Chamberlain, p. 19)

It should be noted that these statistics were not even particularly self-serving to The Times. The World Telegram had exclusive New York newspaper publication rights ("Author Makes," 1934).

Dexter remained what can be called overtly biased about The Life of Our Lord during the ensuing year in that he declined to substantiate his subsequent defense of the work. His additional comments in the Autumn 1934 and Winter 1934-35 issues are revealing. He first writes:

> There is a section of the public which expresses dissatisfaction with this work. It was not written as a piece of "literature" per se. It is precisely what its original title, "The Children's New Testament," suggested, nothing more nor less. We cannot help thinking the change in the title has been responsible for this misunderstanding. (1934c, p. 238)

If the popular press as reviewed in Chapter Three reflects the section of the public dissatisfied with the work, then Dexter errs in believing that a change in title alone would have eliminated this dissatisfaction. Yet he continues the same theme in the very next issue, suggesting a serious lack of awareness of specific criticisms raised, at least in the popular press:

> Lady Dickens tells me that among the family the work was almost always referred to as the "Life of Our Lord," sometimes as the "Life of Christ." As the former title is now world-wide, we must leave it at that; but still we cannot help thinking that had the word "Children" been introduced into the title it would have been more appropriate and might possibly have prevented certain misunderstandings. (1934-1935, p. 1)

It should be noted that neither Dexter nor anyone else on The Dickensian staff proffered a formal review of the work in the twelve months subsequent to its publication. (An excerpted unfavorable critique from a work of nonfiction published in 1935 was run without editorial comment in the Winter 1936-1937 issue, and the criticisms raised there are examined among the book reviews in Chapter Two.)

The only other member of academia to comment in a journal upon the appearance of The Life of Our Lord was Robert Graves, and again the journal was The Dickensian. Philip Collins in Dickens and Education (1964) condensed Graves' 1934 one paragraph letter

containing his opinion but did so out of context, leading researchers like Michael Piret (in his 1991 dissertation Charles Dickens's Children's New Testament: An Introduction, Annotated Edition, and Critical Discussion) to conclude that Graves' critique warrants serious consideration. Contrary to Piret's assertion that "[i]mmediately after its publication, Robert Graves, pointing out a few of the botches and mistakes in the text, censured Dickens's [writing]" (p. 13), Graves was actually responding to a series of criticisms of his 1933 novel The Real David Copperfield, dismissed in three issues of The Dickensian and subjected to sarcasm and irony in one issue of The New Statesman and Nation.

Dexter in the Summer 1933 issue of The Dickensian announced that "the author has attempted to rewrite the book . . ." and that the "press has severely trounced Mr. Graves for his outrage." However,

> We Dickensians are by no means annoyed. . . . we have found much food for thought in his four-page introduction; but as for the rest of the book we smile to think that a man possessing [such] talents . . . should waste them on such an unnecessary task. (p. 170)

A letter to the editor in the same issue of The Dickensian begins, "The indignation which the attempt of Mr. Robert Graves to 'improve' Dickens has aroused in all English speaking countries is fully shared by the French reading

public" (p. 239). The following year Graves' book was again dismissed, with the comment that "[f]ew will regret . . . that [Graves] thought it unlikely that this unfortunate book would be reprinted" (Staples, p. 68).

In March 1933, G. W. Stonier wrote in The New Statesman and Nation a lengthy review of Graves' book, noting among other things that "[t]he reader . . . will be surprised, perhaps, to know that Dickens's novel, despite thundering faults, has a good story . . ." and that "I turned to the text of The Real David Copperfield to see the astounding masterpiece which Mr. Graves would construct out of a dingy and moribund Dickens" (p. 389).

Graves' response to Stonier was printed in the April 15, 1933 issue of The New Statesman and Nation, and it reads in part:

> SIR,--I don't mind your Mr. Stonier punning on my surname with inimitable Dickens' feebleness, and I can't be bothered to correct at length his wilful mis-statements about the general character of my book. But I can and do protest against his dishonesty in printing two parallel passages from Dickens and myself to show how many master-strokes I have left out, and then proving his point by misquotation. (p. 475)

His response to The Dickensian was printed in the Summer 1934 issue. It reads in full:

> SIR.--A paragraph referring to my "Real David Copperfield" appears in your spring issue. It suggests that I have been indulging in the "gay adventure" of at once "imitating," "diluting," and

> "adulterating" the work of Charles Dickens. This is not the case. My book is critical, not imitatory, and unlike the original is consistently readable from beginning to end: it removes the adulterations and dilutions with which Dickens spoilt his best story, and its publication may be regarded as a sincerer tribute to Dickens (as worth taking some trouble over) than the most extravagant praises of his countless non-readers. "The Real David Copperfield" has now been followed by Dickens's Life of Our Lord. What do the people who professed to be shocked by my careful cleaning-up of Dickens's messy writing have to say about Dickens's careless messing-up of the clean writing of the Evangelists -- for example about his confusion of Herodias with Salome, and his total disconnection of Jesus from the Jewish race and religion? That it was only written for his little ones? Then what about the millstone-and-sea text? (p. 231)

It seems likely, then, that had The Dickensian foregone commenting unfavorably on Graves' novel, Graves would have written no comments at all on The Life of Our Lord. His words were motivated by a demonstrable sensitivity to said criticism, and he replied in kind, wherever the criticism originated. His comments on The Life of Our Lord can scarcely be deemed unbiased scholarship. As for the errors Graves noted in Dickens' text, Collins could have reported a more thorough list by consulting the popular press book reviews, as is demonstrated in the next chapter.

The question remains as to why academia in particular largely ignored the final publication of a work by one of the most important English writers of the nineteenth century. While no hypothesis purporting to explain the

absence of an historical phenomenon can ever be expected to be "proven," I would nonetheless like to offer a series of factors which, taken as a whole, can reasonably explain academia's lack of interest. First, The Life of Our Lord was made public eighty-eight years after it was written, sixty-four years after Dickens' death, and thirty-three years after the end of Queen Victoria's reign. Stonier's review of The Real David Copperfield in The New Statesman and Nation, for all its irony, includes the observation that "[t]he Victorians are commonly said to be more remote from us than any other period in English history . . ." (1933, p. 389). It may very well be academia's interests lay anywhere but in a comparatively short work written by any Victorian author.

However, let us suppose that one can demonstrate that several short works by Victorian authors appeared for the first time in the 1930s and were adequately critiqued by scholars as to their place in each author's canon. A further explanation would then be needed to account for such a critique not occurring in Dickens' case. Perhaps Dickens, unlike other of his contemporaries in this hypothetical situation, was not particularly literarily "inspired" when he wrote his short work. Even with his favorable bias, Dexter in The Dickensian seems open to this possibility. He does state that the

work "was not written as a piece of 'literature' per se" (1934c, p. 238), and there is no evidence that Dickens ever revised the manuscript to "improve" it either for publication or to meet his personal literary standards. Madonna Egan, who for her dissertation worked extensively with the manuscript in The Free Library of Philadelphia, finds that:

> [b]ecause the Life was not intended for publication, because the manuscript was the reading copy, Dickens obviously concentrated on keeping his writing readable. This characteristic is especially appreciated by anyone who has tried to read any of Dickens's novels in their nearly illegible manuscript form. Not only is the text readable; changes, corrections, and deletions are usually also legible, which allows readers to "see" the progression of Dickens's thinking as he wrote. (1983, p. 55)

In other words, Dickens produced a manuscript in a form suitable to his own purposes and not in anticipation of his reading public's expectations.

Is this, then, to suggest that the manuscript was initially inspected by scholars and found totally lacking in literary merit and, so, unworthy of analysis? Piret finds that although Dickens often "moderniz[es] the distant Jacobean English of the Authorized Version" (1991/1992, p. 15), "often he retains the King James wording almost verbatim -- especially where some weighty dictum occurs . . ." and ". . . in dialogue more generally, he often retains the archaic forms 'thee'

and 'thou' . . ." (p. 16). In rewriting the New Testament as Piret describes, Dickens seems to have limited the extent to which he allowed himself to be creative, leading Piret to conclude that "on the whole, recognizable sparks of Dickensian creative fire in The Children's New Testament are extremely rare" (p. 21). Egan agrees, finding that "[t]he self-restraint [Dickens] imposes on his creativity becomes all the more noticeable when we see how rarely the control slips . . ." (1983, p. 411).

Perhaps scholars in 1934 failed to note both Dickens' occasional "recognizable sparks of . . . creative fire" and "how rarely [his] control slips" through not reading the book in its entirety. One does not have to read beyond the first page to dismiss, should he or she choose to do so, the work as juvenile literature:

> My dear children, 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 anyway ill or miserable, as he was. And as he is now in Heaven, where we hope to go, and all to meet each other after we are dead, and there be happy always together, you never can think what a good place Heaven is, without knowing who he was and what he did. (1934a, p. 11)

It is fair to inquire at this point just how much interest did academia have in juvenile literature in the 1930s? Peter Hunt, in Children's Literature: The

Development of Criticism, finds that

> [o]nly in the twentieth century, and, more specifically, post-1945, has criticism developed in a recognizably conventional direction, and it has developed in a way which parallels academic criticism. (1990, p. 3)

He explains the dichotomy of scholarly analysis and popular criticism as follows:

> Initially, those 'critics' who wrote about children's literature were regarded as eccentric, and, perhaps as a result, modelled their work on the most traditional of critical methods -- a judicious mixture of biography and liberal-humanist literary evaluation -- with the added (and often confusing) criterion of 'accessibility' and 'appropriateness.' Also, the lack of canonical status of the vast majority of children's books meant that there were few outlets for serious discussion of the texts. Even the pioneering Junior Bookshelf (1936 onward) was essentially a reviewing journal, and discussion of children's books, until fairly recently, was confined to corners of the review pages. (p. 4)

However, Suzanne Rahn in Children's Literature: An Annotated Bibliography of the History and Criticism dates the "analysis of children's literature (as distinct from reviewing)" (1981, p. xi) as beginning during the second decade of the twentieth century, well enough in time for one to expect there to have been such analyses of The Life of Our Lord in addition to the actual book reviews. Nonetheless, an examination of the full texts of all thirteen post-1933 resources cited by Rahn as containing criticism of Dickens' literature which is

suitable for children reveals no analyses of or even references to The Life of Our Lord. Perhaps the focus on The Life of Our Lord should shift from the work as children's literature to the possibilities it offered in 1934 as an extension of already extant scholarship on Dickens himself. This perspective will necessitate a review of literature from Dickens' death in 1870 through 1933.

The scholar in the 1930s who considered reading, critiquing, and otherwise examining the first edition of The Life of Our Lord in light of earlier scholarship on the general topic of Dickens and religion would have been basically limited to the following sources, which were not even identified collectively until they appeared under "references" and "further reading" in Dennis Walder's 1981 book titled Dickens and Religion. These sources are here presented in chronological order:

(1884) The Religious Sentiments of Charles Dickens, Collected from His Writings by Charles H. McKenzie (London: Walter Scott).

(1912) "Charles Dickens and Unitarianism" by Clement E. Pike in Unitarian Monthly (February issue of Volume 9, pp. 18-19).

(1912) "Charles Dickens and Dissenters" by Lily B. Watson in Notes and Queries (June 29 issue of Volume 5, pp. 511-512).

(1925) Letter by Frank S. Johnson in The Dickensian (July issue of Volume 21, p. 158).

(1930) Dickens and Religion by William Kent (London: Watts and Co.).

(1930) Christian Teaching in the Novels of Charles Dickens by William. C. Procter [Cited as "Proctor" by Walder] (London: H. R. Allenson, Limited).

Although no post-1981 scholarship on the topic of Dickens and religion, with either a major emphasis on or a brief mentioning of The Life of Our Lord, cites all six of these references, for the 1930s scholar, they would have offered at least a minimal foundation for study of The Life of Our Lord. Perhaps academia at that time viewed the challenge as formidable; after all, no full annotation was undertaken until Madonna Egan wrote her 1983 dissertation "Telling the Blessed History": Charles Dickens's "The Life of Our Lord". For today's scholarship, only Kent's Dickens and Religion continues to have value, as is demonstrated in Chapter Three.

As far as references to Dickens' children's New Testament, only one of the six references contains speculations about the unread manuscript, the existence of which had been announced to the public as early as the month after Dickens' death, in Blanchard Jerrold's "Charles Dickens: In Memoriam" in The Gentleman's Magazine

issue of July 1870:

> There is a manuscript the world knows nothing about this day; and yet which has been for many years in existence, and in circulation among those who were native to the author's hearth. The Life of Our Saviour was written by Charles Dickens to guide the hearts of his children: and if ever a labour of love was done by that most affectionate nature, this was pre-eminently it. By the eloquent pages that now will shortly be put within the reach of every English and American household, the children of Charles Dickens were taught their first lessons of Christian love and Christian chivalry. With what patience and thoroughness he wrought out his creed in his home can be known only to the happy few who were privileged to live his life; and to study the splendid and unbroken harmonies which dwelt in the life within as well as in the life without. How far the ripples of his home-spirit rounded into the outer world will, I hope for the sake of that world, be drawn by the hand to which the solemn duties of biographer shall be presently confided. (pp. 231-232)

Kent stated that "[t]he compilation he made for his children . . . probably embraced nothing but the story of Jesus" (1930, p. 53). As for his other speculation that

> [i]f we could see that version of the New Testament which he prepared for his children . . . we should probably find the founder of Christianity represented as a Mr. Frank Cherryble [from Nicholas Nickleby], with unlimited thaumaturgic powers (p. 19),

Dickens' approach to rewriting portions of the New Testament, as we have already seen, left him no opportunity to remake Christ into a Dickensian character, even had that ever entered into his thinking.

The only other author to address the manuscript within the context of Dickens and religion prior to 1934 is McKenzie (1884), and he simply quoted and paraphrased two letters by Dickens which John Forster had already included in the penultimate chapter ("Personal Characteristics") of his 1872-1874 biography, The Life of Charles Dickens. These letters and others in which Dickens mentioned the manuscript are fully examined in Chapter Three.

Of more interest here, however, is Christian Teaching in the Novels of Charles Dickens by Procter (1930), in which he reveals more by what he omits than by what he includes. He deliberately removed a reference to the manuscript in the sole letter from which he quoted, without supplying punctuation to alert the reader of the omission. His quotation reads as follows, with the missing reference restored and other corrections made in brackets:

> "I [word added] put a New Testament among your books [for the very same reasons, and with the very same hopes, that made me write an easy account of it for you, when you were a little child. B]ecause it is the best book that ever was or will be known [in the world;] and [because it] teaches you the best lessons by which any human creature who tries to be truthful and faithful to duty can possibly be guided." (Procter, 1930, p. 4; Forster, 1874, p. 446)

I do not conclude that Procter intentionally refrained from informing his readers of the manuscript's existence because the manuscript was outside the focus of Christian teaching in Dickens' novels. In spite of his book's title, Procter also examines American Notes, Pictures from Italy, and The Uncommercial Traveller, three works which include essay commentaries. Rather, I suggest that he was well aware of Dickens' use of the manuscript for Christian teaching in his household, but the absence of scholarship on the manuscript, not to mention Procter's own unawareness of its content, posed a challenge to his purported expertise on the general topic of Christian teaching by Dickens. A silence on Procter's part tended to conceal this gap in his knowledge.

Acknowledging that there may be even additional plausible explanations, which, considered with these heretofore proffered, account even more satisfactorily for academia's minimal reception of the initial appearance of The Life of Our Lord, the focus of this chapter will now turn to key scholarship and opinions on the book. For readers interested in a nearly exhaustive review of all of academia's references to The Life of Our Lord through 1982, the introductory chapter of Egan's dissertation Telling "The Blessed History": Charles Dickens's "The Life of Our Lord" (1983) should be

consulted.

Egan makes only two omissions. The first is Bernard Shaw's 1937 critique, which is generally accepted as authoritative, although I will shortly demonstrate its self-contradictory aspect. The second is Robert Fleissner's rambling 1981 article titled "Dickens' Little Testament: Spiritual Quest or Humanistic Document?", in which he first defines the "leading question" as "To what extent can the Dickensian gospel be accepted seriously as a literary Christian document?" (p. 36) and second defines a "principal task" as "determining whether it is, in effect, a Unitarian document . . ." (p. 36), and somehow reaches the nebulous conclusion that "[t]he humanistic element is quite strong in his writings, and the most interesting aspect of his faith is that it plays in counterpoint with his aesthetic and social conscience" (p. 44).

Unlike Egan, Piret in his 1991 dissertation, Charles Dickens's Children's New Testament, provides no systematic review of literature to account for the years between Egan's dissertation and his. He does demonstrate knowledge of Fleissner's 1983 article "The Title The Life of Our Lord: Does it Fit the Dickens Canon?", an article which indirectly supports my decision in Chapter Four to rename Dickens' manuscript, which, as I there present it in a Sunday school format, is not at all a

"Life of Our Lord." Piret is also familiar with Janet Larson's Dickens and the Broken Scripture (1985), but to this work he makes only two minor references, one in which he corrects an error of hers and one in which he unnecessarily quotes one of her quotations of Dickens. Curiously, he makes no references whatsoever to other scholarship which appeared in 1989 and 1990. Accordingly, these later works make their first collective appearance in a review of literature at the end of this chapter.

Two years after publication of the first book editions of The Life of Our Lord, the first edition marketed for American children appeared. Yet another year passed before Bernard Shaw, an authority on Dickens, offered a new critique of the book. His critique, however, was written neither for broad dissemination nor for ease of location by anyone interested in his assessment. It is embedded in his introduction to the 1937 Limited Editions Club edition of Great Expectations. The relevant passages are quoted in full, as follows:

> To educate his children religiously and historically he wrote A Child's History of England which had not even the excuse of being childish, and a paraphrase of the gospel biography which is only a belittling of it for little children. He had much better have . . . taken into account the extraordinary educational value to the Authorized Version as a work of literary art. . . . At all events Dickens thought his Little Nell style better for his children than the English of King James's inspired scribes. (p. xiii)

After a thorough study of Egan's (1983) parallel gospels alongside Dickens' text, one can conclude that Shaw's use of the word "paraphrase" is basically sound, but he then contradicts himself. He criticizes Dickens' "gospel biography" for being written in Dickens' "Little Nell" style, which apparently makes it "belittling" to children. Had Dickens written this work in a Little Nell style, it is difficult to perceive how it could then generally read as a paraphrase of the New Testament, even if one takes into account Dickens' modernization of some language.

The following year, in the January 1938 issue of The Hibbert Journal, J. M. Connell wrote on "The Religion of Charles Dickens" and focused on the role of The Life of Our Lord as a statement of Unitarianism rather than as a failure or success as a literary art. The author's premise that John Forster's 1872-1874 biography of Dickens "underestimates the extent of Dickens' reaction against the dogmas of the Church of England, and the extent also to which he was influenced by Unitarian teaching" (p. 226) is weakened by unsubstantiated claims, such as

> [h]is aversion was to the Catechism [of the Church of England] itself, as a thing that was unfit for the minds of any children whatever. For the use of his own children he himself prepared a catechism which he considered more suitable and more in harmony with what he believed to be the teaching of Jesus Christ. (p. 227)

I find nothing in Dickens' text that would suggest Connell's use of the word "catechism" in either a Unitarian or any other denominational sense, nor do I find in Chapter Three's examination of relevant family correspondence that the manuscript was ever employed in such a manner. His additional comments, such as

> [i]t may be that even when living under the shadow of the traditional creed, his soul was drawn by natural affinity to the teaching of the New Testament, and more especially to the parables and other sayings of Jesus (p. 229),

do little to elucidate Dickens' religious views in general or the intended meaning and purpose of his children's New Testament in particular.

Although three more unabridged editions, American, German, and British, were published in 1939, 1945, and 1947 respectively, the next conventional scholarship on The Life of Our Lord did not appear until Edgar Johnson published his two volume work titled Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph in 1952. Egan faults Johnson for his "factual errors and questionable judgments" (1983, p. 34) concerning The Life of Our Lord, but her regret that "many readers derive their knowledge of Dickens's minor works from Johnson's comments" (p. 34) is misguided in this instance. She herself states that his critique is found in a footnote (actually, it is even farther removed from the main text in an endnote), which many

readers are more likely to ignore than to read and remember. The endnote reads in full on Roman numeral page L in Volume Two as follows:

> The Life of Our Lord, the children's version of the New Testament referred to, was completed in 1849. It was not intended for publication, and until 1937, when it at last saw print, existed in only two manuscripts, one of which had been made for the use of the Dickens children and the other given to the children of Mark Lemon. It is of very slight literary importance, but significant for its consistently Unitarian emphasis. It always refers to Joseph as Christ's father; instead of calling Jesus the Son of God the opening chapter has the angels tell the shepherds that "God will love him as his own son." No mention is made of the conception by the Holy Ghost or of Mary being a virgin. The entire stress is upon a nontheological reverence for Christ as a great spiritual teacher, not upon his divinity. (1952)

The "factual errors" which disturb Egan are Johnson's dating the manuscript 1849, as the first British edition incorrectly states, and dating the first editions 1937, which is easily demonstrated in Johnson's own work as a printer's error by consulting page cxlii of the Index, which reads in part "Works, listed here for convenience. . . . See under main entries: . . . Life of Our Lord (written 1849, published 1934)." The "questionable judgments" concern Johnson's agreement ("[i]t is of very slight literary importance") with Shaw's assessment and his agreement ("significant for its consistently Unitarian emphasis") with that of Connell. Johnson may or may not have been knowledgeable of Connell's article; it

is not included in his bibliography, as Shaw's introduction to Great Expectations is.

The year 1963 marks the first complaint that scholarship on The Life of Our Lord had advanced no further than the brief writings of Shaw, Connell, and Johnson. In the May issue of The Dickensian, Noel Peyrouton's article "The Life of Our Lord: Some Notes of Explication" begins, "This last of the Dickens canon has been very much neglected" (p. 102). Johnson is then singled out for providing "only summary notice" in his biography. Peyrouton reviews the history of the manuscript and then joins the foray into the question of the extent to which The Life of Our Lord is a Unitarian statement. By extrapolating Dickens' comment to Forster that "[e]very sentence that you quote from [Dean Stanley's Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold] is the text-book of my faith" (Forster, 1873, p. 125) to mean that Dickens fully accepted the particular quotations Peyrouton selects from Stanley's book, he finds that

> [i]f anything can be concluded definitely I would say it is rather that Dickens was unable or unwilling to come to a conclusion about the Virginity of Mary, the Divinity of Christ, the Fatherhood of God, or the Holy Ghost. Moreover, I am convinced he did not believe the distinctions ultimately significant. (p. 106)

He then reopens the discussion of the value of the work in terms of its literary quality, and, while

admitting that "[t]he more patently obvious Dickens characterisation is missing," insists that "[t]he artistry is not to be entirely denied or circumscribed even when the artist is overwhelmed by the theme" (p. 107). Rather than being overwhelmed by any aspect of the New Testament, Dickens, I maintain, consciously limited his creativity in retelling the passages he selected, having other than literary purposes in mind. A last observation by Peyrouton which warrants inspection is "Dickens's greatest felicity in this little book must have been the opportunity it gave him to be explicitly undoctrinarian" (p. 109). I find this to be the first comment from academia which might constitute an attempt to expand The Life of Our Lord beyond the heretofore emphases on Dickens as a Unitarian and Dickens as an artist.

The following year witnessed the publication of Philip Collins' Dickens and Education, of interest here for its third chapter, titled "'Dedicated to My Own Dear Children,'" a variation on Dickens' dedication in volume one of the first book edition of A Child's History of England (Collins, 1964, p. 53). In addition to appraising the extent to which "the characteristics of [The Life of Our Lord] reflect Dickens's theological beliefs . . . " (p. 54), Collins reveals his familiarity with the family tradition that Dickens "rejected all suggestions that it be published" (p. 53), but he then

attributes this "wise" position of Dickens to Collins' own assessment that the book "was a short and slight work" (p. 53), "an undistinguished piece of writing" (p. 59). He continues:

> Dickens was doing his best, but his imagination was not fired by this self-imposed task, and his feeling of reverence no doubt restrained him from exerting such of his secular gifts as might have been appropriate even on ground so unfamiliar. . . . The Life of Our Lord is not an inspired work . . . (p. 59)

While agreeing with Shaw and Johnson's judgments that the book lacks literary merit, Collins does hint that there might be different and more appropriate criteria for evaluating a manuscript written for religious instruction. He acknowledges an extent to which the work was "suitable for its original family purpose" (p. 53) and grants that it was written "conscientiously and for praiseworthy motives" (p. 59). He finally adds that

> Dickens deserves praise . . . for taking this amount of trouble over his children's religious education, and for the predominantly sensible and charitable spirit informing his efforts. (p. 59)

Once Collins begins using the language of conscientious and praiseworthy motives for one's family, as well as the language of charitable spirit, the earlier language of literary criticism seems oddly out of place.

In 1976, Jan Hodge completed the most thorough study yet of The Life of Our Lord in his dissertation titled The Gospel Influences on Dickens's Art. While including in the first chapter, "Dickens and Christianity: The Victorian Context," a review of the obligatory debate over Dickens and Unitarianism, he devoted most of his second chapter, "The Gospel According to Dickens," to The Life of Our Lord. Hodge intelligently and articulately analyzes selected passages both for meaning suggested by Dickens' word choice and for implications of omitted gospel verses. Moreover, he provides scholarship's first annotations as he discusses key passages. However, Hodge is much less convincing when he makes a sweep through the Dickens canon, leaving one with an impression that at a thematic level of analysis, it is possible, if not meaningful, to relate The Life of Our Lord to virtually every other work. He writes:

> At least the first of these strategies [i.e., "how to portray good convincingly"] Dickens had sensed and tried to exploit from the beginning, but with Pickwick, Oliver, Nell, Kate Nickleby and Madeline Bray, and the idiot Barnaby, the good is too unknowing, too easily assumed, and the evil is too grotesque, for either to be credible. (p. 97)

Only three of these specified characters are then discussed, each briefly. Similar treatment is then given to Florence Dombey, Esther Summerson, Sissy Jupe, and the Boffins. Only the section on Amy Dorrit is

comparatively thorough and substantiated and, so, far more persuasive as being accurate and significant. Be that as it may, he persists in overgeneralizing by later writing:

> In the new community being and loving replace doing as the primary r'aison d'etre. . . . jobs are important . . . but . . . [i]nherent meaningfulness lies elsewhere . . . Bob Cratchit, Meg and Trotty Veck, Stephen Blackpool, Amy Dorrit, Lizzie Hexam all work, but work, and even the dignity to be found in work, is not the justification for their being. (p. 124)

This second example of a sweep through Dickens' literature is even weaker than the first, for in order to demonstrate that in "the Gospel narratives . . . people have occupations, but they are never the important thing" (p. 123), Hodge relies on Taylor Stoehr's Dickens: The Dreamer's Stance, not Dickens' own children's New Testament. Perhaps Hodge's overgeneralizations are simply preparatory for his analysis in his remaining chapters, devoted respectively to The Chimes, Dombey and Son, and Hard Times, but then one is left with the puzzle as to why these chapters have few or no cross-reference to The Life of Our Lord. Hodge's second chapter, then, while taking scholarship on The Life of Our Lord in the new direction of the annotation, ultimately raises more questions about the manuscript than it answers.

The next major work to address The Life of Our Lord is Dennis Walder's previously mentioned Dickens and Religion (1981). Walder is extraordinarily thorough in his research and documentation, which includes unpublished graduate sources, omitting only Hodge's 1976 dissertation. In his introduction, he labels The Life of Our Lord "a plain version" and accurately states that calling it "a Unitarian work . . . is to read into it a theological significance hardly applicable, unless this simply means having a moral emphasis" (p. 13). His final comment on the book, that "[i]n teaching his children, Dickens chose not to dwell on the supernatural element of Christianity, but rather upon its essentially moral features" (p. 13), provides an additional example of an awareness that the work was written for a purpose entirely different from making a proclamation about Unitarianism, from creating great literary art, or even from producing a document in need of annotation.

Two years later, Madonna Egan echoed Peyrouton's lament, now twenty years old, when she wrote on the first page of her 1983 dissertation that Dickens' "beliefs and The Life of Our Lord have been subject to misunderstanding, oversimplification, error, and -- most frequently -- neglect." Building upon Hodge's original annotations, Egan produced a harmony of the gospels alongside Dickens' entire text, with corresponding

annotations and critical commentary. Given her momentous task, it is not until page 359, in her concluding chapter, that she finds an opportunity to address Dickens' intent in writing the manuscript. She offers the following explanations:

> Although we cannot know for certain, I believe . . . that Dickens planned to introduce Jesus as a special but human child so that his own children could relate to him, and then intended to show Jesus as more than human as he led the children deeper into the story. On the other hand, I also believe that Dickens originally planned to stress the moral teachings and minimize doctrines such as divinity, trinity, and redemption, which would be beyond the children's understanding, but that as he wrote he realized that telling Jesus's history with any authenticity requires dealing with some of this abstract material . . . (pp. 359-360)

She continues:

> At the same time that he gradually develops the portrayal of Jesus as human and divine, Dickens consistently emphasizes what Jesus does and what he teaches, which contributes to the work's being seen as a moral lesson. Young readers and listeners would receive an unambiguous impression of Jesus as a lover of people -- especially the suffering, children, and women -- a lover who is compassionate, gentle, forgiving, yet strong against evil. And the young readers would hear the appeal to them: to love God and others, to pray, to be generous and humble, to express sorrow for sin and hope confidently for forgiveness, to live the beatitudes, and to desire happiness in heaven with God. (p. 360)

Egan sees Dickens as primarily concerned with depicting Jesus as a teacher of morality. In these two paragraphs, she establishes more of a pedagogical

foundation for the study and utilization of The Life of Our Lord than she does collectively in her annotations. Although she earlier promises that

> [f]ollowing the charting of each chapter and its sources is an analysis of the text which focuses on close reading, use of sources, Dickens's pedagogical techniques, relationship to other writings of Dickens, comments on language and style, and any insights provided by studying the chapter in its manuscript form (1983, p. 54),

her specific commentary on pedagogical techniques is disappointingly sparse and at times disjointed. This perhaps results from her attempt to analyze Dickens' text as static, written pedagogy instead of as interactive oral pedagogy.

For example, Egan encounters difficulty when she attempts to credit Dickens with "vocabulary adjustments to help the children's understanding . . ." (p. 90) but then finds that words elsewhere have been changed "so that the children will not be misled by a too literal interpretation" (p. 202) and that additional "vocabulary strikes us as cumbersome and inappropriate for small children . . ." (p. 226). Such an approach is not part of what Egan variously labels in her first chapter of annotation good pedagogy, careful pedagogy, or good religious pedagogy. Rather, it is an attempt to limit Dickens' pedagogy to the word of the text instead of relating the written word to the context in which it

was orally shared. Had her occasional pedagogical annotations been more directed toward the spirit in which "Dickens originally planned to stress the moral teachings and minimize doctrines . . ." (p. 359), she could have offered greater insight into Dickens' teaching effectiveness.

Nevertheless, as is evident from the review of literature in this chapter, Egan establishes in her concluding chapter a stronger pedagogical foundation for The Life of Our Lord than did any academician before her. Only in one popular press critique, nearly half a century before Egan's scholarship, is a stronger pedagogical orientation offered. This earlier critique is examined in the following chapter.

To continue with Egan's assessment of Dickens' intent in writing his children's New Testament, I find special significance in her successive use of the phrases "his own children," "the children," and finally "[y]oung readers and listeners" (pp. 359-360). Whether she intended to or not, she strongly suggests that this work has an inherent pedagogical value. She continues:

> [A]nyone who teaches small children -- formally or informally -- experiences the need to explain, illustrate, simplify, apply, and demonstrate a truth in a way that communicates clearly to the child without essentially changing or destroying the truth of what is being taught. No one championed children more than Dickens, no one argued more consistently and passionately for their rights, including the

> right to a good truthful education. Surely these values affected the writing of The Life of Our Lord. (p. 361)

I suggest that these values affected not only the writing of but also Dickens' teaching from the manuscript.

The balance of Egan's concluding chapter contains a review of the Dickens and Unitarianism debate and a noticeably stronger treatment of relationships between The Life of Our Lord and Dombey and Son, David Copperfield, and Bleak House than is found in Hodge's (1976/1977) dissertation.

Egan's work is followed by Janet Larson's 1985 Dickens and the Broken Scripture. Within Larson's analysis of the purpose of the manuscript of The Life of Our Lord, she includes the observation that it can be viewed as "a pious work translating the New Testament's language for children's hearing and turning it into more readable continuous narrative" (p. 10). Her focus on "hearing" supports Egan's casual reference to young listeners.

In addition, Larson speculates about a Victorian reaction had Dickens chosen to publish the manuscript as it has come down to us. She believes that otherwise "amused" rationalists "might have been content enough with the moral parables Dickens retells in stressing Jesus' teaching ministry" (p. 11), echoing in this

instance Egan's evaluation of Jesus as a teacher of morality in Dickens' text.

In 1989, John Frazee contributed an article on the no longer very original topic of "Dickens and Unitarianism" to Dickens Studies Annual. Oddly, he begins:

> The subject of Dickens' involvement with Unitarianism has received scant attention from scholars since John Forster, Dickens' friend and first biographer -- and himself a Unitarian -- offered what has come to be the standard account not only of that involvement but also of the development of Dickens' religious views generally. (p. 119)

Frazee then proceeds as if he is the first person to examine and accept The Life of Our Lord as Dickens' Unitarian statement. He writes:

> Another important -- but generally undervalued -- resource is Dickens' retelling of the New Testament, written for his own children in 1846 and published in 1934 as The Life of Our Lord. I consider The Life of Our Lord to be a much more reliable indicator of Dickens' beliefs than do most scholars. (p. 122)

"Most scholars" for Frazee consist of Peyrouton and Walder, whose views are reduced to one paragraph before he announces that The Life of Our Lord "must be considered theologically significant" (p. 122).

The article continues with a six page "description of the three most important strains of Unitarianism in England in the nineteenth century" (p. 122). When Frazee

finally returns to Dickens and The Life of Our Lord, he relies far more heavily on quotations by nineteenth century Unitarians than by Dickens himself, in either The Life of Our Lord or his correspondence, to prove that Dickens had "lifelong Unitarian sympathies" (p. 139). Needless to say, it is quite a leap to read a little Dickens and then posit that he accepted verbatim a lot of Unitarian dogma, selected by Frazee. "Dickens and Unitarianism" is of questionable value in the study of Dickens and religion and of no value in the study of The Life of Our Lord, given the scholarship which has come before it.

Notwithstanding Frazee's assurance that "Dickens himself rarely offered direct expressions of his religious beliefs in his fiction, his public speeches, or even in his correspondence" (p. 121), Kerri Ward, in her 1990 Master of Arts thesis, provided Dickensians in particular and scholars in general with an invaluable resource titled The Religious Letters of Charles Dickens: A Reference Guide. Her abstract is accurate and reads in part as follows:

> In order to create a bibliography that would deal exclusively with the religious letters of Charles Dickens, all letters by Dickens that are in print were researched through numerous bibliographies, journals, essays, books, etc., and obtained from various libraries throughout the United States either through the interlibrary loan service or by microfiche and microfilm. These letters, once

> obtained, were thoroughly read, and ones containing information about Dickens's feelings on religious issues were copied (if permitted) and later included in this bibliography. During the course of the research, some letters were discovered which have never been discussed in previous bibliographies or critical essays on Dickens and religion. (p. v)

The care with which Ward has edited and classified the entries in her tome justifies her observation in her introduction that:

> [s]uch an overwhelming number of Dickens letters on religion have survived through various collections that there is enough evidence for the Dickens scholar or student to find out Dickens's views on practically all the religious issues of his day, plus his own views on Christianity, his personal religious tastes, and his actual religious practices. (p. 22)

Ward's section on "Dickens's Personal Religious/Moral Beliefs New Testament/Christ" (pp. 171-204) necessarily includes the relevant excerpts from all five known letters in which Dickens commented on his children's New Testament, and these passages are examined thoroughly in my third chapter. Her commentary is almost entirely based on Egan's dissertation; however, on page 183 she also directs her readers to Johnson, Peyrouton, Walder, and Larson. Inexplicably, she selects Larson's 1983 article "The Battle of Biblical Books in Esther's Narrative" in Nineteenth Century Fiction (volume 38, pages 131-160) rather than her book Dickens and the Broken Scripture (1985) as the author's key contribution to

scholarship on The Life of Our Lord. Four copies of her thesis are available at Auburn University and circulate through the library's interlibrary loan service.

As little known to the general reading audience as Ward's 1990 thesis would by its very nature be, the most widely known work of modern scholarship on Dickens also appeared in 1990, namely Peter Ackroyd's massive biography simply titled Dickens. Unlike Johnson, who relegated The Life of Our Lord to an endnote, Ackroyd discusses its place in the Dickens canon when, chronologically, he reaches Dickens' stay in Lausanne. Although a comprehensive biography is not, by design, the place to analyze at length the pedagogical implications of an author's minor work, Ackroyd does follow Egan and Larson's lead by mentioning that the manuscript was intended as "[a] story to be read aloud . . ." (p. 504). Within the section "Notes on Text and Sources," he advises, "The subject of [Dickens'] religion is of course best discussed in Dennis Walder's Dickens and Religion . . ." (p. 1116), but he also identifies two works by Dickens' children in which, purportedly, they "have left their own memories of his religious instruction" (p. 1116). These works and others like them are examined in Chapter Three.

This review of literature is now brought up to date with the several times previously referred to 1991

dissertation by Michael Piret, Charles Dickens's "Children's New Testament": An Introduction, Annotated Edition, and Critical Discussion. In consideration of Egan's virtually complete review of literature and the works which appeared in the time period between Egan and Piret's dissertations, it is difficult to accept Piret's introductory comment that

> [a]part from Madonna Egan's thoughtful and detailed dissertation, sustained studies of the book's implications are nonexistent. The number of critics who have made informed comments about it can be counted on one hand. (1991/1992, pp. 14-15)

If by "sustained studies" he means works of dissertation quality and length, why, then, does he devote over one third of his dissertation to another annotated edition? Even though he claims that "[i]n many ways, my explorations have been anticipated and made easier by [Egan's]" (p. vii), he admits:

> I made a point of finishing all but the very last stages of my work with the Gospels before looking at hers. Our citations of these sources sometimes begin or end with different verses, but they are for the most part satisfyingly congruent, as if one scientist had confirmed the work of a predecessor by repeating an experiment on his own. (p. 35)

The final half of Piret's dissertation is comprised of chapters titled "Hell, Judgement, and the Devil," "Old and New: Unitarianism and the Two Testaments," "Which Christ?," and "True Practical Christianity." I do not

see that Piret's analysis of the topic Dickens and Unitarianism significantly contributes original insight to this largely exhausted debate. His chapters on "Hell, Judgement, and the Devil" and "True Practical Christianity" are weakest when he attempts to interpret Dickens' religions beliefs on the basis of a scattering of parallel themes between The Life of Our Lord and Dickens' fiction, much as Hodge (1976/1977) did before him.

Of relevance to this study of The Life of Our Lord is Piret's introductory section on motives behind Dickens' self-appointed task. He specifies "an obvious one: to make the Gospels more accessible to his children . . . " (1991/1992, p. 15). Joining Egan, Larson, and Ackroyd, he adds:

> [t]he language is reasonably simplified, and similar patterns of alteration could be construed as an indication that his main intent was merely to transpose the Scriptures into a key suited to the ears of children. (p. 17)

On the basis of an analysis of surviving correspondence, such as I undertake in Chapter Three, Piret could have made as strong a case for Dickens' "transpos[ing] the Scriptures into a key suited to the ears of children" as he does for Dickens' "mak[ing] the Gospels more accessible to his children."

As for analyzing Dickens' pedagogy, Piret is no more successful than is Egan. To support his "view . . . that Dickens was rushing when he wrote the latter part of The Children's New Testament" (p. 180), he writes:

> For example: when we recall his careful explanation of what a camel is, in the second chapter, we may well ask why, in the eighth, he tells the children that the crowd in Jerusalem shouted "Hosanna!" to Christ; but does not pause to tell them what the word means. (1991/1992, p. 181)

Piret here is fruitlessly searching for consistency within a static written text. Whether Dickens wrote the latter part of his manuscript in haste or not is irrelevant to Dickens' pedagogy. Presenting the text orally with his children over the course of up to fifteen years allowed Dickens innumerable opportunities to answer any son or daughter's question, "Papa, what does 'Hosanna' mean?" or to provide the requisite information, even if not asked.

I would like to conclude this chapter with a proposal. Even though the Appendix to this dissertation soundly refutes Piret's assertion that "[r]eprints since the first edition have been rare . . ." (p. 15), an annotated edition of The Life of Our Lord has yet to be made available to scholars other than in dissertation form. I propose a collaboration between Egan and Piret in writing and then making available for publication

a scholarly edition which encompasses Egan's synopsis of Dickens' text and the gospels, Egan's annotations and commentary, and Piret's original, not duplicative, annotations. To aid in my preparation of the first ever curricular edition in English, I continue in the next chapter with a review of the literature of the popular press on The Life of Our Lord.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE POPULAR PRESS' LITERATURE

Most of the content of this chapter's continuation of the review of literature is new to scholarship on The Life of Our Lord, and it now makes its collective debut. Why, we must ask, are there sources which have been rarely consulted or not at all utilized by academia? Several possible explanations come to mind. The simplest involves a researcher's review of literature. If a type of literature has not occurred to or has not been of interest to earlier researchers, a review alone would not lead a later researcher to it.

How, then, does one explain Egan's (1983) total omission of any commentary found within any book edition of The Life of Our Lord? Her review of literature includes Jan Hodge's 1976 dissertation The Gospel Influences on Dickens's Art and Jane Vogel's 1977 book Allegory in Dickens, and they are the first two scholars to quote from this type of commentary. Her silence would not appear to be related to her dimissal of Vogel's work as "[t]he worst . . . [with] convoluted figural analyses, linguistic games, proselytizing puns, and logic-defying correspondences . . ." (pp. 29-30), for she credits Hodge

with "the work which devotes the most insightful attention to The Life of Our Lord" (p. 40). Piret (1991/1992) echoes Egan on both counts, but he does acknowledge the existence of a few more such commentaries in his bibliography and a footnote.

Another explanation could be Hodge, Vogel, and Piret are alone in deeming their cited commentators knowledgeable about The Life of Our Lord, but we are then still left with the question as to why the publishers arranged to have these particular commentators write their respective essays for inclusion in the various editions. Even if an introduction is lacking in insight, might it not provide a scholar with an opportunity for reviewing key sources overlooked by that commentator?

In some instances, perhaps Hodge, Vogel, and Piret's omissions are explained by a provincial approach to research. The author of the Spanish prologue to Vida de Jesucristo (Dickens, 1934d), for example, is the first writer to assess Dickens' style, critique the text, and discuss Dickens' pedagogy, all within the same essay. Had I limited my research to English sources, I would have limited my understanding of Dickens' pedagogy, which is essential for the preparation of my curricular edition in Chapter Four. True, Piret mentions in a footnote that Cree, Icelandic, and Esperanto editions were published, but why then omit reference to the French,

German, Spanish, Polish, and Korean editions? Hodge and Vogel can perhaps be excused for not knowing of foreign language editions, but Piret leaves one wondering if he actually inspected the foreign language magazine serialization and books he cites.

Whatever the reasons for their exclusion, commentaries within book editions are not the only neglected sources of perspectives and insights. Popular book reviews as well have commanded little interest, even when the authors have been university faculty members. It may be argued that a scholar like Connell (1938), who discusses Dickens' Unitarianism, or Peyrouton (1963), who discusses Dickens' style of writing, or Egan (1983), who discusses Dickens' manuscript sources, would have no reason to expect relevant content from book reviews. However, such a narrow approach prevented Connell from strengthening his case through illustrating Catholic book reviewers' dissatisfaction with absent dogma. It restricted Peyrouton to his own limited analysis of Dickens' command of language. And it caused Egan to misdeclare that Dickens' identification of Herodias as Herod's daughter is an error "which has been pointed out only once, by Robert Graves in The Dickensian in 1934" (1983, p. 154). With my interest in the children's New Testament as a pedagogical instrument for Christian education, both commentary within editions

of The Life of Our Lord and popular press critiques are quite relevant to my study, so I here begin their review.

The original commentary for the first British edition of The Life of Our Lord was provided by Henry Dickens' widow, Marie, in April 1934. It is by far the least satisfactory of the commentaries, in that it was based in part on erroneous or unsubstantiated information, not to mention that it has resulted in the perpetuation of this misinformation whenever it has been included in a subsequent edition (1970, 1981, 1986, 1987c, 1991). Egan (1983) takes Georgiana Hogarth's September 1870 letter (De Wolfe Howe, 1922) to task for its role in misreporting both the Gospel of Luke as Dickens' main source and the number of chapters in the manuscript. She might have done the same with this foreword, first for Marie's acceptance of 1849 as the manuscript's date of composition, second for her pronouncement that Dickens wrote it "in order that his family might have a permanent record of their father's thoughts" (Dickens, 1934a, p. 8), third for her omitting Mamie's ownership or possession of it, fourth for her stating as fact rather than as family tradition that "Charles Dickens had made it clear that he had written The Life of Our Lord in a form . . . not for publication" (p. 8), and fifth for her suggesting that the book's title was Dickens' title.

The error in dating the manuscript resulted from Marie's knowledge of the inscription "on the medallion of the case which contains the manuscript," namely "Written for his own Children by Charles Dickens 1849" (1934a, p. 10). The medallion was based on "a title page in the hand of Georgiana Hogarth, reading as follows: "Copy of The History of Our Saviour, Jesus Christ written by Charles Dickens for his own children 1849" (Dexter, 1934-1935, p. 1). In the next chapter I cite a letter by Dickens establishing the year of composition as 1846. That Dickens did not write his children's New Testament as a "permanent record" of his thoughts is also established in the next chapter.

As for the matter of ownership, Egan places the manuscript for awhile in Mamie's hands on the basis of Georgiana's written comment that "I gave it at once to Mamie, who was, I thought, the most natural and proper possessor of it, as being his eldest daughter" (Egan, 1983, p. 44; De Wolfe Howe, 1922, p. 120). Regardless of ownership, there is no direct evidence in Dickens' hand, including his will, that the manuscript was never to be published. Georgiana took possession of it under the clause, "I also give to the said Georgiana Hogarth all my private papers whatsoever and wheresoever . . ." (Forster, 1874, pp. 515-516), and she, with John Forster, was further authorized in Dickens' will to

> proceed to an immediate sale or conversion into money of the said real and personal estate (including my copyrights), or defer and postpone any sale or conversion into money, till such time or times as they, he, or she shall think fit, and in the meantime may manage and let the said real and personal estate (including my copyrights), in such manner in all respects as I myself could do, if I were living and acting therein . . . (Forster, 1874, p. 516).

Forster himself specifically received "such manuscripts of my published works as may be in my possession at the time of my decease" (p. 516), so the unpublished children's New Testament could have been sold for publication immediately or anytime thereafter under both the letter and the spirit of his will. The will was written May 12, 1869 (p. 518), while Georgiana in her September 1870 letter maintains that Dickens "expressed that decided determination [against publication of the manuscript] only last autumn to me, so we have no alternative" (De Wolfe Howe, 1922, p. 119). If Dickens was, indeed, so adamant, then apparently he forgot to include an appropriate directive in his June 2, 1870 codicil. Otherwise, still assuming Georgiana is not exaggerating that "he had decided <u>never to publish it -- or even have it privately printed</u>" (p. 120), he must have trusted her to rely on his oral statement and ignore his directive to her in his will in this particular instance.

Finally, Marie's matter of fact prose suggests that "The Life of Our Lord" was Dickens' own title instead of simply a title "that among the family the work was almost always referred to" (Dexter, 1934-1935, p. 1). For a review of the manuscript's title's history, Piret's introduction (1991/1992) should be consulted. I have only to add that Simon and Schuster, publishers of the first American edition, reported to The New York Times for a February 12, 1934 article that "[i]t has not been decided whether the book will be put out under its title or the subtitle, 'The History of Our Saviour, Jesus Christ'" ("Gets New Dickens Book," p. 13). The phrase "its title" here probably refers to the by then contractual title "The Life of Our Lord," supplied by Henry Dickens' family.

The foreword to the first American and Canadian editions is credited to "the publishers" (Dickens, 1934b, p. 8; Dickens, 1934c, p. 16), yet it seems unlikely that the editors would have directed a representative of Simon and Schuster to collaborate with a representative of The Musson Book Company for the preparation of a brief foreword. Perhaps the two publishers commissioned one author on their behalf. Be that as it may, whoever wrote it was more knowledgeable about the manuscript and Dickens' life than was Marie Dickens.

While the author is reluctant to correct Georgiana's year of composition, he does quote from Dickens' letter which establishes the year as 1846, and settles on the span of 1846 through 1849 for Dickens' producing the total of forty-six pages of manuscript. He later gives Dickens' children's 1849 ages, in explaining that "Sydney was two years old, but the others, ranging from twelve to four, were definitely of the articulate and inquisitive age . . ." (1934b, p. 7), but these ages should be reduced by three years each. He also quotes from two of the surviving letters in which Dickens mentioned the children's New Testament.

The author quotes as well from a letter Dickens wrote which does not refer to the manuscript. The unidentified addressee is the Reverend R. H. Davies, and the unspecified date of composition is December 24, 1856. I reproduce the quotation here, restoring deleted clauses and correcting an error in wording in brackets, in anticipation of a similar passage in Dickens' will, examined in the next chapter:

> "There cannot be many men, I believe, who have a more humble veneration for the New Testament, or a more profound conviction of its all-sufficiency than I have. [If I am ever (as you tell me I am) mistaken on this subject, it is because I discountenance all obtrusive professions of and tradings in religion, as one of the main causes why real Christianity has been retarded in this world; and because] [m]y observation of life induces me to hold in unspeakable dread and horror [those]

> unseemly squabbles about 'the letter' which drive 'the Spirit' out of hundreds of thousands." (Dickens, 1934b, p. 5; Forster, 1874, p. 447)

The author attributes the manuscript's not being published during Dickens' lifetime to a possible fear on the part of Dickens "that a public disclosure of so intimate a document might involve the possibility of attack and defense of his deepest religious convictions" (1934b, p. 5). As discussed in Chapter One, Dickens' manuscript comprises much paraphrasing with evident stylistic restraint. It is far more likely that Dickens feared an attack and defense of his literary abilities, which he intentionally chose to suppress as secondary in importance to the clear and direct moral instruction he sought to provide for his children. A general paraphrase of an edited New Testament scarcely reveals one's "deepest religious convictions."

The author also quotes from Georgiana Hogarth's letter of September 1870 to explain why the manuscript had not been published earlier and to reveal that Georgiana gave it to Mamie. He quotes, too, from Henry Dickens' will to inform the reader more fully as to how the first book edition is finally available in print.

The foreword in the first French edition (1934e) consists only of a translation of the first American and Canadian editions' foreword, with the addition of

one paragraph from Marie Dickens' foreword. However, two other 1934 foreign language editions contain introductory material of interest here, one in Spanish and the other in Esperanto. In the prologue to the former edition, Rafael Vazquez-Zamora recognizes Dickens' "enormous sacrifice for a writer who is a genius to renounce his own style" (1934d, p. 18). He continues, "What a humble act by he who dominates prose so majestically to limit himself . . . before an unsurpassable work of art [the Bible]" (p. 18). He finds that Dickens' "bare, simple" prose reinforces "the humbleness which was so praised by Christ" (p. 20). In addition, the simplicity of the language makes it "as contemporary now as it was then" and appropriate even for "future times" (p. 13).

As for the text, he cautions against overanalyzing its sources:

> Wise men will not come to ask about the influences on this little, simple, humble book, which has, however, an immense strength, great drama, and sublime poetry. This book has only one source, THE BOOK, the book of excellence, The Bible. (p. 13)

His approach here is reminiscent of Dickens' comment to Davies about "those unseemly squabbles about the letter which drive the spirit out of hundreds of thousands" (Forster, 1874, p. 447). In other words, it is difficult

for the text to speak truth if one does not listen for its broad message.

Vazquez-Zamora addresses Dickens' pedagogy when he states that "some portions [of the words and events of Christ] were modified or omitted because of the tender young minds of the children" (1934d, p. 21). He does not read into Dickens' pedagogy Unitarian or Anglican beliefs Dickens may or may not have held, as purportedly evidenced by modified or omitted words.

The Esperanto edition's introduction (1934f) was written by Montagu C. Butler, future editor of the Esperanto-English Dictionary (1967). A paragraph long, the introduction informs the reader that the book is the last of Dickens' works to be published and that errors in the original text have been left intact. More importantly, just like Vazquez-Zamora, Butler recognizes and tries to recreate Dickens' simple, plain prose.

In 1938, Theodor Arnason published an Icelandic edition titled Lifsferill Lausnarans, loosely meaning "Life's [biographical] Path of the Redeemer." An unsigned foreword, perhaps by Arnason himself, also incorrectly dates the manuscript 1849. Georgiana Hogarth's 1870 ownership and her descendants' 1934 ownership of the manuscript are omitted. Instead, the reader is inaccurately told that Dickens bequeathed it to his children in general, suggesting that they maintained

joint ownership until all Dickens' children had died. The author does recognize that "Charles Dickens spoke often to his children of Jesus Christ" (p. 7), but it is unclear whether by this he means Dickens frequently read the manuscript aloud or taught his children about Jesus in addition to his manuscript readings. He labels Dickens' story telling approach as "beautiful and unaffected" (p. 7) before concluding with the book's 1934 publication history.

Curiously, for the next forty years, new commentaries within editions of The Life of Our Lord are found primarily on dust jackets. The 1939 edition from Garden City Publishing Company retained the foreword to the first American edition, but altered the dust jacket's summary of that foreword from:

> After his sister-in-law, Georgiana Hogarth, died, it fell to Dickens' youngest [surviving] child, Sir Henry Fielding Dickens, with the admonition that it should not be published while any child of Dickens lived. (1934b, dust jacket)

to

> [Dickens] felt that the manuscript was a personal message from him to his own immediate family and he refused to permit its publication during his lifetime or that of his children. (1939, dust jacket)

This new wording erroneously suggests that Dickens either authorized or did not forbid publication by his

grandchildren. Georgiana's letter and Dickens' will provide the only evidence of Dickens' wishes, her letter stating that Dickens would not personally allow its publication and his will allowing the sale of any unpublished manuscripts.

A significant feature of the Garden City dust jacket's commentary is the unnamed author's validation of Vazquez-Zamora's assessment of Dickens' writing style. The relevant paragraph reads as follows:

> The immortal story of Christ's life and teachings is an ambitious undertaking for any author to assume, and Dickens has achieved it with all the beauty and sincerity that it deserves. Great genius that he was, Dickens sensed the spiritual nature of his subject and was careful to keep his narrative absolutely free of any literary tricks or mannerisms. It is a simple story, simply told by a father for his children, and it is this very naturalness and simplicity which gives it its universal and ageless appeal. (1939, dust jacket)

This author agrees that Dickens intentionally restricted his artistic talent and in so doing created a timeless document.

The unidentified author of the centennial edition's dust jacket text adds an additional comment in support of Vazquez-Zamora's pedagogical observation. The jacket reads in part:

> [The Life of Our Lord] should serve something of the purpose that Charles and Mary Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare has done for generations -- that of an introduction of an indispensable part of their

> spiritual inheritance to those as yet too young to receive it directly from the Bible itself. (1970)

This brings us to the 1981 edition from The Westminster Press, which is supposed to be "a facsimile of the first edition in book form published by Associated Newspapers Ltd in London in 1934" (p. 5). As would be expected, it includes Marie Dickens' foreword, but the publisher's note reveals that

> [t]he 1934 edition of The Life of Our Lord contained copies of religious artwork popular in the 1930s. For the present edition these pictures have been deleted; in their place are presented a selection of the engravings by a contemporary of Dickens, Julius Schnorr von Karolsfeld, whose work represents the style of illustration that would have been familiar to the Dickens children in family Bibles of the Victorian era. (pp. 5-6)

Moreover, the pagination differs between editions as a consequence of both the number of words per page and conflicting practices in deciding whether or not to include illustrations in the page count. Finally, for this so-called facsimile of the first British edition, the dust jacket borrows text, without crediting its source, from the foreword to the first American and Canadian editions. The two passages are presented here for comparison purposes, the former having already been examined in part in this chapter:

> During his lifetime Charles Dickens refused to permit publication of "The Life of Our Lord" because he

> doubtless felt that it was a personal letter to his own children, and feared that a public disclosure of so intimate a document might involve the possibility of attack and defense of his deepest religious convictions. (1934b, p. 5; 1934c, pp. 12-13)

> Dickens *no doubt* refused to permit publication because it was such a personal communication to his own children, and he did not want his deepest religious convictions to be subjected to public discussion. (1981, dust jacket)

The only other item of significance in this edition is the attempt in the publisher's note to update the history of the manuscript from 1934 through 1981, but the account is so sketchy as to leave one with more questions than answers.

A Polish translation appeared in 1985, based on the 1981 edition just reviewed. In an afterword, Tomasz Polkowski envisions Dickens with his children as I do:

> He often told them in the evenings the story of Jesus Christ based on the Gospels, meanwhile teaching them how one should live according to the law of love which Christ had left us. (p. 119)

However, Polkowski then apparently unknowingly contradicts the purpose he has ascribed to the manuscript by stating that "Dickens left it to his children as a memento so that directly after his death they might have a testimony of the faith of their father and a handwritten document of his words" (p. 119). As I reveal more fully in the next chapter, the original and intended value of the

manuscript lay in its active use by a father with his children as moral instruction, not, as many scholars and commentators have since treated it, in its purported profession of faith. Furthermore, as we have already seen in his will, Dickens did not leave it to his children. Polkowski's final paragraph cites the scholarly and authoritative versions of the gospels he consulted while translating Dickens' text.

In 1986, The Westminster Press reissued the 1981 edition but added a foreword by D. James Kennedy. As the review of literature in Chapter One demonstrates, Kennedy's position that "until the publication of this work in 1934 . . . it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to say where he stood on matters of religion" (p. 5) is a slight exaggeration. He indicates familiarity with Dickens' will, but what he labels "apparent discrepancies" (p. 6) in the text of The Life of Our Lord are easily explained by Dickens' charge to his children in his will that they "try to guide themselves by the teaching of the New Testament in its broad spirit" and "put no faith in any man's narrow construction of its letter here or there" (Forster, 1874, p. 517). Kennedy imposes just such a narrow construction when he deems Dickens "somewhat unclear on the proper relationship between faith and good works" (pp. 5-6). Kennedy then refers the reader to his appendix, in which

he "clarif[ies] some of the doctrinal points" (p. 6) that Dickens "mistakes," "confuses," "fails to see," and misleadingly "implies" (pp. 127-128). (I should mention here that some 1986 first editions omit this appendix and can be identified only by examining pages 125 through 128. Specifications are given in this dissertation's Appendix, under items 33 and 34.)

Kennedy concludes, in part:

> With its charming language and simple explanations, The Life of Our Lord is a wonderful book to read to our children to help them understand more about Christ. It also encourages us, as parents, to strive to communicate God's truth to our children, even as Dickens did. (p. 6)

While I admire Kennedy's vision in calling on parents, if not adults in general as teachers, to emulate Dickens' use of the manuscript with children, by not undertaking a curricular version such as I offer in Chapter Four, his proposal is no more effective than handing any earlier edition of The Life of Our Lord to an adult with the instruction to use it as Dickens did.

The following year Beehive Books (1987a) issued an edition in Great Britain and authorized Silver Burdett Press (1987b) to make it available in America as well. Neil Philip edited and modernized the text based on a microfilm of the manuscript from The Free Library of Philadelphia. He also wrote both a foreword and the

most extensive commentary before or since in an afterword. The foreword is a brief introduction to Dickens and The Life of Our Lord and reads as if it is directed to children, while the afterword would be of more interest to adults. The key sentence in the foreword is "[Dickens] believed strongly that Christ's message of understanding, compassion and charity made a foundation for everyday life, not just for Sunday show" (1987a, pp. 13-14), and this, of course, is the premise of my dissertation in its effort to recapture Dickens' pedagogy for interactive use.

Philip's afterword is largely a competent review of Dickens' theological and moral beliefs. While he corrects the year of composition, he makes the usual omissions regarding ownership of the manuscript, and he accepts without further comment that Dickens decided "emphatically against publication" (1987a, p. 88). He confirms Egan's interpretation of the care with which the manuscript was composed. He states,

> It is written in a bold unhesitating hand with very little major alteration or rewriting, unlike the heavily scored and revised manuscripts of Dickens's fiction. Where a phrase or sentence is deleted or inserted, the changes are clearly contemporary with the main text, rather than afterthoughts. It may be that this was not the first draft, but Dickens seems to have known clearly what he wanted to say and how he wanted to say it. (p. 89)

As already reviewed in Chapter One, Egan writes,

> Because the Life was not intended for publication, because the manuscript was the reading copy, Dickens obviously concentrated on keeping his writing readable. This characteristic is especially appreciated by anyone who has tried to read any of Dickens' novels in their nearly illegible manuscript form. Not only is the text readable; changes, corrections, and deletions are usually also legible, which allows readers to "see" the progression of Dickens's thinking as he wrote. (1983, p. 55)

Although Philip names few of his sources, I suggest that he is not familiar with Egan's scholarship. If he were, he would not have claimed that "[t]he uncluttered, lucid narrative is based largely on the Gospels of Luke and John . . ." (1987a, p. 89). He does name Forster, Shaw, and Graves, but these latter two, it will be remembered from Chapter One, made observations on The Life of Our Lord which are of questionable intellectual rigor.

In his conclusion, Philip, too, agrees with Vazquez-Zamora that

> [q]uite rightly, Dickens did not, in making a simple paraphrase of the Gospels suited to the understanding of children, seek to impress his own literary style on the material. He offers a shared reading of the Gospel story, rather than an imaginative recreation of it. (1987a, pp. 91-92)

However, he is at his weakest when he imitates Hodge's approach (1976/1977), described in Chapter One, by claiming for The Life of Our Lord

> resonances with Dickens's other work, most notably with the series of Christmas books he wrote in the 1840s: A Christmas Carol, The Chimes, The Cricket on the Hearth, The Battle of Life and The Haunted Man (p. 92)

and then offering as "proof" one sentence from The Life of Our Lord to compare with one sentence from The Battle of Life. Incidentally, this particular example I trace directly back to Katherine Carolan's article "The Battle of Life, A Love Story" (1973).

Also in 1987 and also in Great Britain, Ashford Press released an edition with a foreword by Michael Charles Dickens Whinney, a great grandson of Charles Dickens, Jr. Whinney is initially concerned more with the cosmetics of the book than with its text or original purpose. He trusts that its "good sized print will make it easily readable and help [it] to find a place on the table and desk at home and at school" (1987c, p. v). If it is to be used for teaching, he is confident that "[p]arents and teachers will find the strikingly original and modern illustrations will hold the interest of younger readers" (p. v).

Except for Whinney's dating the manuscript 1849, on the basis of his two following pages of interpretative commentary, I am willing to entertain the possibility that the first page was written intentionally for the eye of the casual book purchaser, who is not expected

to read carefully beyond the first page. On the following pages, he correctly points out, as Piret (1991/1992) learned four years later, that the manuscript is well worn and suggests that "what [Dickens] loved most was reading to his own children" (p. vi). Of course, were this the case, one needs to ask him what would have made the children's New Testament a valuable recurring read. He answers first that the carefully selected parables "appear to reflect Dickens' own longing for genuine compassionate action through practical caring . . ." (p. vi) and second, more generally, that "[h]e believed Christianity needed to be lived out and not just talked about" (p. vi).

Whinney is also aware of Dickens' views on interpreting Scripture. As is seen in the following chapter, his observation that, for Dickens, Christianity "was not to be the cold and unfeeling fulfilling of the exact letter of the law, but rather a thankful response to the spirit behind the law" (p. vi) is accurate. However, his interpretation that "[Dickens] wanted people to understand how much Christ cared and to follow his example in the way they behaved towards each other" (p. vii) may turn out after Chapter Three's analysis more properly to read "Dickens wanted his children just to follow Christ's example in the way they behaved towards others." In any event, Whinney sees a strong moral

dimension to the children's New Testament.

A 1987 Korean translation includes an unsigned introduction with information about "the Author and His Works," "The Life of Jesus Christ," and "A Christmas Carol" (1987d, pp. 2-3), which is included in the volume. The author, who also incorrectly dates the manuscript's composition 1849, apparently is unfamiliar with any of Dickens' correspondence which is reviewed in the following chapter, for he states that the book was written "to induce his children to read about the life of Jesus Christ" (p. 3).

He does agree with earlier translators that "[t]he book presents the life of Jesus Christ in plain and simple story language" (p. 3), while accurately crediting Dickens with consulting all four Gospels. He concludes,

> Through this book it is hoped that we may learn about Jesus Christ and Christianity and ultimately be led to read the Bible, itself, which stands as the most important work in human history. (1987d, p. 3)

It is not entirely clear, however, whether the passive voice construction "it is hoped" refers to Charles Dickens or the editors of this translation. The former interpretation would suggest that "we" then refers to Dickens' children, in which case the use of the present tense is problematic. The latter interpretation would suggest that "we" refers to today's readers. As is

demonstrated in Dickens' letters to two of his sons, he did expect his manuscript to lead to their own reading of the New Testament when they had attained an older age.

Walter Reed of Emory University wrote the introduction to the Oliver-Nelson Books 1991 edition. With his credential of Professor of English and with all the scholarship and analysis which this dissertation has already revealed preceded his 1991 commentary, I feel justified in holding him to a higher level of accountability for the inaccuracy of his statements. Although he does not cite his sources, it would be no great challenge to list the sources which he did not consult.

Reed suggests that the published title was composed by Dickens when he claims that "his account of the life of Jesus, The Life of Our Lord, was completely unknown outside the circle of his family until long after his death" (p. xiii [pages preceding page 1 are unnumbered in the text]). This statement itself is easily refuted. Winifred Matz wrote an article, already mentioned in the Introduction, titled "My Copy of 'The Children's New Testament,'" and it is included in Dunn's 1976 cumulative index of The Dickensian's articles from 1905 to 1974 under "Life of Our Lord." She begins her article:

> A typescript copy of Dickens's unpublished work, The Children's New Testament, is one of my most cherished possessions. It must be more than twenty years ago that Mrs. Perugini [Kate Dickens] allowed my father to make a copy of it from Mark Lemon's copy (then in her possession) and it was a most valued gift to him from such a sweet and dear friend as she always was. (1934, p. 89)

He then perpetuates the "compromise" on composition dates by stating, "He wrote out this condensation of the Gospels between 1846 and 1849 . . ." (1991, p. xiii).

Of everyone who has briefly acknowledged Dickens' original purpose in preparing the children's New Testament as a pedagogical instrument, Reed alone disassociates Dickens from the role of teacher. He states,

> Dickens had told the story of Jesus many times to his children long before they could read, he wrote to a correspondent, but he wanted to write an "easy account" at this time for their own use. (p. xiii)

As has been mentioned, all of Dickens' relevant letters are analyzed in the following chapter, but Reed's error in syntactic interpretation which caused him to exclude Dickens from the pedagogical implementation of the manuscript is easily explained here by providing three brief excerpts from these letters. The correspondent to whom Reed refers is John M. Makeham. Dickens wrote ". . . I re-wrote that history for my children -- every one of whom knew it, from having it repeated to them, long before they could read . . ." (Forster, 1874, p.

448). Reed interprets "it" to mean the story of Jesus, not the manuscript of the children's New Testament. This ambiguity is resolved in a letter from Dickens to the Reverend David Macrae in which he explained,

> All of them [Dickens' children] from the first to the last, have had a little version of the New Testament that I wrote for them, read to them long before they could read . . . (Macrae, 1871, p. 128).

As for Reed's quotation of the words "easy account," he has borrowed the phrase from a letter Dickens wrote to his son Edward, in which he told him:

> I put a New Testament among your books for the very same reasons, and with the very same hopes, that made me write an easy account of it for you, when you were a little child" (Forster, 1874, p. 446).

By not citing his sources, Reed's wording incorrectly suggests that the phrase "easy account" was included in the letter "he wrote to a correspondent." Consistent with his mistaken view that Dickens' children studied the manuscript on their own, he adds, "The Life of Our Lord remained in manuscript, shared among members of his family, and was left to his sister-in-law on Dickens' death" (p. xiii).

Reed's next error is in accepting Georgiana Hogarth's opinion that the manuscript was "chiefly adapted from St. Luke's Gospel . . ." (De Wolfe Howe, 1922, p. 120).

He writes, "In producing what is in essence a harmony of the four New Testament gospels, Dickens relies on the gospel of Luke for the bulk of the story . . ." (1991, p. xiii). Obviously Reed is not aware of Egan's 1983 harmony which includes the text of The Life of Our Lord and definitively refutes Reed's assertion.

The only interpretative comment in this introduction pertinent to the curricular edition of The Life of Our Lord in Chapter Four is how Dickens' full text "calls particular attention to the compassion of Jesus for the poor and the mistreated and to the moral example He provides . . ." (p. xiv). Yet even with this recognition of the stress Dickens placed on moral education, Reed does not comment on the Oliver-Nelson Books edition's deletion of Dickens' personal moral message at the end of the manuscript, presented here from the Beehive Books edition, with its "minor amendments" (1987a, p. 9) of modernized punctuation, spelling, and capitalization:

> REMEMBER! It is Christianity to do good always -- even to those who do evil to us. It is Christianity to love our neighbour as ourself, and to do to all men as we would have them do to us. It is Christianity to be gentle, merciful, and forgiving, and to keep those qualities in our own hearts, and never make a boast of them, or of our prayers or of our love of God, but always to show that we love him by humbly trying to do right in everything. If we do this, and remember the life and lessons of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and try to act up to them, we may confidently hope that God will forgive us our sins and mistakes, and enable us to live and die in peace. (p. 79)

No other edition has ever deleted this passage.

In my judgment, Neil Philip, who is responsible for the well edited Beehive Books/Silver Burdett Press editions (1987a, 1987b), has written the most thorough and competent of the commentaries within any edition of The Life of Our Lord to date. It remains to be seen if it will be surpassed in substance and insight by the introduction that nineteenth century children's literature authority Gillian Avery has prepared for the 1995 Everyman's Library paperback edition, which will include all of Dickens' works for children for the first time in one volume. She assures me that her expertise on the subject could enable her to expound on it for an entire day, but apparently her focus returns to the old debate over the extent to which the manuscript reveals Dickens' religious beliefs. She writes,

> What I said about it in the introduction was that it was a difficult book that looked easy, and important to our understanding of Dickens's' religious views. I went on to discuss the nature of Broad Churchmanship and its place in Victorian religious life -- an infinitely complex subject . . . (personal communication, November 24, 1994)

For more information about this forthcoming edition, the other editions referred to in this chapter, and book and magazine editions which do not include original commentary and so have not been included in this chapter, please consult the Appendix.

I now continue with a chronological examination of the numerous book reviews of The Life of Our Lord. As The Tablet suggested in its March 10, 1934 issue, reviews published simultaneously with the first installment of Dickens' text are perhaps suspect. The reviewers may or may not have had advance access to the fourteen sets of printers' proofs (see the first entry in the Appendix for the original publication dates). I liken such overly generous "reviews" to the "loud trumpetings" ("Whom Say Ye," 1934, p. 293) of The Daily Mail to increase its circulation through the publication of the manuscript. The reader interested in such advance assessments can consult The Daily Mail issue of March 5, 1934.

By and large, book reviews have appeared in publications which would be of interest either to the general reading public or to a targeted audience within the general reading public. The reviews range from March 10, 1934, at which time only six of the fourteen installments had appeared, through January 1988, when a 1987 edition was reviewed. In these reviews, I am especially interested in perceived faults in the text. Just as Dickens was wont to act on some of John Forster's suggestions after Forster had read manuscript pages intended for publication (Forster, 1872-1874), so am I prepared to act on some of the reviewers' concerns

in preparing a children's Christian education edition based on The Life of Our Lord.

As indicated above, the British Catholic periodical The Tablet reviewed The Life of Our Lord, doing so when fewer than half of its installments could yet have been read by the reviewer without his having access to printers' proofs. It may even be the case that a copy deadline prevented the reviewer from reading more than the first installment, for his criticism is based entirely on passages from the first chapter of the manuscript. Dickens merely introduces the infant Jesus in this chapter and does not yet establish a moral foundation for his work beyond writing that "everybody ought to know about [Jesus] . . . who was so good . . ." (1934b, p. 11). Accordingly, it need not be surprising that the reviewer focuses on a reading of the text which demonstrates that "[a]ll idea of divinity is suppressed" ("Whom Say Ye," 1934, p. 293). Only after reading additional chapters can one have confidence that Dickens' text presented moral education to his children. This reviewer's stance, then, is interesting but premature.

The first American review of which I am aware was reported in The New York Times issue of April 2, 1934, about two weeks after the final installment had appeared in the New York World Telegram. The first book edition had not yet been released (Loveman, 1934). The review

itself had been given orally, with The Times reporting, in full:

> Criticizing Charles Dickens's recently published "The Life of Our Lord," written for his children, as narrow-minded and unfit to give to children, Dr. Charles Francis Potter, leader and founder of the First Humanist Society, meeting in Steinway Hall, 113 West Fifty-seventh Street, said: "The anti-Semitic prejudice in Germany and elsewhere is directly traceable to the attitude of those like Dickens, who consider other religions than Christianity as 'false and brutal.'" ("Dickens's Work," p. 14)

Potter was responding to Dickens' second to last paragraph in the final installment, which reads:

> They took the name of Christians from Our Saviour Christ, and carried crosses as their sign, because upon a cross He had suffered death. The religions that were then in the world were false and brutal, and encouraged men to violence. Beasts, and even men, were killed in the churches, in the belief that the smell of their blood was pleasant to the Gods -- there were supposed to be a great many Gods -- and many most cruel and disgusting ceremonies prevailed. Yet, for all this, and though the Christian religion was such a true, and kind, and good one, the priests of the old religions long persuaded the people to do all possible hurt to the Christians; and Christians were hanged, beheaded, burnt, buried alive, and devoured in theatres by wild beasts for the public amusement, during many years. Nothing would silence them, or terrify them though; for they knew that if they did their duty, they would go to Heaven. So thousands upon thousands of Christians sprung up and taught the people and were cruelly killed, and were succeeded by other Christians, until the religion gradually became the great religion of the world. (1934b, pp. 123-124)

Potter's point is well taken, although in fairness to Dickens, he was equally, if not more, disgusted with like false and brutal Christians throughout the intervening centuries who, as he wrote in Pictures from Italy, "hunted down and tortured, burnt and beheaded, strangled, slaughtered, and oppressed each other . . ." (1991, p. 386). He was also fully aware of and condemned like actions practiced by Christians on Jews. In A Child's History of England he wrote, "On the day of . . . coronation, a dreadful murdering of the Jews took place, which seems to have given great delight to numbers of savage persons calling themselves Christians" (1991, p. 222). The Inquisition he labeled "the most unholy and the most infamous tribunal that ever disgraced mankind . . ." (p. 305).

The charge of anti-Semitism on the part of Dickens is continued in a second review. Although The Commonweal, a Catholic publication, does not identify the source of Rabbi Louis Newman's statements that the book "'merely reinforces the ancient legend of Jewish guilt'" and that the "'unremitting emphasis on the morbid and unhappy end of Jesus has encouraged hostility and hatred'" ("Emphasis on," 1934, p. 620), a complete book review by Newman appeared the following month in The Saturday Review of Literature (Canby, 1934), and his views will be examined in more detail there. The Commonweal merely

took this earlier opportunity Newman afforded the publication to discuss theology, not The Life of Our Lord.

The following day, The Saturday Review of Literature (Loveman, 1934) printed its own assessment of the book. Staff writer Amy Loveman attributes the success of the serialization sales both to Dickens' name and advance advertising by the newspaper syndicates. She finds that the book "lacks high distinction, and as a rendering of the gospel story it is colored by a Victorian regard for the ignorance of young minds and a Dickensian inclination toward the good and the sentimental" (p. 610).

Of course, once the term "Dickensian" is employed, one is referring to style of writing as well as characterization, and this dissertation has already cited the authority of the annotator and of the translator to posit that the text is deliberately not Dickensian. As such, "high distinction" was never even attempted. With the manuscript's moral dimension, it would be peculiar not to find an "inclination toward the good." As for the point that the gospel story assumes "the ignorance of young minds," who better than Dickens would have known what each of his children already knew about Jesus' teachings and what he further wanted them to learn? If, on the other hand, Loveman is referring to the text's

keeping Dickens' children in ignorance in specific respects identified by subsequent reviewers, such as the virgin birth and adultery, I will explore in the context of those book reviews if such omissions from the New Testament are pertinent to Jesus' teachings.

The April 24, 1934 issue of America: A Catholic Review of the Week included an assessment of Dickens' book, remarkable in three respects. First, although the issue's table of contents includes a section titled "Reviews of Books," the assessment appears under "Editorials -- Note and Comment." Second, the article is titled "Dickens' 'Life of Christ,'" yet neither the newspaper serializations nor the first book editions presented the manuscript's text under this appellation. Finally, the editorial reads as if the author had not actually read the text.

Most of the editorial discusses Dickens' novels, the works of "a man . . . who has never known Christ" (p. 26). The reader is told that "[h]e revered Christ as 'a good man,' although he rarely mentions Him in his books" (p. 27). Subsequent comments are demonstrably vague, such as "Emphatically, the Christ of Dickens is not the Christ of the Gospels" (p. 27), a comment which may refer to those purportedly rare instances in his novels or may refer to his children's New Testament. Equally vague is the pronouncement that "[w]hat he writes

of Christ is reverent in tone, but its moral and religious level is no higher than that of his novels" (p. 27). Instead of quoting or paraphrasing an illustrative example from The Life of Our Lord, the author quotes a bishop in the following passage:

> The same qualities, in a measure, mark Dickens' "Life of Christ." They make it, whatever the author's intention, a subtle attack on the Divinity of Christ. As the Bishop of Nottingham has recently said, "It is perfectly clear that the writer of this book did not believe at all in the Divinity of Christ." This negation influences every page of the "Life." (p. 27)

The author's conclusion further suggests no substantive familiarity with the text. He writes:

> The book will probably be issued in a special edition for children, but Catholics will remember that it is not a book for Catholics. And most of us who love the novelist will feel that what he taught in his stories is undone by what he teaches in this unhappy little book. (p. 27)

On May 15, 1934, The New York Herald Tribune presented Lewis Gannett's book review. It is difficult to agree with his opinion that Dickens was "content to follow the language of the King James version as closely as seemed compatible with the understanding of children just out of the cradle" (p. 19), for when Dickens wrote his children's New Testament, he had six children, ages nine to one, and they would have exhibited a variety of different levels of cognitive development. I cannot

envision one static manuscript version suiting all his children simultaneously. I suggest that Dickens, as teacher, would have edited, modified, or expanded the manuscript orally as best suited any particular child.

Gannett does astutely notice that Dickens, in his pedagogy, avoids both the "hell fire and damnation" and the "sugar-coated morsels" approaches to religious instruction, instead "teach[ing] them, through the Gospel stories, the simple virtue of the Golden Rule" (p. 19). He concludes, in part, with a caution that "[a] modern Bible rewriter would eliminate the traces of anti-Semitism . . ." (p. 19)

The next day The Christian Century relegated its review to its "Books in Brief" column, probably because "[w]idely syndicated in newspapers, this simple recital of the life of Jesus is already familiar to most readers" ("Life of," 1934, p. 665). The review itself consists of but one sentence. "It is a perfectly plain and naive recital of the gospel story breathing an air of devout piety and untroubled faith" (p. 666). The most intriguing word here is "naive." Apparently the text is being critiqued as a revelation of Dickens' own theological positions, and those positions do not measure up to the editorial dogma of The Christian Century.

As Editor of The Saturday Review of Literature, Henry Canby solicited and assembled a series of reviews for the May 19, 1934 issue. He explains:

> The Life of Christ which, by wish of the novelist, the heirs of Charles Dickens have so long kept in manuscript, has aroused such intense interest in its serial publication and is being broadcast so extensively over the English reading world, that more than the usual review seemed in order upon its publication in book form. We have accordingly asked for the informal opinions of a group of distinguished readers, Protestants, Roman Catholics, Hebrews, experts in children's books, and authorities upon Dickens. These comments, various in approach, and divergent in estimate, are printed below. (p. 697)

Rabbi Newman's stated point of contention here is Dickens' ignorance of or unwillingness to have used "the content of volumes such as Klausner's 'Jesus of Nazareth,' Enelow's 'A Jewish View of Jesus,' Radin's analysis of the Trial, and Hirsch's of the Crucifixion . . ." (Canby, 1934, p. 698).

Newman raises, as well, the issue of anti-Semitism. Although he recognizes Dickens' "adherence to the conventional Christian account of [Jesus'] life and death" (p. 698), he singles out and edits the passage given below to hold Dickens personally accountable for "adopt[ing] uncritically the phrases which set Jesus apart from the Jewish people whose race and faith he shared" (p. 698). For comparison purposes, Newman's version is set off here, followed by both Dickens' source

for the edited words and his full text in context. Newman has Dickens' wording read precisely as follows:

> "[M]any Jews . . . hated Jesus Christ. . . . So they said to one another that Jesus Christ should be killed, because He cured people on the Sabbath Day." (p. 698)

The Gospel of John, from which Dickens derived the above words, reads:

> And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. (Egan, 1983, p. 158)

However, in context, Dickens' full text reads:

> Among those poor persons was one man who had been ill thirty-eight years; and he told Jesus Christ (who took pity on him when He saw him lying on his bed alone, with no one to help him) that he never could be dipped in the pool, because he was so weak and ill that he could not move to get there. Our Saviour said to him, "Take up thy bed and go away." And he went away, quite well.
>
> Many Jews saw this; and when they saw it, they hated Jesus Christ the more: knowing that the people, being taught and cured by Him, would not believe their priests, who told the people what was not true, and deceived them. So they said to one another that Jesus Christ should be killed, because He cured people on the Sabbath Day (which was against their strict law) and because He called Himself the Son of God. And they tried to raise enemies against Him, and to get the crowd in the streets to murder Him. (1934b, p. 50)

A syntactic inspection of Newman's editing reveals that he delays Dickens' revelation of the motivation behind the hatred and then grants Dickens only a partial

explanation of the motivation, thereby placing all the more emphasis on hatred in general at the beginning of the quotation. Putting Dickens in this light reinforces Newman's objection reported by The Commonweal that portions of the book promote "'hostility and hatred'" ("Emphasis on," 1934, p. 620) in kind toward Jews.

While I believe that Newman's edited evidence serves to weaken his case, in being critical of how he attempts to support his objection, I am by no means deeming his objection invalid. I certainly concur that it is to no one's benefit to perpetuate a message of hate from "the ancient misconceptions which have bred so much heartache throughout the centuries" (Canby, 1934, p. 698). As for Newman's wish that Dickens had consulted outside sources in addition to the New Testament, I reiterate that Dickens was primarily concerned with paraphrasing and modernizing the gospels. The evidence in Chapter Three does not support Dickens' preparing the manuscript for analyzing the gospels historically.

George Schuster, Managing Editor of The Commonweal, writes that "The Life of Our Lord cannot suit those whose view of the Savior differs from that of Dickens" (Canby, 1934, p. 698). Specifically he faults Dickens for writing "a book which sidesteps the question of Our Lord's divine nature, which puts no stock in the doctrine of the virgin birth, and which assumes that the Last Supper was a kind

of farewell dinner" (p. 698). Of course, Schuster is assuming that what Dickens did not write about, Dickens must not have believed. His approach is less problematic when he states that Dickens is "sensitive to the moral urges characteristic of the early Victorian age" (p. 698), although I am hard pressed to explain how morality founded in Jesus' teachings is peculiarly Victorian. Be that as it may, I am unconvinced that the addition of Jesus' divinity and virgin birth, or the alteration of his portrayal at the Last Supper, would enhance Jesus' lessons about how we should treat each other in our day to day lives. Jesus certainly did not focus on Schuster's concerns in his moral teachings and, correspondingly, neither did Dickens.

Three members of academia were also invited to write reviews for Canby's Saturday Review issue, Alfred Holt, Stephen Leacock, and William Lyon Phelps. Holt writes, "There is no pretense here: we find an utterly lucid, straightforward account, told in the simplest language for children" (1934, p. 698). Given the manuscript's topic and Dickens' seriousness of purpose, Holt adds, perhaps tongue in cheek, "We look in vain for Dickensian humor. An overmastering sense of solemnity seems to have padlocked the puckish spirits of one of the supreme comic writers" (p. 698). He then adopts Schuster's approach of emphasizing what Dickens omitted, but from

a perspective of "Victorian reticence" (p. 698) rather than that of doctrinal unsoundness:

> Nothing has been admitted that could bring the well-known blush of shame to the maiden cheek. The word "adultery" has been relegated to the outer darkness; harlots are only hinted at, in "The Prodigal Son;" Herod's reason for imprisoning John the Baptist is given as "because he taught and preached to the people" (here, incidentally, Dickens makes his worst blunder, when he gives Herodias rather than Salome the credit for the actual performing of that murderously effective dance); and the woman who "had had five husbands" is omitted altogether. (p. 698)

I remain unconvinced that Dickens' omissions, even with attributing a different motivation to him, detract either from his original use of the manuscript or from possible similar use in the future. Consider how Dickens recounts:

> One morning He was sitting in a place called the Mount of Olives, teaching the people who were all clustered round Him, listening and learning attentively, when a great noise was heard, and a crowd of Pharisees, and some other people like them, called Scribes, came running in, with great cries and shouts, dragging among them a woman who had done wrong, and they all cried out together, "Master! Look at this woman. The law says she shall be pelted with stones until she is dead. But what say you? What say you?"
>
> Jesus looked upon the noisy crowd attentively, and knew that they had come to make Him say the law was wrong and cruel; and that if He said so, they would make it a charge against Him and would kill Him. They were ashamed and afraid as He looked into their faces, but they still cried out, "Come! What say you, Master? What say you?"
>
> Jesus stooped down, and wrote with His finger in the sand on the ground, "He that is without sin among you, let him throw the first stone at her."

(1934b, pp. 63-64)

The woman's "wrong" is inessential to the moral message. One might just as well lament that the gospel writer fails to account for the woman's partner in adultery, although Jesus' response about judging, condemning, and punishing him would have been the same. If anything, by not naming the "wrong," Dickens adds to the universality of Jesus' morality. Specifying adultery suggests categories of sins, opening the door to debate over categories of responses, some of which might yet be judgmental.

As for Dickens' "worst blunder," the name Salome does not appear in the New Testament in the story of John the Baptist. In my edition in Chapter Four, I will correct Dickens' specification of Herodias by referring to Herod's niece, the daughter of Herodias. Curiously, no editors to date have ever seen fit to correct Dickens' error, either in the text or by means of a footnote on the same page as the text.

Holt does make an important observation. He finds that "[w]here the different Gospels vary, [Dickens] usually chooses, as any reader of his novels knows he would, the more dramatic version" (Canby, 1934, p. 698), although in terms of writing style, it is important to remember that these are more the New Testament's dramatic

versions than those of Dickens.

In sharp contrast to my claim of Dickens' seriousness of purpose, Stephen Leacock writes, perhaps not tongue in cheek, "I read Dickens's 'Life of Our Lord' up to chapter five. Beyond that I couldn't get. For all I know it may have become 'louder and funnier' later on" (Canby, 1934, p. 697). He finds it "deplorable" (p. 697) for Dickens' children that Dickens not only failed but even attempted "to surpass the marvellous language of King James's translators" (p. 698). As is apparent from this dissertation's review of literature, Leacock is alone in his belief that Dickens hoped to write superior prose. Even in a self-contradictory critique, Bernard Shaw managed to label his manuscript writing both "a paraphrase" and "his Little Nell style," but never an attempt to improve "the English of King James's inspired scribes" (1937, p. xiii).

Leacock then enlarges his theme, seemingly taking some kind of personal satisfaction in proclaiming that "not even Dickens could re-edit Jesus Christ" (Canby, 1934, p. 698). He concludes, "Dickens was not quite sure of where he stood [theologically]" (p. 698), which more accurately reflects Leacocks' inability, like others after him, to pinpoint Dickens' core religious beliefs in a manuscript in which he never attempted to record them in the first place. Leacock's only positive comment

is "he is most flattering and appreciative of Jesus's morality" (p. 698).

William Lyon Phelps, former English professor at Yale University, with expertise on both Dickens and the Bible, shows a much more thoughtful understanding of Dickens' intent for and utilization of the manuscript. He confirms that:

> Dickens wrote this manuscript for the benefit of his children; he very sensibly wished them to grow up in an intimate acquaintance with the greatest spiritual Teacher who ever lived. Just as he wished them to know the masters of literature, art, and music, so he wished them to be familiar with the life and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. It seems to me that the book admirably fulfills the purpose for which it was written. The style is adapted for juvenile readers; the incidents are made concretely interesting; and the story has vigor, vivacity, and charm. (Canby, 1934, p. 697)

Moreover, Phelps expands on an insight initially provided by Lewis Gannett (1934). He explains that:

> what is best about it is its emphasis. In the mid-nineteenth century, when this book was written, it was commonly thought that the character of a good man was negative. A Christian was one who did not smoke, drink, dance, play cards, or attend the theatre; that was the ordinary conception of a Good Young Man. No wonder religious people often seemed unattractive. . . .
>
> Dickens followed the Gospels instead of the current Sunday School teaching of his day. In the Gospels all the emphasis is laid on positive rather than on negative characteristics. It is fine to see in the interpretation of Christianity by Dickens, that goodness means unselfishness, kindness of heart, consideration for others in little things, tact, generosity of temper as well as of pocket, in other words that the love of one's neighbor is really

> "like unto" the love of God. He deserves tremendous credit for this emphasis, especially at that time. (p. 697)

This is the spirit of Dickens' text which I hope to recapture in Chapter Four. Moreover, Phelps sees Dickens as I do, "in the midst of his family, talking affectionately with his children" (Canby, 1934, p. 697), and this is the spirit of Dickens' pedagogy which I hope to release once again as well. In the same series of reviews, John Holmes, pastor of the Community Church, finds that "these qualities, like a fire on the hearth, glow only inside the home and for the family circle; and with the passing of the mystic hour which prompted its writing, the book became dead" (p. 697). My effort may or may not succeed, but I will not argue the point that the book has remained dead to its purpose since 1870, its over forty editions to date notwithstanding.

The series of seven book reviews in The Saturday Review of Literature concludes here with the one word review of self-proclaimed "drama critic," "essayist," and "one of the best-informed Dickensians in the country," Alexander Woollcott: "lousy" (Canby, 1934, p. 697). I simply add that in an August 1934 review in The Commonweal, which will be examined more fully in its proper chronological place, writer Gerald Lahey could not bring himself to share Woollcott's opinion with his

readers, even in paraphrase. He went no further than advising everyone that Woollcott's "word is far from complimentary" (p. 366).

The following day, May 20, P. W. Wilson's review for The New York Times Book Review (1934b) was printed. Paradoxically, he holds Dickens to the standards of moral behavior which Dickens sought to teach his children and, deeming him to have failed, rejects the book. Specifically, he refers to the recent release of correspondence "which discloses the inner tragedy of a marriage that broke down under circumstances by no means resounding to the credit of Dickens as a husband and a gentleman" (p. 2). Wilson had provided readers of The New York Times Magazine with excerpts from this correspondence one week earlier in his article titled "The Dickens Tragedy Revealed" (1934a), and he would continue his examination of Dickens' character a month later in "Mr. and Mrs. Dickens: A Debate Revived" (1934c).

For Wilson, Dickens is "a kind of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (1934b, p. 2), or, in Dickensian terms, a Mr. Chadband or a Uriah Heep. Therefore, he reconstructs Georgiana Hogarth's letter which pronounced that Dickens would not publish or privately print the manuscript (De Wolfe Howe, 1922) as revealing a paranoid hypocrite who "did all in his power, during his lifetime, to prevent its publication, either then or in the future" (1934b,

p. 2). Were this the case, however, would not Dickens have destroyed the manuscript, or, more to the point, not have written it in the first place, rather than leaving it to Georgiana as one of his "private papers" (Forster, 1874, p. 515), which, as such, she was authorized to sell immediately or anytime in the future?

Wilson's disclosure of Dickens' ill-treatment of his wife cannot be refuted, but to dismiss the text on the basis of guilt by association is either intellectual laziness or intellectual dishonesty. Perhaps sensing this, Wilson modifies his position somewhat and grants Dickens "an intense sense of responsibility" (1934b, p. 2) in undertaking the preparation of the manuscript. Still, he cannot understand how Dickens "should be reduced by this unaccustomed theme to the monosyllabic manner of the New Testament. Either he quotes or his phrases are paraphrases" (p. 2). Wilson errs by making great literary style a precondition of pedagogy, and then he even misses the moral focus of Dickens' pedagogy by stating that "it was his desire that his children should know about his subject as much as he knew himself" (p. 2).

The very same day, New York Herald Tribune Books printed John Holmes second, and longer, review. He explores more fully the consequences of publishing "a work for the nursery or the fireside of the Dickens family

. . ." and then having it reviewed "with the cold eyes of critical appraisal" (1934, p. 1). By including my attempt to return to the manuscript's original purpose, Holmes has now accurately prophesied all of academia's approaches to the work over the ensuing sixty years:

> As a biography of Jesus, this work of Dickens has only the interest that inevitably attaches to anything that has come from the pen of so great a writer. It is a revelation of Dickens's personality, of his relation to his children, and of his attitude toward Christianity, and thus important. . . .
>
> As literature, it must be said that the "Life of Our Lord" has even less distinction than the rather lamentable "Child's History of England." (p. 1)

With no scholarship before mine including a focus on the manuscript as a revelation of Dickens' relation to his children as teacher of Christian moral education, my task in preparing a Sunday school version is formidable. My optimism is derived in part from the book's being "free, to be sure, of the sentimentality and pietism which poison most 'Sunday School books'" (p. 1). In the absence of a pedagogical edition comparable to my effort in Chapter Four, I concur with Holmes that "in itself, as a 'Life' of the Master, even for children, it has little value," solely "important to students of Dickens's life, an essential footnote . . ." (p. 1).

The very same issue of New York Herald Tribune Books contains, in the "Books for Young People" section, what I might call "[t]he stone which the builders rejected" (Matthew 21:42; Psalms 118:22). Here, in a second review, is the strongest validation outside of the Dickens family (see Chapter Three) of my premise about the manuscript's purpose. Even more importantly, the reviewer, May Becker, specifically addresses "under what conditions it might be used for [children's] direct benefit and advantage" (1934, p. 7).

Becker succinctly states that "it is a book with a purpose, and that is a moral purpose" (p. 7). She addresses Dickens' motivation in writing the text as follows:

> Here is a man who loved his children, longed that they might be, and grow up to be, good and happy, and meant to neglect no means by which he might help to bring this to pass. To him, the secret of this good life was to be found in the life of Christ Jesus. (p. 7)

Finally, she interprets Dickens' pedagogy and shares her findings thusly:

> The uses and the limitations of usefulness of such a book for family use are thus made plain. If you believe these things, or if you wish your children to believe them, read it aloud to little children, or ask older ones to read it aloud to you. If you do not, leave it alone. Dickens wrote it for a purpose, clearly stated and sharply felt: to bring what he considered a message essential to the good life, to his own children, for whose welfare he

> was responsible. The only extenuation for breaking faith with him, in a matter on which he felt so strongly, would be the extension of that purpose to other children, now that the last ripple of his family circle has died away. (p. 7)

As is apparent in her last sentence above, Becker is far more accepting than I of the family tradition that Dickens wanted the manuscript never to be published. I do feel that in preparing my edition to be used in part as she describes, I am keeping faith with him.

As grateful as I am for Becker's perspective and analysis, in the book reviewers' designated role as John Forster, others may have more suggestions for me to consider in preparing a curricular edition, so I now proceed with The New Republic's review of May 30, 1934 ("Suffer Little"). This reviewer takes Gannett's (1934) and Phelps' (Canby, 1934) praise for the book's emphasis on positive human characteristics and omission of negative characteristics to an extreme and, in so doing, interprets Dickens' Jesus "as dull and impossible as our Little Nell" and laments over the absence of characters "who were not innocent, but human, and therefore engaging" ("Suffer Little," 1934, p. 81). That the reviewer misses even more "many of the human touches to be found in the synoptic gospels" (p. 81) is curious, given Dickens' close adherence to the King James Bible's text.

The next month The Catholic World presented a short review by Felix Klein, who directed virtually all of his attention to either attributing the book's successful sales to Dickens' name and advertising or to listing dogma which Dickens would have included in the text but for his "arbitrary principle of selection" (1934, p. 381). Klein's only praise is "Dickens indeed writes with reverence . . ." (p. 381).

In July 1934, another religious publication provided a brief review. The Living Church managed to contradict itself within its self-imposed confines of two paragraphs by first "pictur[ing] the father telling the story to his children" and then stating that the book "will prove agreeable to the adult reader" ("Life of," 1934, p. 112). Absence of the virgin birth is also mentioned.

With the frequency of the reviews now diminishing, only Gerald Lahey provided one in August, in The Commonweal (1934). He begins, "Dickens's 'Life of Our Lord' has had indeed a poor reception" (p. 366), but it is unclear whether he is referring to book reviewers, sales, or Catholics. According to his research, Catholic writers in The United States, Canada, England, and France all expressed dissatisfaction on the basis of errors, omissions, and unsoundness of doctrine. He then highlights all the negative assessments of the book he can find in the May 19 issue of The Saturday Review of

Literature (Canby, 1934), except for the anti-Semitic bias depicted by Rabbi Newman, who is not even referred to as having written one of that issue's seven reviews. Lahey admires Dickens the novelist and has empathy for Dickens "[t]he victim of an unhappy home life," but Dickens the "apostle . . . did not understand Christ the Son of God" (p. 366).

In October, The Booklist (1934) allotted its single paragraph to The Life of Our Lord as follows:

> Although written for children, this biography of Christ is interesting more as a literary curiosity than as an addition to children's literature. It is simple and sincere in tone but entirely lacking in distinction. Paper and typography are old-fashioned, designed to give the effect of an early Victorian book. (p. 50)

The text's distinction, I maintain, is found in its original use, the absence of which does make it only a literary curiosity.

The final review in 1934 appeared in the Pratt Institute Quarterly Booklist. It reads in full: "A simple re-telling of the life of Jesus written by Dickens for his children and publication forbidden by him until after the death of the last of his children" (p. 8). Needless to say, the statement about publication is spurious.

The last review I have found until some forty-five years later was not written as a book review per se.

However, the Winter 1936-37 issue of The Dickensian treated it as if it were one by quoting all of the passages in which Dickens and his text are specifically addressed. The quotations are taken from George E. Sokolsky's book We Jews, published in 1935.

Before addressing The Life of Our Lord in particular, Sokolsky observes that

> [t]he child who is constantly being taught that the Jews killed Jesus cannot be expected to love a Jew. Rarely is he told that Jesus was a Jew. Still more rarely, perhaps never, is he told that crucifixion was a Roman and not a Jewish method of killing offenders. Nor yet is the Christian doctrine of the inevitability of the Christ dying that men might be freed explained to children in such a manner that they might learn to love even his enemies. Rather is Sunday-school teaching limited to the current vernacular of the child, so that he comes to feel that a lot of Jews ganged up on Jesus, put nails in his hands and feet, and killed him. (1935, pp. 46-47)

Then, unlike Rabbi Newman before him, he quotes from The Life of Our Lord at length, five full paragraphs from the tenth chapter, each one verbatim. The scene depicted is just prior to the crucifixion, and Sokolsky is deeply concerned that "[t]housands of children will read this book, and thousands of children will grow into manhood and womanhood accepting Pontius Pilate as a minor hero and the mass of the Jews as murderers" (p. 49).

He next lists historical facts which Dickens has omitted, namely why Pilate was in Jerusalem, what

constitutes the Messianic ideal, and "why the Jews had to disassociate themselves politically from one of their own people who was asserting his rights to a kingship which Rome had destroyed by military force" (p. 49). He continues, "The child reads this simple tale and believes every word of it literally and he hates the Jews bitterly, for they have killed his Lord" (p. 49).

Sokolsky concludes his section on Dickens as follows, making a poignant point about uninformed and insensitive Sunday school lessons, which can speak to Christian educators even today:

> As long as such a book as Charles Dickens's The Life of Our Lord is read by children, as long as in the Sunday schools the Jew is accused of having murdered Jesus, as long as the clergy utilize a religion of love to instigate hatred, so long will anti-Semitism be prevalent throughout the world. (1935, pp. 49-50)

In my approach to editing Chapter Four's curricular edition, I believe that I do no less than Dickens himself would have done, had he been aware of such charges of anti-Semitism. I base my belief on the following evidence, the outline of which is taken from both Edgar Johnson's biography (1952) and Fred Kaplan's biography (1988).

In 1860 Dickens arranged to sell his lease on Tavistock House to a Jewish couple. In his prejudice, he expected that the husband, Mr. Davis, would attempt

to manipulate him during the negotiations. Mr. Davis did nothing of the sort, to Dickens' surprise. Dickens maintained his acquaintance with the couple, and in 1863 Mrs. Davis, in a written request for a contribution to a charity, stated that his portrayal of Fagin in Oliver Twist some twenty-five years earlier greatly wronged her people.

Dickens' reply was overly defensive, given his actual characterization of Fagin, and he was unwilling to admit his insensitivity, now brought to his consciousness. He enclosed with his reply "quite a nominal subscription towards the good object in which you are interested" (Hogarth, Dickens, & Hutton, 1903b, p. 129), perhaps to ease his conscience nominally. Be that as it may, his conscience was not at ease, and in his next novel, Our Mutual Friend (1864-1865), he depicted a Jewish community which provides refuge to one of his heroines. Further, prominent among that community is Mr. Riah, a generous, kind, and noble old man entrapped by a Christian moneylender.

Mrs. Davis commented favorably on Dickens' reparation while the novel was being published in installments. Johnson tells us that:

> Some years later she gave him a copy of Benisch's Hebrew and English Bible, inscribed: "Presented to Charles Dickens, in grateful and admiring recognition of his having exercised the noblest

> quality men can possess -- that of atoning for an injury as soon as conscious of having inflicted it." (1952, p. 1012)

I strongly suspect Dickens would have altered Fagin's portrayal had he received Mrs. Davis' letter while he was publishing that novel in installments, and I believe Dickens would have altered the manuscript of his children's New Testament similarly, had he decided to publish it between 1863 and 1870.

After the book reviews of the first editions of The Life of Our Lord had ended, new publishers brought out additional unabridged editions in the 1930s, as well as the 1940s and 1970s, as is documented in the Appendix. However, it was not until The Westminster Press edition of 1981, purportedly a reprint of the first British edition, that I find a new book review published. Eugene Dooley's appraisal for Best Sellers (1981) emphasizes how Dickens "treats the story of the Lord Jesus with kindly and tender compassion," stressing "incessantly the kindness, the gentleness and the goodness of Jesus, always with the wish that his children copy their Divine Master by the goodness of their lives" (p. 151). These are the sections of the book which have the most claim for inclusion in an abridged text for Christian moral education. Dooley also finds that "Catholic readers may be a bit annoyed at the very brief account of the

Last Supper and the Eucharist" (p. 151).

The same edition was reviewed the following year in West Coast Review of Books ("Life of," 1982), but the praise bestowed is unsubstantiated. "To 'review' in this case would be too presumptuous" (p. 57), the author writes, and so the text is quoted at length. The book is "'inspirited' with Dickens' own great God-given gift -- the ability to hold his readers spellbound" (p. 57). It seems evident that this reviewer, first, is critiquing Dickens the novelist, and, second, has no knowledge of how the manuscript was utilized in the Dickens household. Dickens' personal comments on this aspect of the work are examined in the following chapter.

In 1987, when new editions appeared on both sides of the Atlantic, as well as in Korea, critiques were printed in at least three newspapers and a journal. In the April 19, 1987 issue of The Observer (London), Paul Bailey reviewed the Ashford Press edition (1987c). He, like the reviewer for The New Republic ("Suffer Little," 1934), recognizes that among the characters "the good are Good, the bad Bad" (1987, p. 23) but is disappointed that Judas Iscariot is neither characterized in the spirit of Jonas Chuzzlewit nor is granted a well staged suicide. He can perceive the value of the text in Dickens' home only if the author, "a great amateur

actor . . . pulled a few dramatic stops out [while] perform[ing] this pious tale by the family fireside" (p. 23). Finally, he expresses what I would deem more substantive concern over the number of anti-Semitic references.

In November of the same year, Robert Coles of the Washington Post reviewed the Silver Burdett edition (1987b) in the newspaper's "Book World" section. He succinctly states that "[t]his is a moral fable written by a novelist who loved Jesus, but harbored a great skepticism (to put it mildly) toward institutional Christianity" (p. 23). Similarly, Dickens "tries hard to spring [Jesus'] moral message free of all intermediaries, the interpreters who have claimed Him in such diverse (and often conflicting) ways" (p. 23). I concur, which is why I believe much of The Life of Our Lord to be a sound source for a nondenominational approach to Christian moral education.

The Los Angeles Times Book Review shortly followed suit with Marjorie Holmes' article titled "Dickens' Other Christmas Story" (1987). She unintentionally writes from a 1934 perspective, "How lucky we are that it is available to the rest of us at last, for it is a treasure" (p. 17). Her error is in believing that the book had circulated only "in a limited British edition" (see the third entry in the Appendix). The source of her error,

apart from not researching her subject, is a misreading of a modifier in a statement made by Neil Philip in the book's forward (1987b). Philip writes, "He never intended to publish it, and it only appeared in print in 1934, sixty-four years after his death" (p. 13). Holmes interpreted the latter clause as "it appeared in print only in 1934 . . ."

Like the reviewer for West Coast Review of Books ("Life of," 1982), Holmes quotes passages from The Life of Our Lord extensively, and she critiques Dickens the novelist when she claims that "here are real people, so vibrantly alive they almost leap from the page" (1987, p. 17). Apparently nothing short of studying Egan's (1983) harmony of the gospels alongside Dickens' text would reveal to her how little original characterization Dickens introduced in The Life of Our Lord.

The most recent book review, also of the Silver Burdett edition (1987b), is found in School Library Journal's January 1988 issue. Patricia Pearl is the first person to designate an age appropriateness level for the work, which, in her judgment, is from grades three through six. In my next chapter, Dickens' correspondence reveals an even earlier usage with his own children.

Pearl summarizes much of the commentary of her predecessors and is helpful in noting some errors not

previously publicized, any of which I will correct if the passages in which they occur are selected for my Sunday school edition. She writes,

> 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. (p. 74)

I will let the content of this chapter's review of literature, then, guide me in the preparation of the text in Chapter Four, but first I turn my attention in the next chapter to the most authoritative sources of information about the original purpose and implementation of the children's New Testament. Original documentation by Charles Dickens and his children will be examined.

CHAPTER THREE

PRIMARY SOURCES

The purpose of this chapter is to examine primary evidence left by Charles Dickens and his children regarding both the intent and the use of the manuscript of the children's New Testament. Also of interest are Dickens' pedagogical views, especially as they pertain to religious instruction at home and, for Chapter Four, as they might pertain to Sunday school lessons based on parts of his manuscript. His professed moral creed is examined as well for consistency with the moral dimension of his children's text.

There are four known references to Dickens' manuscript in his surviving correspondence, as well as an undated excerpt from an otherwise unpublished letter, included in a book of essays published the year after Dickens' death. Dickens' first reference is contained in an 1846 letter to his friend and future biographer, John Forster. From Lausanne, Switzerland, Dickens writes that "'I have not been idle since I have been here . . . Half of the children's New Testament to write, or pretty nearly. I set to work and did <u>that</u>'" (Forster, 1873, pp. 214-215).

The next reference occurs some twenty-two years later. What is significant is not that Dickens may or may not have referred to the manuscript in the interim period in correspondence which is now lost. Rather, at least three times during the last two years of his life, Dickens attested to the importance of his children's New Testament, written over two decades earlier. In an 1868 letter to his youngest son Edward Bulwer Lytton Dickens, he placed the manuscript within the context of his larger faith. Accordingly, it is appropriate to quote the letter at length, as it appears in the third volume of Forster's The Life of Charles Dickens:

> I therefore exhort you to persevere in a thorough determination to do whatever you have to do, as well as you can do it. I was not so old as you are now, when I first had to win my food, and to do it out of this determination; and I have never slackened in it since. Never take a mean advantage of any one in any transaction, and never be hard upon people who are in your power. Try to do to others as you would have them do to you, and do not be discouraged if they fail sometimes. It is much better for you that they should fail in obeying the greatest rule laid down by Our Saviour than that you should. I put a New Testament among your books for the very same reasons, and with the very same hopes, that made me write an easy account of it for you, when you were a little child. Because it is the best book that ever was, or will be, known in the world; and because it teaches you the best lessons by which any human creature, who tries to be truthful and faithful to duty, can possibly be guided. As your brothers have gone away, one by one, I have written to each such words as I am now writing to you, and have entreated them all to guide themselves by this Book, putting aside the interpretations and inventions of Man. You will remember that you have never at home been harassed

> about religious observances, or mere formalities. I have always been anxious not to weary my children with such things, before they are old enough to form opinions respecting them. You will therefore understand the better that I now most solemnly impress upon you the truth and beauty of the Christian Religion, as it came from Christ Himself, and the impossibility of your going far wrong if you humbly but heartily respect it. Only one thing more on this head. The more we are in earnest as to feeling it, the less we are disposed to hold forth about it. Never abandon the wholesome practice of saying your own private prayers, night and morning. I have never abandoned it myself, and I know the comfort of it. I hope you will always be able to say in after life, that you had a kind father. (1874, pp. 445-447)

What I would emphasize here is Dickens' closely associating in one sentence the New Testament with his "easy account of it" before deeming the former "the best book" on the basis that "it teaches you the best lessons by which any human creature . . . can possibly be guided." A lexico-syntactic analysis of this passage reveals that Dickens chose not to name Christ as the subject of the action, but rather "it," that is, the ideas expressed by the words contained in both the New Testament and his manuscript. That Christ authored them is of secondary importance in this particular sentence; what is significant to Dickens is what action is taken, namely teaching. The direct object of the action is "the best lessons" and the indirect object is "you," reminiscent of Matthew 11:15: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Even if no one hears, "the best lessons" remain

the object in the sense of the point of the teaching. All that is then needed is an audience open to hearing, and for Dickens the audience for his manuscript was his children whenever he presented to them his self-selected "best lessons."

A month later, Dickens wrote to his sixth son, Henry Fielding Dickens:

> As your brothers have gone away one by one, I have written to each of them what I am now going to write to you. You know that you have never been hampered with religious forms of restraint, and that with mere unmeaning forms I have no sympathy. But I most strongly and affectionately impress upon you the priceless value of the New Testament, and the study of that book as the one unfailing guide in life. Deeply respecting it, and bowing down before the character of our Saviour, as separated from the vain constructions and inventions of men, you cannot go very wrong, and will always preserve at heart a true spirit of veneration and humility. Similarly I impress upon you the habit of saying a Christian prayer every night and morning. These things have stood by me all through my life, and remember that I tried to render the New Testament intelligible to you and lovable by you when you were a mere baby. (Hogarth, Dickens, & Hutton, 1903b, pp. 305-306)

What, precisely, does Dickens here mean by the word "render"? The Oxford English Dictionary provides the two likeliest explanations, yet both seem somewhat lacking. One meaning is "[t]o reproduce or represent, esp. by artistic means, to depict," but as has been discussed in Chapter One, Dickens approached his task much more as a paraphrase than as an original work of

art. Another meaning is "[t]o reproduce or express in another language, to translate," but Michael Piret in his dissertation Charles Dickens's "Children's New Testament" (1991/1992) tells us that "often he retains the King James wording almost verbatim . . ." (p. 16) and "the only notable change Dickens makes in [an illustrative] statement is a backward one, giving the Authorized Version a more archaic flavor than it actually has . . ." (p. 16). I would like to entertain the possibility that Dickens had in mind as well an additional, obsolete connotation of the word "render": "[t]o repeat (something learned); to say over, recite; ? to commit to memory." I base my consideration of this nuance on the additional letters he wrote.

On June 8, 1870, the day before his death, Dickens answered a reader's letter in which the reader had claimed that a passage in what was to become Dickens' unfinished novel, The Mystery of Edwin Drood, was irreverent. Dickens replied to John M. Makeham, with an altered word restored and phrases omitted by Forster supplied in brackets:

> It would be quite inconceivable to me, but for your letter, that any reasonable reader could possibly attach a scriptural reference to [a] passage [in a book of mine, reproducing a much abused sound figure of speech, impressed into all sorts of service, on all sorts of inappropriate occasions, without the faintest connexion of it with its original source.] I am truly shocked to find that

> any reader can make the mistake. I have always striven in my writings to express veneration for the life and lessons of our Saviour; because I feel it; and because I re-wrote that history for my children -- every one of whom knew it, from having it repeated to them, long before they could read, and almost as soon as they could speak. But I have never made proclamation of this from the house tops. (Forster, 1874, p. 448; Hogarth, Dickens, & Hutton, 1903b, p. 361)

Dickens' assertion that he "repeated" the manuscript to all of his children "long before they could read" attests to his using the manuscript orally and helps explain his aforementioned comment that he rendered it to Henry when he was "a mere baby." Even though Dickens' eldest child, Charles, was nearly ten years old when his father wrote the manuscript, nowhere in the remaining correspondence does Dickens state or hint that after a certain age, his children were expected to read it on their own. Piret describes "rather well-thumbed" leaves in concluding that "the piece seems to have been read in the household quite a lot" (1991/1992, p. 9), to which I would now add "by Dickens." It appears from Dickens' remaining letters that only when his sons left home did he formally turn his teaching responsibility over to them by presenting them with complete New Testaments, for them to read now as young adults.

The final letter exists only as an excerpt in a book published by the Reverend David Macrae in 1871. Although Macrae does not date this correspondence, he

prefaces extracts from this letter as well as another:

> In 1861, I unexpectedly received from Mr. Dickens a letter of thanks for a paper published at the time in which I had endeavoured to point out the service his books had done to Christian morality. This led to a correspondence, in the course of which Mr. Dickens made some statements of his views in regard to Christ and His teaching, which have peculiar interest now. (p. 127)

On the basis of this prefatory comment, Forster concluded that the excerpt of interest here was written in 1861 and so states in a footnote on page 445 of the third volume of his biography of Dickens. However, until the original letter is recovered, it is better considered as having been written sometime between 1861 and 1870. The excerpt Macrae gives us anticipates Dickens' comments to Makeham and reads in full:

> My reverence for the Divine Preacher of the Sermon on the Mount is not a feeling of to-day. I married very young, and had a large family of children. All of them, from the first to the last, have had a little version of the New Testament that I wrote for them, read to them long before they could read, and no young people can have had an earlier knowledge of, or interest in, that book. It is an inseparable part of their earliest remembrances. (1871, p. 128)

What Peter Ackroyd in his 1990 biography Dickens labels "[a] slight exaggeration here, since the eldest children were already well beyond the stage of their earliest remembrances . . ." (p. 504), I interpret as evidence of Dickens' devoting so much time to the

religious and particularly moral instruction of his many children that in the recollection and so reinterpretation of his role as father and teacher, Dickens constructed the consistent, if only in his own mind, reality reported to Macrae and Makeham. It still remains to examine what, if any, "earliest remembrances" his children who wrote memoirs revealed of their father's providing them with religious instruction.

Ackroyd names two works, one each by a daughter and a son, as being most informative in this respect:

> His children have left their own memories of his religious instruction -- Mamie Dickens in My Father as I Recall Him and Henry Dickens in My Father as I Knew Him" (1990, p. 1116).

However, there are strong reasons to believe that Ackroyd is not as familiar with the children's home religious experience as his matter of fact statement suggests. First, Henry Dickens never wrote a book titled My Father as I Knew Him. Rather, the first chapter of The Recollections of Sir Henry Dickens, K.C. (1934) is titled "My Father as I Knew Him," and in this chapter Henry makes only two relevant comments. To begin, he states:

> He made no parade of religion, but he was at heart possessed of deep religious convictions, as the terms of his will, as his letters to us on starting in life, go to show, as well as the 'History of Our Lord's Life,' for his children, which has not yet been published as he expressed his desire that it should not be, as it was not intended as a

literary effort. (p. 41)

Henry writes here as an elderly man who is looking back upon his young adulthood, not his childhood, and when he mentions the "History of Our Lord's Life," he provides only his 1933 perspective that it "has not yet been published," with the family's explanation for this circumstance.

He also publishes "a simple prayer written by [Dickens] for his own children when they were very young" (p. 41), yet two oddities remain. He prefaces the prayer with the comment that it is "a document which I have found among my papers" (p. 41), suggesting that only recently has the prayer come to his attention, if not his memory. Further, his use of the first person singular in this prefatory comment ("I" and "my") is abandoned in his next sentence ("written by him for his own children when they were very young"). One would expect him to remain in the first person, merely switching to plural to include his siblings: "written by him for us when we were very young." Whatever memories Henry had are not included in his Recollections.

As for Mamie Dickens, she provides absolutely no information whatsoever about her personal religious instruction in My Father As I Recall Him (1897). If Ackroyd actually studied this book, he is attributing

unwarranted significance to the following brief passages, each of which is scarcely personal:

> [Dickens] loved Christmas for its deep significance as well as for its joys, and this he demonstrates in every allusion in his writings to the great festival, a day which he considered should be fragrant with the love that we should bear one to another, and with the love and reverence of his [not "my" or "our"] Saviour and Master. (p. 25)

and

> "It is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its Mighty Founder was a child himself," was his own advice, and advice which he [not "I"] followed both in letter and spirit. (p. 39)

Other than these passages, Mamie simply quotes from Dickens' letter to Forster concerning writing half of the children's New Testament and quotes from an article her father wrote for The Cornhill Magazine:

> "God grant that on that Christmas Eve, when he [Thackeray] laid his head back on his pillow and threw up his arms as he had been wont to do when very weary, some consciousness of duty done, and of Christian hope throughout life humbly cherished, may have caused his own heart so to throb when he passed away to his rest." (p. 68)

One must look beyond Ackroyd's authority for information regarding Dickens' children's religious instruction.

Mamie Dickens' other book, Charles Dickens (1885, 1911) provides just the slightest references to her

religious upbringing at home. Instead of focusing on the role of her father's children's New Testament, immediately after she mentions that he wrote a "'History of the New Testament' for his children," she adds, "He had written prayers for them, as soon as they were old enough to say them" (p. 104). The use of the third person to refer to the children is more readily explained here than in Henry's case, inasmuch as this book is written as a biography for children. She confirms that Dickens' religious instruction included her and her siblings' repeating prayers their father taught them. One prayer is included in this dissertation's fourth chapter. Mamie also quotes from one of her father's letters in which he refers to "[o]ur blessed Christian hopes" (p. 124) in the context of the death of a child, but this does not add to our knowledge of her religious instruction at home.

An article by Mamie appeared in The Cornhill Magazine the same year as her first book was published, and she provides additional information on which one wishes she had elaborated:

> He wrote special prayers for us as soon as we could speak, interested himself in our lessons, would give prizes for industry, for punctuality, for neat and unblotted copy-books. A word of commendation from him was indeed most highly cherished, and would set our hearts glowing with pride and pleasure. (1885, p. 33)

By beginning her list of her home experiences with her father's composition of family prayers, is she suggesting that the next item on the list, namely his being interested in "our [first person plural] lessons," includes some religious instruction beyond his reading the children's New Testament aloud? At the very least, I would suggest that by placing her father's prayers for his children first in the list, she is emphasizing their importance in her life over the other aspects of her education. The additional memoirs of her siblings should now be examined.

Henry Dickens, like Mamie, wrote two books about his father. The Recollections of Sir Henry Dickens, K.C. has already been reviewed and found wanting. The earlier Memories of My Father (1928, 1929) is equally lacking, containing as it does only the same explanation as to why the manuscript of the children's New Testament had not yet been published and references to the letters Dickens wrote his sons as young adults:

> His religious convictions, though he never made a parade of them, were very strong and deep, as appears by the letters he wrote to me and my brothers when we started our careers, as well as in the beautiful words of his will, which are most solemn and impressive in their religious devotion. So strong was this feeling, indeed, that he wrote the simple history of Our Lord's life for us when we were children. The manuscript of this I have in my possession, but my father impressed upon us that, as it was not intended as a literary effort, it was never to be published to the world. (pp. 28-29)

Henry also wrote an article for Harper's Magazine, "A Chat about Charles Dickens" (1914), but the content contains nothing noteworthy here. It is necessary to turn to Dickens' other children, not all of whom, it should be understood, wrote memoirs.

Charles Dickens the Younger wrote "Personal Reminiscences of My Father" for The Christmas Windsor (republished in book form in 1934 and reprinted in book form in 1972) and "Glimpses of Charles Dickens" for The North American Review (1895). The former includes a not revealing description of a Christmas Day dinner, as well as an account of the summer of 1846 when:

> . . . we went to live at Lausanne in Switzerland, and my reminiscences of my father during that summer and autumn are chiefly concerned with walks along the lake-side or among the beautiful hills behind the town, of visits to open air fetes in the heart of the green woods where he was always anxious that I should join and distinguish myself in the boyish sports that were going on . . . (1972, p. 14)

Now, the possibility that the newly written children's New Testament was not read to Dickens' children until they returned home to England presents itself; however, as Dickens' eldest son additionally does not refer anywhere to the family's prayers, I interpret the absence of any reference to the manuscript as a chosen silence on the author's part. Dickens the Younger is equally silent in the latter article, in which he

highlights the Dickens family's stay in Lausanne with his father's writing to Forster that perhaps "'a great deal of money might be made . . . by one's having readings of one's own books'" (1895, p. 677). Of course, there is no reason to expect Charles as a child to have been interested in or even to have known of this letter of his father's in 1846. His knowledge most likely came as an adult from reading Forster's biography. There is, however, as we have already seen in Dickens' correspondence, great reason to expect Charles as a child to have known of his father's children's New Testament in 1846. I am left with the conclusion that Charles Dickens the Younger was unwilling to reveal any information of a personally religious nature.

The only other of Dickens' children to write memoirs was Alfred, although he also granted an interview, which appeared in the November 12, 1910 issue of Great Thoughts from Master Minds under the title "Reminiscences of Dickens: An Interview with Mr. Alfred Tennyson Dickens." Unfortunately, neither the reminiscences nor Raymond Blathwayt's questions covered religious instruction at home. Alfred simply referred to his father as "a splendid companion for boys," and "a splendid companion for children," adding that "he dearly loved his children" and "he always had a very droll mind and a very humorous way of putting things" (p. 105). The following year

he wrote "My Father and His Friends" for Nash's Magazine (1911), without including even a nebulous comment about religious education during his childhood. In order to learn anything further about Dickens' pedagogy, it is necessary to return to the nonfiction of Dickens himself.

In a speech prepared for the fourth anniversary dinner of the Warehousemen and Clerks' Schools in 1857, Dickens spoke at great length on the kinds of schools of which he did not approve. He finally turned his attention to "the sort of school that I do like," which he depicted as follows:

> It is a school established by the members of an industrious and useful order, which supplies the comforts and graces of life at every familiar turning in the road of our existence; it is a school established by them for the Orphan and Necessitous Children of their own brethren and sisterhood; it is a place giving an education worthy of them -- an education by them invented, by them conducted, by them watched over; it is a place of education where, while the beautiful history of the Christian religion is daily taught, and while the life of that Divine Teacher who Himself took little children on His knees is daily studied, no sectarian ill-will nor narrow human dogma is permitted to darken the face of the clear heaven which they disclose. It is a children's school, which is at the same time no less a children's home, a home not to be confided to the care of cold or ignorant strangers, nor, by the nature of its foundation, in the course of ages to pass into hands that have as much natural right to deal with it as with the peaks of the highest mountains or with the depths of the sea, but to be from generation to generation administered by men living in precisely such homes as those poor children have lost; by men always bent upon making that replacement, such a home as their own dear children might find a happy refuge in if they themselves were taken early away. (Hogarth, Dickens,

& Hutton, 1903b, p. 473)

Granted that Dickens' agenda here was to describe in terms pleasing to his audience the very schools for orphans and needy children for which he was soliciting financial support, there are reasons to believe that he approved of just such an education for his own children. To begin, as we have already read in Dickens' correspondence, he regularly read aloud his children's New Testament to his children at home. For their knowledge of the Christian religion, they were not sent away to a school "confided to the care of cold or ignorant strangers."

As for Dickens' insistence that "no sectarian ill-will nor narrow human dogma" be permitted to adulterate the history and teachings found in the New Testament, his words to his own children in his will speak much the same:

> I commit my soul to the mercy of God through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and I exhort my dear children humbly to try to guide themselves by the teaching of the New Testament in its broad spirit, and to put no faith in any man's narrow construction of its letter here or there. (Forster, 1874, p. 517)

Assuming a diary account to be accurate, it is possible to trace Dickens' mistrust of "narrow construction" to the days when the gospels were first

written down. Annie Fields recorded an 1868 conversation with Dickens as follows:

> He thinks Jesus foresaw and guarded as well as he could against the misinterpreting of his teaching, that the four Gospels are all derived from some anterior written Scriptures -- made up, perhaps, with additions and interpolations from the Talmud, of which he expressed great interest and admiration. Among other things which prove how little the Gospels should be taken literally is the fact that broad phylacteries were not in use until some years after Jesus lived, so that the passage in which this reference occurs [Matthew 23:5], at least, must only be taken as conveying the spirit and temper, not the actual form of speech, of our Lord. (De Wolfe Howe, 1922, p. 110)

It is possible to demonstrate that Dickens' rejection of "sectarian ill-will" and "narrow human dogma" transcended any quarrels he may have had with Victorian Anglicanism, Catholicism, or any other contemporary theological "ism." In his travel book Pictures from Italy, in a passage already examined in part in the last chapter, he lamented that throughout history:

> Christian men have dealt with one another . . . perverting our most merciful religion, they have hunted down and tortured, burnt and beheaded, strangled, slaughtered, and oppressed each other; I pictured to myself . . . how [the early martyrs] would have quailed and drooped -- [with] a foreknowledge of the deeds that professing Christians would commit in the Great Name for which they died . . . (1991, pp. 386-387)

It is on the basis of such statements as these as well as the already reviewed comments Dickens wrote to sons

Edward and Henry that we can attribute to the children's New Testament a nondenominational intent in its approach to Christian education.

Dickens' metaphor of the Divine Teacher is found within several of his works of nonfiction, a fact noticed and commented on by William Kent in his 1930 book titled Dickens and Religion. He quotes from Dickens' 1850 essay "The Christmas Tree" a passage about Jesus, for which I have restored in brackets the phrases which he edited out. Jesus is described actively:

> . . . restoring sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, [hearing to the deaf, health to the sick, strength to the lame,] knowledge to the ignorant . . . (Kent, 1930, p. 19; Dickens, "Christmas Stories," 1991, p. 11)

Kent then observes that:

> Dickens's sympathy tends to lead him to add to sacred history. In the quotation given he represents Christ as instructing the ignorant. There is nothing in the gospels to suggest any concern on the part of the founder of Christianity for 'secular education' such as Dickens himself creditably displayed. (1930, p. 19)

Kent also cites from an 1858 speech given in Manchester to the Institutional Association Dickens' attributing to "'[t]he Divine Teacher'" his ability to "'still the raging of the sea'" and "'hush a little child'" (Kent, 1930, p. 126; Hogarth, Dickens, & Hutton, 1903b, p. 501) and posits that "[p]erhaps Dickens, in

his nursery, yearned for the supernatural power suggested by the last act, of which there is no example in the Gospels" (1930, pp. 126-127). What is of more interest in this speech, however, is the context in which Jesus is portrayed as a teacher. Immediately before Kent's excerpt from the speech, Dickens had said,

> Let the child have its fables; let the man or woman into which it changes, always remember those fables tenderly. Let numerous graces and ornaments that cannot be weighed and measured, and that seem at first sight idle enough, continue to have their places about us, be we never so wise. The hardest head may co-exist with the softest heart. The union and just balance of those two is always a blessing to the possessor, and always a blessing to mankind. (Hogarth, Dickens, & Hutton, 1903b, p. 501)

Just after, he added:

> As the utmost results of the wisdom of men can only be at last to help to raise this earth to that condition to which His doctrine, untainted by the blindnesses and passions of men, would have exalted it long ago; so let us always remember that He set us the example of blending the understanding and the imagination, and that, following it ourselves, we tread in His steps, and help our race on to its better and best days. Knowledge, as all followers of it must know, has a very limited power indeed, when it informs the head alone; but when it informs the head and the heart too, it has a power over life and death, the body and the soul, and dominates the universe. (pp. 501-502)

From Dickens' perspective, then, he is not alone in broadly interpreting the teachings of Jesus. Precedent on a far vaster scale has been set by Jesus as the interpreter of the timeless universe through "blending

the understanding and the imagination."

Additional instances of the metaphor of the Divine Teacher are found in Dickens' letters as well as in another speech, given in December 1847 and commemorating the opening of the Glasgow Athenaeum. Dickens told his audience that:

> [i]t seems to me to be a moral, delightful, and happy chance, that this meeting has been held at this genial season of the year, when a new time is, as it were, opening before us, and when we celebrate the birth of that divine and blessed Teacher, who took the highest knowledge into the humblest places, and whose great system comprehended all mankind. (Hogarth, Dickens, & Hutton, 1903b, p. 419)

Once again, Jesus' teachings are depicted as speaking to all people of all ages, or at the very least to all Christian denominations.

With Jesus as teacher having a nondenominational, moral message to "help our race on to its better and best days," with its "power over life and death, the body and the soul" (p. 502), it is reasonable to ask Dickens for his own moral code which transcends, in Dickens' terminology, sectarian ill-will; dogma; religious observances, formalities, and forms of restraint; and man's narrow construction of the Gospels. However, I would first like to stress that in asking for Dickens' code of morality, I do not do so in order to judge the extent to which he practiced it in his marital, business,

or any other categorical aspect of his life. Anyone interested in his shortcomings may consult any number of sources, particularly from "The Dickens Tragedy Revealed" in The New York Times Magazine of May 13, 1934 through Peter Ackroyd's 1990 biography Dickens. Rather, I ask for his code in order to examine it for consistency with his pedagogical views given in his Warehousemen and Clerks' Schools speech, which have been demonstrated to be consistent with his use of his children's New Testament and his understanding of Jesus as teacher. If Dickens can be shown to have held moral beliefs compatible with his pedagogical and theological beliefs, then I can feel confident in offering morally centered lessons based on The Life of Our Lord to a new generation of children, containing as they do what Dickens would have deemed a timeless and nondenominational foundation for moral education. I believe that Dickens would have approved of such an edition in his lifetime, one which, without having his name attached to it to avoid misguided literary criticism, promotes "better and best days."

Dickens stated his moral creed at a banquet in his honor in Hartford during his first tour of America in 1842. That it predates all of his other writings and speeches cited in this chapter, including the composition of the children's New Testament, is helpful in assessing whether his creed can be designated a core belief,

spanning his adult life. He told his hosts and their guests:

> Gentlemen, my moral creed -- which is a very wide and comprehensive one, and includes all sects and parties -- is very easily summed up. I have faith, and I wish to diffuse faith in the existence -- yes, of beautiful things, even in those conditions of society, which are so degenerate, degraded, and forlorn, that, at first sight, it would seem as though they could not be described but by a strange and terrible reversal of the words of Scripture, 'God said, Let there be light, and there was none.' I take it that we are born, and that we hold our sympathies, hopes, and energies, in trust for the many, and not for the few. That we cannot hold in too strong a light of disgust and contempt, before the view of others, all meanness, falsehood, cruelty, and oppression, of every grade and kind. Above all, that nothing is high, because it is in a high place; and that nothing is low, because it is in a low one. This is the lesson taught us in the great book of nature. This is the lesson which may be read, alike in the bright track of the stars, and in the dusty course of the poorest thing that drags its tiny length upon the ground. This is the lesson ever uppermost in the thoughts of that inspired man, who tells us that there are
>
> 'Tongues in the trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in everything [As You Like It, Act II, Scene I].' (Hogarth, Dickens, & Hutton, 1903b, pp. 380-381)

While a reader of the full speech will note that Dickens was leading up to one of his many calls for international copyright laws, and so perhaps was attempting to pave the way for a spirit of fairness in business transactions, I would point out that immediately preceding Dickens' stated moral creed he suggested that his novels attest to his creed's veracity. The reader

of his fiction through 1842 and even later would find it difficult to demonstrate an absence of faith in the beautiful and even harder to find an acceptance of whatever is mean, false, cruel, and oppressive.

Dickens in his creed transcends sectarianism by including what is good in all Christian sects. His morality is active, consisting not only of "sympathies" and "hopes," but also of "energies." It is nondenominational, being "for the many, and not for the few." Good can be found "'in everything.'" I find nothing inconsistent with his pedagogical and theological beliefs, and to make the gospel link from his creed to his pedagogy, I cite again his letter to his son Edward in which, of all <u>good</u> books, he specifies the New Testament "the best book that ever was, or will be, known in the world" (Forster, 1874, p. 446).

I conclude this chapter by returning to Mamie Dickens' comment that her father "wrote special prayers for us as soon as we could speak [and] interested himself in our lessons . . ." (1885, p. 33). While she does not specify the content of those lessons, we can speculate which lessons, were they present, captured Dickens' interest the most. In the earlier mentioned Manchester speech, he listed "all the keys that open all the locks of knowledge," namely, "history, geography, grammar, arithmetic, book-keeping, decimal coinage, mensuration,

mathematics, social economy, the French language . . ." (Hogarth, Dickens, & Hutton, 1903b, p. 497). Yet this is the same speech in which he proclaimed, "[D]o not let us, in the laudable pursuit of the facts that surround us, neglect the fancy and the imagination which equally surround us as a part of the great scheme" (p. 501).

I hear Dickens in dialogue with Mamie, asking her "what if" questions which probe beyond the facts. I hear him exercising his "very droll mind and a very humorous way of putting things" (Blathwayt, 1910, p. 105) with Alfred, viewing the facts imaginatively and so unconventionally, taking nothing for granted. But above all, I hear him sometimes helping his children with their prayers, sometimes reading from his children's New Testament, orally correcting or more likely omitting in the greater scheme of things insignificant factual errors of which he later became cognizant, pausing to ask his children what they would do under modernized circumstances, and answering their questions about Jesus. I never hear him wearying Edward or any of his other children with static religious "facts." I always hear a father whose, to use Henry's words, "affection for us was, indeed, very deep" (1934, p. 36). It is in this spirit, then, that I next offer a Sunday school curriculum based on Dickens' children's New Testament.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHARLES DICKENS FAMILY GOSPEL: TWELVE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS FOR CHRISTIAN MORAL EDUCATION (GRADES 3-6)

Introduction

The Life of Our Lord, on which these Sunday school lessons are based, is a book unlike any other that Charles Dickens ever wrote. It is the only one of his works written for his children alone. He regularly read it aloud to them, yet from 1846 when he wrote the manuscript until his death twenty-four years later when his youngest child Edward was just eighteen, he never gave the text a formal title and he never published it. It remained unpublished until 1934.

Dickens never saw Edward again after the boy left home at age sixteen in 1868 to join a brother in Australia. As a parting gift, Dickens presented him with a New Testament and a letter of fatherly advice. He wrote:

> I put a New Testament among your books for the very same reasons, and with the very same hopes, that made me write an easy account of it for you, when you were a little child. Because it is the best book that ever was, or will be, known in the world; and because it teaches you the best lessons by which any human creature, who tries to be truthful and faithful to duty, can possibly be guided.

The "easy account of it" is what is now known as The Life of Our Lord. During the past sixty years, over forty editions have been published worldwide. What makes this edition unlike any other is its abridgment of the original text into a trimester of twelve weekly curricular lessons for Christian moral education. On the basis of my study of the original manuscript, surviving family references to the manuscript, and scholarship on the importance of Christianity in Dickens' life, I believe that such an abridgment, supplemented with small group activities and enhanced by illustrative excerpts from additional writings by Dickens, offers the best approach to recapture the spirit of Dickens' moral instruction in his own household. Although we cannot know precisely either Dickens' answers to his children's questions or his own questions while he read the manuscript to them, this edition is designed to promise the most effectiveness in terms of delivery of content in an environment comparable to one with parental patience and love.

As the full text of The Life of Our Lord has been designated by the School Library Journal as appropriate for grades 3-6, I have designed the small group activities in consultation with elementary and Sunday School teachers for comparable age appropriateness. All passages selected from the full text are either given in their entirety or are placed alongside similar passages from elsewhere

in the full text. Minor factual errors, which Dickens surely would have corrected orally for his children in the absence of editing his text for publication, I correct without comment. I also generally modernize Dickens' spelling, capitalization, and punctuation from each of his writings included in the lessons.

Overview of Lessons

Charles Dickens simplified parts of the Gospels and the Book of Acts for three significant reasons. First, he wanted his children to comprehend and manifest moral behavior, based on the teachings of Jesus, at an earlier age than the Authorized Version of the New Testament could be expected to promote. Second, he wanted Christian moral education to occur in community, whether between father and daughter or son, or among father and children. Third, he wanted Jesus' teachings to be heard, just as Jesus spoke aloud whenever He taught. Accordingly, it is essential that the principles of simplified vocabulary, learning in community, and oral presentation be adhered to, regardless of what other variations on the lessons the teacher deems most helpful for her children. Any approach which alters these three principles will seriously compromise the teaching method which Charles Dickens found most effective for nearly a quarter of a century as his children grew up.

Each lesson contains three sections: text from The Life of Our Lord, an excerpt from elsewhere in Dickens' fiction or nonfiction which can either anticipate or reinforce the selected text, and a small group activity to promote community. These latter two sections, while not essential to teaching from The Life of Our Lord, help recreate the learning environment of the Dickens

household. Dickens' son Alfred tells us that his father's way with words was not limited to his writings, which is now our only source of supplementary material as commentary. Dickens was "a splendid companion for children, and he always had a very droll mind and a very humorous way of putting things." Daughter Mamie tells us that her father would give prizes for excellent school work and that "a word of commendation from him was indeed most highly cherished, and would set our hearts glowing with pride and pleasure." Small group work, with adult assistance and praise, is another educational approach which, too, can elicit pride and pleasure, while additionally promoting community. Materials needed for the small group work are identified in a chart immediately preceding Lesson 1.

Another advantage to having three sections per lesson is flexibility. For instance, in a home schooling setting, a parent who shares a passage orally with a daughter or son will already experience a close relationship between adult and child, and so may forego a joint project. The text and the companion passage can stand alone. Similarly, in a Sunday school setting, a teacher who shares a passage orally with a small group may not have time to add the excerpt from Dickens' other writings. The text and the group activity will nonetheless suffice.

Additional flexibility results from the broad range of New Testament readings which Dickens selected for his children. Lessons on morality are interspersed with Dickens' introduction to Jesus and his readings on both the importance of prayer and Jesus' miracles. The sequence of lessons, accordingly, is offered as a suggestion. Only the first and last lessons strictly follow Dickens' sequence, containing, as they do, his opening and closing thoughts. Therefore, individual lessons can be omitted without significantly affecting subsequent lessons. Lessons on miracles and promises are offered in pairs, if more emphasis on these topics is desired, inasmuch as Dickens himself focused more extensively on these particular topics. Again, the teacher may easily select only one of the two lessons for inclusion, if appropriate. Ten of the twelve lessons can be expanded by reading and comparing Dickens' Gospel sources in the King James Bible. Source identification is taken from Telling "The Blessed History": Charles Dickens's "The Life of Our Lord" by Madonna Egan.

Each activity is intentionally written in a narrative format. When Dickens joined his children to read and talk about what he once referred to as "the children's New Testament," he did not rely upon a lesson plan with narrow predetermined objectives, designated minutes for time on task, or learning assessment instruments. Rather,

he came to his children with his life experiences, of which his literature played no small part, and his simplified Gospel. It was his desire and expectation that his children develop a consciousness of gentleness, caring, tenderness, and love, and he deemed the New Testament "the one unfailing guide in life" for such a consciousness.

Finally, children should be permitted to interrupt a reading, ask questions, make comments, and respond to the moral teachings of Jesus. Even with Dickens' care in selecting and rewriting New Testament passages, there will still be words and concepts that some children will not understand or about which they will want to know more. Just as the teaching effectiveness of Dickens' manuscript depended on the presence of a father among his children, so does the teaching effectiveness of these twelve lessons depend on the presence of the teacher among her students. The best teacher is also the best listener.

Materials Needed for Activities

Material/Lesson	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Bible			x									
Book of Names	x											
Bulletin Board	x			x	x			x		x		
Christmas Carol			x									
Construction Paper				x	x			x				
Dickens Biography			x									
Dictionary	x											
Envelopes												x
Flash Cards	x	x				x					x	
Glue										x		
Lot Box			x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	
Marker Board					x				x			
Markers	x			x	x			x	x		x	
Newspapers										x		
Paper												x
Pencils		x										x
Poster										x		
Rulers								x				
Scissors										x		
Straws			x									
Thumbtacks	x			x	x			x		x		

Lesson 1: The Importance of Knowing Jesus

Activity

Give the children one flash card each and ask them to share markers as they print their names and decorate their cards. The children can then display their names on a bulletin board. Ask them if they know why they were given their particular names. Allow everyone an opportunity to respond. Children who do not know each other well or at all will begin to learn about each other's families. Continue by asking if the children know what their names mean. Consult a book of names and their meanings, and expect additional comments in support of or refuting the book's explanations. If no one is named "Charles," request predictions of this name's meaning and then look up the name, in preparation for introducing Charles Dickens.

Ask for predictions of the meaning of the name "Scrooge." Expect some accurate answers, for the characters and story of Dickens' Christmas Carol have become intermingled with the custom of celebrating Christmas. Encourage the children to tell what they know about the story. Memories will be based on different versions, from live performances to movies to family readings. Show that the name "Scrooge" is not in the

book of names, but that it is found in a large dictionary. Discuss what might account for the name's appearance in the dictionary, and identify Charles Dickens as author of both Christmas Carol and The Life of Our Lord. Let the children tell how they think Dickens or anyone else would begin a book about Jesus and His teachings.

The Life of Our Lord Opening paragraph:

My dear children, 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 anyway ill or miserable, as he was. And as he is now in Heaven, where we hope to go, and all to meet each other after we are dead, and there be happy always together, you never can think what a good place Heaven is, without knowing who he was and what he did.

(Ask the children why Charles Dickens would want his children to know about Jesus and Heaven.)

Supplementary Text from a letter written by Dickens to his youngest son Edward on the occasion of his leaving home for Australia:

I put a New Testament among your books, for the very same reasons, and with the very same hopes that made me write an easy account of it for you, when you were a little child; because it is the best book that ever was or will be known in the world, and because it teaches you the best lessons by which any human creature who tries to be truthful and faithful to duty can possibly be guided. As your brothers have gone away, one by one, I have written to each such words as I am now writing to you, and have entreated them all to guide themselves by this book, putting aside the interpretations and inventions of man.

You will remember that you have never at home been harassed about religious observances or mere formalities. I have always been anxious not to weary my children with such things before they are old enough to form opinions respecting them. You will therefore understand the better that I now most solemnly impress upon you the truth and beauty of the Christian religion, as it came from Christ himself, and the impossibility of your going far wrong if you humbly but heartily respect it.

Only one thing more on this head. The more we are in earnest as to feeling it, the less we are disposed to hold forth about it. Never abandon the wholesome practice of saying your own private prayers night and morning. I have never abandoned it myself, and I know

the comfort of it.

I hope you will always be able to say in afterlife, that you had a kind father. You cannot show your affection for him so well, or make him so happy, as by doing your duty.

Your affectionate Father.

(Charles Dickens uses the word "duty" twice in this letter, once in the context of duty to God and once in the context of duty to a parent. Discuss with the children what the word "duty" means, and explore in what ways its meaning is similar when applied toward God and a parent. Then consider how its meaning is unique when applied toward God as a parent of us all.)

Lesson 2: The Importance of Prayer

Activity

Distribute flash cards and pencils, and ask each child to think of a question to ask about Charles Dickens and to print it on the card. Make certain that the children put their names on the cards as well. Collect the cards for use during Lesson 3 and promise to find answers to their questions, but for now provide some general background information about Dickens. Mention that he lived and worked in London in the 1800s, that he was the most popular writer in his day, and that he is one of the few writers who still has all of his books available for sale today. Tell the children that Dickens experienced poverty as a child and that his father was put in prison for not being able to pay his bills. No matter how famous and wealthy Dickens ever became, he never forgot how important it is for a child to have a good home, good health, and a good education. Reveal that Dickens had ten children of his own, to whom he often read and talked about The Life of Our Lord, from which these Sunday school lessons are taken.

Of course, when telling anyone a biographical sketch, there is a tendency for others to find similarities in their own lives or in the lives of their family members.

Without requesting any specific information from the children, allow them to share whatever autobiographical or biographical information they desire.

The Life of Our Lord [Gospel text: Luke 2:41-47, 51, 3:1]

Then Joseph and Mary went to Jerusalem to attend a religious feast which used to be held in those days in the Temple of Jerusalem, which was a great church or cathedral, and they took Jesus Christ with them. And when the feast was over, they traveled away from Jerusalem, back towards their own home in Nazareth, with a great many of their friends and neighbors. For people used, then, to travel a great many together for fear of robbers, the roads not being so safe and well guarded as they are now, and traveling being much more difficult altogether than it now is.

They traveled on, for a whole day, and never knew that Jesus Christ was not with them, for the company being so large, they thought he was somewhere among the people, though they did not see him. But finding that he was not there and fearing that he was lost, they turned back to Jerusalem in great anxiety to look for him. They found him sitting in the Temple, talking about the goodness of God and how we should all pray to Him, with

some learned men who were called doctors. They were not what you understand by the word "doctors" now; they did not attend sick people. They were scholars and clever men. And Jesus Christ showed such knowledge in what he said to them and in the questions he asked them, that they were all astonished.

He went with Joseph and Mary home to Nazareth, when they had found him, and lived there until he was thirty or thirty-five years old.

(Ask the children what "prayer" means. Discuss why Jesus says in this excerpt that we should all pray to God.)

Supplementary Text

Charles Dickens wrote the following prayer for his children:

Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ taught to his disciples and to us, and what we should remember every day of our lives, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our mind, and with all our soul, and with all our strength; to love our neighbors as ourselves, to do unto other people as we would have them do unto us, and to be charitable and gentle to all.

There is no other commandment, our Lord Jesus Christ

said, greater than these.

(Consider why Charles Dickens would write a prayer for his own children to recite. Review Dickens' words to his son Edward from the supplementary text in Lesson 1: "Never abandon the wholesome practice of saying your own private prayers night and morning. I have never abandoned it myself, and I know the comfort of it." Discuss why Dickens says that one should pray to God. Compare the children's answers to why Jesus says one should pray to God. What types of prayers can be prayed? When is each type of prayer most appropriate?)

Lesson 3: Promises (Part 1)

Activity

Hold straws cut to different lengths in your hand so that their lengths cannot be determined before each child takes one. Announce that whoever draws the shortest straw will receive a copy of Christmas Carol. After the straws have been selected and the book has been awarded, ask what makes drawing straws so fair. Explain that the practice can be found in biblical times and that it was called drawing lots. For examples read aloud from Joshua 18:5-6, Nehemiah 11:1, and Acts 1:24-26. Introduce the Lot Box, which should contain the questions about Charles Dickens' life from Lesson 2. Draw the cards out and answer the questions, based on a biography of Dickens with an index. If a question was already answered in Lesson 2, review the answer.

Ask the children how they would have felt if you had not kept your promise to find the answers to their questions. If their responses are tolerant and understanding, ask what their feelings would be if no one ever kept any promises made to them. If their responses are critical, ask if it would have mattered if you could have offered a "good excuse" for not keeping your promise.

The Life of Our Lord [Gospel text: Matthew 3:1-6, 13-17, 4: 1-11; Mark 1:2-6, 9-13; Luke 3:1-6, 21-22, 4:1-13]

At that time there was a very good man indeed, named John, who was the son of a woman named Elizabeth, the cousin of Mary. And people being wicked, and violent, and killing each other, and not minding their duty towards God, John (to teach them better) went about the country, preaching to them and entreating them to be better men and women. And because he loved them more than himself and didn't mind himself when he was doing them good, he was poorly dressed in the skin of a camel and ate little but some insects called locusts, which he found as he traveled, and wild honey, which the bees left in the hollow trees. 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.

There was a river, not very far from Jerusalem, called the River Jordan, and in this water John baptized those people who would come to him and promise to be better. A great many people went to him in crowds. Jesus Christ went, too. But when John saw him, John said, "Why should I baptize you, who are so much better that I!" Jesus Christ made answer, "Suffer it to be

so now." So John baptized him. And when he was baptized, the sky opened, and a beautiful bird like a dove came flying down, and the voice of God, speaking up in Heaven, was heard to say, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased!"

Jesus Christ then went into a wild and lonely country called the Wilderness and stayed there forty days and forty nights, praying that he might be of use to men and women and teach them to be better, so that after their deaths, they might be happy in Heaven.

(Review and discuss the two promises made in the above excerpt from The Life of Our Lord: 1) Dickens promised to take his children to see a camel if they asked, and 2) people who came to John for baptism promised to lead better lives. Have the children consider which promise was more important to keep and why.)

Supplementary Text

Charles Dickens wrote to the Countess of Blessington:

I remember my promise, as in cheerful duty bound, and with Heaven's grace will redeem it. At this moment, I have not the faintest idea how, but I am going into Scotland on the nineteenth to see Jeffrey, and while

I am away (I shall return, please God, in about three weeks) will look out for some accident, incident, or subject for small description, to send you when I come home. You will take the will for the deed, I know.

(Have the children consider if meaning to keep a promise is the same as keeping it.)

Charles Dickens wrote to Douglas Jerrold:

As half a loaf is better than no bread, so I hope that half a sheet of paper may be better than none at all, coming from one who is anxious to live in your memory and friendship. I should have redeemed the pledge I gave you in this regard long since, but occupation at one time, and absence from pen and ink at another, have prevented me.

(Have the children consider if keeping a promise ["pledge"] late is better than not keeping it at all.)

Lesson 4: Promises (Part 2)

Activity

Distribute construction paper and markers. Each child is to print his or her name and then, for each letter in the name, spell a good promise to make and keep. Let the children add this variation on their names to the bulletin board. Draw the children's names from the Lot Box, and allow each child to explain the importance of three of the promises displayed by someone else. Discuss when it would be wrong to keep a promise, such as when doing so would harm someone else.

Review John's baptism of Jesus from the excerpt from The Life of Our Lord in Lesson 3. Ask if anyone knows what happened to John later.

The Life of Our Lord [Gospel text: Matthew 14:1-13; Mark 6:14-32]

Now Herod, the son of that cruel king who murdered the Innocents, reigning over the people there, and hearing that Jesus Christ was doing these wonders, and was giving sight to the blind and causing the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak and the lame to walk, and that he was followed by multitudes and multitudes of people -- Herod,

hearing this, said, "This man is a companion and friend of John the Baptist." John was the good man, you recollect, who wore a garment made of camel's hair and ate wild honey. Herod had taken him prisoner, because he taught and preached to the people, and had him then locked up in the prisons of his palace.

While Herod was in this angry humor with John, his birthday came, and his niece, the daughter of Herodias, who was a fine dancer, danced before him to please him. She pleased him so much that he swore an oath he would give her whatever she would ask him for. "Then," said she, "Uncle, give me the head of John the Baptist in a charger." For she hated John and was a wicked, cruel woman.

The King was sorry, for though he had John prisoner, he did not wish to kill him; but having sworn that he would give her what she asked for, he sent some soldiers down into the prison with directions to cut off the head of John the Baptist and give it to Herodias' daughter. This they did and took it to her, as she had said, in a charger, which was a kind of dish. When Jesus Christ heard from the apostles of this cruel deed, he left that city and went with them (after they had privately buried John's body in the night) to another place.

(Discuss with the children what Herod's response concerning his promise ["oath"] should have been. Praise the children for making good promises which will help, not hurt others, and ask them each to try to keep one in particular before the meeting for Lesson 5. Review the good which Jesus did in the above excerpt from The Life of Our Lord.)

Supplementary Text

Charles Dickens wrote to Baroness Burdett-Coutts:

You may possibly have seen a preface I wrote, before leaving England, to a little book by a working man; and may have learned from the newspapers that he is dead: leaving a destitute wife and six children, of whom one is a cripple. I have addressed a letter to the governors of the Orphan Working School in behalf of the eldest boy: and they tell me he has a good chance of being elected into that institution in April next. It has occurred to me that at some time or other you might have an opportunity of presenting one of the girls to some other school or charity, and as I know full well that in such an event you would rather thank than blame me for making a real and strong case known to you, I send you the childrens' names and ages.

Amelia Overs 11 years old

John Richard 9

Harriett 7

Geraldine 6

Editha 4

John 4 months

They live, at present, at 55 Vauxhall Street, Lambeth.

(Ask the children what good Charles Dickens tried to do for the family identified in this letter. What specific needs would the mother and her children share? Consider each family member in turn. What unique need might a person of each age have? How could persons more fortunate help a family like this today?)

Lesson 5: Charity

Activity

Use the Lot Box to group the children in pairs. Distribute construction paper and markers and ask the partners together to list five things they would like to receive as birthday gifts. After the list is prepared, ask for a new list which contains five things anyone who is very poor would need right now. When everyone has finished, display all the lists on the bulletin board. Then have the children tell about the content of their first lists. Continue by reading aloud from the second lists and discussing why the items on the two lists differ so much. List on a marker board the children's suggestions for how they could help someone who is poor obtain the items on the second lists.

The Life of Our Lord [Gospel text: Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:14-19, 12:41-44; Luke 6:13-16, 21:1-4]

That there might be some good men to go about with him, teaching the people, Jesus Christ chose twelve poor men to be his companions. These twelve are called the apostles or disciples, and he chose them from among poor men in order that the poor might know always after that,

in all years to come, that Heaven was made for them as well as for the rich, and that God makes no difference between those who wear good clothes and those who go barefoot and in rags. The most miserable, the most ugly, deformed, wretched creatures that live will be bright angels in Heaven if they are good here on earth. Never forget this, when you are grown up. 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 them 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. And always pity them yourselves and think as well of them as you can. . . .

As he was teaching them thus, he sat near the Public Treasury, where people as they passed along the street were accustomed to drop money into a box for the poor, and many rich persons, passing while Jesus sat there, had put in a great deal of money. At last there came a poor widow who dropped in two mites, each half a farthing in value, and then went quietly away. Jesus, seeing her do this as he rose to leave the place, called his disciples about him and said to them that that poor

widow had been more truly charitable than all the rest who had given money that day, for the others were rich and would never miss what they had given, but she was very poor and had given those two mites which might have bought her bread to eat.

Let us never forget what the poor widow did, when we think we are charitable.

(Ask the children why Charles Dickens told his children never to forget what the poor widow did. Point out that in addition to giving much, the widow gave quietly and privately. Ask why she did not make certain that everyone present knew about her contribution.)

Supplementary Text from Charles Dickens' autobiographical fragment:

It is wonderful to me how I could have been so easily cast away at such an age. It is wonderful to me, that even after my descent into the poor little drudge I had been since we came to London, no one had compassion enough on me -- a child of singular abilities, quick, eager, delicate, and soon hurt, bodily or mentally -- to suggest that something might have been spared, as certainly it might have been, to place me at any common school.

. . .

I was so young and childish, and so little qualified -- how could I be otherwise? -- to undertake the whole charge of my own existence, that, in going to Hungerfordstairs of a morning, I could not resist the stale pastry put out at half-price on trays at the confectioners' doors in Tottenham-court-road; and I often spent in that, the money I should have kept for my dinner. Then I went without my dinner, or bought a roll, or a slice of pudding. . . .

I know I do not exaggerate, unconsciously and unintentionally, the scantiness of my resources and the difficulties of my life. I know that if a shilling or so were given me by any one, I spent it in a dinner or a tea. I know that I worked, from morning to night, with common men and boys, a shabby child. I know that I tried, but ineffectually, not to anticipate my money, and to make it last the week through; by putting it away in a drawer I had in the counting-house, wrapped into six little parcels, each parcel containing the same amount, and labelled with a different day. I know that I have lounged about the streets, insufficiently and unsatisfactorily fed. I know that, but for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond.

(Ask the children how Charles Dickens spent his money when he was almost as poor as the poor widow. Have the children consider if spending money on food is acceptable to God. What if the food is a stale "treat"? Even though Dickens does not tell us that he gave any of his money to persons even less fortunate than he, how do we know in the last sentence that he believed and trusted in God?)

Lesson 6: Miracles (Part 1)

Activity

Place in the Lot Box flash cards with one each of the following miracles printed on them:

1. Four men fish all night and catch nothing. They try one last time, and all the fish in the sea come to them to be caught.

2. A man has a skin disease which doctors cannot cure. The disease suddenly goes away.

3. A man's body shakes so much that he cannot walk. Doctors cannot cure him. Suddenly, he walks away, well.

4. A servant is so ill that he cannot make a trip to a doctor's office. The servant's master believes that no doctor needs to visit his servant. The servant becomes well at once.

5. A little girl dies. Someone says that she is only "asleep" and that she will "wake up." She does indeed wake up, alive.

6. A storm is about to sink a boat with men on board. Immediately the storm ends and no one is hurt.

7. A man loses control of his mind and throws himself on sharp stones. Doctors are too afraid to go near him to help him. He sees a herd of pigs and instantly regains

control of his mind.

8. For thirty-eight years, a man has been too ill to be able to move himself very far. He can be cured only by touching special water, but when he is cured, he has not yet touched the special water.

9. Over five thousand women, children, and men are hungry. They share and eat five loaves of bread and two fish, and everyone becomes full.

10. Water separates a man from a boat. He walks on top of the water to reach the boat.

Each child takes one of these cards from the Lot Box and is given time to decide what he or she would need in order to make what the card says come true. Allow the children to show each other their cards and obtain suggestions, but ask that no more than two persons speak to each other at a time, in order to save group sharing until the end of the activity.

Draw the children's names from the Lot Box to determine the order in which each child reads his or her card aloud and offers a solution. If a child has no solution, ask for suggestions from others. After everyone has reported, discuss what made finding solutions so difficult.

The Life of Our Lord [Gospel text: Matthew 4:24-25; Luke 4:14; John 2:1-11]

When [Jesus] came out of the Wilderness, he began to cure sick people by only laying his hand upon them, for God had given him power to heal the sick, and to give sight to the blind, and to do many wonderful and solemn things of which I shall tell you more by and by and which are called the miracles of Christ. I wish you would remember that word, because I shall use it again, and I should like you to know that it means something which is very wonderful and which could not be done without God's leave and assistance.

The first miracle which Jesus Christ did was at a place called Cana, where he went to a marriage feast with Mary, his mother. There was no wine, and Mary told him so. There were only six stone water pots filled with water. But Jesus turned this water into wine by only lifting up his hand, and all who were there drank of it.

For God had given Jesus Christ the power to do such wonders, and he did them that people might know he was not a common man and might believe what he taught them, and also believe that God had sent him. And many people, hearing this and hearing that he cured the sick, did begin to believe in him, and great crowds followed him

in the streets and on the roads, wherever he went.

(Have the children consider from this excerpt from The Life of Our Lord what is always needed in order for a miracle to occur, namely God's involvement. Next, ask them how Jesus would have felt both before and after curing a sick person.)

Supplementary Text

Charles Dickens wrote in Christmas Carol:

"There's father coming," cried the two young Cratchits, who were everywhere at once. "Hide, Martha, hide!"

So Martha hid herself, and in came little Bob, the father, with at least three feet of comforter exclusive of the fringe, hanging down before him; and his threadbare clothes darned up and brushed, to look seasonable; and Tiny Tim upon his shoulder. Alas for Tiny Tim, he bore a little crutch, and had his limbs supported by an iron frame!

"Why, where's our Martha?" cried Bob Cratchit, looking round.

"Not coming," said Mrs. Cratchit.

"Not coming!" said Bob, with a sudden declension in his high spirits; for he had been Tim's blood horse all the way from church, and had come home rampant. "Not coming upon Christmas Day!"

Martha didn't like to see him disappointed, if it were only in joke; so she came out prematurely from behind the closet door, and ran into his arms, while the two young Cratchits hustled Tiny Tim, and bore him off into the wash-house, that he might hear the pudding singing in the copper.

"And how did little Tim behave?" asked Mrs. Cratchit, when she had rallied Bob on his credulity, and Bob had hugged his daughter to his heart's content.

"As good as gold," said Bob, "and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see."

(Ask the children if they can help others without miracles. Review with them their promises on the bulletin board from Lesson 4 and their suggestions for helping others from Lesson 5.)

Lesson 7: Miracles (Part 2)

Activity

Review the miracles printed on the flash cards from Lesson 6. Draw as many names from the Lot Box as desired to find out from the children which particular miracles they would like to hear how Jesus made come true. The full text for each miracle is found below.

The Life of Our Lord

1. [Gospel text: Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11]

The first four of these were poor fishermen, who were sitting in their boats by the seaside, mending their nets, when Christ passed by. He stopped and went into Simon Peter's boat and asked him if he had caught many fish. Peter said no; though they had worked all night with their nets, they had caught nothing. Christ said, "Let down the net again." They did so, and it was immediately so full of fish that it required the strength of many men (who came and helped them) to lift it out of the water, and even then it was very hard to do. This was another of the miracles of Jesus Christ.

2. [Gospel text: Matthew 8:1-3; Mark 1:40-42; Luke 5:12-13]

When [Jesus] was come down from the mountain, there came to him a man with a dreadful disease called the leprosy. It was common in those times, and those who were ill with it were called lepers. This leper fell at the feet of Jesus Christ and said, "Lord! If thou wilt, thou canst make me well!" Jesus, always full of compassion, stretched out his hand and said, "I will! Be thou well!" And his disease went away, immediately, and he was cured.

3. [Gospel text: Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:15, 17-20, 24-25]

Being followed wherever he went by great crowds of people, Jesus went with his disciples into a house to rest. While he was sitting inside, some men brought upon a bed a man who was very ill of what is called the palsy, so that he trembled all over from head to foot and could neither stand nor move. But the crowd being all about the door and windows, and they not being able to get near Jesus Christ, these men climbed up to the roof of the house, which was a low one, and through the tiling at the top let down the bed with the sick man

upon it, into the room where Jesus sat. When he saw him, Jesus, full of pity, said, "Arise! Take up thy bed, and go to thine own home!" And the man rose up and went away quite well, blessing him and thanking God.

4. [Gospel text: Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10]

There was a Centurion, too, or officer over the soldiers, who came to him and said, "Lord! My servant lies at home in my house, very ill." Jesus Christ made answer, "I will come and cure him." But the Centurion said, "Lord! I am not worthy that thou shouldst come to my house. Say the word only, and I know he will be cured." Then Jesus Christ, glad that the Centurion believed in him so truly, said, "Be it so!" And the servant became well, from that moment.

5. [Gospel text: Matthew 9:18-19, 23-25; Mark 5:22-24, 35-43; Luke 8:41-42, 49-56]

But of all the people who came to [Jesus], none was so full of grief and distress as one man who was a ruler or magistrate over many people, and he wrung his hands and cried and said, "Oh, Lord, my daughter, my beautiful, good, innocent, little girl is dead. Oh, come to her, come to her, and lay thy blessed hand upon her, and I know she will revive and come to life again

and make me and her mother happy. Oh, Lord, we love her so, we love her so! And she is dead!"

Jesus Christ went out with him, and so did his disciples, and went to his house, where the friends and neighbors were crying in the room where the poor dead little girl lay and where there was soft music playing, as there used to be in those days when people died. Jesus Christ, looking on her sorrowfully, said, to comfort her poor parents, "She is not dead. She is asleep." Then he commanded the room to be cleared of the people that were in it, and going to the dead child, took her by the hand, and she rose up, quite well, as if she had only been asleep. Oh, what a sight it must have been to see her parents clasp her in their arms and kiss her and thank God and Jesus Christ His son, for such great mercy!

6. [Gospel text: Matthew 8:23-26; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25]

By this time the crowd was so very great that Jesus Christ went down to the waterside, to go in a boat to a more retired place. And in the boat he fell asleep, while his disciples were sitting on the deck. While he was still sleeping, a violent storm arose, so that the waves washed over the boat, and the howling wind

so rocked and shook it, that they thought it would sink. In their fright the disciples awoke our Savior and said, "Lord! Save us, or we are lost!" He stood up and, raising his arm, said to the rolling sea and to the whistling wind, "Peace! Be still!" And immediately it was calm and pleasant weather, and the boat went safely on through the smooth waters.

7. [Gospel text: Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-13; Luke 8:26-33]

When they came to the other side of the waters, they had to pass a wild and lonely burying ground that was outside the city to which they were going. All burying grounds were outside cities in those times. In this place there was a dreadful madman who lived among the tombs and howled all day and night, so that it made travelers afraid, to hear him. They had tried to chain him, but he broke his chains, he was so strong, and he would throw himself on the sharp stones and cut himself in the most dreadful manner, crying and howling all the while. When this wretched man saw Jesus Christ a long way off, he cried out, "It is the son of God! Oh, son of God, do not torment me!" Jesus, coming near him, perceived that he was torn by an evil spirit and cast the madness out of him and into a herd of swine (or pigs)

who were feeding close by and who directly ran headlong down a steep place leading to the sea and were dashed to pieces.

8. [Gospel text: John 5:1-9,16,18]

There was, near the sheep market in that place, a pool or pond, called Bethesda, having five gates to it, and at the time of the year when that feast took place great numbers of sick people and cripples went to this pool to bathe in it, believing that an angel came and stirred the water, and that whoever went in first after the angel had done so was cured of any illness he or she had, whatever it might be. Among those poor persons was one man who had been ill thirty-eight years, and he told Jesus Christ (who took pity on him when he saw him lying on his bed alone, with no one to help him) that he never could be dipped in the pool, because he was so weak and ill that he could not move to get there. Our Savior said to him, "Take up thy bed and go away." And he went away, quite well.

9. [Gospel text: Matthew 14:14-21; Mark 6:32-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14]

Jesus, going with his disciples over a sea called the Sea of Tiberias and sitting with them on a hillside, saw great numbers of these poor people waiting below and said to the apostle Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that they may eat and be refreshed after their long journey?" Philip answered, "Lord, two hundred pennyworth of bread would not be enough for so many people, and we have none." "We have only," said another apostle -- Andrew, Simon Peter's brother -- "five small barley loaves, and two little fish, belonging to a lad who is among us. What are they, among so many!" Jesus Christ said, "Let them all sit down!" They did, there being a great deal of grass in that place. When they were all seated, Jesus took the bread and looked up to Heaven and blessed it, and broke it, and handed it in pieces to the apostles, who handed it to the people. And of those five little loaves and two fish, five thousand men, besides women and children, ate and had enough, and when they were all satisfied, there were gathered up twelve baskets full of what was left. This was another of the miracles of Jesus Christ.

10. [Gospel text: Matthew 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-52; John 6:15-21]

Our Savior then sent his disciples away in a boat across the water and said he would follow them presently, when he had dismissed the people. The people being gone, he remained by himself to pray, so that the night came on, and the disciples were still rowing on the water in their boat, wondering when Christ would come. Late in the night, when the wind was against them and the waves were running high, they saw him coming walking towards them on the water, as if it were dry land. When they saw this, they were terrified and cried out, but Jesus said, "It is I. Be not afraid!" Peter, taking courage, said, "Lord, if it be thou, tell me to come to thee upon the water." Jesus Christ said, "Come!" Peter then walked towards him, but seeing the angry waves and hearing the wind roar, he was frightened and began to sink, and would have done so but that Jesus took him by the hand and led him into the boat. Then, in a moment, the wind went down, and the disciples said to one another, "It is true! He is the son of God!"

(Review God's essential role in any miracle. Review the ability we have to help others by means other than miracles.)

Supplementary Text

Charles Dickens wrote in "The Seven Poor Travellers":

In time, the distant river with the ships came full in view, and with it pictures of the poor fishermen, mending their nets, who arose and followed him, -- of the teaching of the people from a ship pushed off a little way from shore, by reason of the multitude, -- of a majestic figure walking on the water, in the loneliness of night. My very shadow on the ground was eloquent of Christmas; for did not the people lay their sick where the mere shadows of the men who had heard and seen him might fall as they passed along?

(For Charles Dickens, a river, ships, and even shadows reminded him of Jesus. Discuss with the children what in our lives today can remind us of Jesus. How can thinking about Jesus help us be better persons and make better decisions about how we treat each other in today's world?)

Lesson 8: Forgiveness

Activity

Distribute construction paper, markers, and rulers. Direct each child to divide his or her paper into two equal portions with a straight line. On one half the child is to draw a picture of how he or she feels after accidentally doing wrong to someone else. On the other half should be a picture of how he or she feels when the wronged person does not get angry or upset. Let the children add their pictures to the bulletin board. Then draw names from the Lot Box to determine the order of each child's oral explanation of his or her picture. Some of the children will probably interpret their pictures in terms of actual experiences, whether or not their wrong was ever forgiven.

The Life of Our Lord [Gospel text: Matthew 5:1-2, 6:9-13, 18:21-35; Luke 7:36-50, 11:2-4]

As great crowds of people followed [Jesus] and wished to be taught, he went up into a mountain and there preached to them and gave them, from his own lips, the words of that prayer beginning, "Our Father which art in Heaven," that you say every night. It is called the

Lord's Prayer, because it was first said by Jesus Christ and because he commanded his disciples to pray in those words. . . .

One of the Pharisees begged our Savior to go into his house and eat with him. And while our Savior sat eating at the table, there crept into the room a woman of that city who had led a bad and sinful life, and was ashamed that the Son of God should see her; and yet she trusted so much to his goodness and his compassion for all who, having done wrong, were truly sorry for it in their hearts, that, by little and little, she went behind the seat on which he sat, and dropped down at his feet, and wetted them with her sorrowful tears. Then she kissed them and dried them on her long hair, and rubbed them with some sweet smelling ointment she had brought with her in a box. Her name was Mary, and she was from Bethany.

When the Pharisee saw that Jesus permitted this woman to touch him, he said within himself that Jesus did not know how wicked she had been. But Jesus Christ, who knew his thoughts, said to him, "Simon" -- for that was his name -- "if a man had debtors, one of whom owed him five hundred pence, and one of whom owed him only fifty pence, and he forgave them both their debts, which of those two debtors do you think would love him most?" Simon answered, "I suppose that one whom he forgave most."

Jesus told him he was right and said, "As God forgives this woman so much sin, she will love Him, I hope, the more." And he said to her, "God forgives you!" The company who were present wondered that Jesus Christ had power to forgive sins, but God had given it to him. And the woman, thanking him for all his mercy, went away.

We learn from this that we must always forgive those who have done us any harm, when they come to us and say they are truly sorry for it. Even if they do not come and say so, we must still forgive them and never hate them or be unkind to them, if we would hope that God will forgive us. . . .

Peter asked him, "Lord, how often shall I forgive anyone who offends me? Seven times?" Our Savior answered, "Seventy times seven times, and more than that. For how can you hope that God will forgive you, when you do wrong, unless you forgive all other people!"

And he told his disciples this story. He said, "There was once a servant who owed his master a great deal of money and could not pay it, at which the master, being very angry, was going to have this servant sold for a slave. But the servant, kneeling down and begging his master's pardon with great sorrow, the master forgave him. Now this same servant had a fellow servant who owed him a hundred pence, and instead of being kind and forgiving to this poor man, as his master had been to

him, he put him in prison for the debt. His master, hearing of it, went to him and said, 'Oh, wicked servant, I forgave you. Why did you not forgive your fellow servant!' And because he had not done so, his master turned him away with great misery. So," said our Savior, "how can you expect God to forgive you, if you do not forgive others!" This is the meaning of that part of the Lord's Prayer, where we say, "Forgive us our trespasses" -- that word means faults -- "as we forgive them that trespass against us."

(Ask for a volunteer to recite the Lord's Prayer, and then discuss the meaning of each part of the prayer.)

Supplementary Text

Charles Dickens wrote in Bleak House:

"Well, Jo! What is the matter? Don't be frightened."

"I thought," says Jo, who has started, and is looking round, "I thought I wos in Tom-all-Alone's agin. Ain't there nobody here but you, Mr. Woodcot?"

"Nobody."

"And I ain't took back to Tom-all-Alone's. Am I, sir?"

"No." Jo closes his eyes, muttering, "I'm wery thankful."

After watching him closely a little while, Allan puts his mouth very near his ear, and says to him in a low, distinct voice:

"Jo! Did you ever know a prayer?"

"Never knowd nothink, sir."

"Not so much as one short prayer?"

"No, sir, Nothink at all. Mr. Chadbands he wos a-prayin wunst at Mr. Sangsby's and I heerd him, but he sounded as if he wos a-speakin to hisself, and not to me. He prayed a lot, but I couldn't make out nothink on it. Different times, there was other genlmen come down Tom-all-Alone's a-prayin, but they mostly sed as the t'other wuns prayed wrong, and all mostly sounded to be a-talkin to theirselves, or a-passin blame on the t'others, and not a-talkin to us. We never knowd nothink. I never knowd what it wos all about."

It takes him a long time to say this; and few but an experienced and attentive listener could hear, or, hearing, understand him. After a short relapse into sleep or stupor, he makes, of a sudden, a strong effort to get out of bed.

"Stay, Jo! What now?"

"It's time for me to go to that there berryin ground, sir," he returns with a wild look.

"Lie down, and tell me. What burying ground, Jo?"

"Where they laid him as wos wery good to me, wery good to me indeed, he wos. It's time fur me to go down to that there berryin ground, sir, and ask to be put along with him. I wants to go there and be berried. He used fur to say to me, 'I am as poor as you to-day, Jo,' he ses. I wants to tell him that I am as poor as him now, and have come there to be laid along with him."

"By-and-by, Jo. By-and-by."

"Ah! P'raps they wouldn't do it if I wos to go myself. But will you promise to have me took there, sir, and laid along with him?"

"I will, indeed."

"Thank'ee, sir. Thank'ee, sir. They'll have to get the key of the gate afore they can take me in, for it's allus locked. And there's a step there, as I used fur to clean with my broom. -- It's turned wery dark, sir. Is there any light a-comin?"

"It is coming fast, Jo."

Fast. The cart is shaken all to pieces, and the rugged road is very near its end.

"Jo, my poor fellow!"

"I hear you, sir, in the dark, but I'm a-gropin -- a-gropin -- let me catch hold of your hand."

"Jo, can you say what I say?"

"I'll say anythink as you say, sir, fur I knows it's good."

"OUR FATHER."

"Our Father! -- yes, that's wery good, sir."

"WHICH ART IN HEAVEN."

"Art in Heaven -- is the light a-comin, sir?"

"It is close at hand. HALLOWED BE THY NAME!"

"Hallowed be -- thy --"

The light is come upon the dark benighted way. Dead!

Dead, your Majesty. Dead, my lords and gentlemen. Dead, Right Reverends and Wrong Reverends of every order. Dead, men and women, born with Heavenly compassion in your hearts. And dying thus around us every day.

(Ask the children why Mr. Woodcourt (pronounced "Woodcot" by Jo) thought it was so important for Jo to pray to God before he died. Why did he select the Lord's Prayer for Jo to repeat? Why would Charles Dickens want to make us think about the Lord's Prayer in one of his fictional books?)

Lesson 9: Leaving Judgment to God

Activity

Review with the children the excerpt from The Life of Our Lord in Lesson 8 concerning the Pharisee and Mary of Bethany. Explain that Pharisees thought that keeping rules was important to please God. Ask the children to name some rules that adults think are important for children to keep. Record the list on a marker board. Next, have them add to the list rules which teachers think are important for children to keep. Finally, have them add rules which just about everyone thinks are important for everyone to keep.

Let the children discuss and decide which of the rules on the marker board are also God's rules, as opposed to rules which people have created on their own. Circle God's rules with a different color marker to make them stand out, and then consider what makes God's rules different from people's rules.

The Life of Our Lord [Gospel text: John 8:1-11]

One morning, [Jesus] was sitting in a place called the Mount of Olives, teaching the people who were all clustered round him, listening and learning attentively,

when a great noise was heard, and a crowd of Pharisees and some other people like them, called Scribes, came running in with great cries and shouts, dragging among them a woman who had done wrong, and they all cried out together, "Master! Look at this woman. The law says she shall be pelted with stones until she is dead. But what say you? What say you?"

Jesus looked upon the noisy crowd attentively and knew that they had come to make him say the law was wrong and cruel, and that if he said so, they would make it a charge against him and would kill him. They were ashamed and afraid as he looked into their faces, but they still cried out, "Come! What say you, Master? What say you?"

Jesus stooped down and wrote with his finger in the sand on the ground, "He that is without sin among you, let him throw the first stone at her." As they read this, looking over one another's shoulders, and as he repeated the words to them, they went away, one by one, ashamed, until not a man of all the noisy crowd was left there, and Jesus Christ and the woman, hiding her face in her hands, alone remained.

Then said Jesus Christ, "Woman, where are thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" She answered, trembling, "No, Lord!" Then said our Savior, "Neither do I condemn thee. Go! and sin no more!"

(Ask if someone had thrown a stone in the above excerpt from The Life of Our Lord, if it would then have been all right for someone else to throw a second stone or a third stone. Ask about the person who throws the last stone. What if the last stone thrown is just a little pebble?)

Supplementary Text

Charles Dickens wrote in Hard Times:

"I am glad you have come at last, Stephen. You are very late."

"I ha' been walking up an' down."

"I thought so. But 'tis too bad a night for that. The rain falls very heavy, and the wind has risen."

The wind? True. It was blowing hard. Hark to the thundering in the chimney, and the surging noise! To have been out in such a wind, and not to have known it was blowing!

"I have been here once before, to-day, Stephen. Landlady came round for me at dinner-time. There was some one here that needed looking to, she said. And 'deed she was right. All wandering and lost, Stephen. Wounded too, and bruised."

He slowly moved to a chair and sat down, drooping his head before her.

"I came to do what little I could, Stephen; first, for that she worked with me when we were girls both, and for that you courted her and married her when I was her friend --"

He laid his furrowed forehead on his hand, with a low groan.

"And next, for that I know your heart, and am right sure and certain that 'tis far too merciful to let her die, or even so much as suffer, for want of aid. Thou knowest who said, 'Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone at her!' There have been plenty to do that. Thou art not the man to cast the last stone, Stephen, when she is brought so low."

(Ask the children what might have happened in this story to cause a friend of Stephen's wife to be helping his wife before Stephen himself did. Make certain that the children understand that the friend seems worried Stephen might "cast the last stone" at his wife. What is the opposite of casting any stones at anyone?)

Lesson 10: Helping Neighbors

Activity

Use the Lot Box to assign the children to groups of three. Give each group a recent newspaper, and ask the partners to find a story about someone who helped another person who was less fortunate. When a story has been found, it should be cut out and added to a poster, in order to display each group's article on the bulletin board. Let the groups take turns telling everyone else about their articles.

The Life of Our Lord [Gospel text: Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 10:25-37]

As our Savior sat teaching the people and answering their questions, a certain lawyer stood up and said, "Master, what shall I do that I may live again in happiness after I am dead?" Jesus said to him, "The first of all the commandments is, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

Then the lawyer said, "But who is my neighbor? Tell me, that I may know." Jesus answered in this parable:

"There was once a traveler," he said, "journeying from Jerusalem to Jericho, who fell among thieves, and they robbed him of his clothes and wounded him and went away, leaving him half dead upon the road. A priest, happening to pass that way, while the poor man lay there, saw him but took no notice and passed by on the other side. Another man, a Levite, came that way and also saw him, but he only looked at him for a moment and then passed by, also. But a certain Samaritan who came traveling along that road no sooner saw him than he had compassion on him, and dressed his wounds with oil and wine, and set him on the beast he rode himself, and took him to an inn, and next morning took out of his pocket two pence and gave them to the landlord, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever you may spend beyond this, in doing so, I will repay you when I come here again.' Now, which of these three men," said our Savior to the lawyer, "do you think should be called the neighbor of him who fell among the thieves?" The lawyer said, "The man who showed compassion on him." "True," replied our Savior. "Go thou and do likewise! Be compassionate to all men. For all men are your neighbors and brothers."

(Ask the children if people would still help those who are less fortunate if newspapers never reported the good deeds they did. Ask how a person should respond to someone in need, even if no one will ever tell others about the person's good deed, so that only God knows how the person helped.)

Supplementary Text

Charles Dickens wrote in The Chimes:

"Why! Lord!" said Toby. "The Papers is full of observations as it is; and so's the Parliament. Here's last week's paper, now;" taking a very dirty one from his pocket, and holding it from him at arm's length; "full of obserwations! Full of obserwations! I like to know the news as well as any man," said Toby, slowly; folding it a little smaller, and putting it in his pocket again: "but it almost goes against the grain with me to read a paper now. It frightens me almost. I don't know what we poor people are coming to. Lord send we may be coming to something better in the New Year nigh upon us!"

"Why, father, father!" said a pleasant voice, hard by.

But Toby, not hearing it, continued to trot backwards and forwards: musing as he went, and talking to himself.

"It seems as if we can't go right, or do right, or be righted," said Toby. "I hadn't much schooling, myself, when I was young; and I can't make out whether we have any business on the face of the earth, or not. Sometimes I think we must have -- a little; and sometimes I think we must be intruding. I get so puzzled sometimes that I am not even able to make up my mind whether there is any good at all in us, or whether we are born bad. We seem to be dreadful things; we seem to give a deal of trouble; we are always being complained of and guarded against. One way or other, we fill the papers."

(Ask the children why Toby thinks being poor makes him a bad person. Ask them what they would tell him if they could meet him in person.)

Lesson 11: Returning to God

Activity

Use the Lot Box to match each child with one partner. Give each pair of children five flash cards and some markers for writing down five different things someone who doesn't care about being a good person might do. Each pair then exchanges all five cards for another pair's five cards. Alternate among the pairs as the children read a card aloud and then predict how the person who doesn't care about being good would behave in each instance if he or she now wanted to please God. Discuss why the new behaviors are so different from the old ones.

The Life of Our Lord [Gospel text: Luke 15:11-32, 19:1-7]

It happened that our Savior, being in the city of Jericho, saw, looking down upon him over the heads of the crowd from a tree into which he had climbed for that purpose, a man named Zacchaeus, who was regarded as a common kind of man and a sinner, but to whom Jesus Christ called out as he passed along that he would come and eat with him in his house that day. Those proud men, the Pharisees and Scribes, hearing this, muttered among themselves and said, "He eats with sinners." In answer

to them, Jesus related this parable, which is usually called "The Parable of the Prodigal Son."

"There was once a man," he told them, "who had two sons. And the younger of them said one day, 'Father, give me my share of your riches now, and let me do with it what I please.' The father granting his request, he traveled away with his money into a distant country and soon spent it in riotous living.

"When he had spent all, there came a time through all that country of great public distress and famine, when there was no bread, and when the corn and the grass and all the things that grow in the ground were all dried up and blighted. The prodigal son fell into such distress and hunger that he hired himself out as a servant to feed swine in the fields. And he would have been glad to eat even the poor coarse husks that the swine were fed with, but his master gave him none. In this distress, he said to himself, 'How many of my father's servants have bread enough and to spare, while I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father! I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son!'

"And so he traveled back again, in great pain and sorrow and difficulty, to his father's house. When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and knew him in the midst of all his rags and misery, and ran

towards him, and wept, and fell upon his neck, and kissed him. And he told his servants to clothe this poor repentant son in the best robes and to make a great feast to celebrate his return, which was done, and they began to be merry.

"But the eldest son, who had been in the field and knew nothing of his brother's return, coming to the house and hearing the music and dancing, called to one of the servants and asked him what it meant. To this the servant made answer that his brother had come home and that his father was joyful because of his return. At this, the elder brother was angry and would not go into the house, so the father, hearing of it, came out to persuade him.

"'Father,' said the elder brother, 'you do not treat me justly, to show so much joy for my younger brother's return. For these many years I have remained with you constantly and have been true to you, yet you have never made a feast for me. But when my younger brother returns, who has been prodigal and riotous, and spent his money in many bad ways, you are full of delight, and the whole house makes merry!'--'Son,' returned the father, 'You have always been with me, and all I have is yours. But we thought your brother dead, and he is alive. He was lost, and he is found, and it is natural and right that we should be merry for his unexpected return to his old home.'"

By this, our Savior meant to teach that those who have done wrong and forgotten God are always welcome to Him and will always receive His mercy, if they will only return to Him in sorrow for the sin of which they have been guilty.

(Discuss the meaning of the word "prodigal." In the last paragraph of this excerpt from The Life of Our Lord, Charles Dickens summarizes Jesus' lesson as it pertains to the prodigal son. Discuss this lesson, and then consider what lesson Jesus also wants us to learn concerning the eldest son.)

Supplementary Text

Charles Dickens wrote in The Battle of Life:

"That's all," said Mr. Snitchey, turning up the last paper. "Really there's no other resource. No other resource."

"All lost, spent, wasted, pawned, borrowed, and sold, eh?" said the client, looking up.

"All," returned Mr. Snitchey.

"Nothing else to be done, you say?"

"Nothing at all."

The client bit his nails, and pondered again.

"And I am not even personally safe in England? You hold to that, do you?"

"In no part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland," replied Mr. Snitchey.

"A mere prodigal son with no father to go back to, no swine to keep, and no husks to share with them? Eh?" pursued the client, rocking one leg over the other, and searching the ground with his eyes.

(Consider with the children if one can be a prodigal son or daughter with either no parent to whom to return or a parent who is unwilling to accept the repentant son or daughter. Emphasize again that we can always return to God when we have done wrong.)

Lesson 12: Offering Thanksgiving

Activity

Give each child two sheets of paper, two envelopes, and a pencil. The first sheet is for surprising someone with a letter of thankfulness. Secure a promise from each child to try to address and mail or deliver the letter later. The second sheet is for thanking God for whatever the child feels thankful. Have the second sheet placed in the second envelope, and secure a promise from each child to open this envelope at bedtime and read the letter as a private prayer of thanksgiving.

The Life of Our Lord Concluding paragraph

Remember! It is Christianity to do good always, even to those who do evil to us. It is Christianity to love our neighbors as ourselves, and to do to all men as we would have them do to us. It is Christianity to be gentle, merciful, and forgiving, and to keep those qualities quiet in our own hearts, and never make a boast of them, or of our prayers, or of our love of God, but always to show that we love Him by humbly trying to do right in everything. If we do this and remember the life and lessons of our Lord Jesus Christ and try to

act up to them, we may confidently hope that God will forgive us our sins and mistakes, and enable us to live and die in peace.

(Depending upon which lessons were taught before Lesson 12, review with the children which of those lessons illustrated each of the moral behaviors that Charles Dickens stresses in this summary. For easier reference, some of the behaviors are listed in Dickens' order here:

1. Do good always.
2. Love one's neighbor as oneself.
3. Do to others as we would have them do to us.
4. Be gentle.
5. Be merciful.
6. Be forgiving.
7. Do not boast of being good.
8. Pray privately to God.
9. Be humble.
10. Try to do what is right, according to God.)

Supplementary Text

(Ask the children what Charles Dickens might have written to one of his children if he had known that he would never see him again and could write only one letter. Then read aloud the letter below, which Dickens wrote

to his son Alfred in Australia just twenty days before Dickens died. Tell the children that Alfred received the letter in the mail after he had already learned by telegraph that his father had died.)

My dear Alfred, -- I have just time to tell you under my own hand that I invited Mr. Bear to a dinner of such guests as he would naturally like to see, and that we took to him very much, and got on with him capitally.

I am doubtful whether Plorn [Dickens' son Edward] is taking to Australia. Can you find out his real mind? I notice that he always writes as if his present life were the be-all and the end-all of his emigration, and as if I had no idea of you two becoming proprietors, and aspiring to the first positions in the colony, without casting off the old connection.

From Mr. Bear I had the best accounts of you. I told him that they did not surprise me, for I had unbounded faith in you. For which take my love and blessing.

They will have told you all the news here, and that I am hard at work. This is not a letter so much as an assurance that I never think of you without hope and comfort. -- Ever, my dear Alfred,

Your affectionate Father.

(Ask the children if they think Charles Dickens would have been pleased to have known that these were his final words to his son. Remind the children that they have two very important letters of their own to deliver.)

References

Blathwayt, Raymond. (1910, November 12). "Reminiscences of Dickens: An Interview with Mr. Alfred Tennyson Dickens." Great Thoughts from Master Minds, pp. 104-105.

Dickens, Charles. (1991). Bleak House. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

--------. (1991). Christmas Books. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

--------. (1991). Christmas Stories. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

--------. (1991). Hard Times. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dickens, Mamie. (1885, January). "Charles Dickens at Home." The Cornhill Magazine, pp. 32-51.

Egan, Madonna. (1983). Telling "The Blessed History": Charles Dickens's "The Life of Our Lord" (Volumes I and II). Doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota.

Forster, John. (1872-1874). The Life of Charles Dickens (Volumes I-III). London: Chapman and Hall.

Hogarth, Georgiana; Dickens, Mamie; and Hutton, Laurence (Eds.). (1903). The Works of Charles Dickens: Letters and Speeches. New York: Hearst's International Library.

Osborne, Charles C. (Ed.). (1932). Letters of Charles Dickens to the Baroness Burdett-Coutts. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc.

Pearl, Patricia. (1988, January). "The Life of Our Lord." School Library Journal, p. 74.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

About time for Dickens. (1934, April 6). The Commonweal, p. 620.

Ackroyd, P. (1992). Dickens. New York: Harper Collins.

Author makes debut. (1934, March 7). The New York Times, p. 18.

Bailey, P. (1987, April 19). An unholy gift to the world. The Observer, p. 23.

Becker, M. L. (1934, May 20). The life of our lord. New York Herald Tribune Books, p. 7.

Blathwayt, R. (1910, November 12). Reminiscences of Dickens: An interview with Mr. Alfred Tennyson Dickens. Great Thoughts from Master Minds, pp. 104-105.

Butler, M. C. (Ed.). (1967). Esperanto-English dictionary. London: British Esperanto Association.

Canby, H. S. (1934, May 19). The gospel according to Charles Dickens. The Saturday Review of Literature, pp. 698-698.

Carolan, K. (1973). The battle of life, a love story. The Dickensian, 69, 105-110.

Chamberlain, J. (1934, May 15). Books of the times. The New York Times, p. 19.

Coles, R. (1987, November 8). The greatest stories ever told. Washington Post Book World, p. 23.

Collins, P. (1964). Dickens and education. London: Macmillan.

Connell, J. M. (1938). The religion of Charles Dickens. The Hibbert Journal, 36, 225-234.

De Suzannet, A. (1933). The real David Copperfield. The Dickensian, 29, 239.

De Wolfe Howe, M. A. (Ed.). (1922, June). With Dickens in America. Harper's Magazine, pp. 110-120.

Dexter, W. (1933). The real Dickens. The Dickensian, 29, 170.

Dexter, W. (1934a). Unpublished letters and manuscript. The Dickensian, 30, 86.

Dexter, W. (1934b). The children's new testament re-christened. The Dickensian, 30, 157-158.

Dexter, W. (1934c). The life of our lord. The Dickensian, 30, 238.

Dexter, W. (1934/35). The life of our lord. The Dickensian, 31, 1.

Dickens, A. T. (1911, September). My father and his friends. Nash's Magazine, pp. 626-641.

Dickens, C. (1934a). The life of our lord. London: Associated Newspapers.

Dickens, C. (1934b). The life of our lord. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Dickens, C. (1934c). The life of our lord. Toronto: The Musson Book Company, Ltd.

Dickens, C. (1934d). Vida de Jesucristo. Barcelona: Impresos Costa.

Dickens, C. (1934e). La vie de N. S. Jesus-Christ racontee a ses enfants. Paris: Gallimard.

Dickens, C. (1934f). La vivo de nia sinjoro Jesuo. London: The Esperanto Publishing Company, Ltd.

Dickens, C. (1939). The life of our lord. New York: Garden City Publishing Company, Inc.

Dickens, C. (1970). The life of our lord. New York: Crescent Books.

Dickens, C. (1981). The life of our lord. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

Dickens, C. (1985). Zycie pana Jezusa. Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax.

Dickens, C. (1986). The life of our lord. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

Dickens, C. (1987a). The life of our lord. London: Beehive Books.

Dickens, C. (1987b). The life of our lord. Morristown, New Jersey: Silver Burdett Press.

Dickens, C. (1987c). The life of our lord. Southampton: Ashford Press Publishing.

Dickens, C. (1987d). Chu Yesu us saengae; Kurisumasu kaerol. Seoul: Si-sa-yong-o-sa, Inc.

Dickens, C. (1991). American notes and pictures from Italy. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dickens, C. (1991). Bleak house. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dickens, C. (1991). A child's history of England. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dickens, C. (1991). Christmas books. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dickens, C. (1991). Christmas stories. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dickens, C. (1991). Hard times. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dickens, C. (1991). The life of our lord. Nashville: Oliver Nelson Books.

Dickens, C. (1995, in press). Holiday romance, a child's history of England, the life of our lord. London: Everyman's Library.

Dickens, C., Jr. (1895). Glimpses of Charles Dickens. The North American Review, 160, 525-537, 677-684.

Dickens, C., Jr. (1972). Personal reminiscences of my father. New York: Haskell House.

Dickens, H. F. (1914, July). A chat about Charles Dickens. Harper's Magazine, pp. 186-193.

Dickens, H. F. (1929). Memories of my father. Great Britain: Duffield.

Dickens, H. F. (1934). The recollections of Sir Henry Dickens K.C. London: William Heinemann.

Dickens kin lose right to 'life of our lord.' (1934, June 7). The New York Times, p. 4.

Dickens' "life of Christ." (1934, April 21). America: A Catholic Review of the Week, pp. 26-27.

Dickens, M. (1885, January). Charles Dickens at home. The Cornhill Magazine, pp. 32-51.

Dickens, M. (1897). My father as I recall him. Westminster: The Roxburghe Press.

Dickens, M. (1911). Charles Dickens. London: Cassell.

Dickens's work criticized. (1934, April 2). The New York Times, p. 14.

Dooley, E. A. (1981, July). The life of our lord. Best Sellers, p. 151.

Dunn, F. T. (Ed.). (1976). A cumulative analytical index to The Dickensian 1905-1974. Hassocks, Sussex: The Harvester Press.

Egan, M. (1983). Telling "the blessed history": Charles Dickens's "the life of our lord". (Volumes I and II) (Doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota). Dissertation Abstracts International, 44, 758A.

Family votes to publish Dickens 'life of our lord.' (1934, January 21). The New York Times, p. 1.

Fleissner, R. F. (1981). Dickens' little testament: Spiritual quest or humanistic document? Research

Studies, 49, 35-45.

Fleissner, R. F. (1983). The title the life of our lord: Does it fit the Dickens canon? American Notes and Queries, 22, 39-40.

Forster, J. (1872). The life of Charles Dickens: Volume the first. London: Chapman and Hall.

Forster, J. (1873). The life of Charles Dickens: Volume the second. London: Chapman and Hall.

Forster, J. (1874). The life of Charles Dickens: Volume the third. London: Chapman and Hall.

Frazee, J. P. (1989). Dickens and unitarianism. Dickens Studies Annual, 18, 119-143.

Gannett, L. (1934, May 15). The life of our lord. New York Herald Tribune, p. 19.

Gets new Dickens book. (1934, February 12). The New York Times, p. 13.

Graves, R. (1933). The real David Copperfield. The New Statesman and Nation, 5, 475.

Graves, R. (1934). Mr. Robert Graves and his "real David Copperfield." The Dickensian, 30, 231.

Greaves, J. (1961). The life of our lord. The Dickensian, 57, 67.

Hodge, J. D. (1977). The gospel influences on Dickens's art (Doctoral dissertation, University of New Mexico, 1976). Dissertation Abstracts International, 38, 805A.

Hogarth, G., Dickens, M., & Hutton, L. (Eds.). (1903a). The works of Charles Dickens: Letters and speeches (Vol. 1). New York: Hearst's International Library.

Hogarth, G., Dickens, M., & Hutton, L. (Eds.). (1903b). The works of Charles Dickens: Letters and speeches (Vol. 2). New York: Hearst's International Library.

Holmes, J. H. (1934, May 20). Dickens's story of Jesus for his children. New York Herald Tribune Books, p. 1.

Holmes, M. (1987, December 6). The life of our lord. Los Angeles Times Book Review, p. 17.

Hopkins, F. M. (1934, February 17). A cablegram from London. Publishers' Weekly, p. 797.

Hunt, P. (Ed.). (1990). Children's literature: The development of criticism. London: Routledge.

Jerrold, B. (1870, July). Charles Dickens: In memoriam. The Gentleman's Magazine, pp. 228-241.

Johnson, E. (1952). Charles Dickens: His tragedy and triumph (Vols. 1-2). New York: Simon and Schuster.

Johnson, F. S. (1925). Letter. The Dickensian, 21, 158.

Kaplan, F. (1988). Dickens: A biography. New York: Avon Books.

Kent, W. (1930). Dickens and religion. London: Watts.

Klein, F. (1934, June). Life of our lord. The Catholic World, p. 381.

Lahey, G. F. (1934, August 10). Dickens, theologian. The Commonweal, p. 366.

Larson, J. L. (1985). Dickens and the broken scripture. Athens: University of Georgia.

Life of Christ. (1934, Autumn). Pratt Institute Quarterly Booklist, p. 8.

Life of our lord. (1934, May 16). The Christian Century, pp. 665-666.

Life of our lord. (1934, July 7). The Living Church, p. 112.

Life of our lord. (1934, October). The Booklist, p. 50.

Life of our lord. (1982, February). West Coast Review of Books, p. 57.

Loveman, A. (1934, April 7). Books of the spring. The Saturday Review of Literature, p. 610.

Macrae, D. (1871). Home and abroad: Sketches and gleanings. Glasgow: John S. Marr and Sons.

Matz, W. (1934). My copy of "the children's new testament." The Dickensian, 30, 89.

McKenzie, C. H. (1884). The religious sentiments of Charles Dickens, collected from his writings. London: Walter Scott.

Muggeridge, M. (1940). The thirties: 1930-1940 in Great Britain. London: Hamish Hamilton.

Osborne, C. C. (Ed.). (1932). Letters of Charles Dickens to the Baroness Burdett-Coutts. New York: E.P. Dutton

& Co., Inc.

Pearl, P. (1988, January). The life of our lord. School Library Journal, 74.

Peyrouton, N. C. (1963). The life of our lord. The Dickensian, 59, 102-112.

Pike, C. E. (1912). Charles Dickens and unitarianism. Unitarian Monthly, 9, 18-19.

Piret, M. J. (1992). Charles Dickens's "children's new testament": An introduction, annotated edition, and critical discussion (Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 1991). Dissertation Abstracts International, 52, 3613A.

Procter, W. C. (1930). Christian teaching in the novels of Charles Dickens. London: H. R. Allenson, Limited.

Rahn, S. (1981). Children's literature: An annotated bibliography of the history and criticism. New York: Garland.

Shaw, G. B. (1937). Preface. In C. Dickens, Great expectations. Edinburgh: R. & R. Clark.

Sokolsky, G. E. (1935). We Jews. London: Chapman and Hall.

Staples, L. C. (1934). His favourite child. The Dickensian, 30, 68.

Stonier, G. W. (1933). The graveside classics. The New Statesman and Nation, 5, 389.

Suffer little children. (1934, May 30). The New Republic, pp. 81-82.

Unique items in the sale rooms. (1939). The Dickensian, 35, 278.

Vogel, J. (1977). Allegory in Dickens. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press.

Walder, D. (1981). Dickens and religion. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Ward, K. E. (1990). The religious letters of Charles Dickens: A reference guide. Unpublished master's thesis, Auburn University, Auburn, AL.

Watson, L. B. (1912) Charles Dickens and dissenters. Notes and Queries, 5, 511-512.

"Whom say ye that I am?". (1934, March 10). The Tablet, pp. 293-294.

Wilson, P. W. (1934a, May 13). The Dickens tragegy revealed. The New York Times Magazine, pp. 1-3, 20-21.

Wilson, P. W. (1934b, May 20). What Dickens wrote about Jesus. The New York Times Book Review, p. 2.

Wilson, P. W. (1934c, June 24). Mr. and Mrs. Dickens: A debate revived. The New York Times Magazine, pp. 8-9.

Appendix

A Chronological Listing of Book and Magazine Editions of The Life of Our Lord

1934

1. Dickens, Charles. The Life of Our Lord Written by Charles Dickens for His Children 1849 and Kept as a Precious Family Secret for Eighty-Five Years. New York: United Feature Syndicate. 75 pages, 8"x10½".

Includes facsimiles of manuscript pages, illustrations by Gustave Dore.

Release dates:

Chapter the First	Monday,	March 5
Chapter the Second	Tuesday,	March 6
Chapter the Third	Wednesday,	March 7
Chapter the Fourth	Thursday,	March 8
Chapter the Fifth	Friday,	March 9
Chapter the Sixth	Saturday,	March 10
Chapter the Seventh (Part One)	Monday,	March 12
Chapter the Seventh (Part Two)	Tuesday,	March 13

Chapter the Eighth	Wednesday, March 14
Chapter the Ninth	Thursday, March 15
Chapter the Tenth	Friday, March 16
Chapter the Eleventh (Part One)	Saturday, March 17
Chapter the Eleventh (Part Two)	Monday, March 19
Chapter the Eleventh (Part Three)	Tuesday, March 20

"First publication anywhere in world. First release starting Monday, March 5, 1934. One time publication only -- all rights reserved. This copy must be held strictly confidential and must not be published in whole or in part or quoted in any way prior to fixed dates of release. Important: Every paper purchasing first publication rights is requested not to make any announcement prior to Friday, February 16, that 'The Life of Our Lord' will appear in that particular newspaper. This copyright line must be carried on each installment: Copyright for North and South America, 1934, by United Feature Syndicate, Inc.; all rights reserved."

Editions contain uniform typesetting for the content quoted above. The manuscript text, however, is a facsimile of typewriter print which is not uniform among editions. Inconsistencies include capitalization, punctuation, and margins. Some editions include prior

to Chapter the First the following typewritten note to editors: "With 'The Life of Our Lord', the Dickens family has released for publication two prayers written by Charles Dickens for his children. These prayers are for release with the First Chapter on Monday, March 5. It is suggested that they be used together in a box." See (4) and (5) for the first uniform editions to include these two prayers.

2. ------. The Life of Our Lord Written Expressly for His Children. London: Associated Newspapers Ltd. 128 pages, 7"x9½".

Includes Foreword by Lady Dickens, a facsimile of a manuscript page, illustrations by Holman Hunt, Jalabert, Raphael, Ford Madox Brown, Leonardo da Vinci, De Munkacsy, Kehren.

3. ------. The Life of Our Lord Written for His Children. London: Arthur Barker Limited. 115 pages, 8"x10½".

"This is the Collectors' Edition of The Life of Our Lord by Charles Dickens, first published 1934, printed in two colours on Barcham Green's 'Chester' hand made paper, with decorations by Percy Smith, bound in vellum,

and limited to 250 numbered copies and 15 out of series."

Includes facsimiles of manuscript pages, plates, a portrait.

4. ------. The Life of Our Lord Written for His Children during the Years 1846 to 1849 by Charles Dickens and Now First Published. New York: Simon and Schuster. 128 pages, 4 3/4" x 7 3/4".

"Designed by Ernst Reichl."

Includes Foreword by The Publishers (5,14), a facsimile of a manuscript page, a portrait, two prayers written by Charles Dickens for his young children (1,5) (untitled "A Prayer" [22] and "For the Evening").

5. ------. The Life of Our Lord Written during the Years 1846-1849 by Charles Dickens and Now First Published. New York: Simon and Schuster. 128 pages, $5\frac{1}{4}$"x8".

"This edition is specially designed by D. B. Updike, The Merrymount Press, Boston, and is limited to 2387 numbered copies, which are published simultaneously with the regular first trade edition."

"The inconsistencies in punctuation, spelling and capitalization which appear in the original manuscript, intended by Dickens only for the eyes of his children and not for the printer, have been followed in this limited edition. In the regular trade edition these inconsistencies have been slightly edited to make for easier reading."

Includes Foreword by The Publishers (4,14), a facsimile of a manuscript page, two prayers written by Charles Dickens for his young children (1,4) (untitled "A Prayer" [22] and "For the Evening").

6. ------. The Life of Our Lord Written during the Years 1846 to 1849 by Charles Dickens and Now First Published. New York: Simon and Schuster. Only 3 pages include text, 4 3/4" x 7 3/4".

Publisher's dummy of (4). Excludes Foreword by The Publishers. "Chapter the first" is found on page 1 rather than page 9. Text begins "My dear children . . ." on page 3 rather than page 11 and continues through "'We have seen a star in the sky, which teaches us to know that a child is born in Bethlehem, who will live to be'" on page 5 rather than the top of page 14. All remaining pages are blank.

7. ------. The Life of Our Lord. Austin, Texas: The Austin American. 12 pages, 15 7/8" x 17 1/4".

Includes a portrait, illustrations by Gustave Dore.

Bound with Simon and Schuster limited edition (5) at The University of Texas at Austin's Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center.

8. ------. The Life of Our Lord. Cincinnati: Cincinnati Post. 12 3/4" x 16 3/4."

Pasted newspaper clippings bound with World Telegram (11) at The University of Texas at Austin's Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center.

9. ------. The Life of Our Lord. Philadelphia: Evening Bulletin. 15 leaves of differing sizes; page 1 $17\frac{1}{2}$"x$24\frac{1}{2}$".

"Special proofs for the friends of Richard Gimble, March 1934."

"Given for Percy E. Lawler, one of the very few who really know a lot about books." Signed by Richard Gimble.

Includes facsimiles of manuscript pages, a portrait, illustrations. Consists of actual proofs, contained in an oversized folder in the Special Collections Department of Elihu Burritt Library of Central Connecticut State University.

10. ------. The Life of Our Lord (Volumes 1 and 2). Washington, DC: Washington Daily News. Each volume 32 pages, 5 3/4" x 8 3/4".

"Mounted newspaper clippings in two scrapbooks with printed green wrappers. Illustrated by Gustave Dore."

Release dates: Friday, March 16, 1934 through Saturday, March 31, 1934 (excluding Sundays). In Georgetown University's Lauinger Library (Special Collections).

11. ------. The Life of Our Lord. New York: World Telegram. 12 3/4" x 16 3/4."

Pasted newspaper clippings bound with Cincinnati Post (8) at The University of Texas at Austin's Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center.

Includes two prayers written by Charles Dickens for his young children (1,4,5) (untitled "A Prayer" [22] and "For the Evening").

12. ------. Das Leben unseres Herrn Jesus Christus von Charles Dickens Geschrieben fur Seine Eigenen Kinder. Hamburg: Albatross Verlag. 111 pages, 4½"x7".

"This book was produced using lettering created by Johann Friedrich Hallen in Frankfurt in 1727 under the printing process of J. van Krimpen. The printing was done by Oscar Brandstetter of Leipzig. The paper was manufactured by Baussen Papierfabrik. The cover was from a design by Gunter Bohmer for Oscar Brandstetter of Leipzig."

Translated by Hans Mardersteig. Includes illustrations by Gunter Bohmer.

13. ------. The Life of Our Lord: The History of Our Saviour Jesus Christ. Hamburg, Paris, Bologna: The Albatross Verlag G.M.B.H., Hamburg. 140 pages, 4½"x7".

"This edition is composed in lutetia type cut by the Monotype Corporation. The composition has been carried out under the direction of the designer of the

type J. Van Krimpen. The paper is made by the Papierfabrik Bautzen. The printing and binding are the work of Oscar Brandstetter, Abteilung Jakob Hegner Leipzig."

Modern Continental Library, Volume 207. No illustrations.

14. ------. The Life of Our Lord Written during the Years 1846-1849 by Charles Dickens for His Children and Now First Published. Toronto: The Musson Book Company Ltd. 151 pages, 6"x8¼".

"The illustrations in this volume are from woodcuts designed by Albrecht Durer. Most of these woodcuts have been reproduced from a remarkable copy of the first edition of The Life of the Virgin published at Nuremburg in 1511, and now in the Spencer Collection of Illustrated Books, Manuscripts and Bindings, in the New York Public Library. The decorations on the chapter pages are reproductions of the engravings of Gustave Dore.

Includes Foreword by The Publishers (4,5), a facsimile of a manuscript page, a portrait, illustrations by Albrecht Durer.

15. ------. La Vie de N. S. Jesus-Christ Racontee a ses Enfants. Paris: Gallimard nrs. 127 pages, 4 3/8" x 7 1/4".

"The first edition of this work consists of one hundred eighty copies on pure vellum by Lafuma Navarre, with one hundred fifty copies numbered from 1 to 150 for the Friends of the First Edition, and thirty copies numbered from 151 to 180 for general sale."

Translated by Rose Celli. Includes Foreword (4,5,14). No illustrations.

16. ------. La Vivo de Nia Sinjoro Jesuo Verkita de Charles Dickens Speciale por Siaj Infanoj, Tradukita de Montagu C. Butler. London: The Esperanto Publishing Co., Ltd. 118 pages, 7"x9¼".

Translated by Montagu C. Butler. Includes Comment by the translator, facsimiles of manuscript pages, plates, a portrait.

17. ------. Vida de Jesucristo. Barcelona: Impresos Costa. 117 pages, 5½"x8½".

"Traduccion directa del Ingles y prologo de Rafael Vazquez-Zamora. El titulo de la obra, en el manuscrito original, es: The History of Our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Translated by Rafel Vazquez-Zamora. Includes Prologue by Rafel Vazquez-Zamora. No illustrations.

1936

18. ------. The Life of Our Lord Written by Charles Dickens for His Own Children. New York: Grosset & Dunlop, Inc. 78 pages, 8"x9½".

Includes Foreword by The Publishers (4,5,14), illustrations by Rachel Taft-Dixon, two prayers written by Charles Dickens for his young children (1,4,5) (untitled "A Prayer" [22] and "For the Evening").

1937-1939

19. ------. "Translated [into Cree] from The Life of Our Lord by Charles Dickens, published and copyrighted in Canada by The Musson Book Company Ltd." (14). Spiritual Light Easter 1937 No. 19, June 1937 No. 20, Fall 1937 No. 21, Xmas 1937 No. 22, Easter 1938 No. 23, Spring 1938 No. 24, Fall 1938 No. 25, Xmas 1938 No. 26,

Easter 1939 No. 27.

Each issue edited by Rev. F. G. Stevens. Published at Norway House Mission under the United Church Board of Home Missions (a.k.a. The Board of Home Missions of the United Church of Canada).

1938

20. ------. American Notes, Pictures from Italy, A Child's History of England, The Life of Our Lord. Bloomsbury: The Nonesuch Press. pp. 855-891, 6"x10".

"The text of 'The Life of Our Lord' follows that printed by the Associated Newspapers [2]. This edition of American Notes, Pictures from Italy, A Child's History of England and The Life of Our Lord, part of the Nonesuch Dickens, designed by Francis Meynell, is limited to 877 copies."

Editors: Arthur Waugh, Hugh Walpole, Walter Dexter, Thomas Hatton. No illustrations.

21. ------. Lifsferill Lausnarans: Eins og Skaldid Sagdi Bornum Sinum og Skradi Fyrir Thau. Reykjavik: Bokaforlag Jons Helgasonar. 97 pages, 7 1/2" x 9 3/4".

Translated by Theodor Arnason. Includes unsigned Foreword, illustrations by Gerda Ploug Sarp.

1939

22. ------. The Life of Our Lord. New York: Garden City Publishing Co., Inc. 126 pages, 6 3/4" x 9 1/2".

Includes Foreword by The Publishers (4,5,14), illustrations by Everett Shinn, two prayers (1,4,5) ("A Prayer," and "A Child's Prayer for the Evening").

1945

23. ------. Das Leben Jesu (The History of Our Saviour Jesu Christ, Deutsch) Fur Kinder erzahlt. Zurich: Atlantis-Verlag. 79 pages.

Translated by Bettina Hurlimann. Includes illustrations by Roland Guignard.

1947

24. ------. The Life of Our Lord: The History of Our Saviour Jesus Christ. London, Paris: The Albatross Ltd. 140 pages, 4½"x7".

Modern Continental Library, Volume 207 (13). No illustrations.

1948

25. ------. Die Weihnachts Geschichte. Opladen: Verlag Friedrich Middelhauve. 8 pages, $7\frac{1}{4}$"x11".

"The Christmas Story by Charles Dickens from The Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ was created by Karl-Heinz Blase, Wuppertal, in lino-cut typography. These original renderings were based on the block typography of Otto Contius, Solingen, produced in the old block book form by Dr. Friedrich Middelhauve, printer, Opladen, in a limited edition of 3000."

An abridgment of Chapter the First, consisting of the first five paragraphs and titled The Christmas Story. Includes illustrations.

1956

26. ------. The Life of Our Lord (Excerpts): The History of Our Saviour Jesus Christ. Paderborn: Schoningh. 47 pages.

Text consists of excerpts published in a German school version.

1970

27. ------. The Life of Our Lord Written for His Children. London: Collins, Sons & Co. Ltd. 128 pages, $5\frac{1}{2}$"x$8\frac{1}{2}$".

Includes Foreword by Lady Dickens (2), a facsimile of a manuscript page, illustrations by M. E. Edwards, E. Burne Jones, J. E. Millais, F. Philippotaux, Ford Maddox Brown, T. Dalziel, Arthur Hughes (28).

28. ------. The Life of Our Lord Written for His Children. New York: Crescent Books. 128 pages, $5\frac{1}{2}$"x$8\frac{1}{2}$'.

Includes Foreword by Lady Dickens (2), a facsimile of a manuscript page, illustrations by M. E. Edwards, E. Burne Jones, J. E. Millais, F. Philippotaux, Ford Maddox Brown, T. Dalziel, Arthur Hughes (27).

1976

29. ------. The Life of Our Lord: Written for His Children during the Years 1846 to 1849 by Charles Dickens

and Now First Published. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International. 128 pages, $4\frac{1}{2}$"x$7\frac{1}{2}$".

"This is an authorized facsimile of the original book [4], and was produced in 1976 by microfilm-xerography by University Microfilms International Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A. London, England."

Includes Foreword by The Publishers (4,5,14), a portrait, two prayers written by Charles Dickens for his young children (1,4,5) (untitled "A Prayer" [22] and "For the Evening").

1981

30. ------. The Life of Our Lord Written Expressly for His Children. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press. 128 pages, 6 3/4" x 9 1/2".

"This edition of The Life of Our Lord, written by Charles Dickens for his own children is a facsimile of the first edition in book form published by Associated Newspapers Ltd in London in 1934 [2]."

Includes Publisher's Note, Foreword by Lady Dickens (2), facsimiles of manuscript pages, a portrait,

illustrations by Julius Schnorr von Karolsfeld.

31. ------. "The Life of Our Lord." McCalls December 1981, pp. 82-83, 148, 150 (abridged).

"The new Westminster edition [30], from which our excerpts are taken, is a facsimile of the first edition of the book [2] and retains all the irregularities of spelling and punctuation of Dickens' hand-written draft."

1985

32. ------. Zycie Pana Jezusa, Napisane przez Karola Dickensa Specjalnie dla Jego Wlasnychdzieci, Przekl Tomasz Polkowski. Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax. 120 pages, $8\frac{1}{4}$"x$4\frac{1}{2}$".

Translated by Tomasz Polkowski. Includes Afterword by Tomasz Polkowski, illustrations.

1986

33. ------. The Life of Our Lord Written Expressly for His Children. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press. 128 pages, $6\frac{1}{2}$"x$9\frac{1}{4}$".

Includes Foreword and Appendix by D. James Kennedy, Foreword by Lady Dickens (2), facsimiles of manuscript pages, a portrait, uncredited illustrations by Julius Schnorr von Karolsfeld (30).

Differs from (34) on last four pages (p. 125 last page of text, p. 126 facsimile of the last page of the manuscript, pp. 127-128 Appendix).

34. ------. The Life of Our Lord Written Expressly for His Children. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press. 128 pages, $6\frac{1}{2}$x$9\frac{1}{4}$".

Includes Foreword by D. James Kennedy, Foreword by Lady Dickens (2), facsimiles of manuscript pages, a portrait, uncredited illustrations by Julius Schnorr von Karolsfeld (30).

Omits Appendix by D. James Kennedy (33) (p. 125 facsimile of the last page of the manuscript, p. 126 blank, p. 127 last page of text, p. 128 blank).

1987

35. ------. The Life of Our Lord. London: Beehive Books. 93 pages, $7\frac{1}{2}$"x$9\frac{1}{2}$".

"A note on the text: For this new edition of The Life of Our Lord, the text of the first (1934) edition has been checked and corrected against a microfilm of the manuscript, kindly supplied by The Free Library of Philadelphia. As this was a private document, never prepared for publication, minor amendments have been made to Dickens's punctuation and spelling for the ease of the modern reader. The use of capitals has been modernised."

Includes Foreword and Afterword by Neil Philip, facsimiles of manuscript pages, illustrations by Sally Holmes, The Dickens Family Prayers: "Prayer at Night" and "For the Evening" (1,4,5), renamed "The Children's Prayer" (36).

36. ------. The Life of Our Lord. Morristown, New Jersey: Silver Burdett Press. 93 pages, $7\frac{1}{2}$"x$9\frac{1}{2}$".

"A note on the text: For this new edition of The Life of Our Lord, the text of the first (1934) edition has been checked and corrected against a microfilm of the manuscript, kindly supplied by The Free Library of Philadelphia. As this was a private document, never prepared for publication, minor amendments have been made to Dickens's punctuation and spelling for the ease

of the modern reader. The use of capitals has been modernised."

Includes Foreword and Afterword by Neil Philip, facsimiles of manuscript pages, illustrations by Sally Holmes, The Dickens Family Prayers: "Prayer at Night" and "For the Evening" (1,4,5), renamed "The Children's Prayer" (35).

37. ------. The Life of Our Lord Written Expressly for His Children. Southampton: Ashford Press Publishing. 68 pages, $10\frac{1}{2}$"x$8\frac{1}{4}$".

Includes Foreword by Michael Dickens Whinney, Foreword by Lady Dickens (2), illustrations by Bob Hoare.

38. ------. Chu Yesu ui Saengae; Kurisumasu Kaerol. Seoul: Si-sa-Yong-o-sa, Inc.. pp. 8-103, 4 3/4" x 7 1/2".

"Here, we offer yet another work in a series of English and Korean translations. By focusing on celebrated works of literature, philosophy, history, art, and autobiography, this series strives not only to improve its audience's basic English reading skills but also to broaden its knowledge. Distinguishing

characteristics of the new series: 1) Each volume contains an introduction to the author and his work to help orient readers before they begin. 2) Works included here have been selected to maximally improve reading skills, while educational and entertainment value have also been taken into consideration. 3) Every effort has been made to render an English translation that is as faithful as possible to the original. In translating word by word from English to Korean, we have attempted to rely on common idiomatic usage. 4) To help readers understand difficult words, idioms, and colloquial expressions, there are footnotes which offer further explanations and illustrations."

Bilingual edition of The Life of Our Lord and A Christmas Carol (English text on even numbered pages, Korean text on odd numbered pages). Volume 92 in the Yong-Han Taeyok Mungo series.

Includes Foreword by The Editors. No illustrations.

1989

39. ------. Das Leben unseres Herrn Jesus Christus von Charles Dickens Geschrieben fur Seine Eigenen Kinder. Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag. 111 pages, $4\frac{1}{4}$"x7".

Translated by Hans Mardersteig. Includes unsigned Introduction, illustrations by Gunter Bohmer. Reprint of (12).

1991

40. ------. The Life of Our Lord Written for His Own Children. Nashville: Oliver-Nelson Books. 66 pages, $10\frac{1}{4}$"x$8\frac{1}{4}$".

Includes Foreword by Lady Dickens (2), Introduction by Walter Reed, a facsimile of a manuscript page, list of other works by Dickens, illustrations by Tina Baranet Colligan. Omits last paragraph of manuscript.

1995 (in press)

41. ------. Holiday Romance, A Child's History of England, The Life of Our Lord. London: Everyman's Library.

Includes Introduction by Gillian Avery.