

THE LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

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The life of Our Lord Jesus Christ by J. James Tissot

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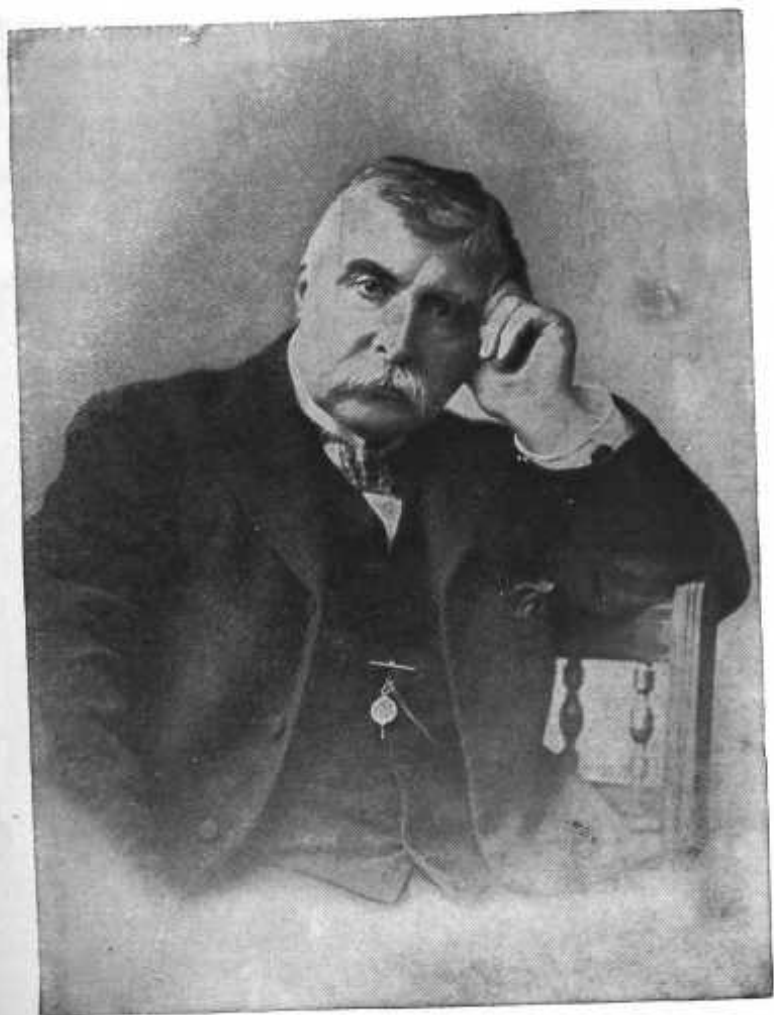
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J. JAMES TISSOT

**THE LIFE OF OUR
LORD JESUS CHRIST**



THE LIFE OF OUR LORD
JESUS CHRIST

Illustrated by Over Four Hundred
Paintings and Drawings Taken
From the Four Gospels and From
Studies Made in Palestine

BY

J. JAMES TISSOT



THE AMERICAN ART ASSOCIATION
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INTRODUCTION

BY JAMES TISSOT.

ON my return from Jerusalem, in March, 1887, I went to see my father, a Christian of the old school. I shewed him my sketches and studies, and all the documents I had brought with me from over the sea. When he saw the appearance and the exact proportions of these places, and particularly of Golgotha, he exclaimed: "Then I must alter all my preconceived ideas of these things! What! is Calvary not a high mountain in the shape of a sugar-loaf, covered with rocks and brushwood?" "Well, no," I replied, "the mount of Calvary, though it occupied the summit of the city, was, at the most, only 22 or 23 feet high. The Holy Sepulchre, too, was close beside it, and among quite different surroundings from those which you have

pictured. Your mistake is shared by the greater number of believers; the Christian world has for a long time past had its imagination misled by the fancies of painters; and there is a whole stock of images that must be driven out of its mind, before it can be familiarized with notions that are a little nearer the truth. All the schools have, more or less consciously, had a hand in leading the public mind astray on this point. While some, like the schools of the Renaissance, have been occupied only with the *mise en scène*, and others, like the mystic schools, with sentiment alone, they have with one accord abandoned the ground of historical and topographical accuracy. Is it not time, in this age for which the *approximate* is no longer sufficient, to restore to reality—I do not say to realism—its usurped rights?"

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This is why, attracted as I was by the divine figure of Jesus, and by the entrancing scenes of the Gospel story, and desiring to present them, as faithfully as I could, in their

different aspects, I determined to start for Palestine, and to visit it as a devout pilgrim.

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I started on the 15th of October, 1886. I was just fifty years old.

As soon as I arrived in Egypt, I saw that there was no fear of my losing any of my illusions; Alexandria and Cairo already amply repaid me for my journey, by giving me the direct impression of antiquity. With such documents, it seemed almost superfluous to go further—antiquity was palpably there, and I thought it would be easy to rid it of the thin layer of *modernity* that covered it, and so discover at once the remains of the bygone ages. When I arrived in Palestine, however, the impression was different again; I felt that Africa was not the whole of the East; that there the race, the customs, the materials used in the construction of the towns, and hence even more markedly the landscapes and the soil, all were different. As I went northwards, from the time of leaving Nazareth, Lebanon, and Damascus, I was aware of the presence