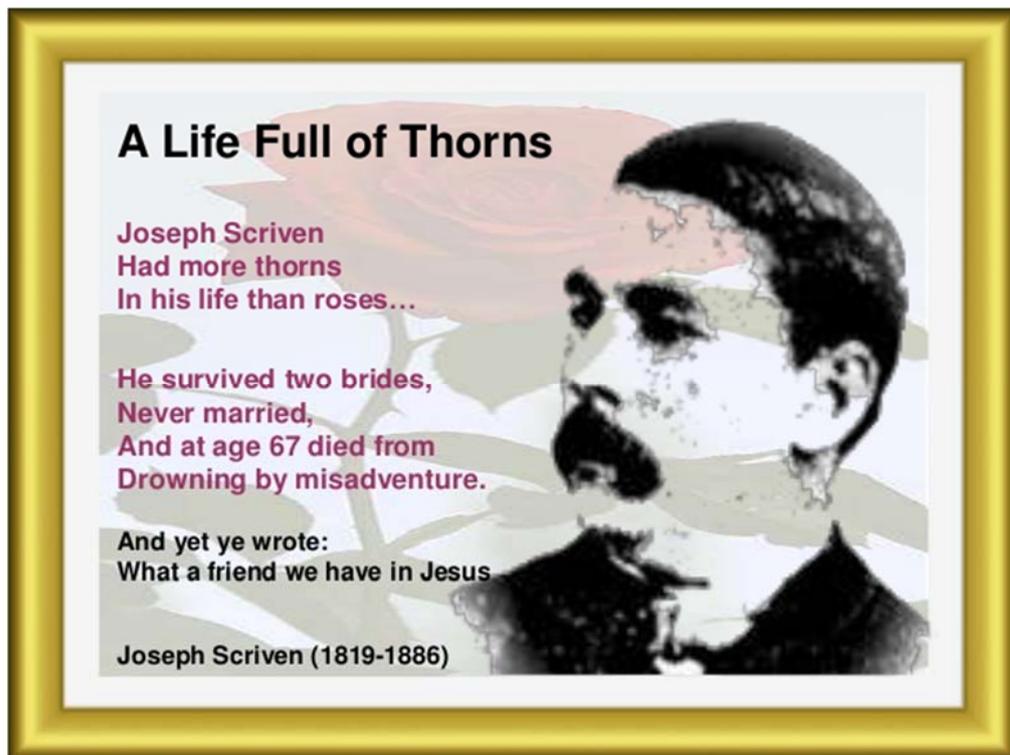


THURSDAY

WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS



In 1842, an Irishman named Joseph Scriven graduated from Trinity College, Dublin, and promptly fell head over heels in love with a girl from his hometown. They got engaged and, with great excitement, planned their wedding and began dreaming about their future together as husband and wife.

The eve of their wedding arrived at last, and Joseph's fiancée saddled a horse to go and see him. Tragically it was one of the last things she would ever do. A little later Joseph saw his bride-to-be riding towards him, and he grinned. But suddenly, just as she was crossing the bridge over the river the horse bucked and threw her like a rag doll into the river below. In blind panic Joseph ran to the river, calling out her name. He plunged into the icy waters but it was too late. His bride was already dead.

Heartbroken, Joseph emigrated to Canada, where he eventually fell in love again. In 1854 Joseph was due to marry Eliza Roche, but she fell ill and grew progressively worse. The wedding was repeatedly postponed until, three years later, Eliza died. Joseph Scriven would never give his heart to another.

Back home, in Ireland, Joseph's mother was deeply concerned for her heartbroken son, and he in turn was concerned for her. One night he composed a poem to comfort her little knowing that it would become one of the best loved songs of all time. Several years later a friend found it in a drawer at Joseph's house and was deeply moved. "The Lord and I wrote it together," Joseph explained. That poem continues to call people whatever their condition to prayer.

*What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit,
Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!
Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged—
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful,
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
Take it to the Lord in prayer.*