



St. Andrew's

Episcopal Church

Morning Prayer

Wednesday, September 25th

Praise Song: What A Friend We Have In Jesus

What a friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer
O what peace we often forfeit
O 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

Are we weak and heavy laden
Cumbered with a load of care
Precious Savior still our refuge
Take it to the Lord in prayer
Do thy friends despise forsake thee
Take it to the Lord in prayer
In His arms He'll take and shield thee
Thou wilt find a solace there

A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: And there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.
= Proverbs 18:24

Someone has well penned this statement, "A Christian's practical theology is often his hymnology." Many of us could attest to this truth as we recall some deeply moving experience—perhaps the loss of a dear loved one—and a simple hymn which has been used by the Holy Spirit to minister to our spiritual need.

Such a hymn is "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." Though it is not considered to be an example of great literary writing, its simply stated truths have brought solace and comfort to countless numbers of God's people since it was first written in 1857. So relevant to the basic spiritual needs of people are these words that many missionaries state that it is one of the first hymns taught to new converts. The very simplicity of the text and music has been its appeal and strength.

Joseph Scriven was born in 1819 of prosperous parents in Dublin, Ireland. He was a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin. At the age of twenty-five he decided to leave his native country and migrate to Canada. His reasons for leaving his family and country seem to be two-fold: the religious influence of the Plymouth Brethren upon his life estranging him from his family and the accidental drowning of his fiancée the night before their scheduled wedding.

From that time Scriven developed a totally different pattern of life. He took the Sermon on the Mount literally. It is said that he gave freely of his limited possessions, even sharing the clothing from his own body, if necessary, and never once refused to help anyone who needed it. Ira Sankey tells in his writings of the man who, seeing Scriven in the streets of Port Hope, Ontario, with his sawbuck and saw, asked, "Who is that man? I want him to work for me." The answer was, "You cannot get that man; he saws wood only for poor widows and sick people who cannot pay." Because of this manner of life Scriven was respected but was considered to be eccentric by those who knew him.

"What a Friend We Have in Jesus" was never intended by Scriven for publication. Upon learning of his mother's serious illness and unable to be with her in far-off Dublin, he wrote a letter of comfort enclosing the words of this text. Some time later when he himself was ill, a friend who came to call on him chanced to see the poem scribbled on scratch paper near the bed. The friend read it with keen interest and asked Scriven if he had written the words. Scriven, with typical modesty, replied, "The Lord and I did it between us." In 1869 a small collection of his poems was published. It was simply entitled Hymns and Other Verses.

After the death of Joseph Scriven, also by accidental drowning, the citizens of Port Hope, Ontario, erected a monument

on the Port Hope-Peterborough Highway, which runs from Lake Ontario, with the text and these words inscribed:

Four miles north, in Pengally's Cemetery, lies the philanthropist and author of this great masterpiece, written at Port Hope, 1857.

The composer of the music, Charles C. Converse, was a well-educated versatile and successful Christian, whose talents ranged from law to professional music. Under the pen name of Karl Reden, he wrote numerous scholarly articles on many subjects. Though he was an excellent musician and composer with many of his works performed by the leading American orchestras and choirs of his day, his life is best remembered for this simple music so well suited to Scriven's text.

Ira D. Sankey discovered the hymn in 1875, just in time to include it in his well-known collection, Sankey's Gospel Hymns Number One. Later Sankey wrote, "The last hymn which went into the book became one of the first in favor."

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 19:1-10)

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?" They replied, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." Then he said, "Into what, then, were you baptized?" They answered, "Into John's baptism." Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied, altogether there were about twelve of them.

He entered the synagogue and for three months spoke out boldly and argued persuasively about the kingdom of God. When some stubbornly refused to believe and spoke evil of the Way before the congregation, he left them, taking the disciples with him, and argued daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke (Luke 4:1-13)

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tested by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over he was famished. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.' "

Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered him, "It is written,

'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.' "

Then the devil led him to Jerusalem and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written,

'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' "

Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' " When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**