

Joseph Scriven, an Irishman, wrote the hymn, **What A Friend We Have in Jesus**, in 1855.

At the age of 25 Joseph Scriven had been engaged to be married in his native country Ireland but the day before the wedding his fiancée accidentally drowned in a lake. Shocked and depressed by this, Scriven migrated to Canada, and settled down in Ontario.

In 1855, Scriven received news from Ireland that his mother was terribly ill. This is what inspired him to write the words of this hymn. He first wrote it as a poem to comfort his mother entitled *Pray Without Ceasing*. It was later set to music and renamed by Charles Converse, to become this hymn we know today as **What A Friend We Have in Jesus**.

Two years after writing the words of this hymn, in 1857, Scriven again fell in love. But once again, just before the wedding, his bride, Eliza Roche, contracted pneumonia and died.

Scriven decided then to devote the rest of his life to preaching and helping others until his death by drowning in 1886 at the age of 66.

Scriven had no idea that the poem he had written to comfort his ailing mother would one day become such a favorite hymn about **prayer** among millions of Christians around the world in the years and decades to come.