

He Leadeth Me

By
Bill Dagle

Much ink has been used to answer the question, “How can I know God’s leading?” All of us, in one way or another, would like to know the answer. Somewhere along the way, I heard a Bible teacher say this about God’s leading: “To know His leading, there are three things—the Bible, the Holy Spirit, and the circumstances of life. God will use all of these to direct our paths into His will.” Because the Bible tells us to speak to one another (Eph. 5:10) and to encourage one another (Heb. 10:25), I’m thinking of a hymn that will do just that.

The song, *He Leadeth Me*, was written in 1861 at the First Baptist Church in Philadelphia, or to be more precise, the house next door. John Henry Gilmore was the supply pastor and, following prayer meeting, was visiting Deacon Watson in the house next door. The members of the church had gathered there and were discussing the pastor’s message on the 23rd Psalm. As Pastor Gilmore listened, he started to write: and within a short time, had completed the hymn. Giving the hymn to his wife, the good pastor soon forgot about it. A few years later, while visiting a church in Rochester, New York, to his surprise, he found his song in a new hymnal the church was using. Apparently, Mrs. Gilmore had sent the words to a Baptist publication. William Bradbury, the *Father of Gospel Music*, had seen the words and added some music. Thus, a new hymn was born.

It’s been said that music prepares the heart for the message. This hymn does that. In its verses, we are reminded that God’s Word, His Spirit and the ups and downs of life are used to lead His children—both in this life and even in the valley to the next (Psalm 23).

He leadeth me—Oh blessed thought! Oh, words with heavenly comfort fraught!
Whate’er I do, wher-e’er I be, Still ‘tis God’s hand that leadeth me.

Sometimes ’mid scenes of deepest gloom, Sometimes where Eden’s bowers bloom, By
waters calm, o’er troubled sea, Still ‘tis His hand that leadeth me.

Lord, I would clasp thy hand in mine, Nor ever murmur or repine; Content whatever lot I
see, Since ‘tis my God that leadeth me.

And when my task on earth is done, When, by Thy grace, the victory’s won, E’en death’s
cold wave I will not flee, Since God through Jordan, leadeth me.

Chorus

He leadeth me, He leadeth me; By His own hand He leadeth me; His faithful follower I
would be, For by His hand He leadeth me.