

# GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## “He Leadeth Me, O Blessed Thought!”

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**H**e leadeth me, O blessed thought... These words were written by a Baptist preacher as he studied his text for a lesson on the 23 Psalm, for the mid-week service on the 26th. of March, 1862. It was penned during the darkest days of the Civil War. He wrote that he wasn't sure if the war had anything to do with writing the hymn, but maybe subconsciously, he realized that the Lord's leadership is such a significant human experience that it needed to be remembered that the Lord leads all of us. And at this time in our history, we desperately needed it. Later in the evening he gave the hand-written hymn to his wife and thought no more about it. She however sent the hymn to a publication in Boston, and they printed it.

The preacher, Joseph H. Gilmore, the son of the Governor of New Hampshire, a graduate from Brown University, wasn't aware that the composer William Bradbury had set the words of his hymn to music. But when he opened a hymnal at the second Baptist Church in Rochester, New York in 1865 to see what they were singing, he turned to the

page titled “He Leadeth Me”.

We as Christians today, appreciate the quiet and reverent feelings that come from reading the first few verses of Psalm 23; *“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside still waters. He restoreth my soul: He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.”*

Reading further; *“...yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.”* We have the fulfilled understanding that regardless of hardships, regardless of the outcome of life, knowing that if we stand with the lord and go where He leads, we will overcome all obstacles in life.

Continuing, *“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou hast anointed my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and loving kindness shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah for ever.”* The knowledge that our Lord provides all things to Christians as we need them, and then offers us a home at the end of

time, if we have kept his commandments and abided in the faith offers us security in an uncertain world. This trust is reflected in a verse penned by Mr. Gilmore, which is included in some hymnals: *“Lord, I place my hand in Thine, nor ever murmur or repine; Content, whatever lot I see, since 'tis my God who leadeth me.”*

Joseph Gilmore was in Pennsylvania when he wrote this hymn. March would have been cold and overcast in that part of the country, and from what I could fine, although he wrote several books, this was the only hymn he wrote. In the political climate of the day with the turmoil of a war pitting brother against brother, North against South, this man, who was starting his life's calling, penned this wonderful old hymn. Like then, our world today is at war. Such shared times should cause us to likewise acknowledge that without the Lord, we would walk a difficult road, if not an impossible one. So when “*He Leadeth Me*” is selected, we need to consider Gilmore's closing refrain, *“...His faithful follow'r I would be, For by his hand He leadeth me.”* May we sing with *grace in our hearts to the Lord who leads us (Eph. 5:19).*