

This Is My Father's World

By
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The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 3:1, "To every thing there is a season." In Ecclesiastes 3:11, Solomon adds, "He hath made everything beautiful in His time." The Lord also reminds us that the world is His and the fullness thereof in Psalm 52:12. Apparently, this was what Maltbie L. Babcock had in mind when he wrote the hymn, "This Is My Father's World."

Born in Syracuse, New York, on August 3, 1858, into a socially prominent family, Maltbie was given many opportunities to succeed, which he did not waste. At Syracuse University, he was a champion baseball pitcher and an outstanding varsity swimmer. His friendliness, coupled with a magnetic personality, made him a natural leader. In the years that followed, he was ordained into the Presbyterian Church and had a distinguished ministry in Baltimore and New York City's Brick Presbyterian Church. His life would be cut short at the age of 43, while on a Mediterranean tour to Naples, Italy. Rev. Maltbie Babcock would, by now, be totally forgotten except for one thing: he penned a song, thus preserving his story for us who love the hymns.

The pastor was a skilled musician and a great lover of nature. He enjoyed the "great outdoors." While pastoring a church in Lockport, New York, the inspiration for writing "This Is My Father's World" came to him. Rev. Babcock was in the habit of taking morning walks to the top of a hill north of Lockport where he had a full view of Lake Ontario and the surrounding countryside. He would say to his wife, "I'm going out to see my Father's world." It was on one of these early morning walks that he was inspired to write these words:

This is my Father's world, and to my listening ears
All nature sings and round me rings the music of the spheres.

Maltbie Babcock understood that nature reflects God's creative ownership of the world, but he also understood that the Lord also controls man's destiny:

This is my Father's world, O let me ne'er forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong
God is the Ruler yet.
This is my Father's world! The battle is not done,
Jesus who died shall be satisfied.
And earth and heaven be one.

Who's controlling your destiny?