



This Is My Father's World



"This is my Father's world,
and to my list'ning ears,
all nature sings and 'round me rings
the music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world,
I rest me in the thought
of rocks and trees, of skies and seas,
His hand the wonders wrought.

"This is my Father's world,
the birds their carols raise;
the morning light, the lily white
declare their Maker's praise.
This is my Father's world,
He shines in all that's fair;
in the rustling grass I hear Him pass,
He speaks to me everywhere.

"This is my Father's world,
O let me ne'er forget
that though the wrong seems off 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 heav'n be one."

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork." -
Psalm 19:1

"The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." - Psalm 33:5

The lovely lyrics of today's hymn were drawn from a poem by Maltbie D. Babcock, an outstanding Presbyterian minister, skilled athlete and accomplished musician from upstate New York. Dr. Babcock enjoyed outdoor activity and early morning walks along the Niagara Escarpment, saying as he went, "I'm going out to see my Father's world." His love of music is revealed in the line, "All nature sings and round me rings the music of the spheres."

"This is my Father's World" is a tribute to nature, but more importantly the unfailing power of God and the assurance of Christ's eventual reign - "and earth and heaven be one." The words paint a picture of all that is lovely in the world around us, and we are encouraged to have "list'ning ears" and eyes to see the beauty of God's marvelous creation.

Unfortunately, in this world of sin, the news is saturated with stories of violence, tragedy, perversions, corruption, hatred, anger, greed and pride - evidence of godless behavior on the part of those who reject God and His ways. But Maltbie Babcock points us away from "the wrong that seems oft so strong" to the God of heaven who "is the Ruler yet." Which brings to mind a line from "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day," by Henry W. Longfellow:

"And in despair I bowed my head: 'There is no peace on earth,' I said, 'For hate is strong, and mocks the song of peace on earth, good-will to men'." These words were written in 1864 as the Civil War raged on, and Henry had fallen into deep depression after the death of his wife in a fire. Life seemed hopeless, until the church bells reminded him of the truth, "God is not dead, nor doth He sleep; the wrong shall fail, the right prevail, with peace on earth, good-will to men."

We are indeed in a spiritual battle, but Babcock and Longfellow both understood that the victory will be won by Almighty God in His time. Judgment will fall on the wicked as righteousness and justice prevail, and those who are in Christ will live eternally with the Lord, where there is no more sin or sorrow, and the beauties of our present world are superseded by the glories of heaven.

There is so much beauty to behold each day, and it often appears unexpectedly: a glowing sunset, chirping birds, monarch butterflies, gentle ocean waves, flowering trees, and rainbows, to name a few. And we know that God can use such things to encourage His people when they need it the most.

A touching example of this was shared this past week by friends who have a close connection to the shooting in Nashville several weeks ago, where a troubled young woman killed 3 adults and 3 students at Covenant Christian School. As the first chapel after the tragedy was about to begin, a double rainbow appeared in the sky between two of the buildings, and one of the witnesses described it this way: "It was SO bright and SO intense and seemed to last forever. It was like God was yelling from heaven - "I see you! I have not forgotten you!" It was one of the most poignant things I've ever experienced in my life. God never promises for everything to make sense. He's God and we're not. But He promises that He loves us and will always take care of us. And what did God decide to use to show this promise (also known as His COVENANT!!) to His people? RAINBOWS.