



HYMNS

FOR MORNING DEVOTION

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This is My Father's World

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Psalm 19:1 — "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

The singing of hymns instills a living and breathing theology and doxology within a congregation who has a love for God's Word. Hymns cover a broad range of topics within Christendom. One of my favorite hymns is *This is My Father's World*, which reminds the faithful Christian that God made a wonderful world to enjoy. Despite the evil and troubles of the world, God still reigns and we should rejoice!

Like many hymns, the lyrics to *This is My Father's World* began as a poem written by a Presbyterian pastor in the late nineteenth century. Maltbie Babcock was an immensely talented individual, raised in an aristocratic family, he was not only a scholar but an athlete and musician. His student years at Syracuse University showcased his talents as a swimmer, ball player, instrumentalist, vocalist, and entertainer. His outlook for life was limitless in the secular world, yet God called him to the ministry.

Babcock trained at Auburn Theological Seminary and became pastor at the First Presbyterian Church in Lockport, New York. While he was a pastor he wrote the sixteen-stanza poem with each verse beginning with "This is My Father's World." The poem was birthed out of his love for the outdoors, a love I share as well. He had a great passion for hiking. Living in the beautiful foothills of the Appalachian mountains in Huntsville, Alabama, I often engage in long solo hikes in the majestic scenery. I've found, as Babcock did, that being alone in nature helps tune my soul to our Creator, hear His voice more clearly, and appreciate the amazing creation and beauty of this world.

Jesus told us there would be struggles and trials in a Christian's life. In this modern age the tendency is to rely on an electronic medium or some other man-made comfort to satisfy. There is value though in discovering the healing balm of solitude in God's creation. I love Psalm 19:1 in which the Psalmist says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." Nothing man creates can compare to the beauty of a brilliant orange sunset in the fall, or a gentle fog rolling over the mountains at dawn. When life gets chaotic, the remedy is slowing down, reorienting ourselves with the God of Creation, and remembering these poignant words of Babcock's song:

*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:
why should my heart be sad?
The Lord is King; let the heavens ring!
God reigns; let the earth be glad!*