

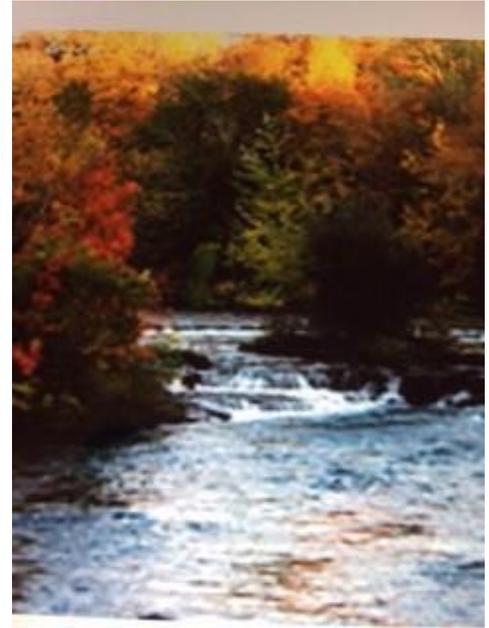
9-11-20

Does a phrase from a hymn ever get stuck in your head? Lately I have been thinking of this one:

“Though the ‘wrong’ seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet...”

Do you recognize it?

It is a line from *THIS IS MY FATHER’S WORLD*, written by The Rev. Maltbie Babcock while he was serving his first church in Lockport, NY. Hailing from an aristocrat family, Babcock was a brilliant scholar with a winning personality. While at Syracuse University he played several instruments and enjoyed composing. He also was proficient at singing, as well as directing the university orchestra and glee club; he might have become a professional musician had he not felt called to the ministry! Graduating with highest honors, he then studied theology at Auburn Theological Seminary, receiving his degree in 1882 and beginning his first pastorate in Lockport at the First Presbyterian Church. He was a tall and athletic man and when not tending to church duties, he loved being outside – running, biking or in the beautiful hills outside of town. He would tell his secretary, “I’m going out to see my Father’s world!” and he would then proceed to lose himself in nature. It is easy to imagine that he could have penned the words to the hymn after such a day; his soul fairly bubbles over with joy and gratitude.



It is in verse 3 that he wrote the words stuck in my head...

“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!”

Almost a century and a half later – in our own days of “wrong that is so strong” – we too can take comfort in that statement of faith and hope. Regrettably, Babcock never got to hear the lovely hymn, written in 1916 to his wonderful words. From Lockport, he was called to a church in Baltimore and finally in 1899 to the prestigious Brick Presbyterian Church in New York City (at a salary of \$30,000 per year!!) to fill the pulpit left by the retirement of Henry Van Dyke (see last week’s *MUSINGS*) Having a heavy work load, he found it difficult to take off on his hikes, but he faced it stoically, writing...

“ Be strong! We have hard work to do and loads to lift; shun not the struggle. Face it. ‘Tis God’s gift. Be strong,”

After being there only 18 months, his church rewarded him with a trip to the Holy Land; sadly, while en route, he contracted a deadly virus and died in Italy on May 18, 1901 at the young age of 42.

Though he never published anything during his lifetime, after his death his wife Katherine compiled his writings, thus gifting the world with one of the most beloved texts in our hymnals today.

Enter this link in your browser

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIRVqikQg9U>

to experience an exquisite rendition by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir complete with slides of "God's world" which Maltbie Babcock would have loved!

