

# HYMNS, OUR CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

## LESSON 19 Upper Level – Day is Dying in the West

PACING: 1 day

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**ESSENTIAL QUESTION, BIG IDEA, and STANDARDS:** See Introduction to *Hymns, Our Christian Heritage*.

**CONCEPT:** Christian hymns are a cherished and valuable legacy, expressing the emotions and experiences of God's people through many centuries.

**OBJECTIVES:** Learn the text and tune of an important hymn of faith. Interpret the spiritual meaning of the hymn. Understand and communicate important facts about the life of the author of the words and/or the composer of the music.

**VOCABULARY:** hymn, hymn writer, hymnal, text, tune, composer, verse, stanza

**RESOURCES:** Performances of "Day Is Dying in the West"

- ✓ Ladies trio, *a cappella*, beside the ocean, SDA (2:34), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ro76IDZ8qtQ>
- ✓ Oakwood College Aeolians, *a cappella* (6:25), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0rGBVT7GkfU>
- ✓ Children's choir with organ accompaniment (2:40), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s8iWst8K4Rw>
- ✓ Organ only with lyrics shown (3:09), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3ok5lfgNcl>

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### ACTIVITIES:

- ✓ Either give each student a printed copy of the hymn, display the hymn for the class electronically or have the students find the hymn "Day Is Dying in the West" (#51) in the *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*.
- ✓ Read the words through together. Discuss what the words mean. Review the meaning of specific words and phrases to clarify the students' understanding: *day is dying in the west, evening lamps, dome of the universe, embrace, eternal morning*, etc.
- ✓ Play a recording of the hymn for the students. (See links above)
- ✓ Use discussion questions found in the Introduction to *Hymns, Our Christian Heritage*.
- ✓ Sing the hymn together. Discuss its form, melody and rhythm. Note how many *verses* or *stanzas* it has. Does it have a Refrain?
- ✓ The music included in this hymn lesson is written in 3/4 time in the key of F. The music in the *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* is written in 6/4 time in the key of G. What does that mean? (If you change the time signature from 3/4 to 6/4 and take out every other bar line, the result would be music in 6/4 time. But it would sound the same. Changing from the key of G to the key of F makes the whole song one whole step lower—and for a lot of people, easier to sing, especially the last line where the melody goes quite high.)
- ✓ Read or tell the story of Mary Lathbury who wrote the words of this hymn, using the biographical sketch found in this lesson.
- ✓ Mary Lathbury's book may be downloaded or read on line in its entirety: *Child's Life of Christ, Stories from the Bible* (Mary A. Lathbury, published 1898).
- ✓ Ask people in your church if they know this hymn. Find out what their memories are of this hymn.
- ✓ Discuss the reason this hymn was written and the manner of its first performance. Do you think that how and where and by whom a piece is performed can make it memorable—or not? Why? What is a *laureate*? Can there be laureates in different areas?
- ✓ Research what the Chautauqua movement was all about. Were they like our camp meetings today?
- ✓ Review the story by completing the Lesson 19 Review.

- ✓ Sing the hymn, focusing on its expressive qualities and memorization of at least the first stanza.
- ✓ Choose a venue to perform the hymn. If no opportunity is found for a performance at the school, church or other community event, consider videotaping a performance for future use.
- ✓ Create posters for a bulletin board display featuring aspects of the hymn story or the words of the hymn in a calligraphic style with hand-drawn illustrations.
- ✓ Use activities found in the Introduction to *Hymns, Our Christian Heritage*.
- ✓ EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:
  - Create a choral reading of the hymn.
  - Create a special arrangement of the hymn, utilizing vocal or instrumental solos or ensembles, etc.
  - Create a skit telling the story of the hymn writer or the circumstances under which the hymn was written. This may be presented to the younger students in a worship or at Sabbath School or church.

**ASSESSMENT:**

There is a Lesson 19 UL Review included. Also, any of the following assessments may be used: teacher observation, discussion, performance, teacher-created worksheets.

**ANSWER KEY: (8 points) "Day Is Dying in the West"**

1. B
2. A
3. False
4. True
5. C
6. B
7. C
8. True

## Day is Dying in the West

### Mary Artemesia Lathbury (1841-1913)

Mary was born in New York to devout Christian parents. Her father was a preacher, and later her two brothers also became preachers in the Methodist Church. Mary discovered that she had talent for drawing and writing poetry. As a little girl, she loved to write poems and illustrate the pages on which they were written. Mary said she heard a voice one day that she believed was God. He said to her, "Remember, my child, that you have a gift of weaving fancies into verse and a gift with the pencil of producing visions that come to your heart. Consecrate these to Me as thoroughly as you do your inmost spirit." And that is what she did.



As the years passed, the multi-talented Miss Lathbury taught art in various schools and then became associate editor of *The Methodist Episcopal Sunday School papers*. She contributed much to these magazines and books for children. This job led her to become involved in the beginnings of the Chautauqua movement located at a former Methodist campground on the shore of Lake Chautauqua in New York.

Begun in 1874, Chautauqua was a ten-week adult education program held each summer. There were lectures, concerts and other high-class entertainment. She attended the sessions for years, regularly responding to requests to write hymns for the Chautauqua programs. She became known as the "Laureate of Chautauqua."

One time her boss, John Vincent, asked her to write a study hymn for the Chautauqua group. "Day Is Dying in the West" was the result. It was first sung August 5, 1877, at the outdoor evening worship. First, it was played as a cornet duet; then it was sung as a solo by Mr. Sherwin, who had written the music. Finally, it was sung by the choir, directed by Sherwin. The choir members were all in boats a short distance from the shore.

Try to imagine the scene as the sun set with the beautiful sounds of Isaiah 6:3 drifting across the water: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory."

This story is told by Cathy O'Bryant in her book *Going In and Out My Window* (XLibris Corp, 2011): "...family worship always began by us singing, 'Day Is Dying in the West.' We kids thought the song was so boring that we giggled through the song. We never knew or felt the impact of that family worship hour until we were grown. Nor did we realize its effect on our neighborhood friends." Then a friend told her that when they were visiting the beautiful island of Jamaica with Cathy's sister, she broke into singing this hymn as the sun set on Friday evening. To everyone's surprise the rest began singing with her, and found they knew all the words! Cathy's friend said that she searched Baptist and Methodist hymnals and found the song only in the *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*.

Student Name:

## Hymns, Our Christian Heritage Lesson 19 UL - Review

Score:

8

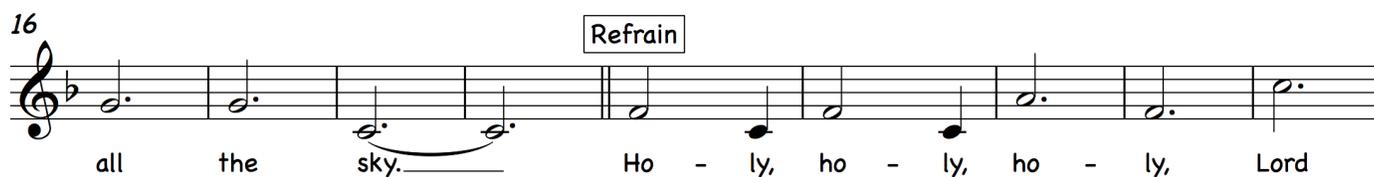
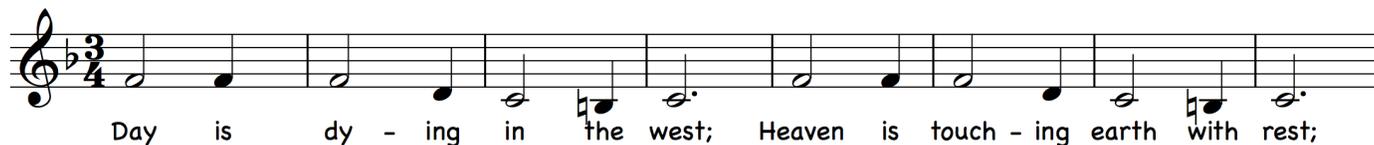
### “Day Is Dying in the West” Text by Mary A. Lathbury

1. What was the profession of Mary’s father?
  - a. Teacher
  - b. Preacher
  - c. Banker
2. What talents did Mary discover she had?
  - a. Writing poetry and drawing
  - b. Knitting and sewing
  - c. Writing music
3. True or False. Mary was never able to teach art in spite of her desire to do so.
4. True or False. Chautauqua was a ten-week summer adult education program.
5. The first Chautauquas were held beside
  - a. Lake Michigan
  - b. The Great Salt Lake
  - c. Lake Chautauqua
6. When Miss Lathbury’s boss asked her to write a hymn for the close of the day, she wrote
  - a. “Now the Day is Over”
  - b. “Day is Dying in the West”
  - c. “All Through the Night”
7. While they were singing, the choir members were
  - a. Marching around the camp
  - b. Standing in the choir loft of the church
  - c. Sitting in boats in the lake
8. True or False. Part of the hymn text comes from Isaiah 6:3.

# Day Is Dying in the West

Mary A. Lathbury, 1877

William F. Sherwin, 1877



2. Lord of life, beneath the dome of the universe, Thy home,  
Gather us who seek Thy face to the fold of Thy embrace, for Thou art nigh.  
REFRAIN

3. While the deepening shadows fall, heart of love, enfolding all,  
Thro' the glory and the grace of the stars that veil Thy face, our hearts ascend.  
REFRAIN

4. When forever from our sight pass the stars, the day, the night,  
Lord of angels, on our eyes let eternal morning rise, and shadows end.  
REFRAIN