



**A**ND one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. (Isaiah 6:3)

Though not generally considered as such, this hymn could easily pass for a liturgical work for its appeal to the Doctrine of the Trinity and its reverence for the over-arching Providence of God.

The lyrics to this majestic hymn is the composition of Mary A. Lathbury, same author of '*Break Thou the Bread of Life,*' in 1877. Both hymns were written on the shores of Lake Chatauqua in New York. The tune, CHATAUQUA, is the work of William F. Sherwin. (1877)

### **Day is Dying in the West**

Day is dying in the west;  
Heav'n is touching earth with rest;  
Wait and worship while the night  
Sets the evening lamps alight  
Through all the sky.

#### *Refrain*

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts!  
Heav'n and earth are full of Thee!  
Heav'n and earth are praising Thee,  
O Lord most high!

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*

While the deepening shadows fall,  
Heart of love enfolding all,  
Through the glory and the grace  
Of the stars that veil Thy face,  
Our hearts ascend.

*Refrain*

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*

**Day is dying in the west; Heav'n is touching earth with rest; Wait and worship while the night Sets the evening lamps alight Through all the sky.** When I consider the moral decadence happening in the western powers (who were once the bearers of the cross to many lands), I am tempted to say that the first line of this hymn is prophetic of that decadence; however, I will adhere to the principle of the author and apply the depth of meaning she intends. One salient point of this first verse is finality of the time scale of this life. From birth until the last breath, we are dying to this earthly life and stand on the verge of Jordan's far Bank. Just as God rested on the seventh day of Creation, so will this world rest in ruin at its fiery end. The daytime and harvest will continue until that day, but the hour grows near, and the shadows lengthen for mortal man and his world, and in the meantime, God's beauty and art continues to illumine the skies with a golden sun by day, and the lamp-lit stars at night. In between, we enjoy a brilliant array of horizon colors both at sunrise and sunset.

**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.** All life under the dome of heaven comes from God, and is sustained, moment by moment, by His upholding hand. A work of the Church is to gather those of faith together in worship who seek the face of God – not worldly reward; but the treasures of Heaven. Just as the beggar Lazarus was gathered to the bosom of Abraham, so will the Lord gather His elect to that same haven in Abraham who believed the Promise made to Abraham and who are considered the true children of Abraham. The last line should be a mighty comfort to all who believe – that is, the Lord is nigh to those who trust in Him. *The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.* (Psalm 34:18)

**While the deepening shadows fall, Heart of love enfolding all, Through the glory and the grace Of the stars that veil Thy face, Our hearts ascend.** We notice not the encroachment of death in our youthful vigor, but as the autumn of our days fade and the winter of life approaches, the shadow of death looms large. The Christian may take joy in the knowledge that death is only a powerless shadow and not a reality. The love of God does, indeed, enfold His chosen Elect at the moment of death. There can be no greater peace than that which is evidenced in the words and gestures of those who pass from this life into glory. The divine, star-laden winds of Heaven cover our features and change us to the glorified souls that God has promised. *51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and*

*this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Cor 15:51-57 (KJV) One thing that we carry with us from this world to the next – our HEARTS! (see Romans 8:38-39)*

*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.* The strongest point of this verse is the eternity of morning in Eternity. Since there is no evening or night, all of our eternal day shall be morning. Darkness cannot exist in the Presence of God, so Heaven is all light and not darkness. There is no need for moon, Sun, or stars in that Paradise of the Lord. Though our Lord is the Light of the World : *I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* (John 8:12); He is also the Light of Heaven: *And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.* (Rev 21:23)

### **The Refrain**

*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts! Heav'n and earth are full of Thee! Heav'n and earth are praising Thee, O Lord most high!* Herein is the primary reason I attribute this hymn to a liturgical role – the Three Holies of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is referred to as the TRISAGION. The Trisagion is a hymn of invocation proclaiming our God as thrice Holy; however, I believe it is tripled in Holiness by the Three Persons of the Godhead. These Three are Holy and without difference in that quality. God the Father is Holy: *For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy.* (Lev 11:44) God the Son is Holy: *26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. 27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.* (Acts 4:26-28) Note in this last text that our Lord was not a victim of villains – He was in control of the process of our salvation in His Passion. God the Holy Ghost is Holy: *26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* (John 14:26) Our God incorporates all three dimensions in an eternity of infinite measure. Are you securely havened within that dimension of God?