



The Last Mile of the Way

#457, Hymns for Worship

Background

- Written by Johnson Oatman (1856-1922)
A prolific song writer – “Higher Ground”, “Count Your Blessings”, “No, Not One”, etc.
- Last Mile of the Way, published 1908.
- A message of encouragement and endurance as long as we live on earth

Vs. 1 – The Pathway of Duty

- “If I walk in the pathway of duty”
 - “IF” – conditional understanding
 - I have responsibilities.
 - An acknowledgment that our salvation is conditional
(**cf. Galatians 6:9, Hebrews 2:3**)

Vs. 1 – The Pathway of Duty

- **“If I walk in the pathway of duty”**
 - The way to heaven – a narrow way
 - **Matthew 7:13-14**
 - I have a duty – expectations, obligation and responsibility –
 - Psalm 119:35**
 - **Luke 17:10**

Vs. 1 – The Pathway of Duty

- **“If I work to the close of the day”**
 - I must stay busy “all day”.
- Introduced to main theme of this song
 - **Revelation 2:10**
 - **John 9:4** – Jesus was working while day
 - **Luke 12:35-40** – working while waiting for the master

Vs. 1 – The Pathway of Duty

- “I shall see the great King...”
 - In every verse – a phrase reminding us of our eternal reward for faithfulness
 - After this life, I shall see Jesus, my King – **Hebrews 12:1-2** – we look to Jesus, who has finished the race
 - **1 Thessalonians 4:17,**
 - 1 John 3:2** – when revealed, we shall see Him as He is

Vs. 1 – The Pathway of Duty

When I've gone the last mile of the way

- Premise – we cannot quit!
- **Luke 9:62** – anyone looks back
 - **Hebrews 10:38-39**
 - **Revelation 14:13**
- “Last mile” – you cannot work MOST of your life and “retire” while on earth!
Keep pressing on
(**cf. Philippians 3:12-14**)

Vs. 1 – The Pathway of Duty

When I've gone the last mile of
the way

Vs. 2 – Proclaim the glad story

If for Christ, I proclaim the glad story

- I need to be thinking of others
- **Matthew 28:19-20** – spiritually
 - **Acts 8:4** – they went everywhere
- **Matthew 5:14-16, Philippians 2:15** – shining as lights

Vs. 2 – Proclaim the glad story

If I seek for His sheep gone astray

- Concern for erring brethren
- **Luke 15:4-7** – parable of lost sheep
- **James 5:19-20, Galatians 6:1-2**

Vs. 2 – Proclaim the glad story

I am sure He will show me His glory ...

- Jesus is living in glory now –

Philippians 2:9ff,

- **1 Timothy 3:16** – received up in
glory

- **Hebrews 1:2-4** – brightness of the
glory of God – at His right hand

OUR anticipate glory - **Romans 2:7,**
10; 8:18, 2 Corinthians 4:17

Vs. 2 – Proclaim the glad story

**When I've gone the last mile of
the way**

Vs. 3 – If I have earnestly striven

And if here I have earnestly striven ...

- Striving implies intense and serious effort – **Luke 13:24**

– God always expects our best –

Colossians 3:23,

cf. Matthew 22:37

Jude 3 contend earnestly for the faith

Vs. 3 – If I have earnestly striven

And have tried all His will to obey...

- We **MUST** work to obey Him –

**Hebrews 5:9, 1 Peter 1:13-14,
Romans 6:16**

– Note: Tried – we will from time to time “miss the mark”

BUT that is **NO** excuse to ignore failures or be flippant about it.

While God does understand, He expects our loyalty!

Vs. 3 – If I have earnestly striven

It will enhance all the rapture of heaven

- “Rapture” not found in most English Bible
- Means – to be caught up in a euphoric state, an ecstatic feeling
- In older songs, does not necessarily imply premillennialism.
- Our song describes the beauty of heaven - **Cf. Revelation 21:10ff, Hebrews 11:16**

Vs. 3 – If I have earnestly striven

**When I've gone the last mile of
the way**

Ch. – The Last mile of the way

When I've gone the last mile of the way,
I will rest at the close of the day

- Rest, a promise of eternity

Revelation 14:13, Hebrews 4:9

Ch. – The Last mile of the way

And I know there are joys that await me

Heaven is a place of rejoicing –

Revelation 21:4, 22:3-5 – what will NOT be there, and how it is described

- But also note our FAITH in this phrase – **2 Timothy 1:12, 4:7-8**

Ch. – The Last mile of the way

When I've gone the last mile of
the way

Added verse -

“Here the dearest of ties we must sever,
Tears of sorrow are seen every day
But no sickness, no dying forever,
When I’ve gone the last mile of the way”
A hope of heaven – no disappointments
Revelation 21:4, etc.

Concluding remarks:

One day, our time on earth will be over.

(**Hebrews 9:27**)

We do not know when that will be,

(**James 4:14**)

But UNTIL THEN, are you living as if
this IS your last mile?

Let us pray!

