

Monday Matters



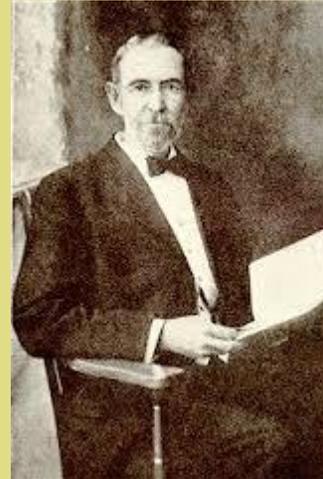
November 23, 2015



Johnson Oatman, Jr. was born in 1856 and lived in Lumberton, NJ., a small town located south of Trenton. His father was a local merchant but also had a gift for singing. Mr. Oatman, Sr. was the best singer in town with a powerful and rich voice. Unfortunately the young Oatman didn't inherit that same gift of singing even though his desire was to be involved with and contribute to society in some musical way.

Johnson Oatman worked for a short time in the family business but gave that up to study for the ministry. For a time after completing his education he ministered in Methodist Episcopal churches. Throughout this time he always hoped that God had other plans for him.

It was when he turned 36 that he realized that he did have a musical talent after all. He found that he could write songs that other Christians would sing. He had found a way to preach the message of Christ through his musical compositions. Over the years he wrote in the neighborhood of 5,000 songs. Songs like "Higher Ground" and "No, Not One" are some of his most famous written pieces. However, one song, written in 1897, stands above all others - "Count Your Blessings".



Today we sing this song in churches across America, especially at this time of year. We use the words "count your blessings" as an expression of thankfulness not just in this season but throughout the year. Someone once wrote about this song that "It is like a beam of sunlight that has brightened up the dark places of the earth." During the revival in Wales it was one of the hymns sung at every service. In England during the turn of the century it was said that "The men sing it, the boys whistle it, and the women rock their babies to sleep on this hymn." "Count Your Blessings" is still a favorite today.

There are times in our country that we tend to take for granted all of the blessings and comforts we have and enjoy. This is the Thanksgiving season and a time to remember all of the blessings we have received. The hymn, "Count Your Blessings", does not tell us to deny or ignore our problems. It does not tell us to be happy and act as if everything is okay. The hymn is really encouraging us to acknowledge that we are at times "burdened with a load of care" or even "tempest tossed". During those times we are to bring these concerns to God in prayer.

With bringing these concerns to God we find that we don't need to be discouraged but realize that "God is over all". **Listen to the words of "Count Your Blessings" sung by Guy Penrod.** There is no fancy orchestra backing him up or a choir, just the melody and words. As we count our blessings, naming them one by one, we will see all that God has done. We will see that He is there to comfort and help us throughout our entire life's journey.



Happy Thanksgiving and count all your blessings this Monday because it matters, this coming Thursday as we celebrate Thanksgiving and through the entire year.

RN



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