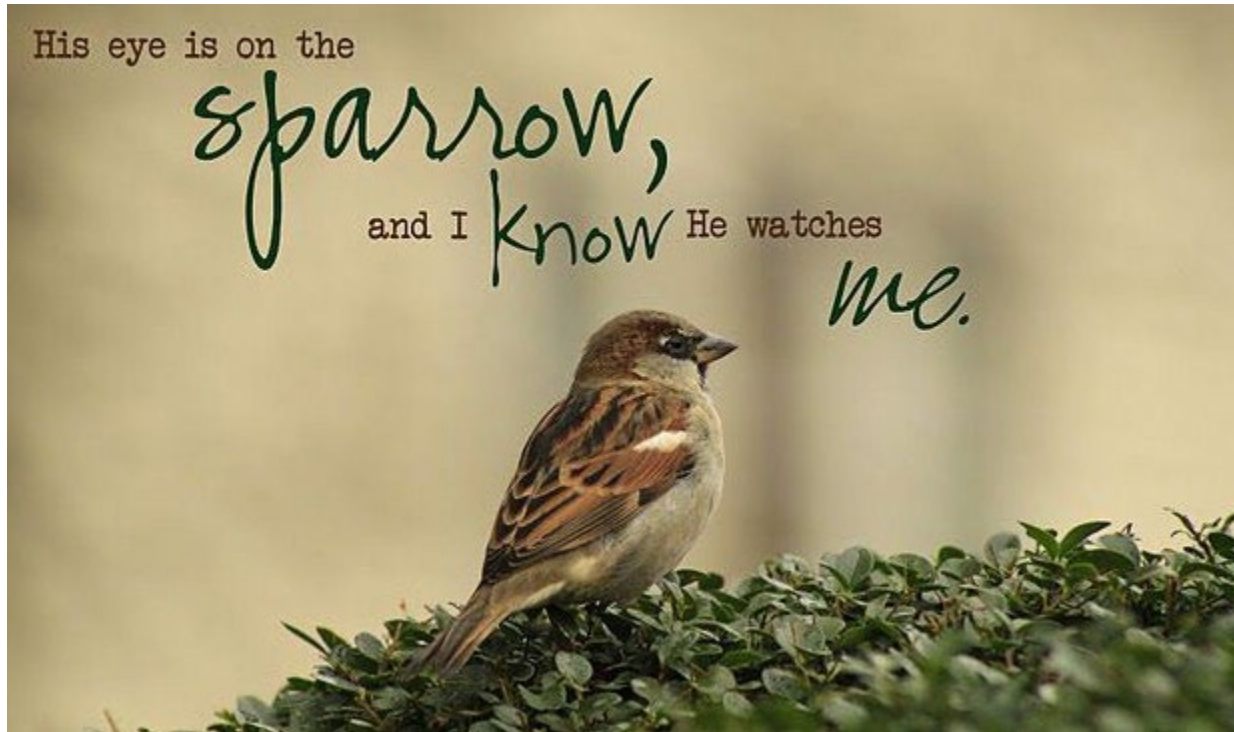


His Eye Is On The Sparrow

The Author: Civilla D. Martin (1866–1948)

The Composer: Charles H. Gabriel (1856–1932)



🎵 "His Eye Is On The Sparrow" Lyrics

Chorus

I sing because I'm **happy**, I sing because I'm **free**, For **His eye is on the sparrow**, And I know He **watches me**.

Stanzas

1. Why should I feel **discouraged**, why should the **shadows come**, Why should my heart be lonely, and long for **heav'n and home**? When **Jesus is my portion**, my **constant Friend is He**: His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He **watches me**.
2. **Let not your heart be troubled**, His tender word I hear, And resting on His goodness, I lose all doubt and fear; Though by the path He leadeth but one step I may see: His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He **watches me**.
3. Whenever I am tempted, whenever clouds arise, When songs give place to sighing, when hope within me dies, I draw **closer to Him**, from grief and fear to flee: His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He **watches me**.

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Background and Authorship

The Author: Civilla D. Martin (1866–1948)

- **Born:** New Brunswick, Canada.
- **Life:** Civilla D. Martin was a dedicated Christian wife and musician who collaborated frequently with her husband, Walter Stillman Martin, a Baptist evangelist and hymn writer. Her talent was in crafting simple, deeply emotional lyrics that directly addressed personal struggles and offered spiritual solace.

The Composer: Charles H. Gabriel (1856–1932)

- **Born:** Iowa, USA.
- **Life:** Charles H. Gabriel was perhaps the most prolific and influential composer of Gospel songs in American history, publishing over 7,000 works under various pseudonyms. He worked with many of the leading evangelists of his time, composing tunes designed to be singable, memorable, and impactful in revival meetings.
- **Contribution:** Gabriel composed the memorable music for "His Eye Is On The Sparrow" in **1905**. The tune is simple yet powerful, perfectly capturing the sense of calm assurance expressed in Martin's lyrics.

The Hymn's History

- **Origin:** The hymn was written in **1905** in the town of Elmira, New York. The Martins were visiting a couple, Mr. and Mrs. Doolittle, who were confined to their home due to chronic illness and physical disability. Despite their suffering, the Doolittles maintained a remarkably cheerful and joyful disposition.
- **Inspiration:** When Civilla Martin asked the couple how they managed to stay so positive, Mrs. Doolittle quoted the Bible, saying, "**His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.**" Inspired by their faith and that scriptural reference, Martin immediately penned the lyrics, which were quickly set to music by Gabriel.

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Scriptural Significance (KJV)

The hymn's title and central theme are a direct reference to Jesus's teaching on God's minute care for even the smallest creation, using the common King James Version language.

- **Central Theme: God's Constant Watchfulness** The core assurance that God cares for us, based on His care for a bird, comes from **Matthew 10:29-31**:

"Are not **two sparrows sold for a farthing?** and **one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father**. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. **Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.**" — **Matthew 10:29-31** (KJV)

- **Theme: Peace in Trouble (Stanza 2)** The hymn's call to let not the heart be troubled echoes the comforting words of Jesus to His disciples:

"**Let not your heart be troubled:** ye believe in God, believe also in me." — **John 14:1** (KJV)

- **Theme: Casting All Care Upon Him** The feeling of finding rest and losing doubt and fear aligns with the broader apostolic instruction:

"**Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.**" — **1 Peter 5:7** (KJV)

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✦ Uplifting Lore and History

The history of this hymn is rich with examples of it providing comfort in great distress, particularly through the life of a famous Gospel singer.

- **Ethel Waters and the Song of Survival:** Perhaps the most famous history associated with "His Eye Is On The Sparrow" is its close connection to the legendary jazz and gospel singer **Ethel Waters** (1896–1977). Waters described the hymn as the single most important song in her life. She said she first heard the song as a young girl, and it was sung to her by her deeply religious grandmother to comfort her during a time of extreme poverty and hardship.
- **A Source of Comfort and Strength:** Waters often sang the hymn in her concerts, crediting it with helping her survive the harsh challenges of her early life and giving her the spiritual foundation to overcome her struggles in show business. In her later years, as she dedicated her life more fully to Christian ministry, she became internationally known for her moving rendition of the hymn, making it a staple of her performances at Billy Graham crusades. Waters's deep personal connection to the hymn turned it into an anthem of perseverance and faith for millions.
- **The Doolittle's Testimony:** The original inspiration—the couple who, despite being homebound and ill, found peace in the idea that God was watching them—provides an enduring, uplifting message. Their quiet, radical faith in God's specific, personal care, even in the midst of chronic pain, is a testament to the fact that the greatest hymns often spring from the **simple, profound faith of ordinary people**.