

HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW

Civilla Martin, Lyrics; Charles Gabriel, Music; 1905

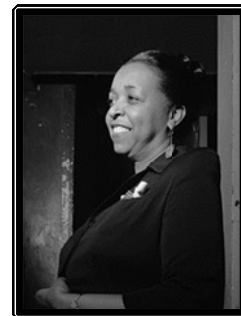
This hymn was written by teacher and hymn writer, Civilla Martin, who shared her inspiration to write the song. Early in the spring of 1905, she and her husband were sojourning in Elmira, New York. We contracted a deep friendship for a couple by the name of Mr. and Mrs. Doolittle, whom she said were true saints of God. Mrs. Doolittle had been bedridden for nigh twenty years. Her husband was an incurable cripple who had to propel himself to and from his business in a wheel chair. Despite their afflictions, they lived happy Christian lives, bringing inspiration and comfort to all who knew them. One day while we were visiting with the Doolittles, my husband commented on their bright hopefulness and asked them for the secret of it. Mrs. Doolittle's reply was simple: "*His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me*". The beauty of this simple expression of boundless faith gripped the hearts and fired the imagination of Dr. Martin and herself.



It only took a few minutes for Civilla to turn those words into the poem we know today as "*His Eye Is on the Sparrow*". That evening, Civilla's husband, Walter, a minister and composer in his own right, tried writing music for the poem, but was never satisfied. So the next day, he mailed it off to a composer friend of his in England, Charles Gabriel, who wrote the music and melody that we still sing today. He called the tune, "*Sparrow*". Gabriel was a prolific hymn writer and composer. Two of his most well-known tunes sung today are "*Will the Circle Be Unbroken*" and "*Higher Ground*".



"His Eye Is on the Sparrow" gained significant popularity when Singer, Ethel Waters, who so loved this song, used its name as the title for her autobiography.



~Tull