

His Eye Is On The Sparrow

By
Bill Dagle

It was Mrs. Martin's daughter who inspired her to write *God Will Take Care of You* with the simple reminder that God does during times of illness. The year was 1904, and the Martin's were living at Practical Bible Training School in Johnson City, New York, at the time. Born in Canada, Civilla Martin had taught school for a number of years, but was now traveling with her husband, William, in evangelistic work. It was William who put her poem to music; and the hymn, *God Will Take Care of You*, was born. God had used the words of a little girl the first time to move Civilla's heart, and now He would do it again with the words of an invalid woman.

It was a bright, clean morning when Mrs. Martin set out on her journey to Elmira, New York. The Erie train would take some time to cover the 50 mile distance from Binghamton to Elmira, but she felt that every bump in the rails was worth it for the Lord was leading again. Years later, she would say that it was the most important trip she had ever taken. In her own words, she tells us what happened that day in Elmira:

I wrote the song, *His Eye Is on the Sparrow* in the company of a bedridden saint in the city of Elmira, New York. I was reading and singing to her; and during our conversation, I chanced to ask her if she did not sometimes get discouraged. She answered, "Mrs. Martin, how can I be discouraged when my heavenly Father watches over each little sparrow, and I know He loves and cares for me"? My husband tried his hand at writing the music for it, but was not satisfied with the results so a short time later, he mailed it to Mr. Charles H. Gabriel who wrote the present music and sent it to Mr. Charles Alexander in England. The song was first sung in Royal Albert Hall during the great Torrey-Alexander revival in 1905. From there, it has gone all over the world.

From the words of a child to the wisdom of an elderly saint, we are reminded in song that nothing is too little or too great for our Lord. Since He has numbered the very hairs on our heads and counted the sparrows as they fall, in the words of Mrs. Martin, "His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me."

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; His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches
me.

"Let not your heart be troubled," His tender word I hear, And resting on his goodness, I lose my
doubts and fears; Tho' by the path He leadeth But one step I may see: His eye is on the sparrow,
And I know He watches me; His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me.

When-ev-er I am tempted, When-ev-er clouds arise, When songs give place to sighing, When
hope within me dies, I draw the closer to Him, From care He sets me free; His eye is on the
sparrow, And I know He cares for me; His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He cares for me.

Chorus

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