

# In Their Own Words

**Slave Life and  
the Power of Spirituals**

**Eileen Guenther**

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*To the Spirituals' creators,  
those enslaved on plantations, on farms, and in cities,  
who found motivation, hope, and comfort in the beautiful music they produced  
in spite of indescribably dehumanizing conditions,*

*And to William B. McClain,  
my colleague, mentor and friend,  
who passed his knowledge and enthusiasm  
for this amazing body of music on to me.*

## O Black and Unknown Bards

O black and unknown bards of long ago,  
How came your lips to touch the sacred fire?  
How, in your darkness, did you come to know  
The power and beauty of the minstrel's lyre?  
Who first from midst his bonds lifted his eyes?  
Who first from out the still watch, lone and long,  
Feeling the ancient faith of prophets rise  
Within his dark-kept soul, burst into song?

Heart of what slave poured out such melody  
As "Steal away to Jesus"? On its strains  
His spirit must have nightly floated free,  
Though still about his hands he felt his chains.  
Who heard great "Jordan roll"? Whose starward eye  
Saw chariot "swing low"? And who was he  
That breathed that comforting, melodic sigh,  
"Nobody knows de trouble I see"?

What merely living clod, what captive thing,  
Could up toward God through all its darkness grope,  
And find within its deadened heart to sing  
These songs of sorrow, love and faith, and hope?  
How did it catch that subtle undertone,  
That note in music heard not with the ears?  
How sound the elusive reed so seldom blown,  
Which stirs the soul or melts the heart to tears?

Not that great German master in his dream  
Of harmonies that thundered amongst the stars  
At the creation, ever heard a theme  
Nobler than "Go down, Moses." Mark its bars,  
How like a mighty trumpet call they stir  
The blood. Such are the notes that men have sung  
Going to valorous deeds; such tones there were  
That helped make history when time was young.

There is a wide, wide wonder in it all,  
That from degraded rest and servile toil  
The fiery spirit of the seer should call  
These simple children of the sun and soil.  
O black slave singers, gone forgot, unfamed,  
You—you alone, of all the long, long line  
Of those who've sung untaught, unknown, unnamed,  
Have stretched out upward, seeking the divine.

You sang not deeds of heroes or of kings;  
No chant of bloody war, no exulting paeon  
Of arms-won triumphs; but your humble strings  
You touched in chord with music empyrean.  
You sang far better than you knew; the songs  
That for your listeners' hungry hearts sufficed  
Still live,—but more than this to you belongs:  
You sang a race from wood and stone to Christ.

—James Weldon Johnson (1871–1938)

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# Introduction

## AN OVERVIEW

*Through all the sorrow of the Sorrow Songs there breathes a hope—a faith in the ultimate justice of things. The minor cadences of despair change often to triumph and calm confidence. Sometimes it is faith in life, sometimes a faith in death, sometimes assurance of boundless justice in some fair world beyond. But whichever it is, the meaning is always clear; that sometime, somewhere, men will judge men by their souls and not by their skins. (W. E. B. Du Bois)<sup>1</sup>*

Slavery has been called “America’s original sin.” Frederick Douglass called it “the grand aggregation of human horrors.”<sup>2</sup> It ripped apart families, communities, churches, and a nation. The number of victims of slavery will never be known, nor will the extent of its poisonous effect ever be fully recognized. Its poison afflicted an entire social, political, religious and economic system and everyone in it: the owners (the victimizers) and the slaves (the victims). The balance of power was totally unequal and, in the gross immorality of slavery, it is the story of the victim that captures our hearts, our sympathy, our imagination, and our admiration.

The creators of Negro Spirituals were fiercely determined survivors of the largest forced migration in history. Many of the captives did not survive. Because of starvation, disease, and cruelty, fifteen to thirty percent of those enslaved died on the march from their African village to the slave ship that would bring them to the New World. An estimated additional ten to fifteen percent did not survive the Middle Passage. Between the march and the Middle Passage millions of Africans died. “For every one hundred slaves who reached the New World, another forty had died in Africa or during the Middle Passage.”<sup>3</sup>

The cruelty they endured, once they had been purchased and settled on a plantation, reinforced the determination to survive. The enslaved

peoples' frustration and anger at the oppression, torture, and control of body, mind, and soul are reflected in their Spirituals and in their autobiographical narratives and Work Progress Administration interviews.

As artist Cynthia Farrell Johnson has so brilliantly captured in the piece she has allowed me to use for this book's cover, the Spirituals sing of hope—hope for eternal life, and hope for escape from the often diabolical control of the owner, or from the many others who controlled a slave's life—the owners' spouse and children, overseers, slave drivers, jail-house masters, and any white person who saw the slave doing anything arbitrarily considered wrong.

This book explores the life of the slave in its many aspects through the words of the enslaved people themselves, words from their autobiographies as well as their interviews and newspaper articles written about them. Their daily lives comprised the soil that gave birth to the Spirituals. The slave narratives are *their words*. They may be in a dialect or use terms that we have excised from our modern vocabulary, but these are *their words*.

Why write about the Spirituals and slavery? To my mind, Spirituals are among the most powerful music ever created. Spirituals are universal; they apply to situations well outside of slavery. I have long felt that, as Arthur Jones writes, Spirituals are “available to all persons who are prepared to open themselves to the unsettling healing power that inhabits these marvelous songs of life.”<sup>4</sup> They come out of slavery, indisputably “deeply meaningful, archetypically human experiences, relevant not only to the specific circumstances of slavery but also to women and men struggling with issues of justice, freedom, and spiritual wholeness in all times and places”<sup>5</sup>—yet “the spirituals [are] sources of wisdom and guidance in addressing *current* societal and psychological issues.”<sup>6</sup>

There is the story of a student who started to cry during a rehearsal of the Spiritual, *Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child*. When asked why, he said he was gay, had just “come out” to his family, and had then been told that he was consequently not welcome home at Christmas. At that moment, he truly felt like *a motherless child*.

A recent study of older African-Americans, led by Jill B. Hamilton of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Nursing, showed that, at the other end of the age spectrum,

[R]eligion expressed through song was a coping strategy for participants experiencing stressful life events who described feelings of being comforted, strengthened, able to endure, uplifted, and able to find peace by turning to the types of religious songs described here. Five types of songs were used including those evoking Thanksgiving and Praise, Instructive, Memory of Forefathers, Communication with God, and Life after Death.<sup>7</sup>

There is beauty and genius in these “musical products of an enslaved community’s struggle with the vital human issues of life and death, hope and despair, slavery and freedom.”<sup>8</sup> While focusing on the text helps identify themes and specific subjects, it takes the combination of melody and words to enable the full power of the Spiritual to come through, and it takes both to deliver the insight and healing that can transform a hurting world.

Enslaved individuals created these songs—whether we call them slave songs, plantation songs, jubilee songs, survival songs, religious songs, or sorrow songs—in a time and place in our country’s history that still evoke pain today. Their creation might have been the impetus of an individual, or it might have been a group effort. There is little information to guide us on this point, but we do know of one particular exception. Nat Turner is frequently credited with having composed *Steal Away*, but otherwise no single individual is credited with the composition of any Spiritual. Regardless of the details of their origins, these songs were first honed by the community and then owned by the community. They are folk songs, songs of the people, passed orally by the enslaved from person to person and community to community, just as their ancestors in Africa had done. Only after they were written down in the 1860s do we—those of us outside the community of origin—have the means to sing them. James Lovell, a former Howard University professor and author of arguably the single most important book on Spirituals, estimated their number to be in the range of 800 to 1,000,<sup>9</sup> while others cite numbers approaching 6,000.<sup>10</sup>

Coming out of the religious conversions of the Second Great Awakening (1790–1840), the majority of the songs are religious. In addition to the songs tracing the life of Jesus and celebrating the liberation of iconic figures in the Hebrew Scriptures, I have identified approximately forty subjects. These encompass songs of resistance, codes

(spreading news of a possible escape, or an upcoming secret meeting), and accountability, as well as songs about death, steadfastness in the face of adversity, creation, and consolation. The importance of the Bible (King James, 1611) as a source of texts cannot be overstated: There are sufficient scriptural passages captured in the Spirituals that, if the Bible were lost, the enslaved would still have enough left in the music to more than provide for their spiritual needs.

Spirituals and slave religion have been said to focus on the “compensatory” aspect of the enslaved person’s life; that is, thinking “we can put up with anything here on earth because we will have our reward in heaven.” At the same time, according to Benjamin Mays, a son of former slaves who became president of Morehouse College, Spirituals “affirm a complete trust in God to make right in the next world what was done wrong in this world . . . . The Spirituals provided an emotional security for oppressed slaves during turbulent times. Since slaves had no economic or political security in this world, they put their trust in Jesus whom they believed would make everything all right.”<sup>11</sup>

Society in the American South placed little or no value on the enslaved individual. The Spiritual counters that devaluation with affirmation: “I exist, and I matter.” The eminent theologian James H. Cone explained that “the essence of ante-bellum black religion was the emphasis on the *somebodiness* of black slaves. The content of the black preacher’s message stressed the essential worth of their person.”<sup>12</sup> One of the most important aspects of the Spiritual is that it allowed the slave to feel a sense of personal dignity in a situation where they were treated and legally defined, in the words of philosopher and theologian Howard Thurman, as “a tool, a thing, a utility, a commodity.”<sup>13</sup> This affirmation is unequivocal: “You are created in God’s image. You are not slaves, you are not ‘niggers’; you are God’s children.”<sup>14</sup> The language of Spirituals is rich and symbolic, reflecting the slaves’ African heritage. As clinical psychologist Arthur Jones has observed, Spirituals have a “seemingly magical ability to speak to universal issues of the human spirit.”<sup>15</sup>

Spirituals not only offer a mirror of slave life, they have been called “a master index of the mind of the slave.”<sup>16</sup> They codify the slaves’ description and critiques of their environment. Highlighting their important role in raising “social consciousness,” says Cone, “the social mind of the slaves was a reflection of their African background, their life on

# Prologue

## PRESIDENTIAL GRACE

*Amazing Grace! how sweet the sound  
that saved a wretch like me.  
I once was lost, but now I'm found,  
was blind, but now, I see.*

In July 2015, President Barack Obama delivered the principal eulogy at the funeral of South Carolina State Senator Clementa Pinckney, one of the Charleston Nine murdered in cold blood at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston where he was also the Senior Pastor.

We are here today to remember a man of God who lived by faith, a man who believed in things not seen, a man who believed there were better days ahead off in the distance, a man of service, who persevered knowing full-well he would not receive all those things he was promised, because he believed his efforts would deliver a better life for those who followed.<sup>1</sup>

In an electrifying moment, the first African-American president of the United States began to sing softly the lines of “Amazing Grace.”

Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come.  
‘Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

Naming the Charleston Nine, one by one, the “Reverend President” said they had “found that grace through the example of their lives.”

They’ve now passed it on to us. May we find ourselves worthy of that precious and extraordinary gift as long as our lives endure.  
May grace now lead them home. May God continue to shed His Grace on the United States of America.

It was a seminal moment in the American story. It was not, however, the first time that the musical power of a Spiritual was associated with an American president in the face of death.

Seventy years before, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the polio-paralyzed president who led the nation out of the Great Depression and through World War II, died on April 12, 1945, in Warm Springs, Georgia. With tears streaming down his face, Navy Chief Petty Officer Graham Jackson, an African-American musician who had often played for Roosevelt—indeed, had been scheduled to perform in the minstrel show the day FDR died—played on his accordian Antonín Dvořák’s moving melody known as *Goin’ Home* as Roosevelt was borne away from the Little White House for the last time.<sup>2</sup>

*Amazing Grace* and *Goin’ Home* may well be the best and most-widely known of what have come to be thought of as American “Spirituals.” Yet, in truth, they are not Negro Spirituals. Indeed, the text of *Amazing Grace* was written in 1779 by John Newton, a white ex-slave master, and is sung to *NEW BRITAIN*, a tune of unknown, but likely British origins. Historian-composer William Arms Fisher, also white, fitted his own words of *Goin’ Home* to the melody of Dvořák’s Symphony No. 9 (“From the New World”).

<i>Goin’ home, goin’ home,</i>	<i>It’s not far, jes’ close by,</i>	<i>All the friends I knew,</i>
<i>I’m a goin’ home;</i>	<i>Through an open door;</i>	<i>All the friends I knew.</i>
<i>Quiet-like, some still day,</i>	<i>Work all done, care laid by,</i>	<i>Home, I’m goin’ home.</i>
<i>I’m jes’ goin’ home.</i>	<i>Goin’ to fear no more.</i>	

In the preface to the song’s first published edition, Fisher said:

The Largo, with its haunting English horn solo, is the out-pouring of Dvořák’s own home-longing, with something of the loneliness of far-off prairie horizons, the faint memory of the red-man’s bygone days, and a sense of the tragedy of the black-man as it sings in his ‘spirituals.’ Deeper still it is a moving expression of that nostalgia of the soul all human beings feel. That the lyric opening theme of the Largo should spontaneously suggest the words ‘Goin’ home, goin’ home’ is natural enough, and that the lines that follow the melody should take the form of a negro spiritual accords with the genesis of the symphony.<sup>3</sup>

The genesis of the authentic Negro spiritual began centuries ago and on distant shores.

# PART I





Coast of West Africa, 1743.

## CHAPTER 1

# Origins of Spirituals

## *Every Time I Feel the Spirit*

### WHAT IS THE NEGRO SPIRITUAL?

Seven years after Frederick Douglass's flight from Maryland, this statesman and author wrote:

*I have often been utterly astonished, since I came to the north, to find persons who could speak of the singing, among slaves, as evidence of their contentment and happiness. It is impossible to conceive of a greater mistake. Slaves sing most when they are most unhappy. The songs of the slave represent the sorrows of his heart; and he is relieved by them, only as an aching heart is relieved by its tears. At least, such is my experience. I have often sung to drown my sorrow, but seldom to express my happiness. Crying for joy, and singing for joy, were alike uncommon to me while in the jaws of slavery. The singing of a man cast away upon a desolate island might be as appropriately considered as evidence of contentment and happiness, as the singing of a slave; the songs of the one and of the other are prompted by the same emotion.<sup>1</sup>*

William Francis Allen, Charles Pickard Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison, the ground-breaking editors of the first collection of Spirituals, *Slave Songs of the United States* (1867), characterized them in these terms.

All, indeed, are valuable as an expression of the character and life of the race which is playing such a conspicuous part in our history. The wild, sad strains tell, as the sufferers themselves could, of crushed hopes, keen sorrow, and a dull, daily misery, which covered them as hopelessly as the fog from the rice swamps. On the other hand, the words breathe a trusting faith in rest for the future—in 'Canaan's air and happy land,' to which their eyes seem constantly turned.<sup>2</sup>

Spirituals are folks songs (songs of the people). By definition, according to musicologist Henry Edward Krehbiel, folk songs are:

‘born, not made;’ they must be spontaneous utterances of the people who originally sang them; they must also be the fruit of the creative capacity of a whole and ingenuous people, not of individual artists, and give voice to the joys, sorrows, and aspirations of that people. They must betray the influences of the environment in which they sprang up, and may preserve relics of the likes and aptitudes of their creators when in the early environment from which they emerged.

They contain idioms which were transplanted hither from Africa, but as songs they are the product of American institutions; of the social, political and geographical environment within which their creators were placed in America; of the influences to which they were subjected in America; of the joys, sorrows and experiences which fell to their lot in America....

Nowhere save on the plantations of the South could the emotional life which is essential to the development of true folksongs be developed; nowhere else was there the necessary meeting of the spiritual cause and the simple agent and vehicle.<sup>3</sup>

Theologian Howard Thurman underscores Krehbiel’s observations.

Negro Spirituals [are] a source of rich testimony concerning life and death, because in many ways they are the voice, sometimes strident, sometimes muted and weary, of a people for whom the cup of suffering overflowed in haunting overtones of majesty, beauty, and power....

The real significance of the songs...is revealed at a deeper level of experience, in the ebb and flow of the ties that feed the rivers of man’s thinking and aspiring.<sup>4</sup>

Spirituals first emerged in Colonial America in the mid-eighteenth century and flourished as interest in religion grew during the First Great Awakening (ca. 1730–1755). While Spirituals continued to appear after the Civil War, the focus of this book is on those Spirituals preceding the Civil War that express the suffering and struggle of an enslaved people. Despite their creation during a particularly cruel and tragic time, they are an affirmation of creativity, the power of the human spirit, and life itself.

Slaves viewed God as a deliverer and Jesus as a friend, a companion, a comforter. For them, God was their champion and liberator, and the

songs of liberation offer powerful testimony to their faith in God's power—songs like *Go Down, Moses*; *Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel*; and *Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho*. If God could act with such power for the Hebrews, Daniel, and others whose stories are captured within the Hebrew Scriptures, God would do the same for them.

Historian W. E. B. Du Bois proclaimed the Negro folk song as “the sole American music.”

The Negro folk-song—the rhythmic cry of the slave—stands to-day not simply as the sole American music, but as the most beautiful expression of human experience born this side of the seas. It has been neglected, it has been, and is, half despised, and above all it has been persistently mistaken and misunderstood; but notwithstanding, it still remains as the single spiritual heritage of the nation and the greatest gift of the Negro people.<sup>5</sup>

## DISTINCTIVE SINGING STYLE

“The earliest description found of distinctive religious singing by slaves,” according to Dena Epstein, “dates from 1816.” Standing on the steps of the courthouse in Portsmouth, Virginia, George Tucker described what he witnessed.

[M]y ears were assailed by the voice of singing... I saw a group of about thirty Negroes, of different ages and sizes, following a rough looking white man... As they came nearer, I saw some of them loaded with chains to prevent their escape; while others had hold of each others' hands... They came along singing a little wild hymn of sweet and mournful melody; flying by a divine instinct of the heart, to the consolation of religion... ‘It's nothing at all but a parcel of Negroes sold to Carolina, and that man is their driver, who has bought them’... The truth is, they feel, and exquisitely too... Even in the land of their banishment, it is said, they... have several little wild songs which they sing with tears, recalling the images of past felicity, their cabins and their cornfields.<sup>6</sup>

Many years after Quaker abolitionist Levi Coffin and a cousin had organized in the summer of 1821 a Sunday school for slaves in New Garden, North Carolina, he recalled that, at the close of the session, “[t]he Negroes broke out with one of their plantation songs, or hymns,

led by Uncle Frank, a sort of prayer in rhyme, in which the same words occurred again and again.”<sup>7</sup>

“In 1830,” Dena Epstein noted, “a report appeared discussing the Negro population of Charleston, which unequivocally documented the existence of a distinctive type of sacred song...[U]pon the evening of a Sunday, the song of praise may frequently be heard to issue from the hovel of the Negro...the religious fervor of the Negroes does not always break forth in strains the most reverential or refined. The downfall of the archfiend forms the principal topic of their anthems.”<sup>8</sup>

Ella Storrs Christian, daughter of an Alabama plantation owner, wrote in her undated diary:

When Baptist Negroes attended the church of their masters, or when their mistress sang with them, they used hymn books, but in their own meetings they often made up their own words and tunes. They said their songs had ‘more religion than those in the books.’<sup>9</sup>

A perceptive young woman on a plantation in southwest Georgia, between Albany and Thomasville, recorded this entry on February 12, 1865:

Sunday I went over to the quarter after dinner, to the ‘Praise House,’ to hear the Negroes sing...At their ‘praise meetings’ they go through with all sorts of motions in connection with their songs, but they won’t give way to their wildest gesticulations or engage in their sacred dances before white people, for fear of being laughed at. They didn’t get out of their seats while I was there, but whenever the ‘sperrit’ of the song moved them very much, would pat their feet and flap their arms... They call these native airs ‘little speritual songs,’ in contradistinction to the hymns that the preachers read to them in church, out of a book, and seem to enjoy them a great deal more... I wish I was musician enough to write down the melodies; they are worth preserving.<sup>10</sup>

In 1846, the first notice of these songs found in a musical journal, the *Boston Musical Gazette*, drew a similar distinction.

Many of the slave melodies are well known at the north, but not much is said about their sacred music. Many of them sing all common psalm tunes with accuracy, and in addition there are verses evidently original. When you hear them you are half inclined to laugh at their queerness, and yet cannot but be

affected at the sincerity and thrilling tones of the singer. Here is a specimen:

‘Oh, Satan he came by my heart,  
 Throw brickbats in de door,  
 But Master Jesus come wid brush, Make cleaner dan before.’  
 Another, (*spoken*) ‘My soul leap, and my soul dance,’  
 (*sung*) ‘My soul leap, and my soul dance.’<sup>11</sup>

A decade later in 1856, “Songs of the Blacks,” the first extended article to discuss Spirituals in a musical periodical, appeared in *Dwight’s Journal of Music*.<sup>12</sup>

As early as the 1830s, the noted British actress, Fanny Kemble, married a wealthy American plantation owner and lived on his Georgia plantations for a few years. Horrified by the conditions and brutality she found, she recorded discerning observations in her widely quoted *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838–1839*, including the slaves’ style of singing.<sup>13</sup> Her son-in-law, James W. Leigh, an English clergyman who visited the same plantation soon after the Civil War, before outside influences could have much effect, commented on the slaves’ sacred songs in his book, *Other Days*.

[I]t is the way they sing the words, and the natural seconds they take, and the antiphonal mode they unconsciously adopt, also the remarkable minors that many of their songs are sung in, which is almost impossible to imitate. They always keep exquisite time and tune, and no words seem too hard for them to adapt to their tunes, so that they can sing a long-metre hymn to a short-metre tune without any difficulty. Their voices have a peculiar quality, and their intonations and delicate variations cannot be reproduced on paper. The leading singer starts the words of each verse or line, often improvising, and the others who base him, as it is called, strike in with a refrain.<sup>14</sup>

## AFRICAN ROOTS

The essence of a Spiritual is its rootedness in the African cultures from which slaves or their ancestors came. Spirituals reflect the ways music functions in African cultures—accompaniment to work, play, and activities of daily life. More than an expression of an individual, the music reflects their world view and history.

African origins were diverse because the enslaved Africans came from all over the continent of Africa, the interior as well as coastal areas. They spoke different languages and brought with them a variety of melodies and rhythms. The Yoruba, the Fon people of Dahomey, the Ashanti, and other West African tribes had highly developed religious systems. They also had, as Harold Courlander has observed, “complex systems of law and equity, pride of history and tradition, a high order of arts and crafts, music and dance, a vast oral literature ranging from proverbs to epics, moral and ethical codes in large part comparable to those of Asia and Europe, and complex systems of social organization.”<sup>15</sup>

At the same time, there were common characteristics, such as the vitality and vigor of the musical traditions. West African music included improvisation and commentary on other people—a tradition at the root of the improvised ridicule of slave owners found in Spirituals. In most African communities, music and dance connect with people in the present and with otherworldly spiritual forces. “In the African experience,” writes Arthur Jones, a clinical professor of culture and psychology, “the spiritual force that runs through all of life is impotent unless it is given direct oral and physical expression.”<sup>16</sup> Creative and religious expression are not separated from life; they are inextricably intertwined.

Just as it is impossible in the African tradition to separate music from other aspects of life, it is also impossible to separate spiritual faith and worship from other parts of life . . . For the African, worship and life are inseparable. The most important way in which this fundamental belief is given expression is through music and dance.<sup>17</sup>

Although slaves came from different parts of the continent, they assimilated into a common identity through shared beliefs, values, and basic roots, and they faced the same enemy—all of which found expression through music and dance. As John W. Work explained in his *American Negro Songs*, “The general interchange of slaves among the colonies and the uniformity of social conditions partially developed and fostered by Christianity welded them into a somewhat homogeneous group, from which emerged a comparatively uniform body of song.”<sup>18</sup>

To this day, the *griot* in Africa is a musician of high status who sings the history of the tribe and the tribal leader, traveling from place



to place, and thus preserving history through oral means. These songs include glorious detailed stories of battles or of settling tribal disputes.<sup>19</sup> Sometimes they are accompanied by instruments, but always they were accompanied by rhythm, whether feet and hands or an independent instrument. Slaves brought this practice with them to their homes in the New World.

*We has music and parties. We plays de quill, make from willow stalk,  
when de sap am up. Yous takes de stick and pounds de bark loose and  
slips it off, den split de wood in one end and down one side, puts holes  
in de bark and put it back on de stick. De quill plays like de flute.*  
(Bill Homer)<sup>20</sup>

West African drums are among the oldest rhythmic instruments in the world. Originally, they were made of hollowed logs with animal skins held on by pegs. Musicians used logs of different sizes, yielding different pitches. Ashanti talking drums had two heads held together by leather laces, which regulated the pitch to mimic the sound of human voices. Musicians created other rhythmic instruments, such as rattles and gongs, and melodic instruments, such as the xylophone and horn.

And they danced. As Miles Mark Fisher related, “Dancing was the universal rhythmic accompaniment to singing. Africans danced for joy, and they danced for grief; they danced for love, and they danced for hate; they danced to bring prosperity, and they danced to avert calamity; they danced for religions, and they danced to pass the time.”<sup>21</sup>

African slaves did, indeed, bring their own songs with them. On shipboard, during the Middle Passage, slaves were forced to dance for exercise and for the amusement of the ships’ crews. Yet, there is also evidence that slaves sang on deck for their own consolation.

During afternoons of serene weather, men, women, girls, and boys are allowed while on deck to unite in African melodies which they always enhance by an extemporaneous tom-tom on the bottom of a tub or tin kettle.<sup>22</sup>

In Africa, music was part of every occasion of significance: a child’s first tooth loss, puberty, marriage, birth, initiation into the tribal cult, and burial of the dead. Group activities—hunting, farming, fishing, and counting games—had their own songs. Likewise, they sang work songs for every type of work, from boat songs to songs connected with acquisition of food—abundant crops, productive harvests, and successful hunts.



The enslaved Africans attempted to preserve the culture they had brought with them from their homelands. Jeanette Murphy recalled:

During my childhood my observations were centered upon a few very old negroes who came directly from Africa, and upon many others whose parents were African born, and I early came to the conclusion, based upon negro authority, that the greater part of the music, their methods, their scale, their type of thought, their dancing, their patting of feet, their clapping of hands, their grimaces and pantomime, and their gross superstitions came straight from Africa.<sup>23</sup>

Evidence of the African origin of Spirituals has been further supplied by President Senghor of Senegal, Nicholas George Julius Ballanta Taylor, and other Africans: "These incontestable witnesses," wrote James Lovell, "have affirmed that the identical melodies and sentiments of many songs have been heard for centuries and can still be heard in the outlying districts of Africa."<sup>24</sup> Edward King, in *The Great South* (a book of Negro songs), observed that "a gentleman visitor at Port Royal is said to have been struck with the resemblance of some of the tunes sung by the watermen there to boatmen's songs he had heard on the Nile."<sup>25</sup>

## FOLK MUSIC

Spirituals are folk songs, the spontaneous utterances of those who originally sang them. They are the fruit of the creative capacity of an entire people rather than of individuals. They give voice to the joys, sorrows, and aspirations of that people and, in so doing, they reveal the influences of the environment from which they sprang. They codify the preferences and attitudes of their creators. In his preface to Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's *Twenty-four Negro Melodies*, op. 59, transcribed for the piano, Booker T. Washington wrote of folk song and Spirituals:

The negro folksong has for the negro race the same value that the folksong of any other people has for that people. It reminds the race of the 'rock whence it was hewn,' it fosters race pride, and in the days of slavery it furnished an outlet for the anguish of smitten hearts. . . . The plantation songs known as the 'spirituals' are the spontaneous outbursts of intense religious fervor, and had their origin chiefly in the camp meetings, the revivals, and in other religious exercises. They breathe a childlike faith in a personal Father and glow with the hope that the children

of bondage will ultimately pass out of the wilderness of slavery into the land of freedom.<sup>26</sup>

By their nature, folk songs express the life experience of a people in their own vocabularies and musical forms. The commandant of the Hampton Institute, Robert Moton, wrote in his Notes to the New Edition of Religious *Folk Songs of the Negro*:

Though the words are sometimes rude and the strains often wild, yet they are the outpourings of an ignorant and poverty-stricken people whose religious language and ideals struggled for expression and found it through limited vocabularies and primitive harmonies. They are not mere poetry. They are life itself in the life of the human soul manifesting itself in rude words, wild stories, and curious though beautiful harmonies.<sup>27</sup>

Affirming the folk music quality of the Spirituals, Henry Krehbiel stated his conviction that folk songs “must be felt by the singers themselves to be emotional utterances.” From his perspective, in North America (besides the songs of Native Americans), the only songs that meet this criterion are “the songs of the former black slaves.”<sup>28</sup>

Time and “group editing,” according to John W. Work, are “the two greatest known purifiers of folk song . . . . For instance, one person may create a song in which there are some unnatural intervals or some words that do not quite fit the meter. If the group is favorably impressed with the song as a whole, gradually, and without conscious effort, it replaces these unnatural intervals and misfit words with more suitable ones.”<sup>29</sup> James Weldon Johnson agreed.

The Spirituals are true folksongs and originally intended only for group singing. Some of them may be the spontaneous creation of the group, but my opinion is that the far greater part of them is the work of talented individuals influenced by the pressure and reaction of the group. The responses, however, may be more largely the work of the group in action; it is likely that they simply burst forth.<sup>30</sup>

## INFLUENCES OF EUROPEAN MUSIC

There has been a long-running debate over the extent to which Spirituals derive from European music. Some of these debates have implied a devaluation of the power or authenticity of Spirituals. Today, the consensus of scholars is that most Spirituals are original, not

derivative, music. Slaves heard European music in the homes where they worked and the churches they attended. As musicians do everywhere, particularly those whose heritage is rooted in oral tradition, they absorbed what they heard. As slaves attended religious camp meetings and revivals in the nineteenth century, camp-meeting music, of a variety of origins, became a strong influence on Spirituals.

These influences added to a solid African foundation. How much “Africa” was retained? It is hard to know. Separated from their homelands, often separated from other members of their tribes, enslaved Africans and their descendants found it difficult to retain collective memory. Nevertheless, much was retained. The call-and-response form so typical of the Spiritual is a uniquely African musical form. Henry Krehbiel, however, was an ardent spokesman for the essential “American-ness” of the Spirituals:

They contain idioms which were transplanted hither from Africa, but as songs they are the product of American institutions; of the social, political, and geographical environment within which their creators were placed in America; of the influences to which they were subjected in America; of the joys, sorrows and experiences which fell to their lot in America.<sup>31</sup>

## HOW WERE SPIRITUALS CREATED?

A piece of evidence, precious for its specificity, comes from Thomas Wentworth Higginson, an abolitionist who served from 1862 to 1864 as colonel of the 1st South Carolina Volunteers, the first Federally authorized black regiment:

And I always wondered, about these, whether they had always a conscious and definite origin in some leading mind, or whether they grew by gradual accretion, in an almost unconscious way. On this point I could get no information, though I asked many questions, until at last, one day when I was being rowed across from Beaufort to Ladies' Island, I found myself, with delight, on the actual trail of a song. One of the oarsmen, a brisk young fellow, not a soldier, on being asked for his theory of the matter, dropped out a coy confession. ‘Some good spirituals,’ he said, ‘are start jess out o’ curiosity. I been a-raise a sing, myself, once.’

My dream was fulfilled, and I had traced out, not the poem alone, but the poet. I implored him to proceed.

‘Once we boys,’ he said, ‘went for tote some rice, and de nigger-driver, he keep a-callin’ on us; and I say, “O, de old nigger-driver!” Den anudder said, “Fust ting my mammy tole me was notin’ so bad as nigger-driver.” Den I made a sing, just puttin’ a word, and den anudder word.’

Then he began singing, and the men, after listening a moment, joined in the chorus as if it were an old acquaintance, though they evidently had never heard it before. I saw how easily a new ‘sing’ took root among them.<sup>32</sup>

Another first-hand account about the creation of Spirituals comes from an “Address delivered by J. Miller McKim, in Sansom Hall, Philadelphia, July 9, 1862.” It vividly illustrates the relationship between the songs and the suffering.

I asked one of these blacks—one of the most intelligent of them [Prince Rivers, Sergeant 1st Reg., S.C.V.]—where they got these songs. *Dey make ‘em, sah.* ‘How do they make them?’ After a pause, evidently casting about for an explanation, he said: *I’ll tell you, it’s dis way. My master call me up, and order me a short peck of corn and a hundred lash. My friends see it, and is sorry for me. When dey come to de praise-meeting dat night dey sing about it. Some’s very good singers and know how; and dey work it in—work it in, you know, till dey get it right; and dat’s de way.*<sup>33</sup>

The songs were spread in many ways. Slaves imported from different parts of the South brought their songs with them. Likewise, visits to praise houses and Christmas week visits with families on other plantations offered occasions to share what was being sung; other communal gatherings such as a baptism, or a funeral, or a corn shucking offered similar opportunities. Similarly, a song sung by boatmen as they rowed down the river could be picked up by people working along the riverbanks.

Former slave Lorenzo Ezell remembered how slaves invented songs in the context of church services.

*De old massa he insisted us to go church. De Baptist church have a shed built behind de pulpit for de cullued folks, with de dirt floor and split log seat for de women folks, but most de men folks stands or kneels on de floor. Dey used to call dat de coop. De white preacher back to us, but iffen he want to turn around and talk to us awhile. Us makes up songs, ‘cause us couldn’t read or write.*<sup>34</sup>

# Appendix A: 100 Spirituals—A Concordance

## Spiritual (alphabetical by title/first line)

### Ain't-a That Good News

I got a crown up in-a de Kingdom,  
 Ain't-a dat good news! (*both lines repeated*)  
 I'm-a gonna lay down dis world,  
 Gonna shoulder up-a my cross.  
 Gonna take it home-a to my Jesus,  
 Ain't-a dat good news!  
 I got a robe up in-a de Kingdom....  
 I got a harp up in-a de Kingdom....  
 I got a slippers in-a de Kingdom....  
 I got a Savior in-a de Kingdom....

### Amen

*Refrain:* Amen, Amen, Sing it over  
 Amen, good Lordy, amen have mercy.

See the baby,  
 lyin' in the manger  
 on Christmas mornin'.

See Him in the temple,  
 talkin' with the elders  
 who marveled at His wisdom.

See Him at the Jordan  
 where John was baptizin'  
 and savin' all sinners.

See Him at the seaside,  
 talkin' to the fishermen,  
 and makin' them disciples.

Marchin' in Jerusalem,  
 over palm branches,  
 in pomp and splendor.

## Scripture Reference (KJV)

Prov. 25:25 As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is **good news** from a far country.

Is 52:7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth **good tidings**, that publisheth peace; that bringeth **good tidings** of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

Luke 2:10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you **good tidings** of great joy, which shall be to all people.

Luke 8:1 And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the **glad tidings** of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,

Matt. 16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and **take up his cross**, and follow me.

Mark 8:34 And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and **take up his cross**, and follow me.

Mark 10:21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, **take up the cross**, and follow me.

Luke 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and **take up his cross** daily, and follow me.

Is 43:11 I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no **Saviour**.

John 4:42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the **Saviour** of the world.

1 John 4:14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the **Saviour** of the world.

Luke 2:7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a **manger**; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Luke 2:46-48 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the **temple**, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were **astounded at his understanding and answers**.

Matt. 3:4-6 And the same **John** had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about **Jordan**, And were **baptized** of him in **Jordan**, confessing their sins.

Luke 3:21 Now when all the people were **baptized**, it came to pass, that Jesus also being **baptized**, and praying, the heaven was opened...

See also: Luke 5:1-10 (Jesus preaching from Simon's boat, calling him as disciple); Mark 1:15-20 and Matt. 4:18-22 (Jesus walking by seaside, calling the four fishermen)

See Him in the garden,  
prayin' to His father,  
in deepest sorrow.

Led before Pilate,  
then they crucified Him,  
but He rose on Easter.

Hallelujah!  
He died to save us  
and He lives forever.

**The Angel Rolled the Stone Away**

The angel rolled the stone away! (*repeated*)  
'Twas on a bright and shiny day,  
When the trumpet began to play,  
The angel rolled the stone away!

My Jesus spurned that dreadful tomb!  
(*repeated*)

'Twas on a bright and shiny day,  
When the trumpet began to play,  
My Jesus spurned that dreadful tomb!

My Lord will come again for me! (*repeated*)  
And on a bright and shiny day,  
When the trumpet begins to play,  
My Lord will come again for me!

**The Angels Keep A-Watchin'**

All night, all day, the angels keep a-watch-in'  
over me, my Lord!  
All night, all day, the angels keep a-watch-in'  
over me!

**Behold the Star**

*Refrain:* Behold the star! Behold the star up  
yonder!  
Behold the star! It is the star of Bethlehem.

John 12:12-13 On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took **branches of palm** trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed [is] the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Rom. 5:6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time **Christ died** for the ungodly.

Rom. 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, **Christ died** for us.

1 Cor. 15:3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that **Christ died** for our sins according to the scriptures.

See also: Matt. 21:9-11; Mark 11:7-10; Luke 19:37-40 (Palm Sunday); Matt. 26:36-46 (Jesus praying in the Garden); Matt. 27-28 (crucifixion of Jesus)

Matt 28:2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and **rolled** back the **stone** from the door, and sat upon it.

Mark 16:4 And when they looked, they saw that the **stone** was **rolled** away: for it was very great.

Luke 24:2 And they found the **stone rolled** away from the sepulchre.

Matt. 24:30-31 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the **Son of man coming** in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a **trumpet**, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

See also: Luke 24 (resurrection of Jesus)

Ps. 91:11 For he shall give his **angels** charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

Ps. 4:8 I will both lay me down in peace, and **sleep**: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.

Ps. 121:4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor **sleep**.

Ps. 127:2 It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved **sleep**.

Ps. 139:18 If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand; **when I awake**, I am still with thee.

Prov. 3:24 When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy **sleep** shall be sweet.

Matt. 18:10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their **angels** do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

Matt. 2:10-11 When they saw the **star**, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures,

There was no room found in the inn,  
For him who was born free from sin.

The wise men came from the East  
To worship Him, the "Prince of Peace."

A song broke forth upon the night.  
Peace on earth, good will to men.

### Bye and Bye

*Refrain:* O bye and bye, bye and bye,  
I'm goin' to lay down dis heavy load.

I know my robe's goin' to fit me well.  
I'm goin' to lay down dis heavy load.  
I tried it on at the gates of hell.  
I'm goin' to lay down dis heavy load.

Hell is deep and dark despair. I'm....  
Stop, po' sinner, and don't go there, I'm....

O Christians, can't you rise and tell, I'm....  
That Jesus hath done all things well, I'm....

### Calvary

*Refrain:* Calvary, Calvary, Calvary,  
Calvary, Calvary, Calvary,  
Surely He died on Calvary.

Ev'ry time I think about Jesus (3x)  
Surely He died on Calvary.

Sinner, do you love my Jesus? ...  
We are climbing Jacob's ladder....  
Ev'ry round goes higher and higher....  
Don't you hear the hammer ringing?...  
Don't you hear Him calling His Father?...  
Don't you hear Him say, "It is finished"?...  
Jesus furnished my salvation....  
Sinner, do you love my Jesus?...

### Can't Nobody Do Me Like Jesus

Can't nobody do me like Jesus.  
Can't nobody do me like the Lord.  
Can't nobody do me like Jesus.  
He's my friend!  
Healed my body; told me to run on. (3x)  
He's my friend!

Picked me up and turned me around. (3x)  
Oh, He's my friend!

they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh.

See also: [Matt. 2](#) (star and wise men); [Luke 2](#) (no room in the inn; song in the night)

[Matt. 11:28-30](#) Come unto me, all ye that labour and are **heavy laden**, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light

[Mark 7:37](#) And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath **done all things well**: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

[Luke 23:33](#) And when they were come to the place, which is called **Calvary**, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

[Mark 15:34](#) And at the ninth hour **Jesus cried** with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

[John 19:30](#) When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, "**It is finished.**" And he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

See also: Crucifixion story in [Matt. 27:32-56](#); [Luke 23:26-43](#); [Genesis 28:10-22](#) (Jacob's ladder)

[Ps. 18:29](#) For by thee I have **run** through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.

[Ps. 119:32](#) I will **run** the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.

[1 Cor. 9:24](#) Know ye not that they which **run** in a race **run** all, but one receiveth the prize? So **run**, that ye may obtain.

[1 Cor. 9:26](#) I therefore so **run**, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.

[Phil. 2:16](#) Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not **run** in vain, neither laboured in vain.

[Heb. 12:1](#) Wherefore seeing we also a compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us **run** with patience the race that is set before us,

[Ps. 80:3](#) **Turn** us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

**Certainly Lord**

Have you got good religion, (3x)  
Cert'nly Lord! Cert'nly, cert'nly, cert'nly, Lord!

Do you love ev'rybody?...

Have you been to the water?...

Have you been baptized?...

Have you been redeemed?...

Did your soul feel happy?...

Did you run tell your brother/sister/mother?...

Did you feel like shouting?...

**Changed Mah Name**

Ah tol' Jesus it would be all right,  
if He changed mah name. (both lines 3x)

Jesus tol' me ah would have to live humble,  
if He changed mah name....

Lam. 5:21 Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old.

Luke 1:16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

Luke 3:21 Now when all the people were **baptized**, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,  
See also: 1 Peter 3:20-21

Ex. 15:13 Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast **redeemed**: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.

Deut. 7:8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and **redeemed** you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Ps. 31:5 Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast **redeemed** me, O LORD God of truth.

Ps. 71:23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast **redeemed**.

Is. 43:1 But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have **redeemed** thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

Is. 44:22 I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have **redeemed** thee.

Luke 1:68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and **redeemed** his people,

Gal. 3:13 Christ hath **redeemed** us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.

1 Pet. 1:18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not **redeemed** with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers.

Rev. 5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast **redeemed** us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Rev. 14:3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were **redeemed** from the earth.

Matt. 28:8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did **run** to bring his disciples word.

John 20:2 Then she **runneth**, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and **saith** unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

James 2:7 Do not they blaspheme that worthy **name** by the which ye are called?

Rev. 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the **name** of my God, and the **name** of the city of my God, which is new



## Appendix B: Reverse Concordance

### Genesis

5:22, 24 *I Want Jesus to Walk with Me*  
 6:9 *I Want Jesus to Walk with Me*  
 8:13 *De Ol' Ark's a Moverin'*  
 9:15–16 *Do, Lord, Remember Me*  
 28:10–22 *Calvary*  
 28:12 *Glory, Glory, Hallelujah*  
*Hold On*

### Exodus

3:12 *Climbin' Up d' Mountain*  
 3:22 *Go Down, Moses*  
 6:10–11 *Go Down, Moses*  
 11:4–5 *Go Down, Moses*  
 12:29–30 *Go Down, Moses*  
 13:21 *Go Down, Moses*  
 14:22, 29 *Go Down, Moses*  
 15:4 *Oh, Mary, Don't You Weep, Don't You Mourn*  
 15:13 *Certainly Lord*  
 20:18 *Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit*  
 25:20 *I've Got a Robe*

### Leviticus

25:9–13 *Great Day*  
*Jubilee*  
 25:13 *Rise an' Shine*

### Deuteronomy

1:21 *There Is a Balm in Gilead*  
 1:31 *Come Out the Wilderness*  
 2:7 *Come Out the Wilderness*  
 3:25 *Deep River*  
 6:5–6 *Lord, I Want to Be a Christian*  
 7:8 *Certainly Lord*  
 8:3 *Live a-Humble*  
 34:9 *Little David, Play on Your Harp*

### Joshua

1:1 *Little David, Play on Your Harp*  
 3:1, 17 *Deep River*  
 3:13–17 *Go Down, Moses*  
 3:14–17 *Roll, Jordan, Roll*  
 6:2 *Joshua Fit de Battle of Jericho*  
 6:20 *Go Down, Moses*  
 10:12–13 *Live a-Humble*  
 22:27 *I'm a-Rolling*

### Judges

5:3 *I'm Gonna Sing*  
 6:34 *Joshua Fit de Battle of Jericho*

### Ruth

2:12 *I Will Trust in the Lord*

### 1 Samuel

9:2 *Joshua Fit de Battle of Jericho*  
 16:23 *Little David, Play on Your Harp*  
 17:23, 50 *Little David, Play on Your Harp*

### 2 Samuel

22:3 *I Will Trust in the Lord*

### 2 Kings

2:11–12 *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*  
 5:10 *Free at Last*

### 1 Chronicles

16:9, 23 *I'm Gonna Sing*  
 16:42 *Mah God Is So High*  
 17:9 *I Shall Not Be Moved*  
 29:13 *So Glad I'm Here*  
 Job  
 9:12 *Ride On, King Jesus*  
 12:10 *He's Got the Whole World in His Hand*

### Psalms

1:3 *I Shall Not Be Moved*  
 4:1 *Let Us Break Bread Together*  
 4:8 *The Angels Keep a-Watchin'*  
 7:1 *I Will Trust in the Lord*  
 8:5 *Live a-Humble*  
 9:2 *I'm Gonna Sing*  
 9:10 *I Will Trust in the Lord*  
 10:6 *I Shall Not Be Moved*  
 13:6 *I'm Gonna Sing*  
 16:8 *I Shall Not Be Moved*  
 17:3 *Lord, I Want to Be a Christian*  
 18:28 *Give Me Jesus*  
 18:29 *Can't Nobody Do Me Like Jesus*  
 18:46 *No Hidin' Place*  
 21:3 *When the Saints Go Marching In*  
 23:2 *Rise an' Shine*  
 25:2 *I Will Trust in the Lord*  
 25:6 *Do, Lord, Remember Me*  
 27:5 *No Hidin' Place*  
*Steal Away to Jesus*  
 27:7 *Let Us Break Bread Together*  
 30:12 *I'm Gonna Sing*  
 31:5 *Certainly Lord*  
 32:7 *Hard Trials*  
*No Hidin' Place*  
 32:11 *I'm Gonna Sing*  
 34:4 *Keep a-Inchin' Along*  
 36:9 *His Name So Sweet*  
 38:17 *Nobody Knows the Trouble I See*  
 39:12 *City Called Heaven*  
 44:13–16 *Free at Last*  
 46:5 *I Shall Not Be Moved*  
 47:5 *In That Great Gittin' Up Mornin'*  
 48:12–14 *'Tis the Ol' Ship of Zion*  
 49:15 *Oh, Freedom*  
 51:18 *Great Day*  
 54:2 *Standin' In the Need of Prayer*  
 55:8 *I Been in de Storm So Long*  
 55:22 *Glory, Glory, Hallelujah*  
*I Shall Not Be Moved*

56:3–4	<i>I Will Trust in the Lord</i>
57:7	<i>Fix Me, Jesus</i>
60:7	<i>There Is a Balm in Gilead</i>
62:6	<i>I Shall Not Be Moved</i>
66:19	<i>King Jesus Is a-Listenin'</i>
71:23	<i>Certainly Lord</i>
73:1	<i>Thank You, Lord</i>
80:3	<i>Can't Nobody Do Me Like Jesus</i>
83:15	<i>I Been in de Storm So Long</i>
85:6	<i>There Is a Balm in Gilead</i>
91:11	<i>The Angels Keep a-Watchin'</i>
95:4	<i>He's Got the Whole World in His Hand</i>
102:15–16	<i>Great Day</i>
106:4	<i>Do, Lord, Remember Me</i>
107:14	<i>Give Me Jesus</i>
107:29	<i>I Been in de Storm So Long</i>
108:1	<i>Fix Me, Jesus</i>
108:8	<i>There Is a Balm in Gilead</i>
112:4	<i>Give Me Jesus</i>
112:7	<i>Fix Me, Jesus</i>
119:32	<i>Can't Nobody Do Me Like Jesus</i>
119:49	<i>Do, Lord, Remember Me</i>
119:114	<i>Hard Trials</i>
121:4	<i>The Angels Keep a-Watchin'</i>
125:1	<i>On Ma Journey</i>
127:2	<i>The Angels Keep a-Watchin'</i>
132:9	<i>I'm Gonna Sing</i>
138:7	<i>There Is a Balm in Gilead</i>
139:5	<i>I Know the Lord Has Laid His Hands on Me</i>
139:6	<i>Mah God Is So High</i>
139:11–12	<i>Give Me Jesus</i>
139:18	<i>The Angels Keep a-Watchin'</i>

**Proverbs**

3:5	<i>Come Out the Wilderness</i>
3:24	<i>The Angels Keep a-Watchin'</i>
4:25	<i>Hold On</i>
24:8–9	<i>I've Been 'Buked</i>
25:25	<i>Ain't-a That Good News</i>

**Isaiah**

1:18	<i>My Good Lord's Done Been Here</i>
1:25	<i>I Know the Lord Has Laid His Hands on Me</i>
2:4	<i>Down by the Riverside [Study War No More]</i>
5:27	<i>Walk Together Children</i>
9:2	<i>Give Me Jesus</i>
9:6	<i>Wonderful Counselor</i>
13:10	<i>When the Saints Go Marching In</i>
17:13	<i>I'm a-Rolling</i>
25:8	<i>In That Great Gittin' Up Mornin'</i>
26:1	<i>Great Day</i>
40:10	<i>Keep a-Inchin' Along</i>
40:11	<i>Rise an' Shine</i>
	<i>You Hear the Lambs a-Cryin'</i>
42:4	<i>There Is a Balm in Gilead</i>
43:1	<i>Certainly Lord</i>
	<i>Hush, Hush, Somebody's Callin' My Name</i>

43:11	<i>Ain't-a That Good News</i>
44:22	<i>Certainly Lord</i>
45:3–4	<i>Hush, Hush, Somebody's Callin' My Name</i>
52:7	<i>Ain't-a That Good News</i>
53:3–4	<i>City Called Heaven</i>
53:7	<i>He Nevuh Said a Mumbalin' Word</i>
57:15	<i>There Is a Balm in Gilead</i>
59:17	<i>Great Day</i>
60:1	<i>Rise an' Shine</i>
	<i>Shine On Me</i>
60:2	<i>Give Me Jesus</i>
60:18	<i>Great Day</i>
62:6	<i>Great Day</i>
65:19	<i>Oh, Mary, Don't You Weep, Don't You Mourn</i>
66:15	<i>Keep a-Inchin' Along</i>

**Jeremiah**

8:22	<i>There Is a Balm in Gilead</i>
9:10	<i>Soon-a Will Be Done</i>
17:8	<i>I Shall Not Be Moved</i>
22:10	<i>I Stood on de Ribber ob Jerdon</i>
46:11	<i>There Is a Balm in Gilead</i>

**Lamentations**

5:21	<i>Can't Nobody Do Me Like Jesus</i>
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**Ezekiel**

1:15–16	<i>Ezekiel Saw de Wheel</i>
10:9–10	<i>Ezekiel Saw de Wheel</i>
16:60	<i>Do, Lord, Remember Me</i>
27:31	<i>Soon-a Will Be Done</i>
32:7	<i>Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel</i>
34:12, 23	<i>You Hear the Lambs a-Cryin'</i>
37:13	<i>Steal Away to Jesus</i>
40:47	<i>I Wanna Be Ready</i>
48:20	<i>I Wanna Be Ready</i>

**Daniel**

1	<i>Peter, Go Ring Them Bells</i>
3	<i>Climbin' Up d' Mountain</i>
	<i>Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel</i>
5:23	<i>He's Got the Whole World in His Hand</i>
6	<i>Climbin' Up d' Mountain</i>
	<i>Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel</i>

**Joel**

2:10, 31	<i>Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel</i>
3:10	<i>Down by the Riverside [Study War No More]</i>
3:14	<i>I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray</i>
3:15	<i>Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel</i>

**Amos**

3:3	<i>Walk Together Children</i>
8:9	<i>Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel</i>

**Jonah**

(all)	<i>Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel</i>
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**Micah**

4:3	<i>Down by the Riverside [Study War No More]</i>
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