

Distraction in prayer

Traditional American Melody
Southern Harmony, 1835

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves, a treble clef on top and a bass clef on the bottom. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The melody in the treble clef starts with a quarter rest, followed by a series of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The bass line consists of whole notes: G3, B2, D3, E3, F3, G3. A measure rest is indicated by a 'z' symbol in the first measure. A measure number '5' is placed above the fifth measure of the treble staff.

The second system of musical notation continues the piece. The treble staff has a melody of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bass line has whole notes: G3, B2, D3, E3, F3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, B2. A measure rest is indicated by a 'z' symbol in the eighth measure of the treble staff. A measure number '10' is placed above the tenth measure of the treble staff.

The third system of musical notation concludes the piece. The treble staff has a melody of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bass line has whole notes: G3, B2, D3, E3, F3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, B2. A measure rest is indicated by a 'z' symbol in the eighth measure of the treble staff. A measure number '15' is placed above the fifteenth measure of the treble staff.

Ah, dearest Lord! I cannot pray,
My fancy is not free;
Unmannerly distractions come,
And force my tho'ts from Thee.
The world that looks so dull all day
Glow's bright on me at pray'r,
And plans that ask no tho't but then
Wake up and meet me there.

All nature one full fountain seems
Of dreamy sight and sound,
Which, when I kneel, breaks up its deeps,
And makes a deluge sound.
My very flesh has restless fits;
My changeful limbs conspire
With all these phantoms of the mind
My inner self to tire.

Sweet Jesus! teach me how to prize
These tedious hours when I,
Foolish and mute before Thy face,
In helpless worship lie.
Yet Thou art oft most present, Lord!
In weak distracted prayer:
A sinner out of heart with self
Most often finds Thee there.

Had I kept stricter watch each hour
O'er tongue and eye and ear,
Had I but mortified all day
Each joy as it came near,
Had I, dear Lord! no pleasure found
But in the thought of Thee,
Prayer would have come unsought, and been
A truer liberty.

My Saviour! why should I complain,
Any why fear aught but sin?
Distractions are but outward things;
Thy peace dwells far within.
These surface-troubles come and go,
Like rufflings of the sea;
The deeper depth is out of reach
To all, my God, but Thee.

Frederick W. Faber