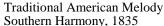
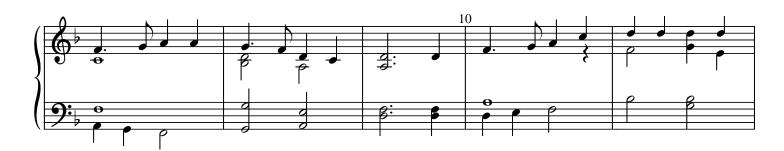
Distraction in prayer









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 Glows 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