Prayer of William Penn

Dean Freiday
of an important love relationship in my life. I can and should act in a simple and childlike way.

Martha acted in a quite adult way with Jesus, with great responsibility, with competence, busy about many things, taking care of Jesus, doing a good job. Mary, childlike, sat at Jesus' feet and looked at him with love, simply; contemplation does that.

Simplicity, lived out, takes the form of quiet attentiveness.

**PRAYER**

Lord Jesus, increase in me your gift of contemplation. You have said, "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it will be opened to you." I am asking you for a new and great outpouring of the gift of contemplation. I seek you, your face, to be able to look at you with love. I am knocking, knowing that your opening the door further for me means giving me more fully the gift of intimate, loving contemplative union with you. Amen.

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**THE KINGDOM HAS COME**

Thy Kingdom is come, and thy Will is done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Even so, Come Lord Jesus! More and more set up thy Kingdom in the souls of the children of men;

That the holy Will of thy Father may be done in earth;

That mercy and Truth, righteousness and Peace may embrace and kiss each other.

So shall the kingdoms of this world become the Kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ;

Who is God over all, blessed forever.

William Penn, 1695 (Works, vol. 3, p. 350)

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**Prayers of William Penn**

Compiled by DEAN FREIDAY

FOR FAITH (1679)

I do fervently beseech Almighty God, the giver of all saving faith, mercifully to vouchsafe more and more

To beget a serious inquiry in us:

What that faith is which we have?

Who is the Author of it?

And what fruits it hath brought forth?

That so we may not profane the name of God by a vain profession of it, nor abuse ourselves unto eternal perdition.

But that we may endeavor, by God's assistance, to approve ourselves such believers, as sincerely fear God, love righteousness, and hate every evil way, as becomes the redeemed of God by the precious blood of his Son.

Since, therefore, we are not our own, but the Lord's, who has bought us with that great price, let us glorify him in our bodies, in our souls, and in our spirits, which are his.

Then we shall be children of Abraham, indeed, heirs of the promise, partakers of that resurrection and life, that immortality and glory, which God the righteous Judge will, one day, plentifully distribute to them that abide in this precious faith unto the end.

"Address to Protestants," III:81.

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BENEDICTIONS

Grace, mercy and peace, yea His peace, which the world can neither give you, nor take from you, be plentifully multiplied amongst you from day to day; that an holy, harmless, and faithful people you may be; yielding to the Lord the fruits of his goodness, by a circumspect and self-denying conversation to the end.

Epistle on his return to Penna., 1699, I:103.

His grace, mercy and peace be with you all, and the blessings of his Life and Presence forever rest upon you. Amen.

I:174 (1682).

Volume and page references are to Penn's Works, 4th edn., London, 1825.

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Into his blessed care and protection, with myself, do I commit you all; and the Lord of heaven and earth preserve us all in his holy fear, love, and patience to the end. Amen.  
III:174 (1675).

**BRIEF EJACULATIONS**

Oh blessed be the name of our God forever, who is a God glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, working wonders for them that commit their cause to him.  
III:171 (1675).

To him that was, and is, and is to come [Rev. 1:4] — the eternal, holy, blessed, righteous, powerful, and faithful One — be glory, honor, and praise, dominion and a Kingdom, forever and ever. Amen.  
II:502 (1677).

**LOOK WITHIN!**

To God's Spirit in your conscience, do I recommend you — that leads out of all evil, and quickens you to God, as you obey it; and makes you a child of God, and an heir of glory.  
1:42 (1675).

...  

So come dear Lord Jesus, that was dead and is alive, and liveth forever. Amen.  
II:489 (1677).

The eternal God reach unto you by his powerful Spirit, break your peace in the broad way, touch you deeply with a sense of your disobedience to him, give you true contrition and repentance, and “create in you a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within you” [Psalm 51:10]. “... make you holy, make you zealous, and make you charitable. That you may do, as well as say, and not only profess but possess the Truth of the living God in your inward parts — that pearl of great price, that hidden and eternal treasure.

So shall you know that the times of refreshing are come from the Presence of the Lord, and that the Kingdom is again restored to Israel! Israel, the Prince of eternal peace, who hath prevailed with God for man: whose sceptre is “a sceptre of righteousness, and of whose dominion there shall be no end” [Psalm 45:6].

So come Lord Jesus.  
Come quickly. Amen.  
III:292 (1692).

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**Review**

**TOGETHER IN SOLITUDE, by Douglas V. Steere**  
(New York: Crossroad, 1982), 201 pp., $12.95.

Through his earlier books such as On Beginning from Within, On Listening to Another, and Prayer and Worship, Douglas Steere has provided helpful spiritual guidance for several decades. The greatest appeal of the present volume may be for previous readers who are familiar with his ability to bring the insights of the literary past to bear upon contemporary contemplative experience.

The four chapters in the first section are: “Common Frontiers in Catholic and Non-Catholic Spirituality,” “The Life of Prayer as the Ground of Unity,” “On Confirming the Deepest Thing in Another,” and “Baron von Hügel as Spiritual Director.” In the second section are these five: “Bethlehem Revisited,” “Solitude and Prayer,” “Contemplation and Leisure,” “The Mystical Experience,” and “On Being Present Where You Are.”

Steere utilizes the Introduction to indicate the occasion and theme of each chapter and its publication history (the years for three chapters, unfortunately, are not included). The chapters are woven together from his bag of irenic and ecumenical quotations.

In chapter nine, “On Being Present Where You Are,” Douglas Steere seems to me most warmly human. There he shares bitter-sweet childhood memories and the significance that actual as well as historical acquaintances (like Abraham Lincoln) had for him. In that chapter, too, he helps us reach out to one another for emotional support, for interfacing the requirements of truth, for crossing ethnic and religious lines, and for letting God’s steady presence instruct us.

Because strengths and weaknesses offer clues to where we stand in relation to each other, I have paired these qualities in reflecting upon this book. First, the book distills pertinent material on the spiritual life from a wide body of philosophical and religious literature, offering the reader a professionally competent religious travelogue through time. Steere also provides anecdotes of his own travels. Some shadow is cast on this strength by a subtle, name-dropping elitism — a sophisticated version of the VIP syndrome. One is conscious of it in such syntax as “Anker Larsen, a Danish mystic whom Rufus Jones always admired and with whom I once spent a day at his home in a suburb of Copenhagen....” Although vital