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An excerpt from John Main OSB, “The Unreality of Fear,” THE HEART OF CREATION (New York: Continuum. 1998), pp. 24-25.

As we read the gospel, we see that a choice is set before us. The alternative is between love and fear. Fear is destructive and corrosive, whether it is the fear of disease, war or famine or whether it is fear of supernatural, angry vengeful gods who must be placated by compulsive rituals. The difference between a barbaric world and a civilized world is that barbarism thrives on fear. Civilization thrives on a love that gives birth to vigor, energy, vitality, creativity. Barbaric energy is negative; its main thrust is destructive and its principal art is war. The principal art of the Christian life is peace.

Our commitment to meditation is our openness to the peace of God’s redemptive love: our acceptance of it, our abandonment of self-fixation and our commitment to self-giving. [. . .] The root-function of the gospel, which is really the only root, is to expel fear, to pluck it out by the roots so that we can go deeper and deeper into a fearless heart and there encounter profoundest love.

After meditation: “Petition” by K.A. Hays in WINDTHROW (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon University Press, 2017), p. 53.

Petition

Here floats the mind on summer’s dock.
The knees loose up, hands dither off,
the eyes have never heard of clocks.
The mind won’t feel the hours, the mind spreads wide
among the hours, wide in sun. Dear sun,
who gives the vision but is not the vision.
Who is the body and the bodies
that speak into the dark below the dock.
Who to the minnows in the sand-sunk tire
seems like love.
Make us the brightness bent through shade.
The thing, or rush of things, that makes
an opening, a way.