

THE THOUGHT FARTHEST OUT

And now at last I was ready for the thought that was farthest out. Not until I had traveled far, not until I had dreamed much, was I big enough — and simple enough — to know that truth which every child knows whenever he plays the simplest games of childhood. Here it is — the truth that is so simple that it seems very difficult, so near that it appears to be very far away:

THE MOST POWERFUL, IRRESISTIBLE MOTION THERE IS, AS WELL AS THE MOST EFFORTLESS, IS THE MOTION OF FALLING. WHOEVER CAN, WHEN CONFRONTED WITH A CRISIS, LET HIMSELF FALL THE MOST EFFORTLESS — AND THEREFORE THE MOST IRRESISTIBLY — IS THE ONE WHO KNOWS BEST THE SECRET OF LIFE.

I was reading the other day, how, when a young man came to Agassiz and asked him how he could become a scientist, Agassiz replied, "Go and study the spider for a year." Why could not you or I tell a young man if he should come asking how he could master the thought farthest out, "Go study the cat for a year?"

I know that will sound absurd, but after all why should such a remark be any more absurd than Agassiz's? Is not the cat a more perfect and finished and elaborate creation of God than the spider, and is not the cat a perfect example of that most essential of all requirements of life — the capacity to balance oneself while falling? Let us watch the cat for a moment. Pick it up and hold it upside down and then let go of it and see what happens. Without any fuss or hysterics, with one or two silent motions, it rights itself and lights quietly on its feet. After studying the cat for a year one would know — he would not believe merely but he would know from experience — that **WHATEVER MAN, — NO MATTER WHAT THE CRISIS HE IS THROWN INTO, WHETHER PHYSICAL, MENTAL OR SPIRITUAL, — WHO IS ALWAYS ABLE TO LAND ON HIS FEET, — IS A TRULY EDUCATED MAN, NO MATTER WHAT CREDENTIALS OR DEGREES HE CARRIES WITH HIM.**

A little investigation will prove to one that such a man is very rare. The average person, when he is thrown into a crisis, finds himself completely out of plumb. He has to stop his machinery and run out and crank himself up, or prime himself up or wind himself up, or whatever you want to call it, to put himself into balance long enough to meet the situation as best he can. As soon as the crisis is over, he relapses into his habitual state of unbalance again.

Just think of what a waste of time this is. Just think of how much time would be saved if our educational system, while training people to do this or do that, or learn this or learn that, would train them first and foremost in the art of balance. Of course this is what our schools and what our gymnasiums and what our churches are supposed to be doing, and to a certain extent they succeed. But think how much more would be accomplished if all the gymnasium teachers, all the college professors, and all the ministers, knew that this was the one central aim and object of their work — and if they all united to inculcate in all the young people they were working with, this thought farthest out.

I think that nothing would be more worth while than to get a hundred people together on some island for three weeks where they could devote their uninterrupted time to an intensive study of this thought farthest out. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could go off somewhere and crank ourselves up or wind ourselves up, or prime ourselves up so thoroughly that we could run in balance for a life time!

There would be only one thing we would need to study at such a camp, and that would be the Art of Falling. Of course if a college professor got into our midst, he might want to sub-divide

it into — Religion, or the Ritual of falling; History, or the Chronicle of falling; Philosophy, or the Reason for falling; Aesthetics, or the Art of falling, and so on. One could make the study just as simple or just as complicated as he wished to. But if we had only three weeks to do it in, instead of four years, I think we could take it up very nicely under the simple head, "The Art of Falling." Falling is perhaps the most fundamental art of all life, and yet the art which for some strange reason has been most persistently overlooked by educators from the beginning of time. It has been overlooked because it seemed so easy. Why study that which anyone can do by the mere act of letting go of himself? By letting go of itself the dewdrop falls upward, and by letting go of itself it falls downward. We find this process at work also in the athlete, in the scholar, and in the saint. This process which is the key to all the great irresistible forces in the universe, as well as to all the great irresistible persons, has certainly been very strangely overlooked by our masters and teachers.

But let us see if this process is as easy as it appears. I have just said that it is the one process where we seemingly don't have to do anything but let go. But is it as easy to "let go" as it seems to be? Have you actually met anyone who truly knew how to let go? Is not that exactly what everyone down in his heart wants to do more than anything else in all the world, and yet which everyone is afraid to do? That word afraid it seems to me is the key that explains why this has so rarely been done in the past, and why educators are so loath to put it into the curriculum in the present. They are afraid it can't be learned! Or they think that people will get hurt learning it.

And why are people afraid to "let go?" Because to "let go" implies a surrender of one's self to this whole process of "falling," and the most primal and early and deeprooted fear that every one is born with, so psychologists tell us, is the fear of falling. If a man can overcome his fear of falling he can overcome the world.

How can one overcome the fear of falling? There is only one way that I know of, and that is for him to learn how to balance himself.

The first step in overcoming physical fear is to learn how to balance your body. But how can you do this? By relaxing your neck, and making all your motions rhythmical, that is to say, make them blend in perfect coordination. Skilled gymnasts and trained athletes are never afraid because they know that when they fall, they can always fall into balance. When you meet a man whose neck is relaxed and whose head is having a happy time on the top of a balanced spine, you have an athlete who has mastered the art of life in the physical realm.

The secret of overcoming mental fear is to bring your mind into harmony by balancing your imagination. All our mental fears are caused by an arrested and tightened imagination, just as all our physical fears are caused by a tightened neck. By relaxing your imagination I mean relaxing and letting go of all your mental inhibitions and seeing facts as they really are, in proper relation and in proper perspective. When you see things in wholes and not in parts, and see behind or through every fact to the truth of which it is a part, you will find things unfolding before you in perfect sequence and in perfect order. Then quietness and calmness will be your portion.

The secret of overcoming fears of the soul is to bring your spirit into balance. What the arrested and tightened neck is to our physical balance, the arrested and tightened power of love is to our spiritual balance. By relaxing our love from its inhibitions, and seeing people as they really are, as perfect beings in a perfect world governed by a perfect God, all the fears of the spirit will vanish. The world is based primarily on love. Love is the strongest force in the world, so strong that it needs no other force to support it or sustain it. Love is the power that brings all things into perfectly adjusted and harmonious relationship. And yet how many people are afraid

to fall "into" love?

After one has completely relaxed himself from his fears, his covetousness, his angers, from all the baser selfish inhibitions and repressions and has therefore mounted up to the place where he truly and essentially belongs, then he can safely and securely fall wherever he is drawn by the magnet of unselfish love. But as the baby cannot at the beginning always fall in harmony with the law of gravity and is therefore at times awkward in his actions and is occasionally hurt, so the one who is still an infant in the spiritual life, who has just learned how to let go of his selfishness, may still be unaware of the balancing power of this spiritual coordinating principle, LOVE. Like Dante, who sometimes followed the voice of the Lady by the Window — false Earthly Philosophy — and forgot to be true to the voice of Heavenly Love, so you may occasionally find your first steps somewhat awkward, and at times they may even cause you pain.

But do not be discouraged. After a few false steps you will awake one day just as suddenly as the child does, to the true art of walking. As suddenly as comes the coordination of the relaxed body with the world about him in the child, just that suddenly will come to you the coordination of the relaxed soul with the world of Peace and Love and Harmony about you. Then you can truly do as you like, speak the word you feel urged within to speak, make the friends that your heart desires, do the work which your spirit craves....For then, being so tuned into the knowledge that the good of one cannot be separated from the good of all, you cannot in your heart desire to do that which will not contribute to the good of all, and therefore when you cannot do that which you think you would like to do because it interferes with what someone else would like to do, you will find in your heart that you are happy not to do it, happy at least until in God's plan you can find the door open to do that which you would really rather do. By that test you will know that you are in spiritual balance.

To sum up: When you relax your body, relax your imagination, relax your love, you will bring yourself into perfect balance, and then you will find the world around you, which a moment before seemed topsy-turvy or upside down, is in perfect balance, too: a perfect world filled with perfect people, governed by a perfect God.

And so we can say that the easiest, the most effortless motion, is falling. The only kind of perpetual motion that can be conceived of, that could be in any way practical, would be a motion of continual falling. Indeed, the action of the stars in their courses, and the motion of the earth as it swings in its orbit about the sun, and the action of the moon as it moves about the earth seem to me to be nothing but that...a continual falling, falling, falling, but always in their prescribed courses.

In our own little individual experiences we find that our own motions are for the most part falling motions. But unfortunately these motions do not seem to be continuous, perpetual, automatic. They have to be continually primed, cranked or started by us...and if we were not continually running out and cranking ourselves up again, we would shortly "run down." Moreover, we would be continually hitting the ground with a bump...and landing on our heads instead of on our feet.

Our walking is a falling, a continuous falling and a continuous catching of ourselves. Were we perfectly attuned to God's laws, had mankind never fallen out of Eden, perhaps we would not have to be always catching ourselves. Perhaps we could let God wind us up and start us off in the beginning and then just keep on falling through all time and Eternity. Perhaps after we die and go to heaven, that is what we shall find heaven will be like — a continual falling, but always falling into tune, always falling into perfect relationships with others, always falling "into" love with the persons we were supposed to fall "into" love with at the time they fell in love with

us; falling into step with friends as they fall into step with us; falling into great big beautiful realms of consciousness, into beauty, into happiness, into glory. Could any happier conception of heaven be dreamed of than that?

I do not know of any better way of ending this little chapter than by adding this conception of God's Divine Plan for you. A friend of mine planted the germ of it in my heart one day, and it has been growing and unfolding like a seed ever since. Take it now and transplant it into the garden of your heart and make it yours by daily reading and it will grow and bear fruits, and great will be the fruits thereof. I sincerely believe that the best way to learn the art of falling into balance is to meditate daily upon the Plan that you believe God has in store for your life, and to try to let go and surrender yourself completely to it. Then, in time you, too, may find your journey through life, like the action of the stars in their courses, and the motion of the earth as it swings in its orbit around the sun, has become a continual falling process, but always falling in your prescribed course, the Divine Course charted for you by your Father who is in Heaven.

The Divine Plan

I. I believe that God has a Divine Plan for me. I believe that this Plan is wrapped in the folds of my Being, even as the oak is wrapped in the acorn and the rose is wrapped in the bud. I believe that this Plan is permanent, indestructible and perfect, free from all that is essentially bad. Whatever comes into my life that is negative is not a part of this God-created Plan, but is a distortion caused by my failure to harmonize myself with the Plan as God has made it. I believe that this Plan is Divine, and when I relax myself completely to it, it will manifest completely and perfectly through me. I can always tell when I am completely relaxed to the Divine Plan by the inner peace that comes to me. This inner peace brings a joyous, creative urge that leads me into activities that unfold the Plan, or it brings a patience and a stillness that allow others to unfold the Plan to me.

II. I believe that this beautiful Divine Plan for me is a perfect part of the larger Pattern for the good of all, not something separate unto me alone. I believe that it has ramifications and interweavings that reach out through all the persons I meet and all the events that come to me, and that the best way to put myself in harmony with the Divine Plan that is within myself is to accept with radiant acquiescence all the individuals and events that are drawn to me, seeing in them perfect instruments for the perfect unfoldment of my perfect Plan. In other words, I believe that to see harmony in that which is without brings harmony in that which is within, even as to see harmony in that which is within brings harmony in that which is without.

III. I believe that God has selected those persons who are to belong to my plan, and that through proximity, mutual attraction or need, they and I are continually finding each other out. I believe in praying for ever-increasing capacity to love and serve them and for greater worthiness to be loved and served by them in return. I believe in sending out a prayer to the Father to draw to me those who are meant to help me and to be helped by me, in order to express my life together with them.

IV. I believe in asking my Heavenly Father for only that which is mine to have, knowing that when the right time has come it will be made manifest. This enables me to look forward to receiving only those things which are mine according to the Providential Plan. It releases my mind from all anxiety and uncertainty. It eliminates fear, jealousy, and anger. It gives me courage and faith to do the things that are mine to do. When my mind is attuned to the things that are mine, I become free from greed, passion, impure thoughts and deeds; but when I look without or watch others to see what they are or are not receiving, I cut myself off from my own

source of supply and minimize my power to receive.

V. I believe that the gifts of God are many thousands of times greater than I am now capable of receiving, and that I should therefore pray to increase my capacity both to receive and to give, for my power to receive is as great as my power to give, and my power to give as to receive. Gifts of God always bring peace, contentment and joy, and therefore anything in which I find a natural harmony and peace and which does not interfere with anyone else's natural expression of life belongs to me, and any work for which I feel a natural call, by gift or inclination, is mine to do. When I am attuned to that which is mine I find no barrier in God's Kingdom, hence I accept none.

VI. I believe that God's Plan for life is a healthy, happy expression for the good of all, and that everything that makes me feel happy to do will bring happiness to others. Therefore, when I am hindered from doing the thing that I want to do, I believe that God has closed the door only to open another, and that upon every closed door there is a sign pointing to a better and larger door just ahead. My disappointments, therefore, become His appointments. If I do not readily see the door just ahead I believe that it is because there is some blindness, deafness or disobedience within my life that walls me off from God, and that God is using the resulting trouble or failure to help me find the inspiration and the guidance and the power to help me overcome it so that I may see the right door.

VII. I believe that the chief essential of life is to keep in touch with the Father, and let the Divinity that is in me manifest through me. I believe that the whole world about me is full of beauty, joy, and power, even as it is full of God, and that I can share it and enjoy it if I attune myself to my Divine Plan and am inwardly open toward God and outwardly helpful toward men. I shall ask my heavenly Father and Friend, who dwells within me and who has given me this vision of life, to give me His help in its realization and to help me share it with others that it may bring peace and happiness to many.

INTERLUDE

The principle underlying the "Thought Farthest Out" can be summed up as follows:

FALL FIRST UP, THEN DOWN.

First: Let go of the dross of life, and turn in thought to God and the Kingdom of Heaven, or to your highest conception of God and the Kingdom. Thus liberated and thus drawn, you will naturally fall upward, and "come up over" the Problem.

Second: Let your heart be filled with Love, and then turn in thought to the Need or the Problem at your door. Thus filled and thus drawn, you will naturally fall downward, or, in other words, your Love and your Faith will flow down over the Need and will "overcome" the Problem.

If the reader has caught the principle and understands it, there is very little for him to do except to go out and practice it. Consequently I thought that the most helpful thing I could do at this point would be to insert some actual talks given to people who were in dead earnest to catch the principle and apply it in their own lives. These talks are printed here substantially as they were given with little or no attempt to bring the wording into adjustment with the principle just stated. Such adjustment is left for the reader to make for himself.