

NEVILLE
GODDARD

*Lecture:
Changing
the Feeling
of 'I'*

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Changing the Feeling of 'I' 1953

For the benefit of those who were not present last Sunday, just let me give you a quick summary of the thought expressed here. We claimed that the world was a manifestation of consciousness, that the individual's environment, circumstances and conditions of life were only the out picturing of the particular state of consciousness in which that individual abides. Therefore, the individual sees whatever he is by virtue of the state of consciousness from which he views the world. Any attempt to change the outer world before he changes the inner structure of his mind, is to labor in vain. Everything happens by order. Those who help or hinder us, whether they know it or not, are

the servants of that law, which constantly shapes outward circumstances in harmony with our inner nature. We asked you last Sunday to distinguish between the individual identity and the state they occupy. The individual identity is the Son of God. It is that I speak of you or to you, or speak of myself, I mean really our imagination. That is permanent. It fuses with state and believes itself to be the state with which it is fused, but at every moment of time it is free to choose the state with which it will be identified. And that brings us to today's subject, "Changing the Feeling of I", and I hope I will not get the same reaction that is recorded in the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John. For we are told that when this was given to the world they all left him, leaving just a handful

behind. For when he told them there was no one to change but self, they said this is a hard, hard teaching. It's a hard thing. Who can hear it? For he said, "No man cometh unto me save I call him." And then it's recorded when he repeated it three times they left him, never again to walk with him. And he turned to the few who remained and asked them, "Would you also go?" And they answered and said, "To whom would we go?" You have the word of eternal life. In other words, it's so much easier when I can blame another for my misfortune, but now that I am told that no man cometh unto me save I call him, that I am the sole architect of my fortunes and misfortunes, it's a difficult saying, and so it's recorded, "It's a hard saying. Who can hear it? Who can grasp it? And who will believe it?" And

so he said, "And now I sanctify myself that they also be sanctified through the truth, for if this is the truth, then there is no one to change, no one to make whole, no one to purify but self." And so we start with the "I" . Most of us are totally unaware of the self that we really cherish. We have never taken one good look at the self, so we don't know this self, for the "I" has neither face, form nor figure, but it does mold itself into structure by all that it consents to, all that it believes, and few of us know really what we do believe. We have no idea of the unnumbered superstitions and prejudices that go to mold this inner, formless "I" into a form which is then projected as a man's environment, as the conditions of life. So here, read it carefully when you go home, "No man cometh unto me save I call him.

You didn't choose me; I have chosen you. No man can take away my life; I lay it down myself . There is no power to take from me anything that is part of the inner arrangement of my mind. All that you gave me I have kept and none is lost save the son of perdition or the belief in God, and because nothing can be lost but the belief in loss, I will not now assume loss of anything you have given me that is good. And so I sanctify myself that they be sanctified through the truth". And now, how do we go about changing the "I". First of all, we must discover the "I" and we do this by an uncritical observation of self. This will reveal a self that will shock you. You will be altogether, I wouldn't say afraid, but ashamed to admit you've ever known such a lowly creature. And had it been God

Himself who drew near in this despicable form, you would have denied him a thousand times before a single cock would crow. You couldn't believe that this is the self that you've carried around and protected and excused and justified. Then you start changing this self after, by an uncritical observation, you make the discovery of that self. For the acceptance of self is the essence of the moral problem of the world. It is the epitome of a true outlook on life, for it is the sole cause of everything you observe. Your description of the world is a confession of the self that you do not know. You describe another, you describe society, you describe anything, and your description of the thing you observe reveals to one who knows this law the being you really are. So you must first

accept that self. When that self is accepted, then you can start to change. It's so much easier to take the virtues of the Gospel and apply them as the word of life, to love the enemy, to bless those who curse us, and to feed the hungry. But when man discovers the being to be fed, the being to be clothed, the being to be sheltered, the greatest enemy of all is that self, then he is ashamed, completely ashamed that that is the being, for it was easier to share with another something that I possess, to take an extra coat and give it to another, but when I know the truth it's not that. I start with the self, having discovered, and start with change of that self. Now, let me tell you a story. A few years ago, in this city, I was giving a series of lectures down near that lake – I can't even recall the name of the

lake but it was some Parkview Manor was the place where I spoke, and in that audience was a gentleman who sought an audience before the meeting. And we went across the street into the little park there, and he said to me that he had an insoluble problem. I said, "There is no such thing as an insoluble problem. "But", he said, "you do not know my problem. It's not a state of health, I assure you; it is look at the skin that I wear" . I said, "What's wrong with it; it looks lovely to me". He said, "Look at the pigment of my skin. I, by the accident of birth, am now discriminated against. The opportunities for progress in this world are denied me just because of the accident of birth, that I was born a colored man. Opportunities for advancement in every field, neighborhoods that I would like to live

in and raise a family I couldn't move in, where I would like to open up a business I couldn't move into that area." Then I told him my own personal experience, that I came to this country. Well, I didn't have that problem but I was a foreigner in the midst of all Americans. I didn't find it difficult. "Yet", as he reminded me, "but that's not my problem, Neville. Others have come here speaking with an accent, but they haven't my skin, and I was born an American" . Then I told him an experience of mine in New York City. If I were called upon to name a man that I would consider my teacher, I would name Abdullah. I studied with that gentleman for five years. He had the same color skin, the same pigment as this gentleman. He would never allow anyone to refer to him as a colored

man. He was very proud of being a negro didn't want any modification of what God had made him. He turned to me and he said, "Have you ever seen a picture of the Sphinx?" I said, "Yes". He said, "It embodies the four fixed quarters of the universe. You have the lion, the eagle the bull and man. And here is man that is the head. The crown of that creature called the Sphinx, which still defies man's knowledge to unriddle it, was crowned with a human head. And look carefully at the head, Neville, and you will see whoever modeled that head must have been a negro. Whoever modeled it had the face of a negro and if that still defies man's ability to unravel it, I am very proud that I am a negro." I have seen scientists, doctors, lawyers, bankers, from every walk of life

seek an audience with old Abdullah, and everyone Who came thought themselves honored to be admitted to his home and to receive an interview. If he was ever invited out, and he was, he was always the honored guest. He said, "Neville, you must first start with self. Find self, don't be ashamed ever of the being you are. Discover it and start the changing of that self". Well, I told this gentleman exactly what Abdullah had taught me, that there was no cause outside of the arrangement of his own mind. If he was discriminated against, it was not because of the pigment of his skin, though he showed me signs as large as all outdoors denying him access to a certain area. The sign is there only because in the minds of some men such patterns are formed and they draw unto

themselves what now they would condemn; that there is no power outside the mind of man to do anything to man, and he by the arrangement of his own mind, by consenting to these restrictions in his cradle and being conditioned slowly through his youth, waking into manhood believing himself set upon would have to be set upon, but "no man cometh unto me save I call him". So then someone comes to condemn or to praise. They couldn't come unless I call them. Not a man called Neville, but that secret being that is not called Neville. The secret being that is the sum total of all of my beliefs , all of the things that I consent to, that form a pattern of structure, that secret being draws unto itself things in harmony with itself. Well, that man went away and wrestled with himself.

He couldn't believe everything I told him, not that night, but last Sunday morning in the lobby, he came forward and we renewed the friendship. He took me next door to show me the fruit of this teaching. He said, "Neville, it took me almost three years to really overcome that fixed idea that I, by the accident of birth, would be a secondary citizen, but I overcame .it. Now here is my office on Wilshire Boulevard. I picked this one not because it was the only one offered; four equally wonderful spots were offered me. I took this one because it had greater telephone facilities , but the others were equally good. Now here is my office. Now you couldn't judge my income from this office, lovely as it is. Everything is nice about it, but, Neville, this year I will net a quarter of a million dollars". Well in

America that is still a fabulous sum of money. It would be staggering in any other part of the world, but even in fabulous America a man to net a quarter of a million is really up in the very highest of brackets. And that was the man that a few years ago told me the whole vast world was against him by reason of the accident of birth. He knows now he is what he is by virtue of the state of consciousness with which he is identified, and the choice is his to go back to the restrictions of his childhood when he believed the story or to continue in the freedom that he has found. So you and I can be anything in this world we desire to be if we will clearly define our aim in life and constantly occupy that aim. It must be habitual. The concept we hold of self that is noble must not be put on just for a moment

and taken off when we leave this church. We feel free here; we feel that we have something in common, that's why we are here, but are we going to wear the noble concept we now hold of self when we go through the door and enter that bus, or are we going to return to the restrictions that were ours prior to coming here? The choice is ours and the hardest lesson to learn is that there is no one in this world that can be drawn into your world unless you, and you alone, call him. So do not do what they did thousands of years ago, for that is the beginning of the secession of the great truth. So we are told they turned away from it, never again to walk with it, and the few who remained didn't like it either, but where would they go if this is the word of eternal truth? Not that it's true for this day and age,

but if this is the law of being, and in all the dimensions of my being it holds good, if this is eternally true, then let me learn the lesson now, though I wrestle with myself as he did for three years. So, the changing of the feeling of "I" is a selective thing because unnumbered states are infinite states, but the "I" is not the state. The "I" believes itself to be the state when it enters and fuses with it, so he was presented with a state and without the faculty of discrimination in his youth, he fused with the state and believed these restrictions were true, and it took him three years to disentangle the "I" from these fixed ideas with which he had lived for so many years. Now you may take only a moment or you, too, may take your three years. I can't tell you how long it's going to take you but I'll

tell you this much. It can be measured by the feeling of naturalness. You can wear a feeling until it's natural. The moment the feeling becomes natural, it will begin to bear fruit within your world. So I told this story at a small gathering here in the city, and not very many asked questions about it, but three people asked, "But he must have had money before. He must have known the right people. He must in some way have had some substance to start it, because how can you go out to loan a hundred million dollars and call that a real fact of being that you have that to loan and tell me you didn't have someone who had it or you, yourself, didn't have it". I did not ask the gentleman about the individual facts of the case. I went into the office, I saw it, I didn't look at his books; he volunteered this

information, and gave me the figure of a quarter of a million net for the year. I have not checked or in any way verified the statement; I believe it implicitly. But I will not go along with those who believe that unless you have certain things to start with you can't apply this law. You can start now from scratch and choose the being you want to be. You aren't going to change the pigment of your skin but you will find your accent or the pigment of skin or your so-called racial background will not be a hindrance, for if a man is ever hindered it can only be the state of consciousness in which he abides that hinders him. Man is freed or constrained by reason of the state of mind in which he persists. If you persist in it, well, then I will say, "persist in it", but I warn you no one cares and that is an awful blow

when a man discovers that no one, no one but himself really cares. So we find ourselves weeping with ourselves in the hope of getting others to weep with us. And what an awful shock when the day arrives, we discover that no one really ever cared. They will give us some little listening ear for a moment just as they were passing by, but they really didn't care. When we make that discovery, we shake ourselves out of it and boldly appropriate the gift our Father gave us before the world was. So let me show you the gift. You've read your Lord's Prayer possibly daily, but you read it as a prayer from a translation of a translation which does not reveal the sense of the evangelist. The real translation, you will find in Farrar Fenton's work where in the original it is written in the imperative passive mood,

which is like a standing order, a thing to be done absolutely and continuously. So that you can look now upon your universe as one vast inter-knit machinery where all things happen. There isn't a thing to become; all things are taking place, so it is written in this manner, "Thy will must be being done. Thy kingdom must be being restored." It is the only way you could express it if you would express the imperative passive mood. But from the Latin from which our translation was made there is no first aorist of the imperative passive mood. So we have it in the way we have it but it does not reveal the intent of the mysteries. If you will see all things are now, you don't become, you simply select the state that you would occupy. Occupying it you seem to become but it is already a

fact, every aspect of that state in its most minute detail. It's worked out and taking place. You by occupying the state seem to go through the action of unfolding that state, but the state is completely finished and taking place. So now you can choose the being you want to be and by choosing a being other than what you are now expressing you start the change of the feeling of "I". Now, how will I know that I have changed the feeling of "I"? By beginning first with an uncritical observation of my reactions to life and then noticing my reactions when I think I am identified with my choice. If I assume that I am the man that I want to be, let me observe my reactions. If they are as they were, I have not identified myself with my choice, for my reactions are automatic and

so if I am changed, I would automatically change my reactions to life. So the changing of the feeling of "I" results in a change of reaction, which change of reaction is a change of environment and behavior. But let me warn you now. A little alteration of mood is not a transformation; it's not a real change of consciousness. Because as I change my mood for the moment it can quickly and rapidly be I would say, replaced by another mood in the reverse direction. When I say that I was changed, as that gentleman changed his mood, his basic mood, his state of consciousness, it means that having assumed that I am what the moment denied, what my reason denied, that I remain in that state long enough to make that state stable. So that all of my energies

are flowing from that state. I am no longer thinking of that state. I am thinking from that state. So that wherever a state grows so stable as to definitely expel all of its rivals, then that central, habitual state of consciousness from which I think defines my character and is really a true transformation or change of consciousness. Whenever I reach that state of stability, watch my world mold itself then in harmony with this inner change. And men will come into my world, people will come to aid and they will think they are initiating the urge to help. They are playing only their part. They must do what they do because I have done what I did. Having moved from one state into the other. I have altered my relationship relative to the world round about, and that changed relationship

compels a change in behavior relative to my world. So they have to act differently toward me. So in changing the "I", you start with desire, which we will unfold and elaborate on tomorrow night. For it starts with desire. Desire is the spring of action, for you must want to be other than what you are. We fail because we do not fall in love enough with an idea. We aren't, I would say, moved enough to want to be other than what we are. If I could get you to be completely in love with some state to the point where it haunted the mind, I could almost prophesy that you would in the not distant future externalize that state within your world. And the reason we fail we aren't hungry enough to change. For either we do not know the law or we haven't the urge or the hunger to really bring about the change.

For the changing of the feeling of "I" results in the change of reaction, which change of reaction results in a change of world. If you like your world and you are complacent about it, you haven't started on the road of the mysteries, for the very first beatitude appeals to one who is not complacent. "Blessed are the poor in spirit". You must be poor in spirit, not complacent, not satisfied. The man who thinks that by reason of birth, the religion that he inherited at birth, is good enough for me, that he is not dissatisfied, he is not, I would say moved that being is complacent and therefore he is not poor in spirit; he is very rich in spirit. There is not the kingdom of God. For if I could stir you, make you dissatisfied with self, then you will recognize that self and set about to change

it. For the only field of activity for man is within himself and on himself. You do not work on the other. The day you change self, that day you change your world. Now I see my time is going to its quick end. And so in the remaining minute I have left here let me not urge you, because if you come to the meeting tomorrow night not really hungry, you wouldn't benefit, but I do hope that many of you are there. Even if you are stirred to the point of trying to, I would say, disprove what I told you, I would accept that challenge for in the attempt to disprove it, I know if you were sincere in your attempt, you would prove it. So I hope many of you will come and take this feast with us. We are here in the city at the Ebell for 15 nights, Monday thru Friday, as Mr. Smith told you, for three consecutive weeks. If you can't

take all, and I do hope many of you will take all, then pick out the titles that appeal to you. Tomorrow night to me is basic; it is the importance of defining an aim in this world, having a goal, for without an aim you are aimless. And you were warned in the Book, or I would say, in the Epistle of James that "the double minded man is unstable in all his ways. Let not such a man believe that he shall receive anything of the Lord; for he is like a wave that is driven and tossed by the wind." That man never reaches his goal. So you must have an aim, and tomorrow night we will show you the importance of defining desire. There are certain schools who teach you to kill out desire; we teach you to intensify desire and show you the reason for such teaching, show you what the Bible teaches about

desire. And now we will come to the help that many of you have asked for today. Those who were not here on Sunday let me remind you it is a very simple technique. As I told you on Sunday, any time that you exercise your imagination, and do it lovingly on behalf of another, you are mediating God to man. So we sit quietly and we simply become imitators of our Father. And He called the world into being by being the thing he would call. And so we sit and we listen as though we heard someone congratulating us on having found what we seek. So we go to the end of the matter and we listen just as though we heard, and we look as though we saw, and we try in this manner to feel ourselves right into the situation of our answered prayer, and there we wait in the silence just

for about two minutes, and so they will lower the lights to aid you. And let me remind you if you want to clear your throat, please do so. If you want to shift your position in the chair, do so. Feel as though you are alone at home, because if you don't and you try not to disturb the neighbor, you will not be able to exercise your imagination on behalf of anyone. So now I will take the chair and just simply listen attentively, just as though you heard. I'll make you this promise – the day you are very still in mind and really become attentive, you will hear as coming from without what really you are whispering from within yourself.

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