

THE SERMONS, LECTURES, AND SONGS OF SIDNEY EDWARD COX

Hebrews – Chapter 11, Part 1

Editorial Note: This is a lecture by Sidney Cox that was part of a series of lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews that he taught while on the theological teaching faculty at the Toccoa Falls Bible Institute during the early part of 1962. He was 75 years of age at the time.

During the latter part of his life, Sidney Cox had developed a close relationship with the Christian and Missionary Alliance (“CMA”). CMA operates as a vast network of churches, similar to a “denomination.” Toccoa Falls Bible Institute was closely affiliated with the CMA, provided support to the Institute and the Institute sent many of its graduates into ministry within CMA churches. CMA and The Salvation Army, in which Sidney Cox served as an officer for 30 years previously in his life, share a similar theology and emphasis in Christian outreach.

From 1956 – 1960, Sidney and Violet Cox lived in Miami, Florida where Sidney was on the theological teaching faculty of the Miami Bible Institute, another CMA supported institution. They moved to Toccoa Falls, Georgia in 1960, where he served on the staff at the Toccoa Falls Bible Institute from 1960 – 1962.

As a lecture, he was obviously assuming that his students had prepared for class by reading and studying the pertinent scripture and other class material. Thus, his comments were not like a sermon, but lectures to enhance the students’ theological understanding. He emphasized a detailed study of the scripture and incorporated analysis that he gained from his study of Bible commentaries and books on the related subject matter. These lectures are remarkably free of any personal opinions, personal illustrations or “sermonizing” of any kind. While at other times in his career he was very much the preacher and evangelist, in these late-in-life roles of Bible Professor, he was very much the educator.

John Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney Cox. December 29, 2008.

Let’s remember to begin with when we start on Chapter 11, that we are now on the practical side of our study together. These three words that are the key words of Chapter 11 – walk, wait, and work -- are all practical words. They have to do with life.

Now of course, you’ve got to have doctrine under every one of them. You can’t walk without you walk in the way of God’s truth. And remember if you please, that doctrine is simply – and I’m quoting here – “the order of sound words.” It’s sound words put into proper order.

Now, that’s the Apostle Paul’s definition of doctrine and you will find it in the first chapter of II Timothy. Right at the end of that chapter he speaks of ‘the form of sound words.’ Now, sound words are words with the right sound to them and the only words that have the right sound to them are words that come from God himself.

Now, when you take these words that God has given us and you arrange them in proper order, that is what we call doctrine; that's all. And if you want the scriptural definition of doctrine, you will find it there right at the end of that first chapter of II Timothy, 'the order of sound words.' Now, that's doctrine.

Now of course, you can't walk unless you walk on the pathway of the order of sound words; and neither can you wait unless, underneath your waiting, there is the order of sound words. And neither can you work unless, underneath, you find the order of sound words. Now, that's the rock foundation for all of this.

Now, we gave a definition then just that moment. I want you to notice, if you please, that this Chapter 11 begins with a definition. Now, we usually speak of this as the 'faith chapter' and rightly so. This is the faith chapter. We have noticed a good many times that, in the arrangement of the scriptures, that great truths are mentioned constantly.

For instance, faith is mentioned from one end of the scripture to the other. But in the ordered arrangement of things, and it seemed to have been in the mind of the spirit when He did this - it's not an accidental thing, I'm quite convinced of that. That, in His mind, He not only mentions things in general but, at some particular point in the scripture, the teaching is concentrated.

Now, you only have to just let your mind go just a little bit to see the truth of that. You can find the resurrection, for example, from one end of the scripture to the other. Now, when you turn to the 15th chapter of I Corinthians, you find the concentrated teaching about the resurrection. When you turn to the 13th chapter of I Corinthians, you find the concentrated teaching about another subject that runs from one end of the scripture to the other.

When you turn to the 11th chapter of Hebrews, you find the concentrated teaching on the subject of faith that runs from one end of the scripture to the other. And, not only is the teaching seen from one end of the book to the other, but the very characters that are used as illustrations of this great truth are seen from one end of the book to the other; and you've got them all the way along.

Now, concentrated teaching on anything must begin with a definition. You will remember that, in the beginning of the 15th chapter of I Corinthians, Paul begins with a definition. He's going to talk about the resurrection, but he begins with a definition; the only definition of the Gospel that is given anywhere in the scripture and in the heart of it is the thing he's going to talk about. "This is the Gospel that I preach unto you that Christ died, according to the scripture, was buried and rose again, according to the scripture."¹ Now, taking that definition, he then goes on with this magnificent thing that we call the 15th chapter of I Corinthians.

Now, you find the same thing exactly in the beginning of Chapter 13 of I Corinthians, and you find exactly the same thing in this key chapter on faith.

Now, let's have a look, if you please, and see what he says about faith. First of all, or what definition he gives. First of all, let us remember – and this too we have seen before – that this chapter is a sermon on an Old Testament text. Now, we've seen that before, haven't we? We've seen the 7th chapter of

¹ I Corinthians 15:1-4, paraphrased.

Hebrews; for example, that is a sermon on an Old Testament text that comes to us from out of the shining loveliness of the Psalms, and this is the sermon on it.

Now, the sermon, of course, is that famous phrase that you find in the Book of Habakkuk in chapter – I think it is 10:38. Check that, will you? Check that. The phrase is “The just shall live by faith. The just shall live by faith.”² Now, whose favorite text was that? – Martin Luther, exactly; exactly.

Now, I don’t mind whether you pronounce that Old Testament prophet as Ha bak’ kuk or Ha bak kuk’. I don’t mind at all. I think you will be quite correct in either case. We usually speak of him, I think, as Ha bak’ kuk. But there are folks who are worthy of consideration who use the other way of pronouncing it and speak of it as Ha bak kuk’. For example, I heard Dr. Campbell Morgan speak of this man’s name in that way, Ha bak kuk’.

Now, that’s not important, of course. But here’s a chapter that opens with a definition of faith. Now, let’s have a look at it, if you please, and we’ll see just what is said here.

The definition of faith – because it’s well-worth spending a little time on it; 11th chapter, the definition of faith. Now, here it is. “Now, faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”³ Now, you will notice this: That the scriptures do not emphasize repeated definitions. I said a moment ago that the definition in the beginning of the 15th chapter of I Corinthians, the definition of the Gospel, is the only one that is found anywhere in the scriptures.

Now, this is the only definition of faith that is given to us anywhere. Oh, you can see what faith is. You can see how faith is demonstrated. You are given information that enables you to make your own definition, and rightly so. But this is the only scriptural definition of faith that is to be found anywhere in the scripture.

Now, notice if you please, just what is said here. It is, “The substance of things hoped for.” Now, let’s stop a minute because, when you turn to your various translations, you will discover that other words are used instead of the word ‘substance.’ Now, that’s an old-fashioned word, and a good many of these commentators – and you will notice some of this material in your notes. A good many of them use other words; for example, the substantiating, the proving, the incontrovertible evidence of faith, the thing that makes it real; “The substance of things hoped for.”

Now, another word that is changed quite frequently is the next one, “The conviction of things not seen.” Now, you have that in your notes if you care to underline those two words, ‘substantiating’ and ‘conviction,’ – “The conviction of things not seen.”

Now, it is by faith - now I want you to notice this – and this phrase might be well-worth underlining too. “By faith, we feel and act about things not seen as though we could actually see them.” Now, that’s faith and don’t forget that the big thing about faith is not merely believing something. It’s seeing something as well. Faith is the word that gives to us the thought of a supernatural eyesight. When we were saved, when the Holy Spirit takes position of us, then there is a supernatural ability to see things that can’t be seen.

² Actually, found in Habakkuk 2:4.

³ Hebrews 11:1.

Now, faith is the ability to see things that can't be seen, except by these eyes. Now, that's faith. And, when we see these things, we act upon them. You act upon things that you see constantly. For instance, if you couldn't see these stairs out here, you would approach them and maybe walk down them with a great deal of hesitation – if you couldn't see them. But you can, and the consequence is, you don't think anything about it. You just go right on down because you can see. Now, in exactly the same way, faith walks downstairs and faith walks upstairs as well on stairs that cannot be seen, except by the spiritual eye; the renewed eye.

Now, that's one of the gifts of the spirit. If you want to check that sometime or another, you listen while you're doing your personal work and your Christian service and so on and when you are brought in contact with somebody or another and you want to make a little bit of God's truth real to them, and you say, "Well, this is what the Word of God says there. This is what the Word of God says." And you will almost invariably get the reply, "Well, I can't see that." No, of course, they can't see it. Of course, they can't because there's a lack of eyesight, spiritual eyesight I'm talking about.

Now, here is this thing that we mean that we're speaking about, the faith that enables the child of God to see things that other people can't see at all. Now, that's the thing that we're talking about – remember? And here is something else that might be worth underscoring; that, with the child of God, believing is seeing.

Now, you can see immediately that that is exactly the opposite to the way in which the world operates. With the world, seeing is believing. But, with the child of God, it is exactly the opposite; believing is seeing.

Now, remember, we're going to get 25 illustrations of that in just a little while; not merely a little old statement that some teacher makes, not at all. We're going to get 25 illustrations of that in just a little while and we're going down the line and watch every last one of them saw because he believed; every one of them there. And, we're sure that God can do this for every one of us.

Let's look at that word 'substance' that is there; take the old King James Version word for it there. Look at it and see the different meanings for it. Substance, the essence – notice it again, the assurance, the confident knowledge. Faith isn't an indefinite something. Faith, my dear, is confident knowledge in something that only the child of God can know. Now we're not talking about natural faith here at all. We're talking about the faith that leads to fellowship with God.

Now, there are two kinds of faith. I know that the division between them is so fine perhaps that it isn't always seen, and it's not particularly important. But there are two definite kinds of faith. For instance, there's the faith that you are exercising right now in the chair in which you sit. Now, there isn't one of us that came in this morning and wondered whether the chair would hold us or not, not one. Now, we are exercising faith in that. There isn't one of us that wondered this morning whether the floor of this room would hold us or not, not one of us. We have a natural faith in things.

Now, there is a supernatural faith. A supernatural faith that has to do with our relationship with God and every step of the way is marked by it -- the supernatural faith and it leads us into positive knowledge.

Now, positive knowledge is always a pathway of one step at a time before you arrive at a positive knowledge of anything.

Now, the path of faith leads us step by step into positive knowledge of something that cannot be seen with the natural eye. We know all the way along. Now, notice if you please, that this word – and I think you’ll find it in capital letters in your notes there, it is the ‘title deeds.’ Faith is the ‘title deeds’ to things that cannot be seen. Faith has the title deeds.

Now, write at the side of that, if you please, A. T. Robertson. Now, if you haven’t got that, write by the side of those words ‘title deeds’ A. T. Robertson. Now, A. T. Robertson was the great Greek scholar of the Southern Baptist Convention and probably the greatest Greek scholar this country has produced in the last 100 years. Now, I don’t think there’s any question about that.⁴ Now, we have in our library Robertson’s word pictures and a great many other books that came from the pen of this remarkable man and he was just that with capital letters. He sure was. Now, he’s gone home to be with his Lord and gone to heaven. But he has left us a legacy that is beyond value.

Now, this is the man then who says that that word ‘substance’ can be translated, ‘the title deeds.’ Now, title deeds are a very assuring thing.

For instance, we have in Miami just a little fragment of dirt down there and it doesn’t amount to very much and I can’t see it at all. The fact of the matter is, I don’t want to see it. It’s all right down there. I’m not at all interested in it beyond the fact that there it is, down there in the City of Miami. But in the little box that we have, I’ve got a scrap of paper, and on it is the description of that tiny little fragment of property that’s down there in Miami. And if I want to know whether that property belongs to me or not, I don’t go to Miami, I go to that little box and take out that piece of paper and look at it and find the description of it, and I have the title deeds to it. Now the reason why I don’t want to go to it is because the title deed is a cemetery lot. (Laughter) And, that’s one reason why I said it was a little fragment of property down there. I’m not at all anxious to see that; strange to say.⁵

But there it is. But you see what I mean? It isn’t the thing itself there. It isn’t the fact that I hoped that it’s still there and so on and so on. But I’ve got the title deeds. Now faith, my dear, puts something in your hands and you say, “I’ve got the title deeds of an inheritance that’s incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away. I’ve got the title deeds to my mansion in the sky.” You see?

Now, tell me, what does your mansion in the sky look like. What? Have you ever seen it? Have you? And yet, right in your hands, you’ve got the title deeds. Faith says it’s mine, and faith puts the title deeds in your hand. You don’t say, “I hope it’s mine.” You say, “I know it’s mine.” You don’t say anything about your hope that is on there in the future. You don’t say, “I hope this or I do presume that it will be so” or something like that. Faith puts the title deeds in your hands.

⁴ Archibald Thomas Robertson (November 6, 1863 – September 24, 1934) was an American biblical scholar born at Cherbury near Chatham, Va. He was educated at Wake Forest (N. C.) College (M. A., 1885) and at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. (Th. M., 1888), where he was thereafter instructor and professor of New Testament interpretation. Robertson was author of many books on the New Testament.

⁵ Sidney and Violet Cox resided in Toccoa Falls from 1960 – 1962 where he was teaching this particular class at the Toccoa Falls Bible Institute. Prior to that, they had resided in Miami, Florida from 1956 – 1960, where Sidney was Professor of New Testament at the Miami Bible Institute. Sidney Cox was 69 years of age in 1956.

Now, we've got 25 illustrations of men who knew the feel of God's title deeds to something. And some of them haven't seen the genuine fulfillment – the complete fulfillment of it yet. And they've had title deeds in their hands, some of them, for 4 or 5,000 years; and they still haven't seen it. They've got that title deed in their hands, and it's as good as God is good. It sure is.

Now, let's go on and see here just what we're saying regarding this. I want you to notice one or two things about these men – and I think there's a woman or two there, as well - glad about that. But let's remember that in this recital of these men of faith – and this is important, and it's very comforting to the man talking to you, whether it has any comfort to you or not. But every last one of these folks were people filled with faults, every one of them. Faith and faultless are not synonymous terms, not at all. Every last one of them were filled with faults, every one.

Now, that's fact Number 1. But, from one end of the 11th chapter of Hebrews to the other, you will not find one single mention or reference to their faults; not one. There isn't one of them where you find any indication that he was anything else but a perfectly, satisfactory child of God; not one. You won't find a fault mentioned.

Now, remember, and warm your hearts at this fire, that's the kind of a heavenly Father you've got. A heavenly Father who is so glad to put out of His sight and behind His back and under the blood that which can be seen in every one of our lives that is not satisfactory to Him. Now, that's one thing that you can see out of the 11th chapter of Hebrews, and it's a very comforting thing all the way through.

Now, these old-fashioned folks that are named in this one, in this chapter, are all names with few exceptions that we are quite familiar with and you will find that they divide – that the chapter can be divided into this kind of an outline. By the way, that's a good outline and if you just make a note of it there, you've got illustrations galore. And, if you do that, you will be dealing with the 11th chapter of Hebrews in not the usual manner.

Let me ask you a question. You've heard people preach on the 11th chapter of Hebrews. In fact, you hear that almost more than any other subject – turn constantly to the 11th chapter of Hebrews and rightly so, there. Did you ever hear anybody use those words as the outline of the sermon? Now, you may have done. I don't know. But I never have. I haven't heard anybody.

So that I don't think you would be treading on familiar ground and folks would be saying to you, "If you get those three words and work out a sermon from the 11th chapter of Hebrews - well, the fellow got it out of Spurgeon's sermons or somebody else."⁶ They won't say that about you at all. They won't say that.

⁶ Reference is to Charles Haddon (C.H.) Spurgeon (June 19, 1834 – January 31, 1892) was a British Particular Baptist preacher who remains highly influential among Christians of different denominations, among whom he is still known as the "Prince of Preachers". In his lifetime, Spurgeon preached to around 10,000,000 people, often up to 10 times each week at different places. His sermons have been translated into many languages. Spurgeon was the pastor of the congregation of the New Park Street Chapel (later the Metropolitan Tabernacle) in London for 38 years. He was part of several controversies with the Baptist Union of Great Britain and later had to leave that denomination. In 1857, he started a charity organization called Spurgeon's which now works globally. He also founded Spurgeon's College, which was named after him posthumously. Spurgeon was a prolific author of many types of works including sermons, an autobiography, a commentary,

And, if you do, I can give you a promise from every last one of the members from this class, nobody in this class is going to tell where you got your outline. (Laughter) There isn't one of us that will let on about it, not one. We'll just keep it to ourselves. That's a class secret there. But, out of this class, there ought to be 25 sermons going on the 11th chapter of Hebrews with this as the outline, and we're going to rejoice in every last one of them there.

Now, notice this, if you please, that you can divide these characters under these headings, and every last one of them there fit in to either one or the other of these; and some of them into all of them -- the men who learned to walk with God, the men who learned to wait for God, the men who are characterized by their work for God. Now, that's a simple way of dividing them, and you will see just exactly where it starts there.

Now, let's get one or two other things as we go along, and I want you to -- before we actually get into the considering these men, I want you to look at the other things that are said before a name is mentioned at all. By this -- we're talking about faith, the elders. That means the old characters; that's all -- "The elders obtained a good report. Through faith, we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God. So the things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."⁷

Now, remember that when you get into that realm, you only have one set of eyes. You have the eyes of faith, or you do not have eyes at all. Now, the world, for generations, has been trying to penetrate the mystery of where things came from and every last one of those who have sought to penetrate that mystery have done one thing in common. They've all arrived at different conclusions, but every last one of them demonstrate one common thing and, that is, you can't understand where things came from unless you look at it with the eyes of faith. Apart from that, you are simply looking into impenetrable darkness.

I think I quoted for you, maybe in this class -- forgive me for doing it again -- a verse that was written by Alfred Lord Tennyson in which he shows, in his own marvelous way, the necessity of looking at things with the eyes of faith; and, unless we do, we remain in the darkness. And he says:

"Strong Son of God, immortal love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove."⁸

Now, that's faith and when you get into this verse, this second verse of the 11th chapter, you are in a realm where only the eyes of faith can see and only the eyes of faith can put under us the rock foundation that is immovable, the only people that are at rest on the question of where things came from

books on prayer, a devotional, a magazine, poetry, hymnist, and more. Many sermons were transcribed as he spoke and were translated into many languages during his lifetime.

⁷ Hebrews 11:2-3.

⁸ From Tennyson's poem, *Strong Son of God, Immortal Love* -- later set to music by George J. Elvey to become one of the great hymns of the church.

- that's the subject of the second verse there - the only people that are at rest are those who have rested on something that the natural eye cannot see at all. We have rested on the revealed Word of God. We believe what we cannot prove and the more you try to prove these things that go back to the origins of things, the more you try to prove it, the deeper the darkness becomes.

Now, there are a lot of things like that. There're just a lot of things like that. Somebody has said this, "Our knowledge on this subject" – and he's talking about this great thing that is there – "Our knowledge on this subject is not a mere matter of faith in God's word. Reason is a mere matter of faith in God's word. Reason utterly fails here. Profane history does not go back to that period and inform us of it. It is simply that God has told us so in His word, and we'll rest there or we will not rest at all."

Now, one of the reasons for the unrest of the world – and I don't want to get on a subject here that I don't – or in a realm where I certainly don't belong - but I'm deeply convinced that one of the reasons for the unrest of the world is that this rock foundation regarding the beginnings of things has been so seriously shaken that the average person today is not standing on rock at all. He's standing on quicksand. And you can see it everywhere; the world that wants to know from whence came these things. The inquiring mind of the young man and young woman who wants to know something about the beginnings of things so that into their lives there can come a foundation that cannot be moved, and the foundation isn't there. And I'm quite convinced that one of the reasons why we find unrest, and unrest that seems almost like insanity amongst our young thinking folks today; that is, folks who are presumably thinking folks, why we find so much unrest is because, in some way, by some means, this rock foundation is not there.

If you have any doubt as to whether there is unrest, an unrest that leads almost to insanity, go to Fort Lauderdale right now and you would find down there thousands and thousands and thousands of our thinking young people, presumably. College students who give every evidence of mass insanity, and the thing happens every year.

I heard on the radio this morning that the students of one college are now claiming a world record for something. It has now become one of the college crazes. And the record is this: I think they said it was a – I'll give you a general figure on this. They crammed into a room 9x12, 115 people. Now, the craze is to see how many people you can crowd into a room 9x12. And they've got a world record of it.

Now, it isn't a matter here of wandering in darkness. But darkness leads to mental insanity, and the world is just filled with it; just filled with it. What's going to happen to America tomorrow when the Fort Lauderdaleites and this crowd that we're talking about, and thousands of others like them are handling the affairs of our land? Do you want to live in it? Well, I want to tell you, my dear, I'm glad I'm going to heaven right soon. I sure am; in spite of the fact that I don't want to see that property in Miami. I'm not one bit interested in it. I'm right glad I'm going to heaven right soon. I sure am.

Now, let's have a look at some of these fellows, shall we, the men who walked by faith. Notice where it started, if you please, that every last one of them walked in the way of God's instruction. Now, that's the path of faith. Faith means I'm doing what God told me to do. I'm believing what God told me to believe -- what God said. I'm doing it in the way that God told me to do it; and I'm doing it without arguing about it. Now, that's faith; to do what God tells you to do in the way God tells you to do it and not argue about it.

Now, you notice the two – the illustration and the moment that you mention one man’s name, you immediately think of another. Here is Abel. Here’s where it starts. Let’s take a look at him, here and take a little glimpse of him – Abel. Now, notice, what was it that Abel did that Cain did not? He walked in the way of God’s instruction.

Now, both these boys knew what God required. One of them did what God wanted him to do - he walked in the way of faith, and the other one did not. What does it say about Abel there, by the way? “By faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice.”⁹

Now, when God uses the word – or, when the word of God uses the word ‘excellent,’ what does it mean? What does it mean? Now you’ll find it there all the way through. Paul uses it over and over again. One of the reasons why you sort of feel yourself right close to Paul, even though he didn’t write Hebrews, there. But you’re sort of feel he isn’t far away because there are words like this that only Paul uses in the way they’re used here, the word ‘excellent’ for instance, there; for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, My Lord, there.

All right. Here is the excellent sacrifice. We found a more excellent way just a little while ago, didn’t we? – there. Well, we won’t go into that. We’ll just see what Abel says when we meet again.

By the way, I’ve got two or three test papers that have been graded and you stop and get them – Donald Holbrook.....

(Audio ends.)

⁹ Hebrews 11:4.