

## **THE SERMONS, LECTURES, AND SONGS OF SIDNEY EDWARD COX**

Hebrews – Chapter 11, Part 2

**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.**

I’m going to be doing something this morning that I shall be asking you folks to do. You will remember that I suggested that, from this point on, seeing that we are now in the practical side of this epistle -- first part of it doctrinal, second part of it practical – seeing that we are now in the practical part of it, and that we have time enough. We’re not rushed from now on.

We have three chapters, but they’re three tremendous chapters, and I shall be asking you folks to help in bringing to the class certain information. Now, I shall tell you in advance what it is. I shan’t spring anything on you without you being told. But I shall ask you, in advance, to do certain things for me, and it is more than likely that I shall give one of those assignments this morning to one student.

But, in the meantime, I want to be doing something that is a little unusual, and you will see what it is as we go on with our study. Let’s remember certain things, if you please, regarding the opening part of the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Hebrews. Now, this is where we are, and immediately, we say, “This is the ‘faith’

chapter”; and rightly so. That’s the way we ought to speak of it because, here, we have several things that emphasize and spell out the word, ‘faith’ for us in capital letters.

First of all, we have a definition of faith right at the very beginning, and a very important thing that is. I’m hoping that you have not only looked at it but, as far as you can, absorbed it in your own heart. A definition is always an important thing. Without it, it’s like trying to build something without a foundation, or fasten to something or other to something there without any point where you can connect it.

But, when you’ve got a definition, then you can build on that and it’s a very important thing. I think we mentioned one or two things about that definition. **I’m going to mention more of them as we go along. Let’s remember, if you please,** that the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Hebrews is a sermon and the text of the sermon is mentioned in several places; one in the Book of Hebrews itself, the other in the Book of Habakkuk.

Now, where is it found in the Book of Habakkuk? Will somebody tell me, please?

(Someone in audience responds.)

Habakkuk 2:4 and the text is – class, altogether – “The just shall live by faith.” Now, where is that mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews? Have you got that? Because here is something I want to remind you of. We see it over and over again. I hope you won’t get tired of it because if you’re going to get tired of it, you’re going to get tired of this pattern in the Word of God; not me reminding you of it. Where is it found?

(Audience responds.)

10:38. Now 10:38 is just around the corner from Chapter 11, isn’t it? And there you have it again. Now, remember, if you please, this is the old pattern that we have seen so very frequently; a text or an indication of a subject mentioned at the end of one chapter and developed in the one that follows.

Now, we have seen that over and over again. Be sure you keep it in mind because here is one of the classic examples of that, where you find at the end of Chapter 10 this magnificent text repeated with the old voice of Habakkuk still ringing through it and the later voice of Martin Luther and others ringing through it from this side and here it is in the center, coming from the old days, blossoming out before us in the day in which this book was written, repeated in thunderous voices all the way through; and here it is. And Chapter 11 is a sermon with this as the text.

Now, that’s the next thing that we find.

Now, we found this: That when we get into the chapter itself, it is crowded with illustrations so that there is no phase of life that is omitted. If faith is the great necessity, the great changing point in lives, there is no need for us to ever ask the question, “Would that apply under certain conditions?” Because when you go down the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Hebrews from the beginning to the end, you find every condition, every age, every type of person, every problem is mentioned; and in the center of it, in capital letters again, the word ‘faith’; the deciding factor in every single life.

Now, we found too – and this might be a suggestion of an outline. I was glad that it had been left on the board so that somebody might see it beside members of our class if they care to read it. You can divide these illustrations, these characters into three groups – those who walked by faith, those who waited by faith, and those who worked by faith; walk and wait and work.

Now, right at the beginning of it, we found a rather unusual thing. We found that not only characters were named, but we found a group of people who were not named. Now, when you look at Verse 2, what is the general name given to these people who are not specifically named? – the elders; that’s right.

Now, let’s remember if you please, just what we mean by the ‘elders.’ Now obviously, we mean somebody who lived in the ancient days. Now, that’s true. But the elders, in this case, is the general name given to those who lived before there was any written revelation. Now, you get that and remember that, from the time in which the first character appears, Abel, on for centuries there was no written revelation at all and during that time, the men who lived in that time are spoken of as ‘the elders.’ Now, that’s a brief definition of that.

Now, the next thing I want you to notice, if you will please, certain things here and I want to go right back to this matter of faith. Now, I’m going to read certain things to you; perhaps comment on them and I shall not ask you to copy because this is additional information or additional statements to that contained in your notes.

Now, if you want to make a note of it, all you have to do is to just let me know and I’ll stop and repeat it over again so that you can copy it. Now, here’s the first statement, an additional definition of faith. Now, listen to this, and then I’ll stop if you want to copy it down. “Faith is that activity of the heart which secures salvation.” Now, you just go back to that text – “By grace are ye saved through faith.”<sup>1</sup>

Now, that activity of the heart which secures salvation.

Now remember, that in that definition two things are mentioned; one is faith and the other is hope. Now, here’s the definition of the last part of it. “Faith is a realization of that for which one hopes and the proof of things not seen.” Now, do you want me to repeat that, particularly that first part of it? – “That activity of the heart which secures salvation”; and then, “It is the realization of that for which one hopes and the proof of things not seen,” so that we are as sure of things not seen as we are of things seen.

And as a matter of fact, the believer in whose heart the spirit of God dwells and into whom God has imparted His own nature is more sure of things not seen than we are of things seen. Now, don’t ask the world to explain that to you because, confidentially my dear, the world doesn’t know anything about that. It just absolutely doesn’t know anything about that, where a thing not seen can be more real than a thing seen. Now, that’s one of the family secrets of God, and it’s a very beautiful thing.

Now, here’s another thing that you may be interested in. The underlying idea of faith is that it is something that guarantees a future possession. It guarantees a future possession. Now, you don’t have faith for something that’s already in your hand. You have faith for something that is in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 2:8

Now, let's remember again, faith and hope are related. May I remind you again of something that we have said; that faith, in the natural realm, is one thing. Faith in the spiritual realm is another. It's quite a different thing; in the spiritual realm, one thing; in the natural realm, another thing altogether.

Now, hope is exactly the same. In the natural realm, hope is one thing; in the spiritual realm, it is another. Now, let me illustrate by the way in which we use the word 'hope' in the natural realm, and we do it quite frequently. We say, "We hope it will be a fine day today." But we are not sure, so we take our raincoats. You see. Now, take a good look at hope; take a good look at it because while that may be a little extravagant as an illustration, the thought is there all the way through. The element of absolute certainty is never there in natural hope, never, never. We hope it will be a fine day.

Now, let me read something to you and then you literary experts, you tell me who wrote this, will you? Now you ought to know and I'll read it to you, and then you tell me who wrote this. Now, here's the verse, and it describes hope like we've been talking about:

"The worldly hope men set their hearts upon  
Turns ashes - or it prospers; and anon,  
Like snow upon the desert's dusty face  
Lighting a little hour or two - is gone."

That's worldly natural hope. It lights a little hour or two, and then it's gone.

Now my dear, who wrote that? There ought to be one line in there that would give you some inkling. Let me read you the line. I thought it was one of the most beautiful things I've ever read – "like snow upon the desert's dusty face." Now, what poet knew more than anybody else about the desert's dusty face? Huh?

Now, don't look around in New England because New Englanders don't know anything about the desert's dusty face. Neither do Southerners. So, don't look here. Neither do English folks. They don't know anything about the desert's dusty face. You've got to look beyond that. Who was it who wrote that? Give me a suggestion?

(Audience responds.) Robert Frost?

No. No, you're right in our own land there. It was a Persian poet who wrote that. You would expect a Persian to know more about the desert's dusty face than anybody else, wouldn't you? Who was the greatest of the Persian poets? Will somebody tell me?

(Audience responds.) Omar Khayyam.

Omar Khayyam, exactly; sure. That's right out of one of his poems there. But it expresses this idea of the transient, unsatisfactory character of what we call hope in the natural realm. Let me read it to you again – "The worldly hope men set their hearts upon turns ashes or it prospers and, anon, like snow upon the desert's dusty face lighting a little hour or two, is gone."<sup>2</sup> Now, that's hope in the natural realm.

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<sup>2</sup> From *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. Khayyam lived from 1048 – 1131AD in Neyshapur, Iran.

But, my dear, we are studying the Epistle to the Hebrews, hallelujah, and we are not studying some Persian poet; not at all. And this is what the Epistle to the Hebrews says about hope on the other side. It is an ‘anchor of the soul.’ Do you see the difference? It is both sure and certain. Now, look at it again. It is within the veil.

Now, those three things are said about it and we’ve heard the music of those statements before; particularly that one about within the veil. Now, that’s hope in the heart of the believer. That’s the kind of thing that is kindled in the heart of the believer; within the veil.

Now, here is another statement. Listen to this: Hope has necessarily to do with things unseen and future. Hope that is seen is not hope. That is, when you’ve got something in your hand, you don’t hope for it. It is seen and, consequently, hope does not apply in that situation.

Now, here’s another statement: Hope strengthens the present by the prospect of the future. Now, when hope’s eyes look at something in the future, we are not only certain of it but the certainty of it strengthens us as we tread the distance between where we are and where the prospect is, and it strengthens us. How many families have learned that? How many families have strengthened themselves in the absence of a loved one – a father, for example – by the thought, “He’ll be back soon. He’ll be back soon. He’ll be back soon.”

And it gives us strength to every moment of every day in that interim while the waiting is going on. It strengthens the present by the prospect of the future.

Hope is based on two related things. Now, watch it -- one, a promise that is made; and, two, the one who makes the promise. Did you get it? You hope for something in the spiritual realm because somebody has made the promise and we have the promise and the one who made it. Now, that’s the foundation of hope.

Now you can illustrate it, all right. We hope, for example, in a little piece of green paper that we might get in our hands here and we say this is a dollar, and we say it’s money. It isn’t money at all. This isn’t anything. This is just a promise; that’s all. It’s just a promise, but we don’t have any question about it, do we? We know quite well that that promise is good because somebody has said, “If you will take this to a merchandise center, you can exchange it for a dollar’s worth of merchandise or you can exchange it for a dollar’s worth of pleasure or you can exchange it for a dollar’s worth of transportation.”

It is simply worth a dollar. It isn’t money at all. It’s the equivalent of a dollar in merchandise of some kind, and the thing that gives us confidence in it is the promise itself and the one who made it. And we believe this: Not only because it says it’s worth a dollar, that’s the promise. But we know that back of the word, back of the promise there stands the might of the United States government guaranteeing that.

Now, you lift that out of the little natural realm in which we live, where these things are current and you get over into the realm where the Lord Jesus is in the center and you find something here that bears His mark. He has said this, and we say, “That’s as good as if it was actually in our hands now,” because the promise is here, and we turn our eyes to the one who made the promise, and we say, “It is the anchor of the soul.” Of course.

Now, let's look at it again. The Bible is the gathering place of the promises. Now did you ever hear that statement before? I must confess I didn't. But I thought, "My, that's rich." The Bible is the gathering place of the promises. Now, you add to that and it is the revelation of the one who made the promises. So you've got Him and the promise in this book.

And God – listen. I'm going to use a word here and I'm not quite sure whether we have any right to, but I think we can - God will cash or exchange any promise that bears the fingerprints of His son and is made to those who belong to Him. Now, it's good and you can take it to God anytime you want to, and He'll cash it. He sure will. Now, I'm not quite sure about that word 'cash.'

(Audience requests him to repeat the statement.)

Yes: The Bible is the gathering place of the promises and the revelation of the one who made the promises. Then the last statement was: God will cash or exchange promises for blessings. He will exchange promises for blessings. Now, that's hope as we have it here.

Now, I want you to notice, as we come back to this word 'the elders.' I want to get over here by the board, if I can and I want to put something on the board here because it has to do with these people who lived before there was any written revelation.

Now, it isn't any problem for us to know how things came into being in the first place because all we have to do is to turn to the first chapter of Genesis and be simple enough to believe it, and it's so. Now, the world is divided into two great sections – one in the light and the other fumbling around in the darkness and those who are in the light are simple enough to just believe what that says. And those who are fooling around in the darkness – and they are majority, of course -- are those who do not accept what that is.

Now, where did this information come from? By faith, the elders understood.<sup>3</sup> Now, mark the word that's there. They didn't just hear, they understood. The elders understood that the world came into existence by fire to God and that He created that which existed from something that was not there at all and it came into being by His authoritative sovereign word.

Now, the elders understood that; you see? There was no question about it at all. They didn't just think it or hear it or hope it - they understood it. Now, faith and understanding in the spiritual realm are always linked together. There is no understanding in the spiritual realm apart from faith and wherever there is understanding, you can always find the undergirding of faith, always. It's always the underlying thing, always. Out of it grows understanding.

Now, how did these men know? Because remember, it was almost 2,000 years; in fact, it was more than 2,000 years there before Moses wrote that account. And even if Moses wrote the Book of Job, as many of us believe he did, that he was the only one that could have written it - but, if he wrote that, then it's still thousands of years from the time this thing happened. How did this authoritative information? Have you ever stopped to wonder, or have you ever – some Modern Ingersoll<sup>4</sup> or somebody say, "How did Moses know about this?" You see. How did he know? Because that's the kind of thing that these

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<sup>3</sup> Hebrews 11:3, paraphrased.

<sup>4</sup> Modern Ingersoll was a popular German made watch.

modern peanut-headed folks (Laughter in the audience) – and I think perhaps that’s right there – who put God on one side. That’s the way they talk there. “How did he know about it?” Well now, let’s ask the question and see if we can answer it. Remember, in this chapter, we go right back to somebody, don’t we? We go back to the two sons of Adam.

Now, let’s start here, and we’ll put Adam right in here. (Marking on a blackboard.) Now, did he know anything about that? Did he? Now, Adam had the privilege of talking to somebody who did know, didn’t he? To whom was Adam privileged to talk as friend with friend? Did God know what happened? As a matter of fact, He was the only one who knew what happened because He was the only one that was there.

Now, let’s remember this: That, following Adam, and going on this way, there is another to whom this word would have been passed on because the only means of communication was one man telling another. How did Abel know about the necessity of a blood sacrifice? How? How did Cain [know] equally a blood sacrifice is necessary? How did they know?

Well, the obvious answer is: Adam passed it on to his sons, and the sons passed it on to others. Here is a name here – I don’t know whether I can spell it or not. (Marking on a blackboard.) Is that right? Is it? You take marks off that, if it.....

Now, here is Methuselah who lived long before Adam died and lived afterwards. Now, Adam lived for 930 years. Methuselah went further than that in the course of time. To this man, this information would come along with the other elders. Now, watch it again. Right in here, you’ve got another name who lived during the time of Methuselah and afterwards. (Marking on a blackboard.) Did he know? Was he in intimate touch with God? Did he know? Did he know enough to believe what God said?

Now, let’s look at it again. Noah had some sons, and one of them lived while his father was alive, and for 506 years after the flood, he lived, and his name was Shem. (Marking on a blackboard). He lived for 506 years after the flood. So, now we get over on the other side of the flood, but we find there was, in the minds of those who had lived before it and after it, the knowledge that God had transmitted into the minds of those to whom this information had been entrusted.

Now, let’s look again. Let’s remember that during this time, another man lived. His name was Abraham. And, after him, there came Moses. And with Moses, comes the written records so that you can span the distance between the beginning of things when no written record was available to the time when it came by the – just looking at the men who overlapped each other and to whom undoubtedly the men before would pass on the information.

Now, if you want to know how Moses knew and how Job knew and how Elihu knew and how Eliphaz knew and knew a great deal more than many of the folks who live today. They knew because God had been pleased to entrust this information to human beings and put it into human intelligences with the instruction that they should pass it on to somebody else. That’s always been God’s method, always. Now, that’s the way they knew, and you’ve got that before our eyes. They knew. They knew, and this is the way in which they knew.

Now, let's ask this question: We're looking there at men in whom God had placed unusual intelligence. Now, all you've got to do is just look at Adam. God had been pleased to place unusual intelligence and there is every evidence that the unusual intelligence that God placed in man in the first place continued even after the flood. It may have been affected, but it was still there. It was still there.

Now, during this time, when you get to the end of it there, according to profane history, a lot of great names begin to appear -- great minds, great men; great men who are on the other side of things, who do not know what these men know and do not believe what these men believe and who do not recognize God as they do.

For example, when you think of men like Aristotle and Plato and Zoroaster and scores of others, giants intellectually, what is the difference between them and the men that we're talking about -- the men who are in the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Hebrews? Is it a difference in the size of their intellect, in the greatness of their natural abilities? Is that the difference? Oh, no, no. There is just one difference between them, just one; and this is it.

Now, that makes the difference. Faith is the quality that marks the difference between these men of gigantic intellect but without comprehension of things in the first place; and the thing that's wrong with men who tried to fathom the mystery of the beginnings of things and always end up in a bigger mystery than they are trying to fathom, is that one simple thing. It's the factor of faith. Nobody but the Creator could know, and He passed it on, and He passed it on, and He passed it on.

Now, without going any further because our time is almost gone, I want to begin to talk about Abel and .... But, let me tell you what I've been doing. I have been simply giving you what I want you to give to the class, some of you. I simply took a very great book on Hebrews. Now, this is in the library. I'm quite sure. If it isn't, there's one bad spot in our library and we'll have to check that.

But, in many respects, that's the greatest book on Hebrews that I know anything about. It's written by G. H. Lang. There's a lot in it that I don't agree with, but it's so packed full of things that are tremendous that you handle it with reverence.

Now, if you want to make a note of that sometime on in the future when you have maturity enough to say, "I'm going to deny myself of ten ice cream sodas and I'm going to buy this instead." Now, that's going to be a mark of maturity when you do that. That will show that you're getting out of babyhood, and you're getting somewhere where you ought to be. But, when you get to that place and you put your money on one side and buy that, you will have something that will be a tremendous value to you. It will be a gold mine as long as ever you live. It sure will.

Now, all I have done is to simply take the opening section of his chapter on the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Hebrews and have culled out of it these things that we have been talking about, including the quotation from the Persian poet who knew how beautiful, if fleeting, snow on the desert's dusty face was, including that. The title of the book is *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, and it's G. H. Lang, L-a-n-g.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> George Henry Lang, aka G.H. Lang (1874 – 1958) was a noted Bible teacher, prolific author, and biblical scholar of his time. He was born in Southeast London. Early on, Lang affiliated himself with the Exclusive Brethren; but later in life, he affiliated himself with the Open Brethren.

Now, what I'm after here in these classes for the next time -- because we do have a little time to spare. What I'm after here is to get to one or two of our students here to take other books on Hebrews with which you may not be familiar. I don't know whether you know this one -- here is a two volume set - that is a book in two volumes. But again, is one of the classics. It is the exposition by Adolph Saphir.<sup>6</sup> Now, the two volumes of it are in the library. And, because they may be out. I want one of the students to take this and bring to us in our next class a little five-minute review of what Adolph Saphir says on this same section. George, I hand this to you right now.

Now, you do that for us. I put on there five minutes and I've given you the chapters. And, don't you let that book get out of your hands now, boy. You look at the signature in the beginning of that, and you'll see the reason why. You just hold on to that now, my friend. And, you won't have to wait. You won't have to wait to see whether the one in the library is available or not. You can keep that as long as you'd like and I only suggest five minutes. If you want to go more than that, fine.

Now, the next time, I'm going to hand somebody else another book and say, "I want a five-minute review of what this man says in pages so and so and so and so about something else." See. And it will not only familiarize us with books that we may not have time to really get into, because I know quite well how busy you folks are. I'm not blind to that. But, I want us to get acquainted with some of these things. I'm going to hand you my copy of Griffith Thomas and others on these things so that we can get it there.

All right children, thank you very much.....

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<sup>6</sup> Adolph Saphir (1831 - 1891) was a Hungarian Christian who was born into a Jewish family. He and his family were converted in 1843 when the Scottish Free Church sent missionaries to the Jews in Hungary. After completing his studies in 1854, Saphir served in the Irish Presbyterian Church as a missionary to the Jews. He was later ordained by the Presbytery of Belfast. He was a pastor of churches in Glasgow and in London from 1861-1888. Saphir's book, *The Hidden Life* was described as "one of the most helpful books in English literature on the subject of prayer and the deeper Christian life."