

THE SERMONS, LECTURES, AND SONGS OF SIDNEY EDWARD COX

Epistle to the Hebrews - Chapter 6

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 wanted you to be looking at it, and then we'll just start in with that proposition that we have now reached one of the very important parentheses in this book. That's one of the things that characterizes it. We have noticed it all the way along – that the narrative continues; the teaching continues and then, suddenly, there's a break. And you need to watch these breaks because they have in them very important things -- instruction, warning, and so on. And you will find them there.

Now, here is one of the great parentheses of the Book of Hebrews. You'll remember that we began in this fifth chapter -- or that the writer was teaching in the fifth chapter up to verse ten, he was teaching two additional, or regarding two additional contrasts.

You will remember he's talked about the superiority of Christ over Moses, the superiority of Christ over the things of Judaism. Now, he comes to the superiority of Christ over Aaron; and then, for a brief moment, the superiority of Christ over Melchizedek. And, it is, at that point, that he evidently feels that he ought to stop and get certain things straightened out. There ought to be additional instruction before

these people to whom he is writing can understand in any degree the intricacies of the revelation regarding the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Now, it should be reasonably clear to them. At least, they should know the detail of it because it was all part of their history. They knew of a day when Abraham and those who were with him, his 400 men, had gone to battle on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah and Lot in particular; and how on the return journey from their victory, bringing back Lot and those who belonged in Sodom and Gomorrah, they met this mysterious person on the way. And there is a great deal of mystery connected with Melchizedek. And we find him mentioned, been mentioned briefly in this fifth chapter and then the continuation of it in Chapter 7.

Now, it is at this point, that you see the parenthesis very clearly. This is what I want you to do. Turn in your Bibles please, to the Epistle of the Hebrews fifth chapter and look at the last words of verse ten. Now you look at them; will you, please? Look at the last words of verse ten. Ann, will you please read them to me, the last words of verse ten in Chapter 5?

(Ann reads: "After the order of Melchizedek.")

Yes. Now, that's what I wanted to get. Notice those words, "After the order of Melchizedek." Now, that's his last mention of Melchizedek right at that spot. Now, you go to the first verse of Chapter 7. And Ann, will you read that for us, please?

(Ann reads: "For this, Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him.")

Now, there's the historical fact of it. Go back to the last verse of Chapter 6.

(Ann reads: "Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.")

Now, do you notice those exact words? -- the end of verse ten in Chapter 5, "After the order of Melchizedek." It goes right to the end of the chapter and then says exactly the same words, "After the order of Melchizedek." Now, everything in between is a parenthesis; a very important thing, that's true.

And, we want to take just a brief look at it again because here is one of the places right in between in that parenthesis that we need to be quite clear in our understanding. Because, if you do not, then you are liable to get off the track not only in your thinking about this section, but in your thinking about a lot of other things. And it's one of the very important things.

Now, remember, that in this parenthesis, he is doing four things. I think you have this in your notes. I'm not quite sure. Let me repeat it to you anyhow. These are the things that he's doing. He is giving rebuke.

Now, he stops in the midst of his narrative and says, "How can I ever tell these people about an intricate teaching such as that connected with Melchizedek?" And he stops right there and begins to point out certain things that would prevent them from understanding this thing.

For instance, and remember here again, I'd like to put this on the board so that we can be seeing this once more, because this is very important at this particular point. (Writing on the blackboard) We've got our professors over here who have learning but not life. We have our possessors over here, and there are two kinds of them. One will have life but have not progressed in it and others that are going on. And he's looking at one and two here and in particular, the rebuke would naturally come to Section Number 1, those that had received life but were not progressing.

You will remember how he describes them and this is a word. This is a symbol or a picture that most of the New Testament writers use when they are describing somebody who has started on the road but hasn't made progress. The word that they use is, "Babes in Christ."

Now, Paul uses it. The writer to the Epistle to the Hebrews uses it. Peter uses it. You can find it all the way through. It expresses a certain thing: babyhood in the Christian life. Now, babyhood is beautiful. But, if babyhood continues, it can become a dreadful thing. No one wants babyhood to continue; least of all, God. He wants us to grow up and grow up. But, if babyhood continues, it is a dreadful thing, whether it continues physically or whether it continues mentally.

I think maybe I've told some of you of an incident that happened. I was visiting a home in Atlanta and I went up and knocked on the porch door, and the lady came and the porch door was opened, and I felt I had a right to move onto the porch. At any rate, so I moved on and went onto the porch. And she would have stopped me if she could. Then, when I got onto the porch, I could see the reason. There was a baby carriage on the porch. And when I looked into the baby carriage, here was an object with the body of a baby and the head of a man.

There wasn't anything beautiful about that. It was a heartbreaking thing. It sure was. It was a heartbreaking thing. Something had happened to prevent growth, you see. I went almost next door and found exactly the opposite. A great, big fellow six feet two weighing probably 180 pounds playing on the carpet with his little wagons and things like that; body grown, head hadn't. Oh, his head had grown but his mind hadn't. That's what I mean.

You see, lack of growth can be a dreadful thing. It isn't a common place thing, not at all.

(Come on Russell, I'm sure you've got him straightened out now.)

It's not a common place thing. It's not a thing to be passed by idly. It's a dreadful thing, this lack of growth. And it's equally dreadful when it becomes a spiritual matter too; a spiritual baby who ought to be teachers, remember the word. You ought to be teachers. Instead of that, you're just babies. "You're just simply taking the milk of the Word. You're just babies. You haven't grown." Spiritual babyhood, in that respect, is more dreadful than anything that can happen in the physical world.

To see a man who's been a Christian for years or a person who has been in the Christian circle for years and hasn't grown, still don't know; has no conception of the deep things of God, no appetite for the meat of the Word. All they're doing is just sucking on a milk bottle all the time.

And there are lots of folks like that. And many a preacher is doing just exactly that, going around with a milk bottle in his hand feeding spiritual babies and many and many a one is doing just exactly that; just lots of them and it's a heartbreaking business

Now, Paul could -- the writer could see this, you see. Here he was looking at this: "How can I tell these babies about Melchizedek? I can't tell them. I've got to tell them, say something to them that will arouse them and lead them out of their babyhood and get them on the road to growth so that they're growing in grace."

And one of the things that he says incidentally is you ought to be teachers -- and in that, there is a great truth as we mentioned before. It's well-worth repeating. And that is that the only way to grow in grace is to give away the spiritual gifts that God gives to you. That's the only way. If you just receive spiritual gifts, instruction, enlightenment and keep it to yourself, then there is no possibility of spiritual growth there. But every time you receive a spiritual gift -- whether it's a flash of light from heaven; whether it's a moving of the spirit within your own heart as you sit in your own room; whether it's something that comes up, a flash of light as you see something around you that illuminates the Word of God -- and as you try to give it away, give it away, give it away; at that moment, you grow in grace and you never grow any other way. There's only one way of growing in grace and that is to give away, pass on to someone else that which God in great grace has given to us.

These people have been failing to do that. They haven't been teachers. They ought to have been. They've been long enough to be teachers. But, instead of giving it away, they had been keeping it for themselves. And that's the way -- that's the path of immaturity, to use a word that's perhaps nicer than some of the words that I have been using, immaturity. The only way to spiritual growth is to give it away. Every time a spirit-moved teacher or a spirit-moved preacher or a spirit-moved witness gives something away, you grow in grace by that act. There isn't any other way. There is no other way.

Here they were -- now, the rebuke must be given. "You must come out of this. You must grow." You can see who he's talking to. He's talking to those who have received life but have not been growing in grace. So you can see who he has in mind.

Now, the appeal has to be made; an appeal that has to be made on both sides. Because he's not only appealing to these people to grow in grace but he's appealing again to these not to go back to Judaism, because here they are standing right on the edge of things and if they take the first step and go back, he knows what it would mean. And he knows quite well that, if they ever went back into this thing and did what they were required to do, that there would be such a hardening on the inside of their hearts, the hardening process that had already begun would then become a permanent thing. Because remember, my dear, that in these warnings that have been coming, we have watched the pathway of it -- drifting, neglect, unbelief, or doubt that results in a hardening of the heart. Remember? Now, here were these people with this process going on. And, right at the spot where if they do this one thing, the hardness of heart becomes incurable. Now, that's the point where they're standing.

And here's a man making an appeal with everything that he has within him to prevent it from happening, if possible; to warn them of the terrible danger that there is on the other side; and then, at the same time, to give encouragement here to both of these groups there; to give encouragement to some here to come on over the line, and give encouragement to both of these groups here to go on into the better things, the

bigger things, the more glorious things - to grow in grace. Now, that's the thing that he has in mind. And you can see just what's happening here.

Now, let's take just a few minutes to glance at this. By the way, I'm wondering if this wouldn't be a good time for me to tell you a little parable that came to my heart as I was thinking about it yesterday. I've never said this before, but let me tell you a little story, and it's a parable. It didn't happen, but it could happen. And it's something that I know a little about personally.¹

Here's a man who was born outside of the United States, maybe France or Germany or Italy or England. It doesn't matter where. He was born outside of the United States. He had friends in the United States who told him of the wonder of this land and it aroused in his heart a desire to see it and perhaps to share in some of its blessings and beauties. So he leaves his homeland, comes to the United States, and spends considerable time here learning about the United States, enjoying its blessings, studying its laws, absorbing its glory to certain as far as an alien can. He's doing all of these things.

And, at last, somebody says to him, "Now, Pedro" -- or whatever his name might be, "Now, you have been in this country long enough to make a decision about this. What about becoming a citizen of the United States?" And this man says, "Well, I look at this and I look at that and I compare it with what I had over there. I think maybe they've got some advantages. You've got some. I like this. I like this. This appeals to me. I think maybe I'd like to be a citizen of the United States."

So he makes his application and goes to the schools where he can be taught and where explanations can be given. And then the time comes when he, having tasted of the good things of the United States, and having partaken of the good things of the United States, and having learned some things about the United States, he says, "I would like to be a citizen." He puts his name down on the line. Well now, that doesn't make you a citizen, I can tell you that. You've got to go through something else besides that; you sure have.

Now, he knows. He has made his application, and the date is set for him to be received into United States citizenship. The judge is there. Some of the other folks come, but Pedro doesn't. He doesn't show up. And instead of going on in, he turns back. Maybe he got a letter from his old girlfriend in Italy or someplace. Anyhow, he turns back. And in going, this is what happens. Now, I know here is the place where you've got to get perhaps a little out of the realm of the things that would actually happen. But, supposing this man, who could have gone in; with one step he could have been in. Instead of that, he turns back. And on the way back, he says, "I'm going back to where I came from."

And on the way back, he does this: he makes a public statement that the place where he came from is infinitely better than this. "I'm not going on in there. I'm going back in here. I don't want this thing anymore. I don't want it anymore. I don't believe in the United States anymore. I don't believe in it. I don't believe in their government. I don't believe in it. I don't believe in it. I don't believe in it. A curse on the United States (spitting sound)." Now that wasn't a figure of speech, that last thing.

¹ In relating this story, keep in mind that Sidney Cox and his future wife, Violet Henderson were born in England before the turn of the century. Both separately immigrated to Canada after the turn of the century. After becoming Salvation Army officers and marrying, they came to the United States with their two young sons in 1922 to live in Chicago. Ultimately, while residing in Atlanta in 1938, all four became naturalized citizens of the United States.

There's many, many an old Jew that will do that every time you mention the name of Jesus; many a one. And he goes back with his heart set against this, for some reason or another and he goes back pronouncing anathemas upon the United States, a curse on the name of it and everything connected with it and he goes back home.

When he gets back home, he finds that our whole wheat bread is a little better after all than the stuff they've got over there; you see. And so, after a while, there comes within his heart a regret for what he has done. And he says, "I think I'd like to go back." And so he writes a letter and says, "I would like to go back. I'd like to come back."

But, remember, what he has done is on record, see. What do you think would be the reception on the part of the United States if this man who had deliberately turned his back upon it, pronounced anathema upon it, and spat at the name of it? What do you think would be the attitude of the United States to the re-application of this one?

They would say, "Oh, no, no, no, no, no. You had your opportunity. You had everything given to you. We taught you. We fed you. We clothed you. We loved you. We made you one of us. But you deliberately turned back. And, in doing, you did things that make it utterly impossible for you to come back again."

Now, that would happen in the natural realm. And don't forget, it happens in the spiritual realm too. For God will take so much insult of His Son and so much despite to the spirit of grace and just so much trampling under feet the blood of the Son of God; just so much putting him to an open shame -- and, remember, I'm quoting there. He will take so much of that. And then, from that point on, there is no return.

Now, that's the danger that these folks were in. Not these; these people are not going to do that. They may slide back and do things that they shouldn't do. But they're going to be brought back. These people had never been on the other side. They've got their line here. They've never been over, never. And here they were going back and no matter what they did on the other side, there would never be an open door anymore.

Now, the Epistle to the Hebrews is not the only place where that is said. You can find our Lord Jesus saying it two or three times. "You have insulted the spirit of grace. There will never be any opportunity for you again." That's what we call, of course, the unpardonable sin. And the tragedy of it was, this writer could see this is what these people were going to do.

Now, don't forget that the unpardonable sin can only come out of an incurable heart. And these people had been allowing their hearts to become more hard and hard and drifting further and further away until this final step would have taken that heart and made it into concrete so that it never again would have been moved. Now, that's the danger that he could see.

And every time you watch these things and read these words that he's saying, you can see the danger and the thing that they would have to do when they went back to the synagogue to declare that Jesus Christ deserved to die, that His miracles had not been done in the power of God, to declare that His name was

anathema, to pronounce a curse upon His name, and so on; exactly the thing that I have tried to bring in this blundering little parable that I have been telling you this morning.

Now, here was a man who was deeply stirred about that because he knew what could happen and, in many, many cases, what did happen; what did happen.

Now, you've got this teaching here that stirs our hearts at the very thought of it there. And you can find, as we go along here, that there is not only the rebuke and the appeal, but there are other things.

Now, one of the things I want you to notice -- and we're not going to spend time on this because I have already mentioned it to you. But one of the things that you find here, that these people were still clinging to. You will remember that one of the problems in the early part -- early days of the church was the clinging of Judaism to Christian converts. It took them a long time to get away from these things. The weights that were about them as the scripture described. It took them a long time. It took Peter a long time to get clear of those weights, didn't he, so that he could get wings instead of weights. That's what this writer says. "I want you to cut clear of your weights and take to your wings. Let's get wings instead of weights."

Now, what were those weights that were holding them back? It was a loyalty that comes through partial understanding to the old things of Judaism, and he calls them 'the first principles of Judaism.'

Now, let's look and see just what he says because these things are all put in very small words here. "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection."² That is a doctrine that pointed to Christ. Don't forget that practically everything in the old Judaistic setup pointed to Jesus.

Let me ask you something: What did that lamb on the brazen altar point to, or to whom, you see? What did that bloodshed point to? What did that priest standing by the golden altar and offering incense -- to whom did that point? You see, everything about it pointed to Him.

But we don't stay at a Jewish altar. We don't stay with a lamb slain in the wilderness somewhere. We go on to Calvary. Now that's what he wanted them to do. And he said, "You leave these first principles." There's nothing wrong with first principles. There's nothing wrong with five-finger exercises and multiplication tables. There's nothing wrong with them. They're absolutely necessary. They are school masters to lead you somewhere, you see.

Now, he says, "You look at these things and see just what they are, these first principles." For instance, he says, "You go on one step further than repentance connected with dead works." Now, there's nothing the matter with repentance. Of course, repentance is as much a doctrine on this side as it was on this side. But repentance here centered in a dead work, there. A man brought a lamb. A month afterwards he had to bring it again. A little while afterwards he had to bring it again; go to the highest order and watch the high priest, and he goes in there and repents and confesses the sins of his people and of his own. But he has to do it again next year and next year and next year. And every morning at 9:00 and every afternoon at 3:00 in the afternoon - had to be done all over again, all over again, all over again.

² Hebrews 6:1.

There was a repentance that was a limited thing. Instead of leading you to the object of it, it kept you encircled in the thing itself. Now, that's what he wanted them to get clear of. And when you get over into the New Testament teaching, you will find that repentance is there just as much as ever. But it isn't repentance toward dead works. It is repentance toward God and faith in our Lord, Jesus Christ. Now, that's where it leads.

Repentance can either be a rock that holds you where you are, or it can be a pathway that leads you to glory; either one. Now, these people were sitting on the rock of repentance, and there they were - nothing the matter with repentance, of course. But there it was. Faith toward God is but a first principle in Judaism.

What did the Old Testament prophet say as they looked down through the veil of the years? And they looked down and they said, "A Messiah is coming. A Messiah is coming. A Messiah is coming." And men everywhere believed it. "There's a Messiah coming. There's a Messiah coming." That's faith toward God; of course, it is.

And what God said about the Messiah coming? Let's stand on the other side and we'll go over into this realm. What do the prophets on this side say, "A Messiah is coming?" Oh, no, "A Messiah has come." Don't you see the difference? Don't you see the difference?

And there were some even in the circle of Christianity who were still looking for somebody who would have the earmarks and the signs of the Messiah of the Old Testament prophecies. They were still looking for it. And he says, "Why don't you get to the place where you turn your eyes there and say, "He has come. He has come. He has come." And you'll cut a string and a cord when you do so and give wings instead of weights to your life. Now that's what he's saying.

Look at the matter of baptisms. There's nothing the matter with baptisms. Baptisms were all the way through the Jewish order of things. All the way through – the sacrifice had to be baptized, or washed, it's the same word. It had to be cleansed. Here was something else that had to be cleansed. Everything had to be cleansed. The high priest had to be cleansed when he went into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. He had to wash his body completely five times. Washings. Bathings. Baptisms. Baptisms. A water that was dirtied by contact with him and brought but a temporary cleansing that had to be renewed all the time there.

And this man is saying, "Why don't you go on the other side? There's a water that's better than that. There's a water that will cleanse you and keep you cleansed and you won't need to do these things anymore. Why don't you wash in the water of the Word of God? Why don't you cleanse your spiritual faces in the laver of the Word?" That's what he's saying to them. That's what he's saying.

We've got a lot of folks still who think more of a baptismal tank than they do of the Word of God. Just lots of folks. There's nothing the matter with a baptismal tank at all. Not at all. Nobody believes in that anymore than I do, I can tell you that. I sure am. But if that's all. If that's all, what a pity isn't it? What a pity that they haven't gone down into the water – the flowing, cleansing water of the Word of God that can not only make you clean, but keep you clean. "Now are you clean through the Word that I have

spoken unto you,”³ and the washing of the water of the Word. He wants them to go on there. What a pity they didn’t make progress, wasn’t it. What a pity.

This marries another thing, the laying on of hands, you remember? A laying on of hands was an act of identification. You know what the pilgrim did, if you like to use that word, when he came to the altar. You know what he did there when he stood by that brazen altar with his little lamb. He had to put his hands on the head of the lamb and confess his sin, whether he liked it or not. He had to confess it all and he had to confess it out loud, and it had to be put on there. And by that act he put his hand upon the head of the lamb, put his sin upon this, put himself upon it, identified himself with that lamb. But it had to be done again and again and again and again and again. And there was one thing that never happened in the old Jewish dispensation, never. The lamb never put its hand upon the sinner. Never. It was always the sinner putting his hand upon the lamb. Now he says, “Why don’t you come over here? Here is a lamb slain from the foundation of the world with wounded hands. You can reach out your hands and make identification with Him, and as you do so, you will find that His wounded hands are being put upon you.” - something that never happened in the old dispensation. Never.

Now he says, “Why don’t you go on? Why don’t you go on? Why don’t you go on? Why don’t you go on?” I have a funny feeling that maybe he’s just outside the door – the writer to the Hebrews. Do you ever have that strange feeling that somebody who lived a long time ago is not far away? And I’ve had that strange feeling he must have been listening. I hope he’s been satisfied with what we’ve been talking about. I hope he can say sometime when he meets us, “Well, you got somewhere near the truth, anyhow.”

But, supposing he was there and he came in, and we invited him in, and he stood over here. What do you think he’d say to us? What? What would he say to you, my dear? What? What would he say? I think he would say, “Go on. Don’t stop by these old things. Go on. Go on. Go on. Go on. Go on. There are revelations and glories awaiting you. Go on. Go on. Go on. Don’t stop still, no matter what you’ve got. It’s only something that leads to something else.” And I’m wondering if he wouldn’t say that to us here in this class. The laying on of hands.

The resurrection from the dead. Notice all of these things are right in there. The old Jewish dispensation had a resurrection from the dead. You’ll remember that Mary and Martha knew that and believed in it. When our Lord came and said He was going to live, they said, “Well, we know He’ll live. Sure. He’ll be raised in the last days,” and that’s about all they knew. And that’s all that tens of thousands of people know now - a resurrection sometime in the future, a general judgment at the end of the world. A resurrection sometime or other, and there’s a lot of folks that are just wondering around in that quagmire.

Why don’t they go to the Gospel of John? Why don’t they go to the 15th Chapter of First Corinthians? Why don’t they go to the 4th Chapter of First Thessalonians and know that there is a resurrection from out of the general crowd. That one of these days there is going to be a resurrection and we’re going to take part in it. And there’s going to be a first resurrection and a second resurrection, and there’s going to be a resurrection according to our orders, all of which is the teaching of the Word of God. All of it. And he might say to them, “Sure, you believe in the resurrection, but do you know anything about the rapture?”

³ John 15:3

Do you know anything about the transformation of the body? Do you know anything about that? - the things that are in the Word of God. The resurrection.”

They knew about eternal judgment, of course. They knew about that. But, do they know anything about a lamb that relieves us and takes us out of the realm of eternal judgment so that they could say with voices triumphant, “There is therefore now no judgment to them who are in Christ Jesus. Who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.”⁴ Every Jew walked with the shadow of judgment over him – every last one of them. Every last one of them died with the expectation of a future judgment, and in the hope that maybe his good deeds would be a little better than his bad ones – or a little bigger. Every one of them there, and he’s saying, “Why don’t you go on? Why don’t you go on? Why don’t you go on? Why?”

Now he turns from that very point, and you can quite see just how he does it. May be – I think we’ve got time enough almost to look at this. But here is one of the places where you will see the distinction in the manner in which he addresses people. He uses the second person all the way until he comes here. Whatever he has to say to these people on this side, he speaks of them as “We” and “Ye” and “You” and “Us” and puts himself in with them. And all the way through you can find these words, the second person being used. There isn’t a moment when it varies. Now the minute he gets here, it’s all changed. He isn’t talking about “We” and “You” and “Us” there, he’s talking about “Them” and “Those” and “They.” Now you watch it and you can see it every time. There isn’t one spot where it differs. Now if you just glance at your Bible, second person, let me give you one or two of them here: Chapter 5 Verse 11, Chapter 5 Verse 12, Chapter 6 Verse 1, Chapter 6 Verse 3. Did you get them? Now when you get to the end of Chapter 9, it’s still second person – Chapter 6 Verse 9, 10, 11, 12 and all the way through. Now when you get right into the middle, into Chapter 6 Verse 4 – Chapter 6 right in the center of it, there you find it is “They” and “Them” and “Those” all the way through. “We are convinced better things of you.”⁵ Of course. He’s not talking to them about it at all. Not at all.

Now, you can see these things. You can see. Now he has one or two things to say to these folks in reminding them of what God in grace through the spirit had done for them. They had come within the circle of things and nobody is ever saved with one blunder from the outside to the inside. The Holy Spirit always does a pre-salvation work, a pre-natal work before we’re ever born again. He always does that. For instance, these people, they were Jews, they were in the circle of Judaism. They had been enlightened. Now a Gentile on the outside – he’s not talking to them. This isn’t the Epistle to the Gentiles, this is the Epistle to the Hebrews. And he is saying, “You have been enlightened – the light of God’s dealing with Israel had been theirs all the way along.” They could trace it right from the very beginning. Some of them were there, if they were not too old, and probably some of them had lived in the days when John the Baptist had preached in the wilderness of Judea. It is more than likely that some of them knew something of what Jesus had said and perhaps had actually heard his voice. Oh, there were a lot of folks who heard Jesus’ voice who turned back and didn’t follow Him anymore, remember. Just lots of folks. Because they heard His voice, that didn’t mean to say that they were going to follow Him. There were far more that went away and followed Him no more than kept on following.

⁴ Romans 8:1.

⁵ Hebrew 6:9.

They had tasted of the heavenly gift. Now, what is the heavenly gift? Well now, whatever it may mean, it certainly means this: that, “God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son.”⁶ And whatever we may add to that great center, the great heavenly gift is the gift of God’s Son. Now they knew about that. They knew what had happened on Calvary. They knew all about these things, but they were still “tasters.” And there are lots of folks who get their living tasting things. There’s a difference between tasting and eating.

(Tape ends abruptly.)

⁶ John 3:16.