

THE SERMONS, LECTURES, AND SONGS OF SIDNEY EDWARD COX

Epistle to the Hebrews - Chapter 7

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.

When we left our last lesson, we had been considering this dreadful situation of those who were turned back, and some of them have and some of them were on the point of turning back, and if they did, there was no return. It was impossible to renew them again unto repentance.

And the reason for that, of course, is that, in turning back, they had done two things. They had refused all that the Holy Spirit could do for them, and they had insulted the spirit of grace and trampled under feet the blood of the Son of God, had crucified him afresh and we know the reason for that. We know what had happened or what would happen when they went back.

And I mentioned that, not only is that stated in this very remarkable little book by Dr. Max Reich, but that I had discovered it since in several other books where this obligation of returning to Judaism is

stated; what they would have to do in order to be reinstated once more into the fold of Judaism, having left it.¹

Now, the point that we were discussing was this: That that particular phase of things is utterly impossible in these days. But that side of it, that phase of this unforgivable sin is utterly impossible in these days, and we started, when the bell rang, to consider what would happen in these days if something of a similar nature happened. For example, supposing a Jewish brother left the synagogue, came into the circle of Christianity, became interested and tasted and partook of many of the things that were there as far as he could. But, having considered it, weighed it, sized it up -- if you'd like -- he determined that this was not for him. He was going back again into the synagogue.

And so he severs all his connections with Christianity, wherever it may have been, and he goes back into the synagogue. Now, when he gets back to the synagogue, he would face no such situation as was faced in those days.

Don't forget that the people in those days -- now, I'm talking about the people to whom this letter was written. This was addressed to Hebrews; that at that time, they were surrounded with the condemnation of what they had done on Calvary. And the big task of the Jewish nation was to get out of the judgment that was obviously upon them for what they had done at Calvary, and everybody who belonged had to take a final and definite stand against Calvary and against Christ. You will remember, he deserved to die. He was not the Son of God.

Now, you can see why, because at that time, the terrible shadow and cloud of God's judgment upon them was gathering more and more. And don't forget, my dear, that that cloud of judgment burst upon them within a very short time after this letter was written. This was written some time before A.D. 70 and the cloud and lightning and thunder of God's judgment came right then.

Now, that was one of the reasons why it was so desperate a situation to cut all strings with this new thing in which a man was the center that they had murdered. Now, that was the situation. It doesn't apply today. They have still rejected the Son of God, but to go back into the synagogue, you would face no such thing today. The synagogue would open its arms, and there would be no such thing there.

Take, for instance, if a person came out of Roman Catholicism, which brings us one step nearer. Now, Roman Catholicism is about as antagonistic to what we call Christianity. That's our Christianity, shall we say Protestantism? Roman Catholic or Catholicism is as definitely antagonistic to that as is Judaism.

Now, supposing a man came out of Roman Catholicism and came into the circle of the church, and we have seen this happen. This is not an unusual thing. They come, and we glory in what we call a converted Roman Catholic. And sometimes we have reason to glory in it, and sometimes we don't.

But here he comes out of this realm altogether into this one. And after he has been there for a while, he looks back to this old thing as these Jews might have done and says, "Well, we haven't got any decorated

¹ Max Reich (1867-1945) was for fifteen years head of Jewish Studies at Moody Bible Institute until his death. Prior to that he had been one of the founders of the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America (HCAA) in 1915 after which he went on to edit the *Hebrew Christian Alliance Quarterly*. Additionally he helped found the International Hebrew Christian Alliance (IHCA) in 1937

priesthood here. All we've got there is a bald-headed preacher there and he hasn't got a fish-shaped hat on."

We don't have anything like the mass here when we have communion, it isn't like we used to have it in the Roman Catholic church where the priest took it for us and where, as far as he was concerned, it was the body and blood of Christ. We don't have anything like this over here. Where is all of this pomp and ceremony? Where are our images?

We don't have any candles here unless they happened to go into one of these backslidden churches of the present day and there's more and more and more of them that seem to be featuring that particular phase of Roman Catholicism and paganism. But he'd feel very uncomfortable if he hadn't been born again. And it's more than likely that he might turn back. But, if he went back into the Roman Catholic church, he would face no such situation as was faced then; oh, no, not at all, not at all.

You come a little nearer supposing the Methodist leaves the Methodist church and joins the Baptist church, and then decides he doesn't like this, he's going back. Of course, a person that does that would be in the nature of things. They haven't got anything on the inside when you can move from one pew to another and then back again, it indicates that there is nothing on the inside.

But he wouldn't have to face anything, would he? He wouldn't have to face any difficulty. There would be open arms, and they'd drag out the birthday cake or something and welcome him back again – here we're going to have hamburgers and coffee and welcome him back. That's the only thing that would happen now. No such thing, no such thing at all.

And it's just as well for us to look at it and to realize that that phase could not be committed today because there would be no necessity. There would be no such obligation at all. They wouldn't face the same thing at all.

Now, the thing that's in the heart of it is this, that there is an incurable sin, and that incurable sin can only come out of an incurable heart. And we have watched the process of a heart getting incurable so that out of it, this heart permanently separated from God, the only thing that could come out of it is that which could not be forgiven.

And the incurable heart has been before our eyes all the way along. We have watched this first process of drifting that went to neglect, that went to disbelief, that went to this and that and the other; and the hardening of the heart. And remember that the hardening of the heart always gets worse; never better, always. And here it comes to the place where the hardness of the heart becomes a permanent thing.

Now, that can happen anywhere. That can happen today and does. There isn't any question about it. But there are lots of folks who have said, "No, no, no, no"; who have resisted and resisted and resisted and resisted and said, "No. Take your Jesus. Take your stuff; take it, take it, take it, take it. Go on with you; go on with you. I come to religion and come to the church because it's the thing to do."

And they say, "No, no, no, no." And it goes on until God says, "No." And there isn't any question that that thing happens. There is a line over which a man crosses from which there is no return; where the

very desire dies within the heart -- disbelief, disbelief, unbelief, unbelief. Therefore, they could not believe.

Now, what had happened? They had reached the point of no return. Now, that can happen today, and it happens perhaps more frequently than we know. Our hearts go up to God that it may not happen. Our prayer goes to God that, in His mercy, he may withstand it.

But I tremble sometimes when I see folks and we see them all the time, all the time, all the time, saying, "No, no, no, no, no, no." And I say, "How long, oh, Lord? Is that the last time that boy will say no? Is that the last time that gum-chewing preacher will say no to Jesus? Will God put up with it any longer?"

We ask ourselves the question, and we have a right to; for there is a state of heart that becomes incurable. And then out of that heart and that heart alone comes the sin that is unforgivable. One of the things we need to be aware of is these two lines of truth running all the way through the scripture. You can find it all the way through the scripture - a heart that becomes incurable and the sin that comes out of that incurable heart that is unforgivable, "Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone."²

Now, that's just a little isolated fragment of scripture here and there. You can multiply that a thousand times if you want to. But there is a God there in the glory somewhere behind the shadows who will not tolerate constant, permanent, needless insult to His son. Now, that's a teaching all the way through the scripture, and you can see the process of it here.

Now whether any of those folks had got to that place, or whether it was the first thing, the going back again, because in the going back into Judaism they had to do things that finally completed this process, this awful process, of the hardening of the heart. And from that moment on, there would be no repentance. There may be regret, because don't forget, when a heart gets to that place, the Holy Spirit is not at work in that heart anymore. And real repentance, my dear, can only come because of the operation of the Holy Spirit. He's the only one that can produce real repentance.

He isn't going to produce repentance in an incurable heart. He has given opportunity and opportunity. Now, there will be no repentance. There is nothing here to indicate that a repentant sinner could ever be in a situation where the door of God's mercy would be closed against him; not at all.

But the door of God's mercy is closed against those who do not repent. God does not save, "Unrepentant sinners." There may be regret, and we must be aware of the difference between regret for the result of sin and repentance for the act of sin. And there is all the difference in the world between those two. It's a common place, is it not, for us to see regret for the result of sin. You can see that in any jail. You can see that in any hospital. You can see that on any street.

Regret, you can see that in any rescue mission; regret for the result of sin. But you only see repentance when the Holy Spirit is at work. He's the only one that can bring the natural heart of man to the place of real repentance. Now, that's the thing that we have been watching, and we have been looking at these things.

² Hosea 4:17.

Now, and I'm not going to say anymore about that. That's Chapter 6, and the consideration of it is over until we get to Chapter 10. For here, in the pattern of this book, and you have noticed, that there are certain great sections of teaching; and then as if the intolerable burden of the condition of some of these folks is pressing upon this writer and he stops the line, the thread of his discourse into this teaching to give this warning.

And you will find it again in Chapter 10. And you will find it again even more terribly than you find it in Chapter 6. I think we have already mentioned there that there are certain things that are added in Chapter 10, but it's exactly the same situation. You find Him again talking to people to whom he says, "They," -- of whom he says, "they" and "them" and "those." Then immediately following, "We are persuaded better things of you."³ You will find exactly the same pattern when you get into Chapter 10, and the situation is precisely the same.

Now, between the end of Chapter 6 and the middle of Chapter 10, we've got a tremendous section of teaching. And don't forget that the great thing that he is emphasizing all the way through this book is the Priesthood of Christ.

Now, that brings us back to one of our primary statements. We have seen the Priesthood of Christ emphasized and taught. We saw the priesthood taught in the relationship of the priesthood of Christ as compared to Moses. And then we caught a little glimpse of the priesthood of Aaron compared to the priesthood of Christ.

One of the major statements right at the beginning of this book was, having saved us and given us a position along with Him in the glory; having led many sons to glory, He now gives us that which we need, seeing that our position is still down here on earth.⁴ We are still here. Actually, we aren't in this world. What does the saved person need most? He needs the ministry of the great, unchanging high priest. He needs that. Now, that's the thing you find right at the end of Chapter 2, we have such an high priest.

Then he goes on to glorify Him in his comparison, first with Moses, then with Aaron; greater than the law that the high priest was working under, greater than the ceremonies that the high priest was responsible for, greater than the altar, greater than animal blood, greater than this.

Now, he goes on to this final climax of teaching regarding the Priesthood of Christ in which you will find Aaron appearing again and then this strange character, Melchizedek. And we shall see why it is that Melchizedek appears at this time in the consideration of the superior priesthood of Christ.

Now, let's remember certain things. When we go back -- and we can do it right now. Supposing we do it right now. Let's go back mentally over the history of the children of Israel. Are you doing it? Supposing we start where the scripture -- the New Testament ends, and we'll go on back; go on back, that's right; go on back. How far have you gone? How far have you gone? Have you got back to David yet? Go on back, go on back, go on back. Have you got back to Aaron yet? Now, who have you got between Aaron and David who's very important, and they appear all the way along. As a matter of fact,

³ Hebrews 6:9.

⁴ Hebrews 2:10, paraphrased.

Moses was one of them if not the most important of them all. What? What have you got besides priest, Aaron; king, David? What have you got in between? What is it?

(Someone in audience answers.)

What is it? The prophet, exactly so. The three most important people in the history of Israel was the prophet, the priest and the king. Now, let me ask you something: At the time this book was written, what had happened to the king? What? Where was he? Well, you say, you've got a gripper there. They had. They had Herod; they certainly did. They knew it altogether, especially those mothers of Bethlehem. They knew about that, didn't they?

Where was the king? Where? Where, at this time, was the voice of the prophet in Israel? In Judaism? Where was he? Well, the last echo of a prophetic voice had come when a certain man, tall and gaunt and wearing camel's hair and eating locust and wild honey in the wilderness of Judea had declared with a voice like 10,000 thunders, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,"⁵ and here he is right in the midst of you.

Now, listen my dear, there have not been one single sound of a prophetic voice since then; two things had gone, a king and a priest. A king had gone. A priest had gone. Now, the prophet, I should say, had gone.

Now, the only thing they had left was the priest. Now, they still had him. They had the priest, and he sure was there; but they didn't have any king and neither did they have any prophet. Now, wouldn't it be wonderful if, in the person of somebody who was now coming, the priest and the king and the prophet could all be combined in one person? Wouldn't it be wonderful if somebody could come who would be prophet and priest and king?

Nobody in Israel had ever said, "Thus saith the Lord" since John the Baptist's time; nobody. Wouldn't it be wonderful if somebody came who had the note of the prophet in his voice? Somebody who would come -- who would be - they would instinctively know was the one superior to them all, the King.

Now, not only would their hearts perhaps cry out for that, but over and over again, as they would turn back to their scriptures, they would find in the words of the prophet, "Somebody is coming. Somebody is coming. Somebody is coming. And, in him, you will find kingship and priesthood combined. And out of his mouth will come the authoritative word of God."

Now, the prophet said that. The scriptures had said that. All the way along, they had said that. Will somebody please find Zechariah 6:13; find Zechariah 6:13, Zechariah 6:13.

(Someone from audience reads.) "Even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne."

Now, watch it. Here is somebody who's going to build a throne, and he's going to be a priest upon a throne. Don't you see? Now, where could you find that? Well, you couldn't find it. And now somebody is coming who combines in himself kingship and priesthood.

⁵ Matthew 3:2.

Now, not only do you find the voice of the prophet saying that, but you find the voice of the pictures that God gave to the children of Israel, the visual aids that He gave to them that we call, "types."

Now, a certain man appeared in connection with the priesthood of Aaron, appeared before the Aaronic priesthood was established; that's true. But he came, this mysterious one came from out of the shadows, disappeared into the silence once more, and he was a king and priest. And now, somebody is coming who is going to be after the order of Melchizedek. He is going to combine in Himself kingship and priesthood.

We can all see what a tremendous argument that would be, wouldn't it? - a tremendous argument to these who had been brought into the light but were still fumbling around in babyhood. What an encouragement? What an encouragement? What an encouragement it would be to these folks to go on seeing that there ahead of them is one who combines in himself kingship and priesthood.

What an unanswerable argument it would be to this crowd who were looking back to the visible priesthood and saying over here, "You have nobody like this. You haven't got any altar. You haven't got any sacrifice. You haven't got any lamb. You haven't got any smoke of a sacrifice arising morning and noon. In your old setup there, you don't have two silver trumpets that sound in the morning and again at the evening. You don't have any of this kind of thing." And then the answer comes back, "We have something that is infinitely greater than that. We have someone who was and is king and priest unto God, after the order of Melchizedek."

Now, remember, he is writing about this. Can you imagine the eyes of these folks to whom this letter goes, opening their eyes and saying, "Melchizedek, Melchizedek. Why, he came from out of the mystery when Abraham was coming back from the conquest of the kings following this disturbance there and defeated these two cities." What was the name of them? -- Sodom and Gomorrah.

He was coming back. And suddenly, out of the midst of it there, this one appears. And he doesn't have beginning of days or end of days. In other words, in Him, there is an eternal priesthood. My, that's better than any priesthood we ever knew, for the only priesthood we knew was a very temporary thing. A priest was priest for a little while, and then he died. And then somebody else had to take his place. And somebody else had to come and take his place. They were continually passing off the scene.

Is it possible that there is a priest now who will never die? There will never be any change? Is it possible that this immutable priesthood is there? Don't you see what a tremendous argument this would be to those who are only looking at the priesthood as they could see with their visible -- with their naked eyes? What a priesthood this would be?

They would say, "Well, one of the things that we major on in our setup here is pedigree. If you haven't got a pedigree, you don't amount to anything." But a pedigree always starts with somebody, and it leads on to somebody else.

Here is somebody, and his pedigree is not mentioned. Who was Melchizedek's father? Will somebody tell me? -- or his mother? When did Melchizedek die? Where is he buried? Who succeeded him?

Where? We only have to ask these elementary questions there, these simple things, these kindergarten questions.

We have here a priesthood stamped with eternity. Now, "Can you produce anybody like that? Is there anybody like that?" Because don't forget that, even if they said, "Yes, Melchizedek was like that," the answer would immediately come back, "Ah, but Melchizedek was not one of you. Melchizedek wasn't a Jew. The only one that you know anything about is one that comes from the tribe of Levi. But, Melchizedek didn't come from the tribe of Levi. He wasn't a Jew at all. If he was anything in your eyes, he would be a Gentile." And yet, he's the one who was the type of one who was king and priest unto God after the order of Melchizedek. How he would stand out and stand out alone, wouldn't he? All the way through. All the way through.

Now there were certain things that happened there that were very important indeed. For example, Abraham gave tithes to this one. Now, in the giving of tithes there is always the confession that when you give a tithe, the lesser is giving to the greater. Let me ask you something. When you give your tithe, what position do you assume? It's the lesser giving to the greater, isn't it? Here is one so small and insignificant giving to one who is so great. Now here was Abraham, and remember he's, "Father Abraham." Here was Abraham taking that position – giving tithes to this one, and this one received them. Now, here's a lesser giving tithes to the greater, and even Abraham acknowledged the superiority of Melchizedek's kingship and priesthood in that act. And don't forget, that when Abraham stood before Melchizedek, in the loins of Abraham there was the Levitical priesthood. It hadn't yet appeared. But Abraham's grandson was Levi, or great grandson. And Levi's great grandson was Aaron, and when Abraham stood before this one and gave tithes to him, acknowledging his superiority, in that act he was putting him above everything that would flow from the life of Abraham. There in Abraham stood the Levitical priesthood, not yet visible, but there it was. There it was. And he was saying, "This one is superior."

Now, there was another very beautiful thing that happened there in that moment, for Melchizedek offered gifts unto Abraham and Abraham did not take them because Abraham was under a covenant with God. And God had said to Abraham, "I'll give you everything you need. I'll do everything you require. There isn't a thing that you will need but I'll supply it." And all the way through, that had happened. Now here is somebody comes and offers gifts to Abraham and Abraham says, "No. I will acknowledge your superiority, but my father in heaven, my friend in heaven has told me with an oath, with Himself, that all I need will be provided." And you can not only see the greatness of Melchizedek, but you can see the greatness of Abraham as well.

Now, when you look at Abraham, you're looking at Aaron. Now from that point, it's a simple matter isn't it to take the actual Aaronic priesthood and compare it once more with the priesthood of Melchizedek. If Melchizedek represents eternity then the Aaronic priesthood only represents time. It was only for a little while. If pedigrees are important, pedigrees have to do with time, not eternity.

There is one thing that will not appear in heaven and that's your family tree. It won't be in heaven. A lot of folks that think it's the most important think on earth, but it won't appear in heaven at all. You will belong to a different family altogether when you get there – you'll belong to the family of God. And your brothers and sisters and fathers and mothers, to quote the words of our precious and wonderful Lord, will be those with whom you have had spiritual fellowship down here. You will have no relatives

in heaven with whom you have not had spiritual fellowship down here. A different thing altogether when you get up there. That's another matter altogether.

It's a serious thought and we need to give consideration to it, but here is one who is eternal. He doesn't need to be replaced. Aaron did and everybody that came after him – everybody that came after him, and some of those who would be reading this letter, with their eyes bulging with the thought of it there, they would say, "Well, with some of those priests it was a right good thing we did get rid of them. What a horrible thing it would have been if there had been eternity of priests and old man Annas and Caiaphas were going to stay forever! What a horrible thing that would be. In the mercy of God, they've disappeared from the scene." Here is one who will never need to be replaced. They would say to themselves, "Well, here is a priest," and they would be thinking of Aaron and everybody that came after him who not only could offer sacrifices and did offer sacrifices for us, but he had to offer sacrifices for himself because he too was a sinner. He couldn't offer an eternal sacrifice. He could only offer a temporary sacrifice and included in it was a sacrifice for himself. If the high priest had ever gone into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement without first offering the blood of sacrifice for himself and his family, he would never have come out alive. Never. He had to do that before he could offer a sacrifice for the people. Now here was somebody, and this would be a good time to say, "Hallelujah" – you can say it in your heart, and I'll promise you won't get points for it if you do, but this would be a good time to say, "Hallelujah" when somebody appears who offers one sacrifice forever, unrepeatable, never to be added to, never to die, never to cease – one sacrifice, forever. Now that's the one that we've got before us. That's the one they had before them.

Now I want you to turn, I've just been rambling on here a little bit about this thing, and I've done it more or less deliberately. I want you to turn in your notes please, I think we've got time for this, turn in your notes, I don't know where you'll find it, but it's at the end of the section on Chapter 7 – right at the end of the section on Chapter 7. And it says "Summary." Now, look for that. "Summary." What's the page Herb? Page 34. Page 34, "Summary." Now, this is important. Did you hear that? This is important. Now you let me read you this summary in which we take these varied things and we put them into nutshell form:

"The person of Christ exceeds that of Aaron and his sons. Under the Levitical priesthood we find imperfection. In Christ, we find perfection. The Levitical priesthood was a temporary arrangement. A further need. It was met in Christ, the eternal priest. Aaron was priest only of the tribe of Levi. Christ is king priest of the tribe of Judah. Aaron was made priest without an oath, Christ with the divine oath. Aaron ministered under the old covenant; Christ is the surety of a better covenant – the new covenant in His blood. The Levitical priesthoods were many, ever learning, continually dying. Christ is alive forever, all wise, unchangeable. Aaron and his sons were sinners, Christ knew no sin. Aaron and his sons offered a daily sacrifice; Christ offered one sufficient sacrifice, once for all. And the Word says, I believe in capital letters, could any Hebrew Christian ask more than that? If they should turn back from this all-sufficiency of Christ, then in the nature of things it would be impossible to renew them again unto repentance. In Christ, God has done all he can do."

Now, you can see that that is a very important summary and I'm not thinking of it now from the standpoint of a test. I'm thinking of you my dear and thinking of your own heart and your own understanding. If some way, we could get that within our own heart, what a wonderful thing it would be,

wouldn't it. What a wonderful thing it would be – this superiority of our Lord. I think when we sing little diddies like, “Isn't He Wonderful, Isn't He Wonderful,” there might be just a little different tone in our voices when we sing.

Thank you very much. Class is dismissed.