

THE SERMONS, LECTURES, AND SONGS OF SIDNEY EDWARD COX

Epistle to the Hebrews - Chapter 9, Part 1

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

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

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

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

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

The essential difference between the old and the new covenant is just this: the old covenant, which is the Law of Moses, could make a man a better man, and that’s all. It couldn’t make him anything else but that. It could improve him, but he still remained the old man - a better man, that’s true. The difference between those who kept the old law and those who constantly broke the old law was just there. One was better than the other.

Now, all the old covenant could do was to make a man a better man. Don’t forget that law can only do that no matter where you find it. The law of our land, for example, does not attempt to make a man into anything else but a better man. A law keeper is a better man, a better citizen, a better thousand other things than a law breaker. Now, that’s the only difference.

But, when this new covenant comes with the blood of Christ in the center, sealed by His blood with Him in the center and in view all the time, with the Holy Spirit dwelling within, it doesn’t make us into

better people. It makes us into new creatures. Now, that's the essential difference between the old covenant and the new covenant. The old covenant could make a man a better man. The new covenant makes a man a new man altogether; one new man. Now, that's the ground – the product of the new covenant.

It could never take place, except by the things contained in the new covenant -- the blood of Christ, the constant appearance before our eyes, the consciousness of His presence; and, in addition to that, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Now, that's the secret of the new life.

When we were in our gospels classes, we asked a question that was more or less related to this. It was: Was the Sermon on the Mount given as a way of salvation? And the answer was, no, because it did not contain any reference to two essential things – the blood of Christ and the Holy Spirit; there's no reference whatever to the blood of Christ or the Holy Spirit. Consequently, it was not given at all as a way of salvation.

Now, the new covenant has both of these. Here is the blood. Here is the spirit. Not the spirit without as He had always been up until that time. But, when our Lord came and His work was accomplished and He cried, "It is finished," from that moment on, the Holy Spirit was not operating upon people from without. He was operating in control of people from within. Now, that's the difference between the old and the new covenant.

Now, obviously, we did not cover this important matter as it should be. I'll tell you why I say that in just a moment. But here was the new covenant. Now, when you get into Chapter 9, you begin to consider something else. You begin to consider not merely the priest, not merely the place where He operates, but the actual sacrifice that He offers. Now, here we've got this difference. What's the difference between the sacrifice that is offered in the old dispensation, the old covenant, and the sacrifice that is offered, that is the center, because there can be no blood without sacrifice? A sacrifice is always symbolized and always completed by the blood. And here in the midst of the new covenant we've got the blood implying a sacrifice. What's the difference between the sacrifice itself under the new covenant and the sacrifices that were offered under the old covenant? Now, that's the subject that lies before us.

And, as we go along, you can see – can't you – how logically this thing moves along. If we had been through this study as carefully as we have tried to go through up to this point, you could, without knowing what came next in Chapter 9, without having any knowledge of Chapter 9, you could have supplied the answer to what the subject of Chapter 9 would be because you would have said, "Well, we've considered the priest. We've considered the character of him. We have considered the covenant under which he operates. We have taken a brief look at the place where he operates."

But there's one thing we haven't talked about, and that is the actual sacrifice. We haven't talked about that. Now, Chapter 9, and we have it right here. Now, that's our subject.

Now, to come back to something else that I wanted to remind you of, and that is this, that when we get to the end of the study of the 10th chapter, which will be the end of the doctrinal portion, and then we have before us the delightful task of studying the 11th, 12th, and 13th chapters of Hebrews, and the very

thought of it ought to send a song ringing in our hearts. But we have that before us.

But, before we do, this is what we shall do. We shall turn right back to Chapter 6 and go over it all again, step by step. It may be in the way of instruction. It may be in the way of review as the Lord leads us. But we'll go over it step by step. Then, there will be a test on Chapters 7 and 8. Then we shall go over the remainder of it quietly, thoughtfully, as completely as we can, taking all the time we need; and we'll go over Chapters 8 and 9 and 10. And then, there will be the additional test on Chapters 8, 9 – no, on Chapters 9 and 10.

So you'll have two tests, one on seven and eight and the other on nine and ten. And we'll go over it thoroughly, carefully, beforehand so that we feel that we've not only got it in our heads so that it can be put on a piece of paper as a temporary thing. But we've got at least some of it within our hearts. Now, that's the plan that we have in mind and I wanted you to know so that perhaps you can be planning your own thinking. I don't know what you're involved in in other things. I know there's a lot of things that you will be crowded in.

But, you will know that there will be no test as far as this class is concerned until after we have finished our study of the 10th chapter. Then we shall turn back and review carefully again Chapters 7 and 8, and then the test will come. And then the next thing will be -- and that will be right soon -- a review and a test on Chapters 9 and 10. So now you know just what it is that lies before you.

Now, I want you to notice, if you please, something that this particular chapter does. It takes us right back to something, and it reminds us again of something that we already know, and that's one of the difficulties that we shall be facing right now. When we began to talk about Chapter 9, and we say, "Well, what does Chapter 9 talk about?" -- What does it talk about? And we immediately reply, "Well, it talks about three things." You'll find these all in your notes there. Three things -- one, the Jewish tabernacle.

Now, that's the point where some of us, and I wouldn't be at all surprised if it has already happened, and you may be saying in your heart, "Well, we've been over this before. We know all about the old Jewish tabernacle."

Now, wait a minute, beloved. You just wait a minute. You just wait a minute. You give yourself 50 more years, and then you won't be so quick to say, "I know all about the Jewish tabernacle." Because, you won't know all about it 50 years from now. If you spend all your time there, you wouldn't know all about it. And don't forget this: That this was a letter written to Hebrew people.

Now, if the Holy Spirit, through this writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, begins to talk about the elementary things of the tabernacle to the Hebrew people, wouldn't they have much more right than we do to say, "We know all about this tabernacle." And, yet, the Holy Spirit goes to the very people who knows so much about it, everything about it, in whose midst the thing has been born, and in whose eyes it has been present all through their national life.

And yet, the Holy Spirit goes to them, and they know more about the tabernacle, or they did know more about the tabernacle than we will ever know. Now, all we can do is to look at it from a long distance

point of view and get some information regarding it – put charts and pictures on the wall and what have you and all the rest of it.

But they knew something more than that. These people had all been in the outer court at any rate. These people had all stood by a brazen altar and watched morning and night while a column of black smoke went up from that brazen altar. We haven't done that. These people had heard the sounds of silver trumpets every morning, every evening as long as they could remember anything.

One of their first remembrances of a childhood when waking intellect was there would be this strange sound of trumpets every morning. And many a Hebrew child, as soon as it could ask questions, would be asking, "What's the meaning of those trumpets? What is that sound? What's that sound?"

Many a Hebrew mother would take her child in her arms and make that question and that sound that brought the question forth as the beginning of a teaching channel. It means this, my child. It means this. It means this. Many a Hebrew child carried in its mother's arms perhaps standing, watching as she would this column of black smoke coming from the brazen altar would say, "Mother, what does this mean?" And all through their lives they had been learning about it. It was not a new thing. We didn't go through any experience like that. None of us ever saw the priesthood. None of us ever saw the great high priest in his glorious garments. None of us ever saw them there with the names of the tribes inscribed upon his shoulders with the beautiful 12 lovely jewels upon his breastplate. None of us ever saw him. None of us ever heard the sound of golden bells as he moved around. None of us has ever seen that. But these people did.

Now, my dear, if the Holy Spirit thought it worthwhile to go over step by step and point by point on this matter of the tabernacle, the folks who knew what they knew, we do not need to think it strange if the same blessed spirit of God thinks it worthwhile to bring it once more before our eyes. And I'm quite sure the Holy Spirit is hoping that we shall not be foolish enough to say, "Well, this is old stuff, and I know all about the tabernacle." I think He would be a bit disappointed with us if we said that. Don't you? I think He would.

All right. Now, if that's the case, then let's look at it and see just what we've got in this chapter. First of all, we have Chapter 9, verses 1 through 10. The Jewish tabernacle appears before us again. And it shows not only the importance of what the tabernacle was, but how very much more important the heavenly tabernacle is. Now, we've taken a glimpse at it before.

Notice the old pattern. First of all, it is mentioned, briefly dealt with, and then it is brought out and dealt with far more thoroughly. It's the old pattern that obtained all the way through. Now, we've got it again. And we take a good look, and there are ten verses that are given to that.

Now, I want you to notice the next one. It is the superiority of the sacrifice of Christ. Now, we said that the next great subject would be the superiority of the sacrifice itself. Is the sacrifice under the new covenant better than the sacrifice under the old covenant? And in what way is it better? Is it better?

Now, you will find, in this particular section, about the same number of verses, 11 through 23, the superiority of the sacrifice of Christ. And then, finally, you will find in verses 24 through 28 this rather

strange interlude of the three-fold appearing of Christ; as if the Holy Spirit is delighting to remind us that, in our precious and wonderful Lord, you find somebody who was, who is, and who is to come; who did come, who is there, who will come, who was prophet, and priest, and king.

And it seems to me that the Holy Spirit is just delighting to point out the Excellencies of our Lord and the marvels of His person that cannot be seen anywhere else. I'm quite sure the Holy Spirit just loves to do that. And one of the marks of the spirit-filled person is, "We like to do it too." You can always tell a spirit-filled person by how much he delights to talk about Jesus. Did you hear that? Did you hear that?

You can always tell a spirit-filled person by how much he delights to talk about Jesus. You can always tell it. It's not how much he talks about a lot of obscure doctrine and theological points and this and that and the other; not at all. How much does he love to talk about Jesus? That's what the Holy Spirit wants. That's what He wants. That's the person He can use too, the person who loves to talk about Jesus.

Now, here is this three-fold appearance of our Lord, as if the Holy Spirit is saying, "Isn't it wonderful what we've been talking about, this tabernacle that is so superior to the beautiful thing that God gave in those days when Moses was the one who erected the tabernacle in the wilderness, in those days when the tabernacle was sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifice; in those days when the Aaronic priesthood first appeared before a breathless people. You know, my dear, I sometimes wonder what the people of Israel thought when they first saw the breathless beauty of the Aaronic priesthood.

What do you think they thought when, for the first time, they saw Aaron in his robes of glory and beauty standing before them? What do you think they thought? Well, I don't know, and you don't. All we can do is to just conjecture about it and wonder about it; wonder about it. But there's something else we do know and, that is, that we can turn our eyes to a high priest who is infinitely more beautiful, more glorious than Aaron ever was. That's something we know; they didn't.

Now, this Holy Spirit writing this thing says, as he has said over and over again, and you have noticed it, "I don't want to ever lose sight of Jesus." He started with that, didn't he? He started with that in Chapter 10, uh Chapter 1. And every little while all the way through he'll stop. "Now, stop; we've been going through all of this stuff. Let's stop and have a good look at Jesus."

And you know, he does that for several reasons; at least two. One, it's beautiful to look at him. And, second, when you do look at him, you can understand the deep things that follow so much better. One of the difficulties with our theological misunderstandings and questions and various things of that kind is, we haven't spent time looking at Jesus. If we had a good look at Him before we ever got into this mess, there wouldn't have been any mess to get into. It would have been as clear as daylight if only we had stopped long enough to have a good look at Him. Don't you see? Now, the Holy Spirit is doing this. He's our teacher. He's our teacher.

Let me interject something here. One of the things that impressed me very greatly – for the moment, you won't think this has anything to do with our subject. But one of the things that impressed me greatly when I got the tape recordings of the great messages that were delivered by Dr. Paul Reese at the

English Keswick Convention; which, by the way, is the largest Bible conference in the world and, by far, the most important one. It is not, in any sense, a camp meeting; not in any sense. And, if there is a place on earth, where the truth regarding scriptural holiness is taught, that's the place; and where the errors that sometimes creep into that consideration, like the eradication theory and sinless perfection and a lot of other things are entirely absent, where the greatest names in all the world are connected with it. Men whose books fill our library; men like Campbell Morgan and Bishop Hanley Moule and Donald Gravinehouse [sic] and a hundred others of the greatest spiritual giants the world has ever seen. And I say that thoughtfully.¹

But they're all there developing this one great theme: What does the Spirit of God and the Book of God say about scriptural holiness? What does He say? Now, I said that for -- just a little aside there because there's misunderstanding about that sometimes. But the thing that impressed me when I got the tapes of Dr. Paul Reese Bible messages that were delivered this summer or last summer at the English Keswick Convention was this: Every time he began his message, he would call on the congregation -- you can hear it all on the tape, even the silence. He would call on the congregation to stop long enough to recognize the Holy Spirit's presence; and, within their hearts individually, collectively, to call upon the Holy Spirit to do what He alone can do, to be the teacher.

And you can hear on the tape the sacred hush that came as for a few seconds without any words to clutter it up. Without any words, a congregation lifted its face and its heart to God the Holy Spirit asking that He would be the teacher.

Now, that is a very interesting thing that you've got there. This is the point all the way through. He wants to teach us things, and He wants to teach us things through this tabernacle. And one of the reasons why we do not so frequently understand what we ought to understand about it is that we fail right in that point, the point of the definite recognition of the Holy Spirit's presence. We fail in it in this class. I fail in it. I confess it. I fail in it over and over again. And I'm quite sure we do as a class.

It's very seldom we stop long enough to recognize that only as He gives us something will it be worthwhile; very seldom. We may be indefinitely conscious of the fact that we need Him. You know. But that's one thing. But, just definitely turning our faces to Him and turning ourselves and our class and our time and our subject over to Him, we seldom do that. We seldom do that. We seldom do that in our lives, let alone in our class. You've got a lot of problems in your life, my dear, that wouldn't have been there if you'd done that. Did you hear that? Did you?

You're facing personal problems that wouldn't be there if we had done that. Now here's one of the things that come leaping out at us out of this book of the Epistles to the Hebrews, it says to us, "You better move along as the Holy Spirit guides you along. You better do that." And by the way, talking about the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we are greatly privileged as a Christian and Missionary Alliance

¹ In the early 1960s, on the only return trip to England (the place of his birth) that Sidney Cox ever made, not only did he visit his remaining family, but he attended the English Keswick Convention. It is not known precisely how he had been attracted to the Keswick movement; however, in the 1950s and 1960s, the Keswick movement came to America and on American radio broadcasts often could be found the evangelical preaching of various Keswick evangelists. The emphasis of Keswick theology is very consistent with the theology of The Salvation Army and The Christian and Missionary Alliance, particularly its emphasis on the doctrine of holiness.

group. And I only say that in the way in which we can say it here. I know they're a lot of us that are not Christian and Missionary Alliance. I'm not that myself; only indefinitely.

But let's remember, if you please, that in this little paper that comes to us, The Alliance Witness, there are articles that are now being published every week. Three of them have already come. The most wonderful things I've ever read in my life on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, by Dr. J. Sidlow Baxter.

Now, if you haven't read those, my dear, you just get a hold of them. Now, if you haven't read them, you know about them now. And if you don't read them and you say you're busy, you're busier than you ought to be. Now, you get them there.

I left my little wife at home there carefully clipping them out as I came down to class this morning so that we could put them into a folder and add them to them and add them to them. And I want to tell you, they're going to be part of our equipment for we need light on that subject just like you do. We sure do; the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Here he's moving along. Why does he bring us face-to-face with this tabernacle? Was it an accident? Does he know his business? Why? Doesn't he know that in these little bits of hearts of ours some of us will be saying, "Well, I've heard that before." Sure you've heard it before. Sure you've heard it before. You've heard that Christ died on the cross before. We're going to listen to it again. We'd better get use to it because we're going to listening to it for all eternity; sure will.

Now, let's look and see what he does say here. Let's take this first section and just a little glimpse at it here. You will notice one thing, as we're going along, and, that is, we are not attempting to hurry with this. I don't want to do that. Fortunately, with the study of the Epistles to the Hebrews, we do not need to do that. We're not racing against a certain point there 25 chapters ahead of us, and we've only got a little while to do it. You know, the way we get into it sometimes there, and we don't know whether we're on our head or our heels oddly. We don't need to do that here.

Let's take a quite look at it here. Let's take a look at that tabernacle and remind us of something. The greater part of the Book of Exodus is taken up with a description of the building and dedication and using of the tabernacle. The greater part of the book is taken up with that.

Now, I want you to notice something else. I want you to notice that there are two sections to it. And, naturally, when we get into the Epistles to the Hebrews, and we remind ourselves, this is God's commentary on the Pentateuch. Do you remember? Does that strike a familiar note? It seems to me we said that before.

If it's God's commentary on the Pentateuch and a certain section of it appears and it's a commentary on what is recorded in the Pentateuch, then should we not, in the nature of things, turn ourselves back to that old portion? And when you do, my dear, you'll find this: There are two distinct descriptions of the tabernacle; almost identical. The first one that was done - when Moses erected it, when God gave the instruction; the original instruction that came from heaven in every single detail. There wasn't one thing that was left to Moses, not one.

Now, you've got this. Then you move on, and you'll find yourself facing exactly the same thing again. And you've got two descriptions of the tabernacle that are almost identical. Now, here's the difference between them. This is the point you need to get, and you need to get this in your own life, my dear. Now, you watch it. In the first place, when the instruction regarding the tabernacle begins to appear and you find this thing growing before your eyes, you will notice this: God said, "Do this."

Now, when you get to the second section and you find it repeated, it begins with this assertion. Moses looking into the face of God and saying, "It has been done." God says, "Do it." And Moses says, "It has been done." And every single detail is repeated on that basis so that God could check, if He wanted to; if there was any necessity for it, God could check with Moses as to what had been done. And Moses stands before Almighty God and says the same thing. But the one whose priesthood is so like Moses that he is spoken of as a priest, "Like unto Moses," a prophet, "Like unto Moses."² And He said at the end of His work, "It is finished."³

And here is Moses standing before God saying, "It's finished. What you told us to do about those curtains, it's finished. What you told us to do about the erection of the tabernacle in every meticulous detail, has been finished. What you told us to do about this braising altar, it's been finished. What you told us to do about the laver, it's been finished. What you told us to do about the beautiful things in a place of the tabernacle, the holy place, the erection of the seven-branch candlestick, and the beauty of this table of showbread, and the indescribable loveliness of the golden altar. Oh, God, it's all been done. That veil has been erected. Here it is. Here it is. It's all been done exactly as you've told us to do it. It's there. It's there. This Ark of the Covenant has all been made. It's all been completed. It's all been sprinkled with the blood just exactly as you told us to do. Oh, God, all that remains is that your presence shall come down and fill that inner place with the blaze of glory, and the only thing that remains is the Shekinah glory. And, Oh, God, we can't do that. You must do it."

Did you hear Moses talking? Did you? Now, you just notice those two – that one single thing that we're talking about, the tabernacle in two parts; both of them identical. But, at the beginning, God says to Moses, "You do this." And, in the beginning of the second one, Moses looking into the face of God and saying, "As Thou has commanded, it has been done."

Now, that's the beginning of the picture of the tabernacle. We can mess around with all the details of the tabernacle and know all the little measurements and all the rest of it. But, unless you see that, it just remains pretty much the same as any other building, a little strange because of its antiquity and so on. But it will remain pretty much the same as the other building -- as any other building.

Let's remember that, while the Holy Spirit is bringing it out, He has a reason for bringing it out and saying it over and over and over again. It's the most complete type of Christ, the great Son of God and the great eternal sacrifice and the great high priest with eternity around him of anything that you will find in the scripture. There isn't a thing connected with our redemption that isn't pictured for us here. Here it is right before our very eyes.

And then he goes, after talking a little bit about the general tabernacle itself, the importance of it – and

² Deuteronomy 18:15

³ John 19:30

you can read it there. It all begins right at the very beginning of the thing. It all begins in this fashion. And, you can find him beginning to talk about certain details.

Now, isn't it strange that he doesn't begin to talk about the brazen altar, or is it? Isn't it strange that he doesn't begin to talk about the laver, or is it? But the first thing he begins to talk about is the seven-branch candlestick. That's the first thing he begins to talk about. And he says, "Come on. I'll take you once more into the old tabernacle. A lot of you folks haven't been in there." I don't mean you. But I mean, as the spirit might be saying to these folks through the writer of Hebrews, you know. "There's a seven-branch candlestick, but you haven't been in there to see it because you don't belong to the priesthood. If you belong to the tribe of Levi, and if you were assigned there to the care of the tabernacle of the temple, you would have seen the seven-branch candlestick. All you know is, there is such a one. Let me tell you about it." And you can almost hear the Holy Spirit encouraging you to enter into confidences regarding beautiful things. He says, "I want you to look at this seven-branch candlestick not because it was made of gold, not because it was kept lighted there, not because there was a certain priestly formula that had to be observed around about it, not because it was the only light that there was in the holy place."

There is was not another light in there; not at all. The only light in the holy of holies was the light of the presence of God. There was no other light in there at all. The Shekinah Glory on the other side of the veil and the seven-branch candlestick on this side of the veil. And he says, "I want you to look at it because it will remind you of something. It will remind you of somebody who lived 40 or 50 years before this letter was written; maybe only 30 years before. It will remind you of somebody who said on two distinct occasions, "I am the light of the world." Now, this is only the light of the tabernacle, and it's going to point to somebody who is the light of the world.

Now, when we meet again on Wednesday we'll pick it up right there.

(audio ends)