

**SALVATION ARMY – SOUTHERN TERRITORY
1969 SOUTHERN BIBLE CONFERENCE
SHAMROCK VILLAGE
FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA**

Chorus: *Lovest Thou Me More Than These*
Sermon: *Close The Door*. 1st Peter 2:1-2

Editorial note: This recording is a spliced audio of various sessions and meetings conducted in connection with the week-long Salvation Army Southern Territory Bible Conference held in July, 1969 at the Shamrock Village in Fort Pierce, Florida. Sidney Cox was one of the special invited guests and he led and participated in many of the sessions of the conference with his music and preaching. The sections spliced together were generally the sessions featuring Sidney Cox and other sections of interest.

Sidney Cox composed a different chorus for each night of this conference. He often wrote songs and choruses for particular occasions and this proved to be a very popular practice. The following choruses were written for and introduced at this conference:

He That Doeth Abideth
Lovest Thou Me More Than These
The Ransomed Shall Return
Life Through His Name
When The Lord Comes Back For His Own

Following the death in August, 1967 of his beloved wife, Violet, who had been a near invalid for many years, Sidney Cox was once again able to travel. Although he was 81 years of age, he was much in demand as a speaker and teacher, and resumed his extensive travel schedule. One of his first such travels was to attend the Salvation Army's Bible Conference held a year earlier in 1968 in Fort Pierce.

Sidney and Violet Cox voluntarily left the work of The Salvation Army in 1944, and in the summer of 1968, he had been a former officer for over 20 years; yet, he remained extremely close friends with the Southern Salvationists and in popular demand as a speaker, preacher and musician at their meetings. Many of the officers at these conferences had been closely associated with him or had been trained by him at the Army's College for Officers Training during his Salvation Army tenure in Atlanta from 1928 – 1944.

These conferences were emotional reunions for him and the Salvationists in attendance.

My thanks to Tom Walker for this audio recording. Tom is the son of James Walker who was commissioned in Atlanta as a member of the Holdfast Session in the spring of 1940 while Major Sidney Cox was serving as the training college principal.

John Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney and Violet Cox. July 2011.

SIDNEY COX:

I want you to sing the chorus, *Lovest Thou Me More Than These?*. Will you find it please; and by the way, while you're doing that, I'm hoping that you're taking care of these choruses. I saw one of our good brothers who had been wise enough to go to the dime store or somewhere else and buy one of those little binders, little folders that you can get there, and he'd carefully placed all of these choruses in there; and I'll tell you something about it, he won't lose one of them. There won't be one of them that will be misplaced. He won't have to say, "Now I wonder where this one is?" Why don't you do the same thing? Go down there in the shopping areas or something; drop in and get one of those little folders, those little binders that will hold these things together; and I think perhaps you'd have something that would be worthwhile – keep them all together. If you want copies of them for someone else, well they're available; and that's the reason why we've got a reasonable quantity of them in order that you might use them. I would be so glad and so happy if you would find them of use to yourself and perhaps of use to somebody else.

Lovest thou Me more than these?
 Lovest thou Me more than these?
 What would your answer be today,
 If once again your Lord should say,
 Lovest thou Me more than these?
 Lovest thou Me more than these?

And just to refresh you, let me sing it for you.

Lovest thou Me more than these?
 Lovest thou Me more than these?
 What would your answer be today,
 If once again your Lord should say,
 Lovest thou Me more than these?
 Lovest thou Me more than these?

[Congregation singing]

Lovest thou Me more than these?
 Lovest thou Me more than these?
 What would your answer be today,
 If once again your Lord should say,
 Lovest thou Me more than these?
 Lovest thou Me more than these?

"LOVEST THOU ME, MORE THAN THESE?"

JOHN 21:15 SIDNEY F. COX



LOV-EST THOU ME, MORE THAN THESE? "LOV-EST THOU ME,
 MORE THAN THESE? "LOV-EST THOU ME,
 MORE THAN THESE? WHAT WOULD YOUR AN-SWER BE TO-DAY,
 IF ONCE A-GAIN YOUR LORD SHOULD SAY, "LOV-EST THOU ME
 MORE THAN THESE? "LOV-EST THOU ME, MORE THAN THESE?"

This is the original manuscript for this song which Sidney Cox composed especially for and introduced at this Bible Conference.

We'll go over one or two more of the others as time permits so that we've got them reasonably well in our hearts as well as on a scrap of paper.

Yesterday, we were talking about the pathway of the 1st Epistle of Peter that led us to the doorway of the household of faith.

It's been an interesting pathway, I'm quite sure. We haven't attempted to stray from it. We have just been simple enough and perhaps happy enough to just follow along and listen carefully while the Holy Spirit talks to us; following His thought as best we could; asking I hope the Holy Spirit to quicken our minds and our thinking; and we have been following the pathway of the believer in particular from eternity to eternity; and I hope

your hearts have been beating a little faster as we have thought of the immeasurable grace of God and the marvelous things that in His heart He foreordained for us from all eternity - the things that He thought of us; and then His thought becomes actual in that which He does for us. How wonderful it is that He should ever have thought of making folks like us into the Children of God.

Now dear, you'll be marveling about that for all eternity. If I meet you in heaven ten-thousand years from now, you'll still be thinking about it – the marvel of the grace of God who not only made us, but thought to make us in the beginningless beginning into His children; the sonship of believers. And the wonder of that which He has provided for us that only waits the consummation of His plan and purpose until we enter into the realization of it; the wonder of His cleansing power; that He should ever have thought of us in the role of priests unto God. Can you imagine it? It's almost overwhelming, isn't it, to even think of it. And yet, there it is; there it is, not only in the will of God, but in the purpose of God. We are to be priests unto God, sprinkled with the blood. That ear of yours was touched with the blood, my dear. That hand of yours – blood anointed. That foot of yours – touched with the blood. We are kings and priests unto God and God fashions of us a holy priesthood, to offer unto Him sacrifices that are acceptable to God in the temple that He is building.

Isn't it wonderful. And we followed down as we thought of the inheritance and we thought of the special, post-graduate course through which He puts all of His children who are to be really useful to Him, through that valley of suffering so that we can come out on the other side not only personally refined, but with an understanding of the problems of others that could never come to us any other way.

You know, the most wonderful thing you say to somebody in need when you talk to them, and they pour out their hearts to you; the most wonderful thing they hear from you is, "I know what you mean. I've been over the road. I know what you've been through. I've been through it too."

And here is the valley in which God gives us the high privilege of learning certain things that we could never learn any other way; and finally He takes us in this lovely chapter right to the doorway of the household of faith. We have been rejoicing in our privileges as children of God, now we get the picture of the house in which we are to live.

.....the daughter will be there so that I could have a word with her too - for mother knew Jesus, but the daughter didn't. And sure enough, when I went to the hospital room, there was the daughter and the little baby in her arms. And after a moment or two and feeling around for some way in which I could approach her, I said to her, "Whose baby is that?" And you know she looked at me in astonishment and she said, "He's mine." And you know how a young mother says that. "He's mine." And then I blundered on and I said, "Are you sure he's yours? He doesn't look any different than any other baby to me. Are you sure he's yours?" And she looked at me again and there was lightening flashing in her eyes and she said, "Oh, he is mine and he is different to other babies," and she was right on both counts. And then I said to her, "What is it that gives you the right to say of

this baby of all others, 'He's mine.' What did he receive from you that gives you the right to say, 'He's mine.'" And she looked at me for a moment and then she said, "Life."

Don't you see? That was the thing that gave her the right to say, "He's mine." And we say it with utmost reverence - that's the thing that gives God to right to say of us, "You are mine" - mine in this peculiar way that we speak of as the relationship of father to children. That's an entirely different thing, you know to the relationship of creator to creature. That's an entirely different thing. This is an exclusive thing. We are 'the elect of God' when we come into the family circle, thus.

And so we go through a door into the household of God and it's a thrilling moment. It must have been a thrilling moment in heaven, and the Word of God tells us so, when you my dear walk through the doorway of the household of faith redeemed and regenerated; and you walk through. Do you remember the day? Do you go over it again? Do you live it over again? Why, of course. And we walk through the door into the household of faith. What a blessing it was. How the angels rejoiced.

But you know my dear, there was something else that happened. There was somebody else who was interested in your passing through that door from one realm to another; there was somebody else who was not pleased at all when you passed from the realm of darkness into the realm of light. There was somebody who had had some claim upon you before that. You were a child of darkness before that, now you're a child of light. Somebody was glad, but somebody was very displeased about that; and when you get through into the household of faith, the first thing we have to do is to close the door through which we pass. And that's our subject this morning.

We were talking about going through the door last night, now this morning, the first thing we have to do is to close the door because this somebody who was not at all pleased when he lost you is going to reach out after you with all the subtleties he possesses to see if he can recapture you or at least spoil the life that God has planned for you on the other side of the door. The first thing we do when we get into the household of faith is to close the door and keep it closed; and when you turn to the first verse of the 2nd chapter of 1st Peter, this is the word that is right before our eyes.

Let me read it to you, "Wherefore, because of what has gone before; wherefore, because God has redeemed you and regenerated you and brought you into the family of God through an open door; therefore, close that door." The words of course are, "Laying aside." Now that's a word that means an action, once for all. We close the door on the old life once for all. We don't leave it open, a little crack there where some of the atmosphere of the old life can creep through. Not at all. We close the door and keep it closed; and the first thing that comes to us as we pass through that door is to close the door.

Now remember my dear, that that door is not going to be closed by you putting your little feeble shoulder up against it. It isn't going to be closed by you putting your years of experience up against it. Not at all. It's going to be closed when we put against it the very same thing that admitted us into the household of faith. What did admit us through that

door? It was blood and the word – the precious blood and the value of the word; and what we do in order to be safe on the other side is to put the word and the blood up against that door and keep it there.

Now, you can make a diagram of that if you wish and say, “Put the blood and the word up against that door.” But, that’s the only way in which we shall keep it closed. Your willpower, your strength of character, your determination, your business of holding on – that’ll never do. Never. There’s only one thing that is going to keep the enemy on the other side of the door, and that’s the blood and the word. Put the blood and the word up against the door and you will find victory there and you’ll never find it any other way. Without it, he can creep in. With it, he will stay where he ought to stay – on the other side of the door. That’s the only way an enemy - why it’s Peter, himself isn’t it who describes this enemy as, “The one who goes around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.”¹ This is the one. And on the other side of that door through which you passed into the loveliness of the household of faith, he stands reaching out after you, and he is determined to get us back if he can; and failing that, to spoil the life God has planned for us on the other side. The blood and the word.

We need to understand the value of the blood and the claiming of it in our everyday living. I read a little pamphlet the other day called, the title of it was, *The Mind Under The Blood*. We put our minds under the blood for protection, for don’t forget that this will be the first place where Satan will attack you. Under the blood – the refuge of the blood that is as beautiful and definite as the blood that was marked on the doorposts and lintels of homes in the long ago, and there was protection there. We need to learn more about the value of claiming the protection of the blood. We need to know more of it. We need to do more of it. That defeat of yours that came at some time or other would never have come if we had stopped and claimed the victory and protection and value and shelter of the blood. We need to know more about that – putting these lives of ours under the blood. What am I going to do with my hands if they’re under the blood? What am I going to do with my feet if they’re under the blood? And you my dear, are a blood-sprinkled child of God destined for that priesthood. We need to know more of it.

Let’s put the word up against that door, not just the word that happens to be in a book, but the word that’s in your heart. That’s the place where it’s of value in this business of keeping evil where it belongs, on the other side of the door. The Word of God. And again, we need to know more of it, of the absolute necessity of having our lives simply saturated with the Word of God. It’s the only way of safety, my dear. It’s the only way. The only thing he’s afraid of is not your philosophy, it’s the Word of God.

Do you remember what our Lord did in what we call the temptation in the wilderness? Do you remember? Do you remember what He used when somebody came with his insidious temptations? Do you remember what he used? Just one thing – the Word of God. The Word of God. And in that strange episode that we call the ‘temptation in the wilderness’ the Lord Jesus seemed to take that word and thrust it into the face of the enemy almost contemptuously. Now, you can’t do that. You’d better not try that. Don’t

¹ I Peter 5:8.

you try to thrust something into the face of Satan contemptuously. You'd better have more spiritual sense than that. But that's what it seemed almost with our Lord, didn't it? Seemed almost as if He just pushed it into his face contemptuously. He certainly did.

And here He tells us this is the way, for I'm deeply convinced you know that that temptation in the wilderness was not merely to prove that Christ was stronger than Satan. It wasn't a contest between the creator and the creature He had created. Not at all. Not at all. It was to show us the path of victory. As if He was saying all the way along, "This is the way to do it. Not only is it the way for me, but it's the way for you too." In the hour of trial and the hour of testing, when the enemy would come in like a flood, God lifts up the standard of His word against him. Why of course. That's the thing. That's the reason why we're to be pouring the Word of God into our hearts - not professionally, personally. There's a lot of us that don't take any of the Word of God unless we do it professionally. It's part of our job; it's part of the thing we're supposed to do. But as individuals, personally we ought to be pouring the Word of God into our hearts so that we've got it there in the hour of need; in the hour of temptation; in the hour of testing - we've got it there. It's the only thing about you that Satan is afraid of - he's not afraid of your skills at all. He's not afraid of your experiences - not at all. He's not afraid of your background. He's not afraid of how many years you've put in at this, that and the other. Not at all. The only thing he's afraid of is the Word of God that's hidden in your heart. That's the only thing.

And when the Word of God is there, poured into our hearts - and that's not something that we merely do when we're young. We keep on doing it! In heaven's name my dear, you folks who are not young anymore, pour the Word of God into your hearts. You need it more as you get older than you did when you were young. If you have the idea that as you get older, your testings and temptations and problems decrease, you are sadly mistaken. You will need the Word of God more than ever. Pour it into your heart. Make it the objective of your life. Why of course.

I went into the home of a man when I was doing meetings in Oregon years ago. He was a forest ranger - a fine Christian man, a deacon of a church where I was working, and he was a forest ranger; and he'd been in that government service for 40 years; out there in the forests of Oregon watching for fires and dangers of one kind or another. And now he was retired, and I went to his little home. And here was this man in his little home of retirement. And I asked him a common placed question that comes to our mind, "What are you going to do now you're retired? What are you going to do to occupy your time? What are you going to do when you're retired?" When I asked him that question, his face lit up as if an electric light bulb had been suddenly turned on on the inside. His face just lit up and he said, "I'll tell you what I'm going to do, I'm going to do the thing I've always wanted to do all of my life. I'm going to take one correspondence course after another in the Word of God; and now I've got time; now I've got the place; now I know what I want; I'm going to pour it into my heart.

Did you hear it? Did you hear it? By the way, what are you going to do when you retire? What? What are you going to do? This man didn't say anything about golf or fishing or

stamp collecting or running electric trains – and I’ve seen retired folks that have been absorbed with all of these things. Nothing wrong with any of them – no. There just secondary. But you’ve never had a real chance for years and years and years perhaps to get down to brass tacks with the Word of God – you better do it, my dear. There are ways and means if you want to, you can be quite sure of that – pouring the Word of God.

If Satan goes knocking on the door of that little cottage in the town in Oregon, he won’t find much of a welcome there, in the home of a man whose life is being constantly saturated with the living water of the Word of God.

If we’ve got any weaknesses, and I suppose we have, that surely is one of them. Our knowledge of the Word of God doesn’t amount to much, does it? And the little bit that we turn to from day to day, the little thing that we call our devotions, or something of the kind, what a poor, feeble thing that is, isn’t it. Whereas God has opened up the Niagaras of His truth and the Word of God and gives us the opportunity to allow the cleansing flow, the penetrating flow, the protecting flow of the Word of God to go into our hearts. The only folks that are safe on the other side of the door are the folks who have put up against it the barrier of the blood and the book. And God has given us in His grace both so that we can put up against the door the protective value of the blood and the shield of the Word of God.

Oh my dear, I hope we’ve got sense enough, I mean spiritual sense enough to listen to what old Peter was saying, or much better than that, what the Holy Spirit was saying through Peter, “Wherefore, laying aside,” there must be no compromise at that point. There must be no substitute for the value of the word and of the blood at that point. Compromise? There can be no compromise; for a compromise will put a crack in the door and through it some of the poisonous atmosphere on the other side will seep; and you can be quite sure that it will be highly perfumed by the time it reaches you; for the one who releases it on the other side has got more sense than to send our way something that is objectionable; something that smells bad. It’ll come to you highly perfumed. Sure it will. But a little crack of compromise will release these things.

I think I told you last year, speaking of that word, ‘compromise’ - I quoted last year from John Morely, the great English writer who wrote the biography of Gladstone and many another book and set a standard for English literature that has never been surpassed; he made a statement on one occasion and he said this, “Compromise is the most immoral word in the English language.” Did you hear it? Well, whether he’s right about that or not, I’m quite sure that compromise is one of the utterly immoral words in the language of the realm in which we live, to de-nature the Gospel by allowing something to seep into it – to soft-pedal Jesus. Did you hear it? That’s the thing he wants you to do – leaves a crack in the door and through it... Now old Peter, and the Holy Spirit back of him, not only says these things in general, but he goes through them in detail.

We heard yesterday about 5 and 5s and 2s, but remember, Satan has his 5s and 2s too; and I want you to read and hear the 5 fingers on the hand that Satan reaches out to try to

get you, my dear; and remember, we're not talking about somebody in general, we're talking about you in particular.

Now, you listen to it please, "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and all hypocrisies, and envies, and evil speakings."² Do you see the hand that's coming there? Do you see the fingers that are there? Do you see them? Malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies, evil speakings? Nearly all these things are sins of the disposition. He's attacking you from the inside when he comes with that kind of a test – from the inside. He isn't attacking you on the money side of things, except incidentally. No, no – malice.

What is malice? What is it? Well, for our purpose, let's define it this way: it's the general condition of evil; the soil out of which other things spring. Malice – this utterly evil thing. And here's a hand. Now, watch it please.

What is guile? It's the smooth, crafty movement of malice. When malice moves toward you, my dear, it comes in the smooth, crafty, oily way that makes the approach look almost sensible and occasionally almost necessary. Malice. When malice moves, it's guile in the movement of it.

What is hypocrisy, my dear? Hypocrisy is simply the camouflage of malice. When malice moves toward you, it doesn't move towards you in all of its nasty, ugliness. Oh no, not at all. It moves toward you camouflaged so that it looks strangely like an angel of light sometimes. The movement of malice. The camouflage of malice. Every movement toward a compromise will be wrapped up in garments that make it look so sensible and so obvious and occasionally so right.

Malice – moving toward us in the form of guile; dressed in the garments of hypocrisy and the disposition of it, the nature of it is envying, covetousness, longing after something that belongs to someone else and we wish it was ours; and occasionally when we see that, we say to ourselves in our stupidity, "I've got a right to that, and I'm going after that. I've got a right to have it. He's got something that I haven't got and I've got a right to have it." Have you ever heard it? Have you? You better watch out, my dear - this business of envying, covetousness.

I was looking in the 20th chapter of Exodus as I was thinking about this this morning and I noticed something that I hadn't noticed before; that in the Decalogue, there is five times as much said about covetousness as there is about any other designated sin. All it says about stealing is, "Thou shalt not steal." All it says about killing is, "Thou shalt not kill." And all it says about immorality is, "Thou shalt not," and that's all. But when it comes to covetousness, when it comes to this thing, the envying which is the outward form of covetousness on the inside, there are five times as much said about it. You're not to covet your neighbor's house. You're not to covet your neighbor's wife. You're not to covet your neighbor's this and that and the other. And all down the line, until we've got five times as much about covetousness as we have about anything else.

² 1 Peter 2:1.

I wonder if there's some reason for that? Could there be a reason for that? Envyng – evil speaking; the language of malice.

And again, as we find it so frequently in the Word of God, the destructive power of words as well as the constructive power of words. There is life hidden away in words; there's dynamite hidden away in them too. I mean the dynamite that destroys – evil speaking. This one on the other side of the door that comes slipping along with guile, dressed in the garments of hypocrisy; and when the lips open, some word touched with the poison of asps falls in some heart or some home or some church; and he has used that means of destroying something on this side of the door over and over again.

Oh, the homes that have been wrecked by a poisonous word, an evil word; the lives that have been wrecked by a word; the corps that have been ruined by a word; the churches that have been smashed to pieces by a word. Why, all along the pathway you can see the wrecks there and occasionally you can see the tombstone where an evil word is written.

And here is this thing that we're talking about. We've gone through the door, or we should have done, and now on the other side we put the protecting barrier of the book and the blood up against it and claim all its values. We've got a right to do that. That's one right we all have, is the right constantly to claim for every step of our way the value of the blood and the cleansing power of the Word of God. Put it up against the door because somebody's reaching after you.

Five things. He's got his five too and he's reaching out after you. Only the illumination of the word as the Holy Spirit takes possession of your heart will ever reveal that; will ever enable us to see beyond the camouflage that comes, with which the testing and the evil clothes itself. There's so much that is essentially evil, and anything that's evil is outside of the will of God. Did you hear that? Anything and everything is evil that's outside of the will of God. May not be nasty evil. May be nice evil. But, it's wrong if it's outside of the will of God; and it comes to us sometimes clothed in the garments that make it look so right, so acceptable. The word that comes to us is a smooth, oily, perfumed word; and here's an old book that says, you ought to be aware of that.

Now, there's a reason for protecting that door and keeping it closed, because on the other side, you remember, and we find it right here, we come through that door not as grown up folks already matured, already to grow wings. We haven't yet been measured for our crown. We don't come through as full grown Christians. Not at all. We come through as babes in Christ. Do you see the picture on this side?

Now a baby needs two things. When you bring that baby home from the hospital, there are two things you provide immediately – one is protection and the other is provision. Did you hear it?

Protection. One of the first things you did, my dear when you brought that little precious bundle home from the hospital, and you walked across the threshold of your home – you closed that door in a hurry. You sure did. You closed that door, and if there was anything

around that would have brought harm to that little baby, you would have fought with tooth and nail to protect that child. Why, of course you would. A child needs protection my dear – the protection of a closed door.

The protection of the blood. The protection of the word.

But a child needs something else as well. If you concentrate on protection and forget the provision, you can be quite sure that it won't be very long before the child will let you know what's wrong. He sure will. And we are to see that this child on the other side is not only brought into the household of faith by the life-giving word, but it is nourished by it. Notice the word that's here, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby."³ For that's the thing we hope, isn't it, that this child will not only come into our home, but it will be able to receive the nourishment that is supplied to it in order that it may grow and become something worthwhile on in the future.

A child that doesn't grow – what an anxiety. What a terrible problem, isn't it; whether it fails to grow physically, or whether it fails to grow mentally. In my visitation that I used to do many a year ago, and I do a little of it even now, but in a home that I visited, there was a woman that I knew quite well, and I knew there was a problem there; and I walked up to the steps of this little home and the porch door was there; and I couldn't see the mother, I saw a little baby cot over here; and so, I pushed open the door, and the moment I did, the mother came. Oh, she could have kept me on the other side of that door, but it was too late. And I walked onto the porch, and she led me over to that cot, and there in the cot was the body of a baby and the head of an adult. The head had grown, but the body hadn't; and I looked at it.

I went into another home that was quite different; and there I walked into the home and in front door I found a great big fellow, about 180 pounds, six feet high almost - great big fellow there; and he was sitting on the carpet playing with the little toys that amuse babies. His body had grown, but his mind hadn't.

And God wants to provide us my dear, until we are well-rounded children of God that He can delight in when He sees His own image in us.

There are Christians, oh forgive me for saying this, I know you'll understand, but there are Christians, and I've met some of them whose Christian life is just a monstrosity – something about them has grown, and the rest of it hasn't. A monstrosity. God wants to give us milk, "The sincere milk of the word," that absorbed into these spiritual lives of ours, it produces something that is beautiful and symmetrical and God-like so that the Father can look down and see the developing image of Himself; the reflection of His face in you and me. "The sincere milk of the word."

Here again, we've got the danger of compromise, haven't we? For there's many a Christian congregation that is being fed not on merely skim milk, but adulterated stuff

³ 1 Peter 2:2.

that produces some kind of a person there that may have the name, but very little likelihood to the person that God wants.

(The audio ends abruptly at this point)