

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

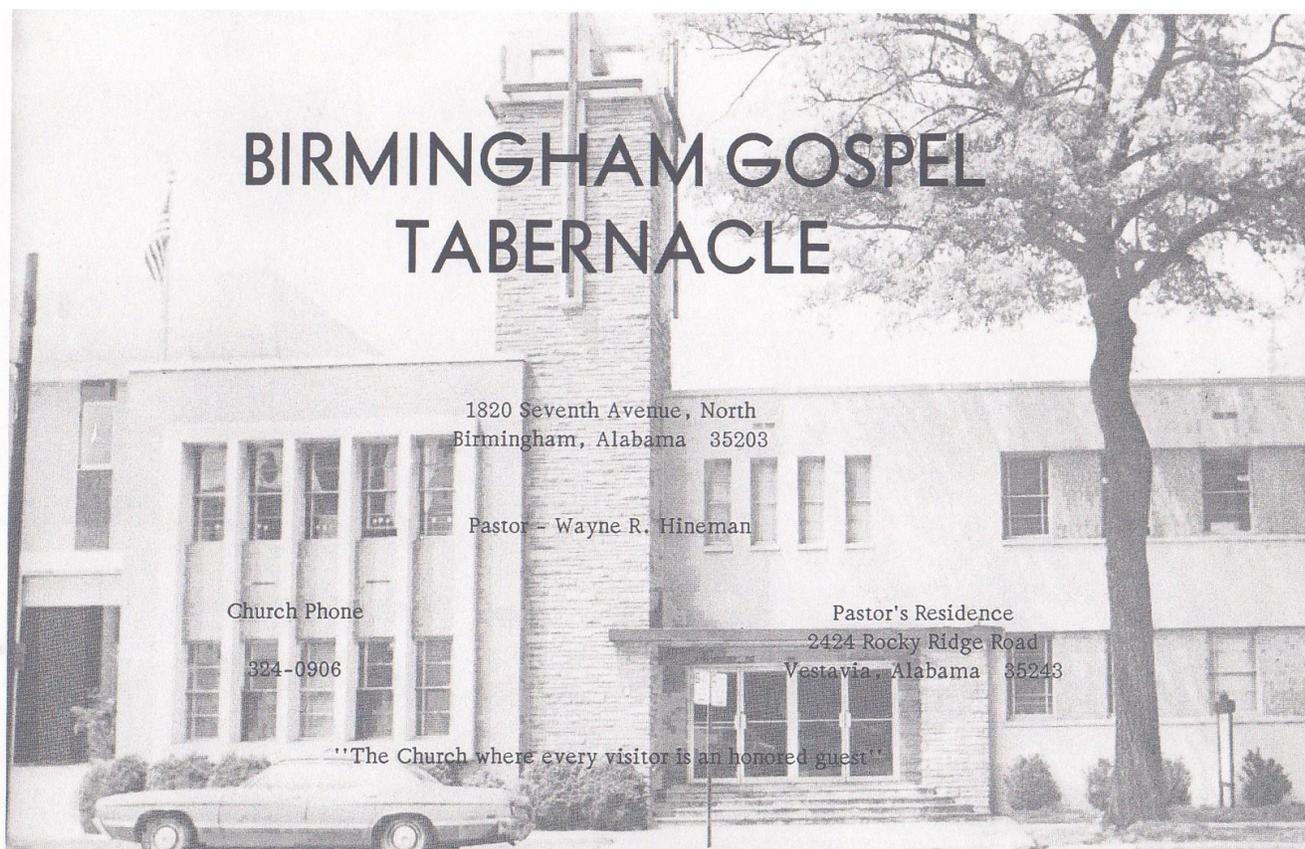
Sidney Cox Tells the Story of His Conversion and Leads the Singing With Concertina of His Chorus –
When The Lord Saved Me

II Timothy Chapter 2 – The Seriousness of the Christian Life
The Workman Who Worked With Words

Editorial Note: In 1972, Sidney Cox moved from Detroit, Michigan to Birmingham, Alabama to be near my parents, John and Jean Cox. He was 85 years of age at the time, but remained in remarkable health and lived on his own in a small apartment on Birmingham's southside.

He remained in great demand as a preacher and Bible teacher. He had a well-chronicled career early in his life as a Salvation Army officer from 1910 – 1944. Later in life, he developed a close relationship with the Christian and Missionary Alliance (“CMA”). From 1956 to 1962, he served on the theological faculty of two institutions that were closely aligned with CMA – the Miami Bible Institute and the Toccoa Fall Bible Institute. Both the Salvation Army and CMA continued to invite him to preach and teach during this phase of his life.

It is believed that this message was delivered circa 1975 as part of a series of nightly messages on the New Testament books of I and II Timothy that he delivered to the Birmingham Gospel Tabernacle, a CMA congregation in downtown Birmingham.



In early 1975, at age 88, Sidney suffered a mild stroke that compromised his speech greatly and hampered his ability to preach and teach. After several months of recovery, he once again began to accept invitations, although his speech was somewhat slurred. Nevertheless, he still had a powerful voice, a clear mind and a continued passion to preach the Gospel.

His full message on Chapter 2 of II Timothy contained his view of seven parables, all of which conveyed the theme of, *The Seriousness of the Christian Life*: the son, the soldier, the athlete, the farmer, the wordsmith, the golden vessel and the bond-slave. On this night, he mentions that he covered the first three parables on the previous night and his emphasis for this night is on, *The Workman Who Worked With Words*.

J. Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney Cox. August 20, 2010.

Thank you very much indeed. It's been a delight beyond to words to have this privilege of a few hours with you in this remarkable little book, II Timothy. And I've enjoyed it and I think you have too. And we've been opening our hearts and letting God talk to us and that, after all, is the major purpose of a Bible study of this kind - not merely to become acquainted with a string of facts, but to allow the Word of God to flow richly within our hearts and do something for us - to produce its own fruit.

I've enjoyed your singing. All the good singers come out during the week. I think I said that on Monday and maybe on Tuesday and I forgot to tell you on Wednesday and Thursday but I'm telling you now, that all the good singers come out on Friday night. And I want you to sing a little chorus that's in this book that we've been talking about and it's Number 14. If you happen to have your copy of it, it's Number 14, and I think you'll like it. It's a simple little chorus and a lot of folks are singing it.

When the Lord saved me, When the Lord saved me,
Something wonderful happened, When the Lord saved me.

And this is what happened:

Old things passed away, Darkness turned to day,
Something wonderful happened, When the Lord saved me.

And I want you to sing it and sing it as if you've known it all your life. Alright, my dear, you give us that there on the instruments and let me sing me it for you and then we'll have the concertina as the third accompanying instrument in our meeting tonight. Alright, this is the way it goes. Watch it please, you're in next. Now,

Sidney Cox singing:
When the Lord saved me, When the Lord saved me,
Something wonderful happened, When the Lord saved me.
Old things passed away, Darkness turned to day,
Something wonderful happened, When the Lord saved me.

Now, everybody together, please. And sing it.

Sidney Cox leading singing, with concertina:

When the Lord saved me, When the Lord saved me,
 Something wonderful happened, When the Lord saved me.
 Old things passed away, Darkness turned to day,
 Something wonderful happened, When the Lord saved me.

Oh, that was good. That was good. I'll tell you something. Don't tell anybody, but there were a few folks who were having a little difficulty with their dentures and they didn't sing loud. Now, that's very important. Now, I'm going to be watching you, and if you don't sing this time, I'll know what's the matter with you. You better visit your dentist, get them fixed up.

Now, when we come to that word 'happened' I want you to sing it as it is written. It isn't written hap.....pened. It's written hap.pened. You hit that first note and get off it as quickly as you can. Because that's the way it happened, you see. It didn't hap.....pen. That's not the way I got saved, not at all - one moment in the darkness, and the next moment in the light. Isn't it wonderful? Isn't it wonderful?

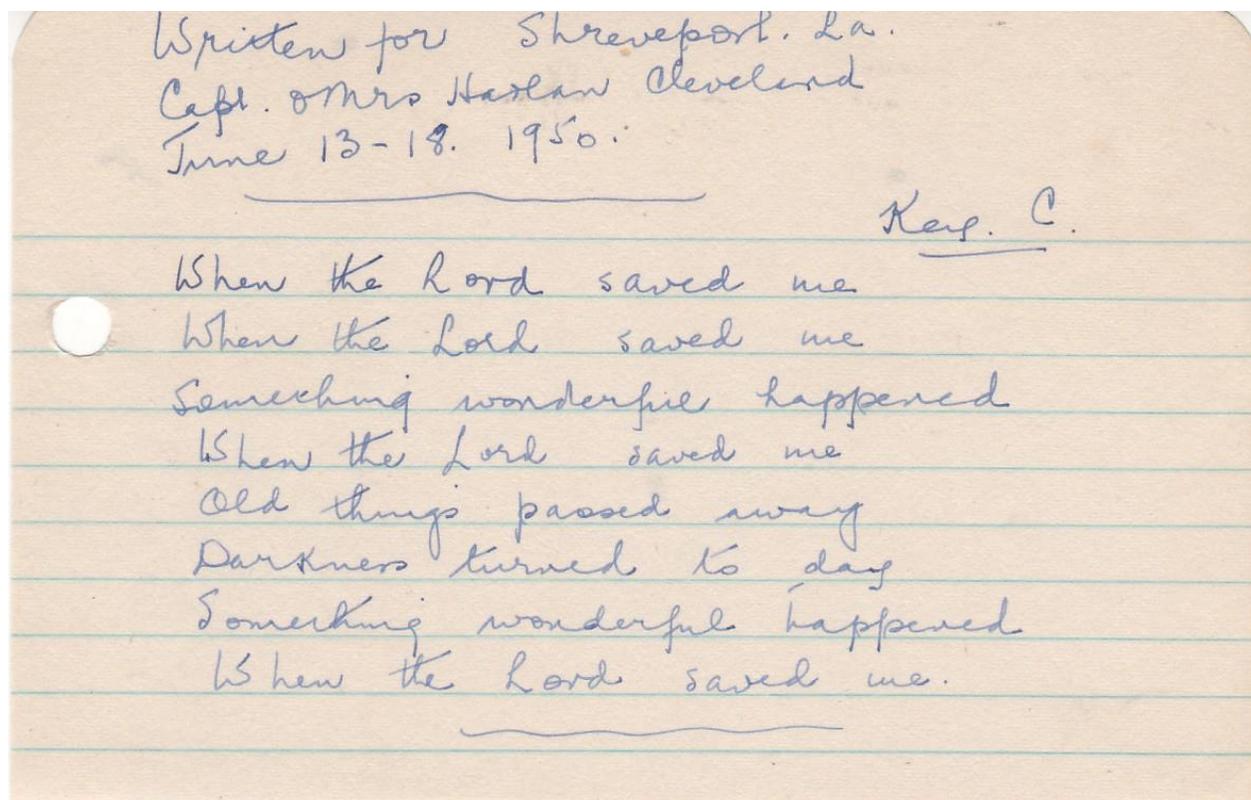
A man in a revival meeting in Calgary, Alberta, back there, oh years and years ago, 63 years ago, and he said, "If you will receive Christ as your savior and Lord, stand up and say I will."¹ And I was sitting in the middle of a crowd there in that enormous church, and there were about 1600 people in that room that night and I stood to my feet and I said, "I will" and I was saved before I sat down. It happened immediately and I knew it. My, what a change. Isn't it something?

Alright, now, everybody sing it and watch that word 'happened'. Alright, together.

Sidney Cox leading singing, with concertina:

When the Lord saved me, When the Lord saved me,
 Something wonderful happened, When the Lord saved me.
 Old things passed away, Darkness turned to day,
 Something wonderful happened, When the Lord saved me.

¹ According to other biographical information, Sidney Cox was converted to Christianity at age 21 in a revival meeting in 1908 in Calgary, Alberta. This would date this meeting to approximately 1971-1972, at which time he was 84/85 years of age.



This is perhaps the original lyrics to the Sidney Cox chorus, *When The Lord Saved Me*. They are written in the handwriting of his wife, Violet Cox. She notes at the top that this chorus was written in 1950 in Shreveport, Louisiana for Captain and Mrs. Harlan Cleveland – prominent officers in The Salvation Army Southern Territory. This trip to Shreveport was part of an extended campaign that lasted several weeks during which Sidney and Violet Cox traveled extensively throughout Louisiana and Texas conducting revival-like meetings for the various corps of The Salvation Army. Throughout their lives, they endeared themselves to many people by composing a chorus especially for a particular group of people on a special occasion.

Thank you very much indeed. Now, will you turn, please to II Timothy, 2nd chapter. II Timothy, 2nd chapter. And I'm not going to spend time tonight reviewing. I want us to make the most of the few minutes we have on this 2nd chapter because we have three of these pictures that remind us of the seriousness of the Christian life; apart from reminding you that in Chapter 1 we have the responsibilities of the Christian life and you will find words all the way through that say to us, "You are responsible for it. You have received a gift. You are responsible for taking care of it. You, Timothy, stir up the gift of God that is in thee."

Now, when we come to Chapter 2, we have the seriousness of the Christian life, and that's where our thought will be entirely this evening - the seriousness of the Christian life. And we noted that there are seven pictures that are given in this chapter, seven little miniatures, if you like. Seven parables, but every one of them say to us, "The Christian life is serious business." And we noted them. Right at the beginning of the chapter, the son, and we noted the importance of sonship, because without it the second one and the third one and the fourth one are impossible.

The first one is the seriousness of sonship. The second, soldiership. The third, the athlete. The fourth, the farmer who is working his fields. And the fifth one is the workman who works with words instead of with wood. And then finally, you come to the picture of a great house in which we are vessels in a great house - vessels of gold and silver on the one side, or of wood and earthenware on the other. And the final one is a picture of the bond-slave, the one who has accepted freedom but gives it back to the one he loves and whose ear has been pierced in the sign of his eternal relationship with the one who is the center of his affection and his love. He is the bond- slave of Jesus Christ.

Now, each one of those seven say to us, "The Christian life is serious business." We don't play at being a Christian, or do we? We don't play at being a Christian if we live anywhere near the second chapter of II Timothy. And we've got something before us that is startling in its challenge to us. Now, last night we talked about sonship and we talked about soldiership and we reminded ourselves that in nearly every case there are three marks of these things. Three marks of the son, three marks of the soldier. He endures hardness, he avoids entanglements, and his one business is to please him who called him to be a soldier.

The athlete, in like manner, the one who strives for the mastery, and we reminded ourselves that Paul in using these athletic figures, illustrations, is thinking of the old Grecian games. When he says, "Run with patience the race that is set before you," - Hebrews 12:1 - and when he says that, that's what he's thinking about. He's not thinking about a general athletic competition or contest in which everybody would be welcome. No one could take part in those old Grecian games except those who were sons of Greece. It was exclusively a Grecian matter. And we talked about the athlete.

We talked about the farmer, the farmer who produced stuff that he could put on his own table and who's proud of it.

Then we noted a little period in which Paul and Timothy were chatting to each other. What do you think they were talking about? What? Do you think their little private conversation that you find in there has a parenthesis? Do you think it was filled with a kind of thing that we talk about when we have our private conversations? By the way, my dear, when was the last time you had a private conversation with somebody and Jesus was not only the subject but the only subject? How long has it been since you had a private conversation in which you didn't mention at all about any of your difficulties? You didn't mention your arthritis? You didn't bring out your old pocketbook and show the picture of your latest grandchild? You talked about Jesus, you see?

We talk about Jesus. And one of the things that is startling is, how little we say about Him. He comes in occasionally as a part of our conversation, but we talk about so many other things. But when Paul, writing to young Timothy, when he stops to have a little private conversation there as he does halfway through that chapter, it's about Jesus, and he finishes up by giving Timothy an instruction that he is to pass on, he's to watch it for himself, and then to pass on to others about one, if not the, gravest dangers that we face. It's the misuse of words.

Now, the reason I say that is, and again reminding you, there is five times as much said about the workman working with words, about the workman himself and about the material with which he's working, five times as much said about the man working with words as is said about the soldier or the athlete or the farmer. Here's the big central section and it just thunders at us. And you'll remember, and

I'm going to ask you to read it with me, I want you to turn to II Timothy, if you please, and we want to read from Verse 14 because here's where it begins. Now, read it with me and read it aloud, will you? II Timothy, 2nd chapter, 14th verse, and I'll tell you when to stop. Alright, together.

“Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.”

Let's stop. What's the meaning of the word 'subvert'? Will somebody tell me? From what source do we get another word? What is it? What is the other word? Catastrophe, that's right. The word subvert means, it brings catastrophe and we stopped long enough last night to just do a little thinking, didn't we? How words can destroy as well as build up. Now, let's go on, 15th verse, please.

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness. But their word will eat as doth a canker, of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus, who, concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already. Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His. And let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”²

Now, that's the end of the section that has to do with words. And you can see how long it is compared to the rest of it. Now, my dear, this matter of words, we saw the general introduction to it. “You charge these folks. Timothy, you are responsible for warning these folks about the danger of words. Words that destroy. Words that once they are released can never be brought back again. Words that have within them the possibility of building up or tearing down.” And two contrasting kinds of words are given to us in the phrases, 'profitable or unprofitable'. That which builds up; that which tears down.

Now, that was the introduction and that's the place where we left off last night. Now, we go from that with the answer to a question. How can I avoid unprofitable words? And how might I open the door of my heart and allow the profitable word to flow into it?

By the way, what is a word anyhow? What it is? How would you define it? A word, my dear, is a means of communication. We think aloud in words, generally, not always. An artist will think aloud in color and form and perspective and so on. A musician thinks aloud in notes and chords and melodies and harmonies and so on. But I want to tell you something. We are neither artists nor musicians. Now, that may be a bit of startling information to you, but that's so just the same. We think aloud in words. Words are the channel of communication. And the profitable word can along the pathway of its communication bring something that is eternal in its value and the unprofitable word can destroy. And Timothy is told in one of the strongest terms that Paul uses to emphasize this, “I charge you that you put them in remembrance about this matter of the danger of words.” How can we avoid it? The next verse, 15th verse, gives us the answer. And it says, “Study to show thyself approved unto God.”

Now, my dear, we were saying that each one of these pictures says to us, “The Christian life is serious business.” Now, let me remind you of something. Study is serious business. It divides, I almost said the sheep from the goats, and I'm not sure that that isn't correct, because so many folks, and some of them

2 II Timothy 2:15-19

look something like us, so many folks are content with just reading the book. But there's a step up that is very important in the Christian life and, alas, only a few take it. We've got Bible readers, but not very many who “Study to show themselves approved unto God.” One of the most important steps up in our Christian life is when we step from reading the Bible to studying it. So many folks that go over the surface of it, and they hear the sound of the words, but they don't catch the sense of them. Do you see? The sound – that's reading. The sense – that's studying. They can see what the word says, but they fail to perceive what the truth is. Did you see?

Let me give you an illustration. A woman came to a well in Samaria, and to her astonishment she found a Jewish man sitting on the curbstone of the well, and to her further astonishment he talked with her. Because, don't forget, the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. But here was a man, obviously a Jewish man, and he talked with her. And they talked about certain things. She could see, here was this Jewish man, but after a while something happened to her eyes. And she said, “Sir, I perceive thou art a prophet.”³

Now, my dear, one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that He is so anxious to give to those who will allow Him to do it is to change your seeing into perceiving, from the sound of the word to the sense of it. Now the Holy Spirit wants to do that for each one of us. He won't force us to do it, not at all. Not at all. But when He finds somebody like you who is willing to pay the price to put your own moment of comfort or satisfaction or whatever it is, when we are skimming over the surface and He's so anxious to lead us down into the depths of God's Word. Now, that's the word 'study'. Now, don't forget, that leads to something. That leads to approval and without it we are apt to be ashamed. ‘Approved and ashamed,’ side by side, and the word that stands in between that transforms one into the other is the word 'study'. “Study to show thyself approved unto God.”

Isn't that word 'approved' beautiful? Isn't it worth it when, by the effort that we make and the reliance upon the Holy Spirit, we step into that realm where God's approval rests upon us? Approval is one of Paul's greatest and most beautiful words – “Approved of God.” Don't forget, that was the first thing that was said in the Christian era of the Lord Jesus Christ. Old Peter, preaching on the Day of Pentecost said, and he pointed his finger right at that crowd listening to him, and he said, “A man approved of God among you but ye slew him.”⁴ And Paul, writing to his friends in Philippi says in Verse 9, Chapter 1, “That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in judgment and that ye may approve things that are excellent.”

It's one of the great words – approved. In the 16th chapter of Romans you will find a man, he's only mentioned once and only about five or six words are mentioned about him. A three-word biography of a man and it says, “Apelles, approved in Christ”⁵. My, have you ever been through a graveyard and read the inscriptions on the tombstones? What would you think if you went to the cemetery sometime and you walked around and you noticed this name and suddenly you came across this: John Smith, two dates, and underneath, “Approved in Christ.” My, I know what you'd do, you'd take your hat off immediately and you'd feel like taking your shoes off. Approved.

3 John 4:19

4 Acts 2:22

5 Romans 16:10

By the way my dear, someday you know there'll be a little white stone that will mark your resting place. What are they going to put on that stone? I hope they tell the truth. I sure do. But wouldn't it be wonderful if there was your name and two dates, and underneath, "Approved in Christ." My, wouldn't it be wonderful? Approved in Christ.

And here's a man who's writing to a young man and said, "The approval of God is worth the effort." You study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, implying that if you don't do that, you are very apt to find yourself in the class labeled, 'Ashamed'. It's either approved or ashamed. And there doesn't seem to be any middle ground, does there? There doesn't seem to be anything that indicates we can be half-approved or half-ashamed; if we did a little study that'll mean we can be half-approved. There doesn't seem to be anything like that, does it? There's no middle ground. It's either one or the other. And some of the things that are said there in this matter are startling indeed.

Let me remind you of something and 'rightly dividing the word of truth,' this is the art. This comes by studying, not by reading. When we step up from reading to studying, then we are in the class that, 'rightly divides the word of truth' so that it fits where it's supposed to be. And it does the thing that God intended it should so that we know the difference between law and grace, for instance. And we don't talk to a sinner about things we shouldn't talk to him about, but we do talk to him about the things he needs to hear.

Now, my dear, old Paul begins to get a little excited about this, because he says to young Timothy, "You shun!" By the way, there's another of these responsible words, isn't it? "Shun profane and vain babblings."⁶ My! Profane and vain babblings? He must be talking about sinners, but he isn't, my dear.

(audio ends)

6 II Timothy 2:16