

## Revivals And Church History :: REPENTANCE OBSOLETE?

**REPENTANCE OBSOLETE?, on: 2006/6/6 3:30**

REPENTANCE OBSOLETE?

By Leonard Ravenhill

Language is strained when one attempts to describe the Gospel as recorded by John the Apostle. Let me borrow some crutches here and use other men's opinions. Herder, the crusading theologian of the eighteenth century, said, "It seems that John's Gospel was written by the hand of an angel."

Old Master Culness gets at it this way: "I believe that the writings of John have been blotted out by more penitents' tears and have won more hearts for the Redeemer than all the rest put together."

Let Dr. A. T. Pierson complete this triad: "Matthew corresponds to the court of Israel, Mark to the court of the priests, Luke to the court of the Gentiles. John leads us past the veil into the holy of holies. Here is the inmost temple filled with the glory of God."

New interest in this Gospel of John was aroused in me in this way: I had preached at a certain conference, and the opinion was that there had been a real blessing. (This was gathered from the many expressions of the people.) Then came a letter. It read like this, "Dear Mr. Ravenhill, I heard you preach two nights and was very disappointed because you stressed repentance." The writer added, "You should know that John's Gospel was the last one written and that John never uses the word repentance once. This proves that there is no need of repentance."

**Re: REPENTANCE OBSOLETE? - posted by enid, on: 2006/6/6 5:11**

I think that anyone who is a regular visitor to this website will laugh at the idea that repentance is obsolete. The gospel of John is the last gospel, but not the last book of the Bible. And even if it were, repentance is still necessary. God bless.

**Re: - posted by TerryLee (), on: 2006/6/6 5:45**

Enid,

On the contrary. . .

The obsessive need to discuss and to find ways to avoid direct obedience to the Word of the Lord displayed in the many threads continuously running before our noses at this site, and so many others of the same kind, reveals the desperate necessity among us to return to this obsolete art of thorough repentance.

We are our own lords. The unwillingness to take on the Cross daily is the true measure of the lack of spirituality among Christians – which means that we are on the brink of severest judgment.

Terry

**Re: - posted by lastblast (), on: 2006/6/6 8:07**

Quote:  
-----We are our own lords. The unwillingness to take on the Cross daily is the true measure of the lack of spirituality among Christians – which means that we are on the brink of severest judgment.  
-----

Amen, Terry. I think the thing with the modern church is that many are willing to carry a cross, but only one they have d

esigned for themselves, not the one specifically designed by the Maker for them.....Blessings in Him, Cindy

**Re: REPENTANCE OBSOLETE? - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/6/6 8:44**

Quote:  
-----It read like this, "Dear Mr. Ravenhill, I heard you preach two nights and was very disappointed because you stressed repentance.  
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-----

I was recently at a gathering in which some 'repentance minded' folk had gathered to do some outreach. I observed something that continues to disturb me about 'repentance preachers' (and I am one ;-)) and it is that of the most sour Christian spirit I see among people. Uptight, aggravated, ready to snap-off on somebody. Saying things to people that hurt their feelings or make them feel like your ministry to them is begrudged. I have kids that listen to repentance preachers and think the way to do it is to "punk people out". I constantly have to check this arrogant spirit in my house. Truth is, these type repentance preachers need to repent for their foul attitude.

There's nothing worse than a preacher preaching repentance and getting cocky about it. Reminds me of the time Ravenhill said he was going to "tell Lot off" when he sees him for staying in Sodom. I love Ravenhill, but there is no place for that kind of attitude anywhere in Christendom. I don't care who you are. Who do you think you are, anyhow? etc. etc. What makes you think you are worthy to preach repentance? Because you look at your brother or sister and thank God that you do not like them?

Repentance begins with the person preaching it. C.S. Lewis said that one of the things the devil has mastered is that he can cause a person to look in the mirror for hours and not see something about themselves that is totally obvious to any one who has spent more than 5 minutes with them.

Sunday PM I was in a service in which a man brought a true word of repentance and I have NEVER seen brokenness like that message brought. This man began by telling the congregation that he asked God why He would have him bring such a strong message. This man (who did not speak English and preached to us through an interpreter) WEPT through the entire message. People were on their face weeping for hours repenting before God. When we get more repentance preachers concerned about *their own* infirmity than those they are preaching to we may get somewhere. Obviously we are doing something wrong? Right? We haven't seen a revival yet? Have we? Jesus told the people to weep for themselves and for their children.

Frankly, I'm not so much worried about someone else's sin as I am my own. And my greatest sin? All the time ignoring my own shortcomings and focusing on everyone else's. Why? They have to give an account to God for their own life. God will not destroy the righteous with the wicked. Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?

If you are going to save your family save yourself first. If you are going to save your neighborhood, save yourself first. If you are going to save your church, save yourself first. If you are going to save your city, save yourself first. If you are going to save this nation, save yourself first. If you are going to save the world, save yourself first.

And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. (Acts 2)

**Re: - posted by habakkuk3 (), on: 2006/6/6 10:31**

Thank you Pastor Robert,

I totally agree and I pray we may walk out our repentance. Any message of repentance that has the hint of pride in it will not bear any fruit.

I reminded of what Paul told King Agrippa in Acts 26 "First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and **prove their repentance by their**

r deeds."

Thank you brother for your kind rebuke. It truly convicted my heart and I pray that this is what we will see in America is the brokenness that comes from going to the cross and repenting of our sins. Blessings to you Pastor for sharing what the Lord God has laid on your heart.

**Re: - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2006/6/6 11:40**

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-----

Thanks for this Robert, I am reminded of...  
Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.  
(1Ti 4:16)

In Christ,

Ron

**Re: - posted by Tears\_of\_joy, on: 2006/6/6 11:56**

Brother Robert you are right.  
I think we don't have right to preach repentance without brokenness.  
God break us.

**Re: REPENTANCE OBSOLETE?, on: 2006/6/6 12:00**

2. That argument is as useless as a swimming suit for a duck. If this letter writer knew that John wrote the last Gospel, he should have been well enough informed to know that John was also the human penman of The Revelation. That was John's last message, and in it he uses the word repent seven times. Repentance surely must have come back into fashion again!

Let us suppose that the writer of this letter is right. Using what is called the argument of silence, he says, "Because repentance is not in the Gospel of John, it is not legitimate to use it." Let us follow his argument for a few moments.

The word faith is used some 340 times in the New Testament, but never once is it used in John's Gospel. So faith goes out of the window? I can't preach on faith any more?

I am sure in my own mind that the brother who pilloried me for preaching repentance believes in hell. But does he know that not one of the terms used for hell (Gehenna, Tartarus, Hades) is ever used by John in his Gospel? So hell-fire preaching is out?

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/6/6 12:21**

Hi Walkington,

Quote:  
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-----

We have to be careful here as *pistis* is not used, but *pisteuo* is used some 86 times in John. *Pisteuo* is translated 'to believe' or 'to commit one's trust'.

The repentance-less salvation message is indeed quite a problem. To say it is out because it is not in John's writings is to ignore I,II,III John which are as cut and dry as one can expect in identifying what a true believer is.

The problem we run into is when we try to be the Holy Ghost. It is not my job to sanctify folk, it is the Holy Ghost's job. We want folk to clean up to our expectation of what a Christian ought to look like, and those 'expectations' are a dime a dozen. What is worse is the belief that a person needs to be broken down again a few times a week and then convictions start getting preached as if they were doctrine. This is how repentance revivals jump the rails.

Beating and beating and beating a repentance message trying to bring folk to ongoing brokenness for their sins is not a method I find in scripture. We are to lay the foundation from dead works and not keep re-laying it. This does not mean we don't need to respond when God puts HIS finger on something; but this is not the same thing as what I referred to. We need to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit when we minister. There are no cookie cutter methods. It's a bitter pill, but we need to be close enough to God to be able to rightly communicate the heart of God.

God Bless,

-Robert

**Re:, on: 2006/6/6 13:17**

Mr Wurtz,

So you are not at ease with the message of Leonard Ravenhill, one of the most well-renowned preachers presented at this site.

Are you comfortable with the fact that our Lord and Saviour is pictured with a sword in his mouth when correcting his Church?

It is indeed an interesting approach you present to a man "just popping in" as the counting department has it.

Have you been around too long, having lost sensibility and kindness?

I have been watching this site at a distance for a long time, hesitating to approach because of the tone represented by many of the regular writers in these threads. Perhaps I made a mistake, I should have stayed at listeners level.

Walk

**Re: REPENTANCE OBSOLETE?, on: 2006/6/6 13:45**

Item presented in full:

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John's Gospel has no demoniacs, is silent about lepers, seems never to have heard about children, omits all mention of scribes, ignores the publicans, lists no "Twelve," has not a parable in the whole Gospel, gives no hint of a sect called the Sadducees, and does not seem to have ever heard of the Sermon on the Mount. So I cannot preach on these either?

On John's own confession, he is writing "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." He uses the words believe or believed seventy-eight times in his Gospel. But note: What we would think essential to convincing people of the deity of Jesus, John leaves out. He says, "The Word was made flesh," but he does not even mention the virgin birth! Shall I stop preaching this too?

John has no mention of the temptation of Christ, nor of His transfiguration, nor of His ascension. He makes nothing of the Lord's baptism, and totally fails to mention the Gethsemane agony. The ministry of the Son of God lasted more than one thousand days. John records only about twenty of them. Am I out of order to preach on the unmentioned 980 days?

Dr. Edersheim, writing the life of Christ without direct inspiration, takes up no less than 1,524 pages, but John under direct inspiration, in the Revised Version takes only thirty! Is John to be charged with error because of omissions? There are a dozen vital things mentioned by the other Gospels that John omits. I, for one, will not quit preaching them.

John, then, has his own ministry. Ninety-two per cent of his Gospel is his own. Look at his matchless fifteenth chapter. Take the shoes off your feet and enter the seventeenth chapter. John's business is to make majestically clear that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he does it! Here is his very first verse: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Let me finish with two things: praise for the revelation this Gospel gives ("Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift"), and a prayer for my letter critic, "Lord, open the young man's eyes."

END

Re: - posted by lastblast (), on: 2006/6/6 13:54

Quote:

-----I think we don't have right to preach repentance without brokenness. God break us  
-----

Can one truly say they've been to the cross without being broken? I don't believe so. In any case, once broken, we all are called to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, which includes repentance (from sin AND dead works).

I think some believe erroneously that God can only speak through those who have been "broken" in particular areas of sin. The truth is that the Lord uses all kinds of "broken" vessels---even those who are still in sin to speak truth and call others from their sins. It is the power of the Word of God that produces the fruit---not the messenger(though certain messengers can turn off listeners due to hypocrisy seen on the repentance issue). Truly, many come to know the Lord through a "vessel" that taught/teaches false doctrine---even false salvation messages---yet, the Word is Preached and it is the Word that the Lord has said that will not come back void.

I think in all things we need to focus on the Word as THE thing which brings about true brokenness. Many can "appear" broken and inside are far from it and many can appear prideful, but are far from it. Is the message true? Blessings in Him, Cindy

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/6/6 14:09**

Hi Walkington,

Quote:  
-----So you are not at ease with the message of Leonard Ravenhill, one of the most well-renowned preachers presented at this site.  
-----

As a man much wiser than I said in these forums a few years ago, "I want to listen to them; I will not 'bin' their testimony unheard. I am not afraid of them so I don't adopt a mental siege attitude (a feeling of needing to surrender to their doctrine). Let them speak, and I will listen. Then I must hold these things before God and think through my own understandings and continue to invite challenges to them (which I sometimes do in this forum). I need to think and formulate so that I (personally) can give reason for the hope that is in me (personally) with meekness and a good conscience." (R. Bailey)

Quote:  
-----Are you comfortable with the fact that our Lord and Saviour is pictured with a sword in his mouth when correcting his Church?  
-----

Yes when the sword is in His mouth, but I am NOT so comfortable when that sword is in *mine own mouth* or in the mouths of those who have grown frustrated with the flock and that frustration is reflected in their message.

Quote:  
-----It is indeed an interesting approach you present to a man Â"just popping inÂ" as the counting department has it.  
-----

I am unsure of what you mean here. I am not sure who the counting department is. My primary response is to how this thread went after the original post. I am a 'student' of Ravenhill as are many on this site as well as certain of my friends in the Lord.

Quote:  
-----Have you been around too long, having lost sensibility and kindness?  
-----

Because we cannot make eye contact in these forums it is almost impossible to know the tone of what is being said. I speak from a heart desperate for revival and repentance and a preacher of it myself. And yet I do know that if one cannot receive correction who is quick to deliver it, or one cannot repent who is apt to preach it, then we have no idea of what repentance means. What do we do when certain of the repentance preachers need to repent for how they preached repentance? That is all I'm saying.

Quote:  
-----I have been watching this site at a distance for a long time, hesitating to approach because of the tone represented by many of the regular writers in these threads. Perhaps I made a mistake, I should have stayed at listeners level.  
-----

I have felt the same way before and don't post often anymore; not because of the 'tone' but because of the content. If you would grace me with patience in my folly...

Many churches today are closing their doors to repentance in an hour of desperate need because of excesses in the preaching of repentance. As I mentioned in my first response, there is a right way and a wrong way to preach repentance. Listening to Ravenhill can quite honestly lead a person to misinterpret his directness and come off in a way that does not edify the body- when they try to emulate him. It is odd that I have offended by a strong call to ask ourselves if we, as repentance preachers, have in effect *lost sensibility and kindness*.

God Bless,

-Robert

**Re: Forget the word! Teach the meaning! - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/6/6 14:49**

Quote:  
-----Beating and beating and beating a repentance message trying to bring folk to ongoing brokenness for their sins is not a method I find in scripture.

There are no cookie cutter methods.  
-----

Amen to that!

I hate to say it, but so many Biblical terms end up as buzz words or magic potions. I have heard the word, "repent" used countless times, but without context. In the end, I had no clue what the preacher was talking about, and I doubted that he really knew what he was talking about.

Repentance is a change of direction, a turning around.

But when I hear the word, I don't know what I'm supposed to turn from or turn to. Oh, yea, turn from sin and to God. Well, what's that? And how really does that look? Does it mean I come to church more often?..... Do you see how confused we make people when we just shoot the word out like buckshot.

When the word is used, most of the pew warmers can comfortably assume that it refers to those "bad" people in the back pew who need to shape up.

I am grieved to say that never, never for most of my life did I hear of my own need to let go of my trust in such things as the church, my good works, the things in this world, my superiors, etc and turn to God and let him be my only source of security, my only source of redemption..... I was essentially told I did not need to repent - I was a good Christian. Thankfully the Spirit knew better and led me to repentance.

I think that the time has come to forget about the word and just say what it means. The book of John talks a lot about repentance without using the word. In fact, the book is written for the purpose of teaching repentance. And look at the examples: the calling of the disciples, the woman at the well and her fellow Samaritans, the man born blind... What about all the examples of those who refused to repent - the Jews, etc.

It's all there. Let's get over our obsession with words themselves. Look at the spirit of the law, not the letter (word) of the law.

And most of all, as Robert pointed out - let us live a life of repentance. That is the best sermon ever!!!!!!!

Diane



**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/6/6 15:25**

Hi Diane and ALL,

Quote:

-----Repentance is a change of direction, a turning around.  
-----

Amen. I hope I have not come off too strong and offensive in this thread. My deepest apology if so. I have ministered extensively on repentance and written on the topic, and the more I do, the more solemn the subject becomes and the more concerned I am about not taking the subject farther than God has said. We have to give an account to God someday.

I only want to be careful when dealing with God's people. I tremble to think about speaking 'a word' to God's people that may injure them. Sometimes, like Ravenhill in the article Walkington shared, I have been 'reactionary' to things people have said or written to me that made me react and make a 'message' to the people from that reaction with which to feed the flock. (If that makes sense)

We must turn from all known sin. That is the message I have ministered. We sin when we do not walk in the revealed will of God. To him that knoweth to good and doeth it not to him it is sin (James).

The article is a great disposition on the issue of repentance in John and a good polemic against a brother who simply was mistaken in his belief. What concerns me is how the most radical things that men/women say end up getting 'distilled' into a potent caustic message. If we are not careful we will have a wrong view of God made after our own imaginations. This is idolatry whether we make a god of love or a god of holiness. God told Moses, "I AM that I AM."

I don't want to be critical of folk that God is dealing with. Everyone must work out their own salvation. I do want to be careful to minister *rightly* so as to please the Lord. God is not impressed by my rantings. He wants me to seek His face and take what I have received to the people. We are a Kingdom of Priests. We have to attend to God's bidding and not our own interpretation of the times. ;-)

God Bless,

-Robert

**Re: - posted by myfirstLove (), on: 2006/6/6 20:39**

do not preach if you are not one with Christ, if you are not living the crucified life. what happens then is that people draw truth out from their feelings a lot of times. they judge by feelings and not truth. if not abiding in Him Christians will get so caught up emotionally that it causes them to freak out on truth and others. as we come to that crucified life where we are truly dead to sin and to the world then brothers and sisters go on and preach. people like that will not be easily tossed here and there but have learned to stand firmly on the word because they KNOW HIM. when we know Him we will become confident in the truth we speak. God puts that burning fire in us that causes us to stand boldly for Him speaking His truth with no apologies, but in great fervent love for your first Love! if you are not sure what you are saying is true then don't say anything at all because you can lead someone astray with your opinions. until you are one with Christ then will you be able to make righteous judgement. so many Christians judge outwardly and because of that they have missed Christ. imagine the old prophets preaching today. what would many Christians say to Hosea? Isaiah? surely God commanded them to do some wild things that seemed against word. surely these prophets spoke piercing spirit-filled words to their own people that caused many to hate them and so some got killed. remember people have different gifts and are used different ways. I have to say real prophets is the most misunderstood and hard gift of them all. many take their messages as mean and very insensitive, having no patience. I know that Ravenhill wept much thru his preachings. someone asked one of his sons what they remembered about their dad. I think it was David that said what he remembered about his dad is that he always prayed, that's all he did and when friends would come over they would go off praying. wow! a man who really lived what he preached! when we become one with God we will better discern. Godly preachers' words will bear with our spirit because we first heard it from God ourselves. their message would just confirm the work that God has worked in our spirit.

I agree with Robert, we must first judge ourselves. if we are not dead to sin and the world we have no right to judge others or preach, or else we will be hypocrites. remember, Jesus said He hates hypocrites. let that shake your bones! let us focus



first on ourself, getting right with God then will we be better ministers for Him.

God bless

**Re: - posted by Tears\_of\_joy, on: 2006/6/6 22:33**

myfirstlove,

I hope you will give me the right and you have nothing against to quote you from other thread, because I think your post will perfectly fit in this thread:

"the men in the bible preached agaist sin, but they also were men broken before God. who did not easily want to cast out the lost but rather be blotted out that the lost would be won. are we weeping for the lost and the church? do we loose sleep because of dying souls? can God find in us one who will stand in the gap and plead for mercy for the lost to be shaken out of their comfort that they may be moved to repentance?

brothers and sisters we can preach the truth, but without love we sound like clanging cymbals to the world. without love it doesn't matter if we give our bodies to be burn.

love suffers, love endures, love is patient and kind, love HOPES.

moses spoke boldly. He spoke God's piercing words to a rebellouse people. but when God wanted to pour forth His judgement moses quickly ran and pleaded with God. because of moses God bestowed mercy on a rebellouse people giving them more time to repent.

the same with jeremiah. he even spoke the judgements on God's people, but still pleaded with God for more time for the people until he knew God will not grant anymore mercy.

yes, i know we will preach a piercing word, but are we willing to stand in the gap and plead for a rebellouse people that they will have more time to repent? are we willing to be blotted out for those we preach too? paul say he wish he was accursed for his brethrens (isreal).

yes, it is more easy to preach agaist sin then to stand in the gap and cryout to God for souls. souls are so precious and it seems so many of us forget that. when we are not filled with the love of God it is so easy to want to cast out the lost, call down fire, and wash our hands and say i'm innocent of this man's blood. i preached to him and he doesn't listen. yes, you preached to him, but did you pray and weep for his soul? did you love him more than your own life that you were willing to die if he would come to Life?

if we really believe that these lost souls will go to hell for eternity we would be more patient. we would really want to die that they may not have to suffer for eternity. we would be in our closet crying out for this generation. we would loose sleep over the reality of souls being damned for eternity. oh we would see it is only thru the power of God that many would be moved. we would become so desperate for His love to fill us that we may win many to His kingdom.

i say this to encourage all of us to examine our hearts, make sure that we are pleasing in the sight of God and that our preaching is filled with love. pray more than we preach. it will make a difference."

Amen.

Thank you.