
Spirit's Day Studies

The Writings of Jane Lead

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*Shake, shake your earthly dust away
Now it's the Spirit's Day,
that will admit of no delay.*

The Eight Worlds

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Abbreviations used in this study
[www.janelead.org/SDS Abbreviations.pdf](http://www.janelead.org/SDS%20Abbreviations.pdf)

On Receiving Admonition

by A.W. Tozer

**Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king,
who will no more be admonished. (Ecclesiastes 4:13)**

It is not hard to understand why an old king, especially if he were a foolish one, would feel that he was beyond admonition. After he had for years given orders he might easily build a self-confident psychology that simply could not entertain the notion that he should take advice from others. His word had long been law, and to him right had become synonymous with his will and wrong had come to mean anything that ran contrary to his wishes. Soon the idea that there was anyone wise enough or good enough to reprove him would not so much as enter his mind. He had to be a foolish king to let himself get caught in that kind of web, and an old king to give the web time to get so strong that he could not break it and to give him time to get used to it so that he was no longer aware of its existence.

Regardless of the moral process by which he arrived at his hardened state, the bell had already tolled for him. In every particular he was a lost man. His wizened old body still held together to provide a kind of movable tomb to house a soul already dead. Hope had long ago departed. God had left him to his fatal conceit. And soon he would die physically too...

A state of heart that rejected admonition was a characteristic of Israel at various periods of her history, and these periods were invariably followed by judgment. When Christ came to the Jews He found them chuck full of that arrogant self-confidence that would not accept reproof. "We be Abraham's seed," they said coldly when He talked to them about their sins and need for salvation. The common people heard Him and repented, but the Jewish priests had ruled the roost too long to be willing to surrender their privileged position. Like the old king, they had gotten accustomed to being right all the time. To reprove them was an insult to them. They were beyond reproof.

Churches and Christian organizations have shown a tendency to fall into the same error that destroyed Israel: inability to receive admonition. After a time of growth and successful labor comes the deadly psychology of self-congratulation. Success itself becomes the cause of later failure. The leaders come to accept themselves as the very chosen of God. They are special objects of the divine favor; their success is proof enough that it is so. They must therefore be right, and anyone who tries to call them to account is instantly written off as an unauthorized meddler who should be ashamed to reprove his betters.

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If anyone imagines we are merely playing with words let him approach at random any religious leader and call to attention the weaknesses and sins of his organization. Such a one will be sure to get the quick brush off, and if he dares to persist he will be confronted with reports and statistics [about how great the ministry is, not the subject at hand] to prove that he is dead wrong and completely out of order. "We be the seed of Abraham" will be the burden of defense. And who would dare find fault with Abraham's seed?

Those who have already entered the state where they can no longer receive admonition are not likely to profit by this warning. After a man has gone over the precipice there is not much you can do for him; but we can place markers along the way to prevent the next traveler from going over. Here are a few:

1. Don't defend your church or organization against criticism. If the criticism is false it can do no harm. If it is true you need to hear it and do something about it.
2. Be concerned not with what you have accomplished but over what you might have accomplished if you had followed the Lord completely. It is better to say (and feel), "We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which it was our duty to do."
3. When reproved, pay no attention to the source. Do not ask whether it is a friend or enemy that reproves you. An enemy is often of greater value to you than a friend because he is not influenced by sympathy.
4. Keep your heart open to the correction of the Lord and be ready to receive his chastisement regardless of who holds the whip. The great saints all learned to take a licking gracefully—and that may be one reason why they were great saints.

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