

# Spiritual Degeneracy – By Dr. T. D. Tahar



Joshua and Caleb tell about the promised land.

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**“And Caleb stilled the people . . . and said: Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.” –Numbers 13:30.**

MOSES sent forth twelve men to spy out the land of Canaan. Not ordinary men, but captains—men of experience and proven valor. All twelve returned. They were all of one accord in their reports—extraordinary richness and fertility of soil, phenomenal physical strength of the inhabitants.

But their descriptions of unavoidable hardships and fierce fighting threw the listening Hebrew multitudes into a panic. Gone was the lofty dream of the Promised Land, gone the jubilant victory for the ten cowards, who, in the heat of their harangues, never gave a thought to the power of the living God of Israel. In less than a few hours we find a whole nation in the throes of a spiritual upheaval and betrayal.

*“And Caleb stilled the people ... and said: Let us go up at once and possess it!”*

There was no response. The multitudes followed the leadership of their political bosses. They were eager enough to come into the inheritance of the land, but the fighting for it was not to their taste. They wanted Jehovah to throw the wealth of Canaan into their lap, the easy way, the way of the world.

When faced with the need for decision in the spiritual life, hesitation is fatal. Spiritual degeneracy is never spontaneous. It always follows in the trail of a protracted record of disloyalty to virtue. A man never becomes a Judas Iscariot overnight. The crucifixion of a lofty ideal is always preceded by the betrayal of a principle. The final uprising against God never flares up until after the jailing of a pleading, tormented conscience.

Thus I have seen it among young men deluded into giving up their lives to

become monks in Roman Catholic monasteries. Imbued with high ideals at the start, they gradually succumb to the deadening atmosphere of the monastery, where there is nothing to lift them up to the sublime truths of the Gospel. Spiritual degeneracy is a cultivated vice, and in monasteries it flourishes on ecclesiastical arrogance and adherence to the cult of Bacchus. In the late hours of the night those young men came to me to talk about the desolation of their souls, the soaring agonies of their perplexed minds. I have heard the quiver of their voices as they laid bare the loneliness that accompanies their spiritual disillusion, the hopelessness of their outlook upon their chained tomorrows. Priests, and expounders of Roman dogmatism that they were, like Nicodemus they came stealthily by night reaching out for a freedom that they already had despaired of attaining.

There is a kind of felony of cowardice that keeps multitudes of priests incarcerated in the gilded jails of Roman Catholic institutions. And there is tragedy in the fact that so many of us remain content to look on as unconcerned spectators, unable and unwilling to do anything to counteract the growing power of Roman Catholicism in our midst. If Protestantism is to preserve its glorious heritage, the time now has come to listen to the timely warning of the Calebs and Joshuas. Protestant leaders today must fall in step with the few who, like the fiery Captain of the Hebrews in the wilderness of Paran, dare to shout with the fervor of spiritual enthusiasm: "Let us go up at once... for we are well able to overcome it!"