

pointed task and be content with looking at the deck on which he stands, a vessel may suddenly lurch up out of the night involving terrible disaster. See the soldier out on the picket line keeping solitary watch. How much depends on his fidelity! To hide behind a tree, to close his eyes in the sleep for which he longs, may mean the stealthy approach of the enemy, a midnight attack, and the defeat of an army. See the engineer in the cab of the locomotive. A failure on his part to see the warning light may plunge the heavy train over an embankment, or send it crashing into some other train, thus bringing death to uncounted homes. The only way to avoid wreckage and ruin in life is by constant watchfulness. Therefore the lesson well exhorts us to be sober, serious, earnest, watchful lest we are caught unawares, and fall victims to the great enemy of our souls. Watch against temptations. Watch against the growth of evil habits. Watch against the encroachments of sin. Watch against our own weakness. And only by this constant watchfulness can we maintain our discipleship. It was while the husbandman slept that the enemy came and sowed tares in the field. Careless discipleship means a prayerless discipleship, for the command is, "Watch unto prayer."

4. *The Christian's Authority.* He is to speak as the oracle of God. The soldier represents the nation whose uniform he wears. For the time being the honor of the nation is intrusted to his care. When Lord Kitchener presented the terms of surrender to the Boer leaders he was not treating for himself as an individual, but for the entire nation. So the Christian, young or old, is the representative of God, and his speech, his life, his example, his influence, are always to be in harmony with the position he occupies. Hence he cannot allow himself to be defiled with strong drink, for his body has been made the temple of the Holy Ghost. He cannot be conformed to the habits and customs of the world, for he is not his own, he belongs to God, and he must hold himself in reserve, for God's service. Instead of being drunken with wine, living in a state of maudlin sentiment or foolish excitement, stirred up by coarse and vulgar pleasures, he is to feel the splendid thrill of divine inspiration, enjoy constant fellowship with God, enter into a life that throbs with holy influence, and though engaged with the duties of his calling here he is really throned above principalities and powers, and abides under the shadow of the Almighty.

To be filled with the Spirit, as suggested by the GOLDEN TEXT, means the mind that was in

Christ, an attitude of opposition to everything evil, an alertness which is never lulled into indolence, and an authority against which nothing can prevail. The world offers us a wine cup of revelry and excitement, God offers instead his own abiding presence.

Prismatic Lights on the Lesson.

VICES AND VIRTUES CONTRASTED.

Looked at period by period, the history of the race seems one long catastrophe. Nations rise to eminence only to rush to ruin. Of course a survey of the whole history shows a real advance, but what are the causes of such world-wide catastrophes? The Bible must certainly show these causes. They are given in verse 3:

1. Licentiousness, that is, sexual degeneracy whereby most nations have perished. They have made a religion of debauchery and enthroned prostitutes as divinities. All vigor of manliness is sapped, all ambition enervated, all possible greatness lapsed into effeminacy.

2. Lusts. All other sorts of mere pleasures, as opposed to duties and virtues.

3. Winebibbing. It is not "excess of wine," as our Authorized Version has it. It is any wine drinking. The Greek is a single word, and "winebibbing" well translates it.

4. Revelings. Furious frolics.

5. Carousings. Drinking bouts.

6. Abominable idolatries. Since the so-called gods were characterized by every lust and crime it is not strange that their votaries should be.

That the early Christians should set themselves against all these sins at once, and worship a pure God and be pure themselves, not running into excess, surrendering self and means, made men think strange of them.

As an incentive to right living Peter lifts the curtain and shows in the future the day of judgment. He presents the opposite virtues:

- (1) Live according to God; (2) be of sound mind, not insane by drink, be sober; (3) pray; (4) have ceaseless love; (5) use hospitality; (6) speak as the oracles of God.

The summary of the vices is hell; of the virtues, heaven. Anyone can choose which he will have forever.

Thoughts for Young People.

CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS.

1. Try to understand what the sufferings of Jesus were. "He suffered in the flesh." No