

OUR MASTER'S SUMMONS.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

This is a restless world. Everything is in motion. Life is not a stagnant pool; it is a running stream, and will grow purer and stronger every hour if it flows towards heaven. A Christian life is not a swing in a hammock; it is a steady march, with brief bivouacs and many a hard battle. There is too strong a tendency to make long halts, to shirk sharp encounters, and to settle down into self-indulgent inactions. We need continual stirring up; and O how often we hear the Master's peremptory command "*Arise, let us go hence.*"

When our Lord first uttered these words in the upper room at Jerusalem on the night of the Paschal Supper, He addressed the summons to Himself as well as to His disciples. He had just instituted the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and pronounced that marvellous discourse which fills with heavenly fragrance the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel. The time for words was past; the time for action and suffering had come. "Hereafter I will not talk much with you," He says, "for the Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me. As the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence." As the man Christ Jesus, He obeys the everlasting Father, even while He realizes what fearful agonies that obedience shall cost Him. There is no drawing back, no evasion of the terrible trial he has to face. Those very disciples have yet to be redeemed by His precious blood, and for the joy set before Him, He must endure the Cross.

The summons of the Master to Himself and to the little band in the upper chamber, is still sounding as a trumpet-call in our ears. If we are true disciples, we will hear and heed the summons, for the primary principle of genuine piety is *obedience to Christ*. Is the authority of parents thoroughly acknowledged in all our families as it ought to be, or even as it used to be? It is the very core of household life, and every child cannot learn too soon the difference between "you may" and "you must." Much is said in these days about "elective studies" in our colleges and universities. Under certain limitations it is a wise arrangement that a collegian should select the course of study which shall fit him best for his special vo-

cation. But to the great mass of young people, the studies which are most essential are those which authority prescribes, many of which they would never choose of their own accord. In Christ's school there are no elective studies. Our Master does not give us the pick and choice, for we would be certain to shrink the lessons that we need most, the lessons that cut down our pride and mortify our lusts and start the tears—yes, and sometimes draw the heart's blood. "Follow Me" is our marching order. The cardinal rule of all discipleship is to find out what Christ wants, and then do it.

In a thousand ways Jesus is saying to us "*Arise, and go hence.*" Christians fall into bad habits, which are as mischievous to them as they are to the ungodly. Habit tightens about one as the poisonous ivy tightens about a tree, until it kills. Many a church-member's spiritual life is imperilled, and his or her influence is destroyed from this very cause. Character is tainted as bad liquors taint a wooden vessel.

Not only from evil habits, but from dangerous associations in business and in social life, does the Master give the short, sharp injunction to arise and depart. When Lot had become so intimate with the "first families," that his own family was rotted through and through with vice, the order was "Up, get you out of this place." No snare is more subtle or more dangerous to a child of God, than undue intimacy with worldlings. Conformity implies resemblance. Holiness is not contagious, but sin is as catching as varioloid. Christ draws sharp lines, and commands His disciples to come out and be *separate* from the world's ethics and the world's sinful indulgences. If a Christian goes over the line to scold and taunt the votaries of sinful pleasure, he offends them to no profit; if he goes in order to participate, he offends his Master. Where a Christian cannot carry Christ and a clean conscience with him—whether it be in politics, society, or amusements—he has no right to set his foot. And when Jesus discovers His professed followers in such corrupting companionships, His loving rebuke is "*Arise, let us go hence.*"

These words are also a trumpet-call to a higher and holier style of character and conduct. We all have a sad tendency to lower the standard of life, and then drop down to that standard. When a regiment were giving way before the enemy, the