

Proverbs 22:2 (Frank B. Tomkinson, Compiler) 189888

Him That Cometh, Poor Man's Text, A (22:2)

"The rich and the poor meet together: the Lord is the Maker of them all" (Prov. 22:2).

THERE STANDS in the Erie Cemetery a humble marker on which is inscribed the simple words, "With Christ." It marks the resting-place of all that was mortal of Theodore Hoffman, but Theodore Hoffman himself is with Christ. It came about in this way.

In early days he loved the "things of this life," and one evening he set off with his violin to a dance, for another carousal. His course led him by a tent from which he heard singing; this was the bait that drew him closer to hear the glad message of a Savior's love. Someone, he knew not whom, was preaching from John 6:37. But were those words for him? A strong conviction of sin came over his soul. Would he, a lost sinner, a drunkard, would he be taken in by the One who said He would not cast out any who simply came to Him?

He could not go to the dance, and fear kept him from going into the tent, so he went home. There God met him in His grace, and delivered him from all his distresses. He had sent forth His Word and it had healed him (Psa. 107:20). A ransom had been found for him and he was delivered from going down into the pit (Job 33:24).

Like Martin Luther, for he too was schooled in the doctrines of Rome, it was the bare Word of God that liberated his soul. And like John Bunyan, there came a helper into his new life like "the shining ones" of whom Bunyan speaks. The "shining one" in Hoffman's life was an aged Mrs. Hunt, a lover of the Word of God and of Missions. The Lord's return from Heaven for His Church became a vital fact in his life, and many happy hours were spent with the aged saint learning the way of God more perfectly.

His little tailor shop became a lighthouse for Christ in the south-west section of the city, and to this day, the memory of this just man is blessed. His whole life was fragrant with faith in the promises of the Word. Poor in this world's goods, he was "rich in faith," and God honored it.

One text—it hung as a medallion in his place of business—John 6:37, had taken root in his heart, and from that day forward his praise was of Him who drew him from the depths of sin and shame into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

His path was not always smooth. His former "religious" connections were forever severed. It put him in company with the "man born blind" of John 9. "They answered and said unto him, 'Thou wast altogether born in sins and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out!'" (John 9:34). The blind man was excommunicated!

It had been previously arranged that if any man confessed that Jesus was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. "When Jesus heard that they had cast him out, He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him" (John 9:35-38).

They cast him out! Jesus took him in!

They said he was altogether born in sins! Jesus said nothing about his sins! According to their wretched tradition they believed it possible for the man to have sinned before he was born. Christ was here to work the works of Him that sent Him, and that work was manifest in the healing and delivering of the blind man. He was blessedly putting forth His own sheep, and then He went without the camp to find him. In that place of shame and exposure they embraced each other. There he was found by One who had Himself been shot at by the archers.

"These things have I spoken unto you that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you because they have not known the Father, nor Me. But these things have I told you that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them...These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world" (John 16:1-4, 33).