

## Stuff About Things

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by Robert F. Turner

**F**or the past month we have been in central Kentucky, near the scene of my first “meetin’s” in the long ago. I was twenty-one when it happened. I can remember, because I had the seven-year-itch three times. (Those are the kind of remarks tossed back and forth among back-country friends.)

We got to talking about this wicked generation, and how evil men wax worse and worse; and it reminded one man of the time some boys swapped the babies left sleeping in wagons while their parents were in the church building. In the dark, parents went home without knowing the difference; and then, wagons rumbled up and down the country all night as they sought and traded for their heir –apparent.

That brought out the story about picking up a T-model and setting the rear wheels in two watermelon halves. (Works best at the edge of the church yard, where grass is tall, and it is very dark.) The owner thinks he has stripped his gears.

And that led me to tell how an old brother had instructed me to “stay up close to the stand, put your books there by the lamp, and speak to us.” Being twenty-one, and having preached in one other meeting, I thought this was insulting instructions, but I let it pass – until he repeated it. Then I told him I knew how to stand up before an audience. He apologized, saying he should have explained it all. “You see,” he said, “during our last meeting the preacher backed up to the window, and some boys stuck a rail between his legs and raised him off the floor.” Yes sir, brother, I’ll stay up close to the speaker’s stand!

Perhaps a more rugged generation looked at things a bit differently in earlier days, but some pranks were as destructive then as they would be now. Have we laughed at crudeness and making a “game” of challenging the law, until our sense of propriety and moral right is seared?

I believe there were “good ol’ boys” in earlier times who played rough for a while, then “grew up” to be some of our best citizens. But they had to change, drastically, and succeed in spite of, not because of, wild oats. The drunkards, and other failures do not join us in our laughter.

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