



Texas Christian Advocate

Jack in the Hedge.

When I was a boy 14 years old in 1836, my father lived on a farm near a beautiful little river that ran parallel with the entire south boundary line of said farm. Between this line and the stream nature had planted and cultivated a dense and almost impassable hedge of thorns which my father would not have destroyed, as it protected the farm on that side from the depredation of cattle and stock about the premises. One Sunday in the afternoon, in the month of July, three of the neighborhood boys came over to my father's house according to a previous agreement, to get me to go with them to enjoy the sport of swimming. The usual boyish salutations were soon passed and the anticipated sport in the water was introduced. Without a moment's hesitation, I told them I could not go without father's permission, and I knew he would not consent, and there was no use to talk. After some deliberation and anxious debate, Jack, who was the eldest and the principal spokesman of the day, proposed to play off on the old man. I will get his consent to go to the farm for some water melons, and then crawl through the hedge to the river. The question then came up, who should go into the house and see the old man about it. Jack held the straw, and by a little fraudulent ingenuity on his part, I drew the short straw. I stepped in to the room and made the request desired. My father slowly raised his spectacles, for he was reading his Bible and closely scanning me from head to foot, said: "You can get the melons my son, but don't cross the hedge, and return immediately." I made my report accordingly. "All right," shouted Jack! "Come ahead; we will see about that hedge," and away he went down the hedge. Ben and Bill close behind him. I followed at a distance, for I feared a result. We were soon out of sight; a place selected for crossing the hedge and Jack on all-fours, making his way through. Thus he continued to work and crawl until about half way, when he unexpectedly met with a big array of little inhabitants of the hedge. He pierced him so frequently and painfully through his poisonous darts, that he could proceed no further. He knocked and slapped, scratched and rubbed, but all to no good effect. Poor fellow, he could not go forward; he did that which was wrong. He could turn neither to the right hand nor to the left, and his only chance for relief was a backward retreat in double quick, on the crawly style. Ben, Bill and I, each of us carried a melon to the house, but Jack stayed around, for his mother, and she, his face scarred and pants torn. He was ashamed; his conscience condemned him, and in ten years of disputation after this event, I saw him the last time. He was in tattered rags, under the influence of the intoxicating drink, and with indignation, and indeed by emissaries of the wicked one, rushed from one of the filthy precincts of degradation and met in bloody conflict a notorious desperado, where he fell to the ground, on the public street of the town in which he was born and raised. In a few minutes he was a corpse, the glittering steel by a strong hand had penetrated his heart, and life's crimson current soon ceased to flow. May all the diabolical boys of Texas, and learned dandies every where, who are in their conception a little wiser than father, mother, and themselves, do not stoop to reverence, or respect that which is the "beauty of old men," and a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness. May they early awake to a sense of duty. "Consider their ways, and turn their feet into the way of peace, and their paths from thenceforth, and their feet from the way of evil." Remember thy creator, while youth's last spring is bright. Before thy cares are greater, before thy days are fewer, while yet the sun shines over thee, while stars are twinkling in the firmament above. Remember thy creator, ere life resigns its throne. Ere slakes dissolving nature, and dust returns to dust. Remember with God who gave it, the spirit shall appear. He who died to save it; thy great creator, feast.

buried his third wife. His health, at his earliest acquaintance with him, twenty-seven years ago, was very infirm, and was never good, I think. This accounts for the somewhat intermittent character of his ministry. But there was always a fixed and steady aim to serve his generation by the will of God. He drew all his cares and studies this way, and he succeeded well in making a workman that needed not to be assumed, rightly dividing the word of truth. There were times when his logic took fire and the man stood transfixed before you in the grandeur of his theme, and his tall and slender frame trembled beneath the exceeding weight of glory. In such frames his was irresistible sinners. Beneath the blows of his sword, wounded and crying; what shall I do to be saved. With the slain of the Lord about him, he was in his element, being the penitent to the very throne of God. In his prayers or cheering them with his songs. He was a faithful shepherd, looking after the lambs, and as well feeding the sheep. It was my fortune when a youth to have been under his pastoral care; he took me into the church and directed my early footsteps in the heavenly way. His saintly portrait of his life is fresh in the memories of thousands to whom he has preached the word of life. Like Martyred Stephen, he was full of faith and the Holy Ghost; virtue stood reborn in his presence, and the indimities which belong to our nature led him to cling all the more earnestly to Jesus for support. His tenacity of purpose and his inflexibility in the pursuit of what he esteemed to be right may have been a stumbling block to some; but to those who knew him well these were understood to be the result of deep conviction and heroic fidelity to his Lord. There have been those in every age who have risen above their fellow men in the purity and similarity of their faith, and it would be strange if such should not provoke opposition; but our brother had as few enemies as perhaps any true man could have. He failed in no life-duty, but his conversation was in heaven. He was ever looking for a witness in the morning that should introduce him to the sacramental hosts of God's elect, and thus his losses, and ill-health, and trials, became stepping stones to loftier heights than he would otherwise have reached. A spiritual man with mind of light and soul of fire, but must pass through some great trial to his proper place before the throne of God. It is thus his descending mantle engirdles others with power, and his brow wears a more radiant crown. Earth's heroes have been the limited few. Bro. Piner leaves a widow, whose maiden name was Miss Mary Jane Stephens, and five children, all of whom are members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. His last days were days of weakness, but he was prostrated in the morning, and he gradually perished, the inner man grew stronger day by day. At the last session of the conference he reluctantly accepted a supernumerary relation. It was apparent to his brethren that his work was done; but he seemed to stand with his brethren to the last. "Soldier of the cross, father, husband, friend, farewell! When the mists have cleared away from the dark death mountains in the rosy light of immortality, we shall meet you; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." H. A. BOWLAND.

your dignity on the hind part of this thing we will soon be on the track again." About this time several men walked up, whom I thought were the coroner and jury of inquest; but finding no corpse, they went to work and soon were gone again. "Mr. Potter, just as the car run off I was asking about the return of the Jews." I told him I did not think they would ever get there if they had to go on street cars. About that time I saw a looking man with a fine voice said: "Mr. Potter, do you think any of the heathens will go to heaven?" Slam, bang, went the thing off the track again. "Bill," said I. "I guess I'm gone this time. Tell my wife she is to pay my bills, my horses and buggy at the Central and bills paid. She will find my watch at Bell & Brothers—two dollars and twenty-five cents due. Farewell." I was soon made conscious that I had not crossed the street. By the way, I do not think I ever saw the man who seemed to have all the curse words at his command. I approached the profane man and said: "Sir, you seem to be doing all the cursing for the crowd and as I don't swear, here is twenty-five cents to pay my bill." He said he never charged preachers. I told him he had better not exhaust his stock of profanity, but to keep some on hand for the next occasion. He said he had a sufficient fund on hand to do for some more run-offs. One man swore he would take it on foot, and he stepped off with such a large amount of mud sticking to his feet that our cursing man said: "Every man in Texas is a mud holder." So we got on the track once more, and got under the hood of the new car. "Mr. Potter, just as the last accident occurred, I asked you if any of the heathens would go to heaven?" I told him I was not in the frame of mind to discuss the subject, that the Almighty had not appointed me a judge of the world, and that if he ever got there he would either find some of them there, or a good reason why they were not." By this time we had reached the main plaza and the thing ran off again. I then made my comment on the Central Hotel in time for dinner. So you see my first half day's experience in the great city was full of tragedies. I took another voyage in the afternoon and had only one run-off. So I hitched up Friday morning and started for my mountain home, a wiser man than I was, and convinced that a great city is not the place for me. Junction city and Benfield are large and grand enough for me. On reaching Boone I reported to Dr. Jacob S. West for examination, who said that the mule that pulled the big wagon was not coming, and that the passengers were non comulants in respect to rules, or words to that effect; whilst my nervous system had been somewhat excited, he thought a serious tour, without the mule, would do me good, but with the mule, at once would give me a fair chance to recover and try my luck again. If so you will be fully informed of the fact by the unlucky writer.—A. J. POTTER.

official members of the district present, a thing I never saw before—Bro. Farmer, Hosmer, Tackett, ministers and Bro. Carson and Andrew Taylor, old stewards. I held the quarterly conference in the afternoon, and organized the church by letter. I found it absolutely necessary to make a change in the appointments as fixed by the bishops. Bro. Farmer, who was assigned to Wichita mission, found all the settled portion of Archer and Wichita counties, forming his work, belonging to and managed by the North Texas Conference. So I changed Bro. Tackett from the Seymour mission and put Bro. Farmer in charge. Bro. Tackett will accompany me to Fort Elliott and Teepee City. We have a membership twenty by letter, and on next Sunday will organize a church on the Wichita river. P. W. GRAVES.

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