

BY THEIR FRUITS.

You all know what a Christmas tree is? Perhaps you have seen so many of them that they do not interest you much now; I feel sure that when you first saw one you thought it a very pretty sight indeed. And so it is. There are dolls for the little ones, and pocket knives for the boys, and books and work boxes and albums for the older children, and sweetmeats for all, to say nothing of the lighted candles and the flags and banners that hang about in every direction. But you know very well—perhaps you knew all along—that these things did not grow on the branches. They looked nice and it was very pleasant to have your share of them; but they were not the real fruits of the tree; they did not come out of it. Now I have sometimes thought that if we have not the life of Jesus Christ in our souls and the love of Jesus Christ in our hearts we might compare ourselves to a Christmas tree. And why, do you think? Because in that case our good actions do not grow out of ourselves. Let me speak more plainly. If you do a kind deed because you are asked to do it, and do not know how to refuse, or because others do it, or because you wish to have something to fill up an idle hour with—well, your kind deed does not grow out of your heart; it is only tied on, like the pretty presents on the Christmas tree, and it is not really worth much. I do not think that God will regard it, though perhaps you may be thanked by those who receive the benefit of your benevolence. God wishes us to be living trees—trees bearing fruit, because there is life in them, like the tree spoken of in the last chapter of the Bible. Do you remember it? It is described as being, not one kind of fruit only, but twelve kinds of fruit; and not bearing for a short time only, but all the year round—"every month." What a beautiful idea of a Christian character! A life full of kindly acts; a constant supply, and not a little done here and then a little there. A great variety too. Sometimes a loving word, sometimes an act of self-denial, sometimes a gift of money, sometimes thoughtfulness and



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consideration, sometimes a giving way to others, sometimes a gentle look, sometimes a patient putting up with the temper and other infirmities of those round us. What a happy world it would be if we all of us, young and old, were living trees, thus bringing forth the fruits of righteousness which are to the praise and glory of God by Jesus Christ.—*Quiver*.

NEVER SWEAR.

1. It is mean. A boy of high moral standing would almost as soon steal a sheep as to swear.
2. It is vulgar—altogether too low for a decent boy.
3. It is cowardly—implying a fear of not being believed or obeyed.
4. It is ungentlemanly. A gentleman, according to the dictionary, is a genteel man—well bred, refined. Such a man will no more swear than go into the street to throw mud with a chimney sweep.
5. It is indecent, offensive to delicacy and extremely unfit for human ears.
6. It is foolish. "Want of decency is want of sense."
7. It is abusive—to the mind that conceives the oath, to the tongue which utters it, and to the person at whom it is aimed.
8. It is venomous, showing a boy's heart to be a nest of vipers; and every time he swears one of them sticks out its head.
9. It is contemptible, forfeiting the respect of all the wise and good.

1888.

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