

THE TREE AND THE POST.

"**I** THINK any one can be just as good without being a Christian," said Harry Wood, with a confident air. "There's Tom; where will you find a more reliable fellow than he? I'm sure he is much more agreeable than John, who joined the church last week, and set himself up to be better than the rest of us."

"Is that quite fair, Harry?" asked Uncle Harvey, with a smile. "Did he set himself up to be better than the rest of you?"

"Well, he said he was going to try to be a Christian, anyway."

"Do you think he meant any thing by it?" asked Uncle Harvey.

"Oh! yes! he meant it. He will try to be good, I suppose, but Tom's good enough for me just as he is." And Harry walked off whistling a lively air.

"Do you remember when this maple was set out, Harry?" asked his uncle the next day, as they stood in the shade of a beautiful tree in the corner of the yard.

"No, but I've heard father say he planted it the spring we moved into this house, and that must have been ten years ago, for I was five then, and now I'm fifteen."

"I remember it quite well," said Uncle Harvey. "It was a mere stick without leaf or branch, and it was inclined to bend over to one side; so your father tied it to a stake to straighten it. It is a pretty good tree now."

"Yes, indeed," said Harry; "we would not part with it for anything."

"It seems to me this post by the gate needs a new coat of paint," continued Uncle Harvey.

"Oh! It is not worth painting. Father is going to put a new hitching-post there. This one is unsteady and is probably rotten at the base."

"Why, how happens that?" said Uncle Harvey. "It was put here at the same time the maple tree was planted. A good, strong, reliable post it seemed; a handsome post, too, in its day—smooth, of good shape, and nicely painted. In fact, it looked much better than the tree. I told your father so, but he only

said: 'Wait awhile.' I've waited ten years. There's the slender, awkward sapling that we all laughed at, and here's the reliable, handsome post." As Uncle Harvey shook it with his hand it cracked ominously. "What's the difference between the tree and the post, Harry?"

"Why, one's a tree and the other is only a post," said Harry.

"But both are wood," pursued his uncle. "Not so unlike, apparently, ten years ago; the difference being in favor of the post. They were planted in the same soil, only a few feet apart. Yet one has grown larger and more beautiful year by year; the other, after remaining outwardly about the same for years, now begins to show signs of weakness and decay."

"One had life and the other had not," said Harry. "A thing must have life in order to grow."

"Do you think your father will make the new hitching-post out of the maple-tree, Harry?"

"Why, of course not, uncle. He wouldn't cut down that tree for anything."

"But he needs a new post."

"O! he can get plenty of posts, but it takes a good many years to get a tree like that."

"You remind me of what the minister said last Sunday in speaking of the difference between a merely moral man and a Christian. His text was those words of Christ: 'In me ye have life'; and he said: 'You can make a post out of a tree, but you can never make a tree out of a post.' Suppose you give John and Tom ten years before you decide which is the better fellow."—*Sunday-school Times.*

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