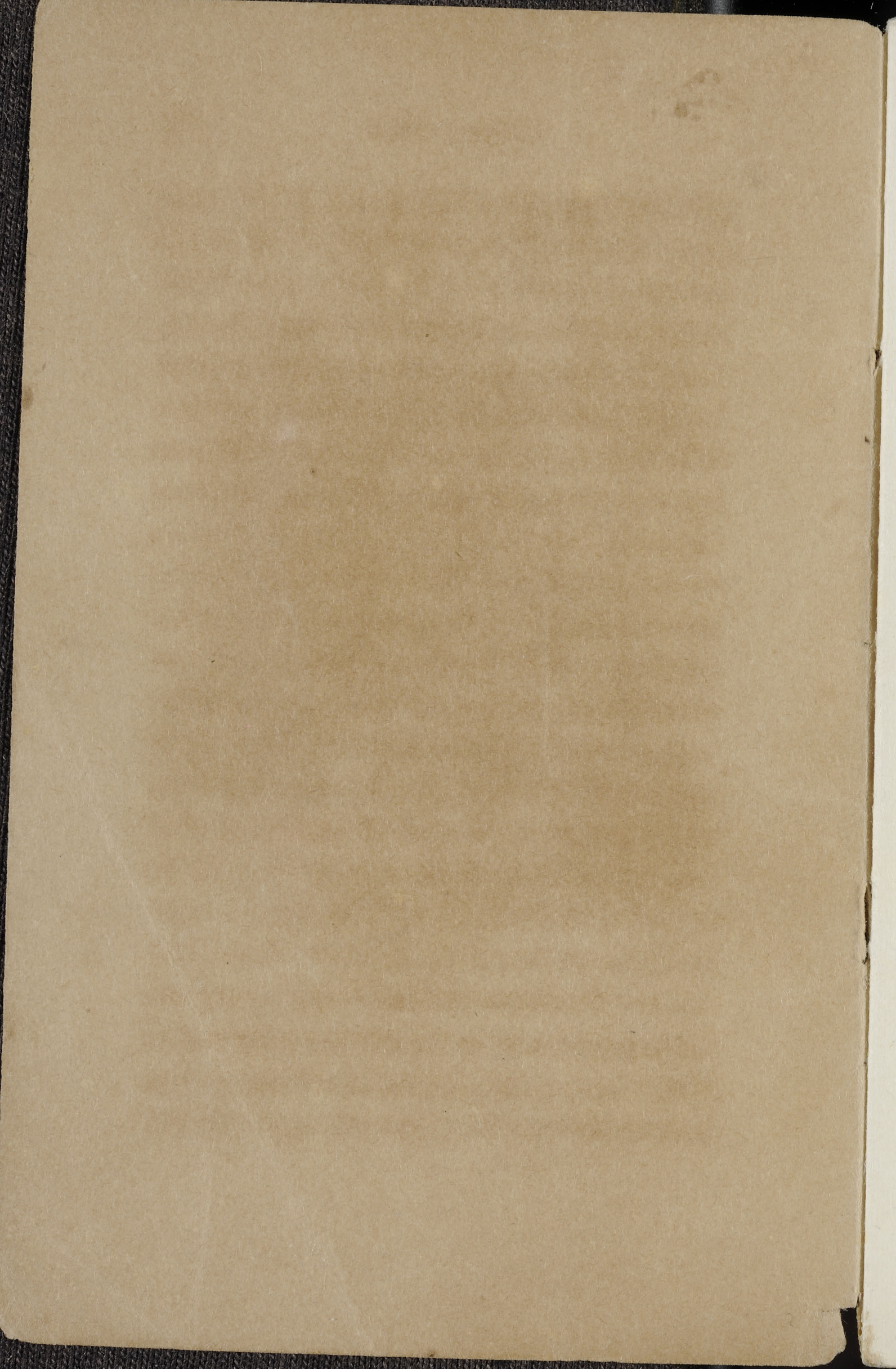


THE
WINE.

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THE VINE.

MR. JOHNSON removed to a cottage, a short distance from town, just before his son William came home from school to spend the vacation with his parents. William had never seen much of the country, so that almost every thing he now saw was quite new to him. The situation of his father's cottage was very pleasant; he was much delighted with it, but particularly with the garden. The weather was fine, and the spring was early; many flowers already showed themselves, green leaves began to appear, and the fruit trees were mostly in blossom.

One day when Mr. Johnson came into the garden, William ran up to him, and said, "Do, Father, come and look here." So saying, he led

him to an arbor at the bottom of the garden. It was covered with a vine, the leaves had not yet begun to appear, and William was quite uneasy about it. "Do, father," said he, "look at this worthless vine: the branches are quite dead, and only fit to light fires—had not I better pull them all down directly, and you can have another vine planted here instead?" So saying, he laid hold of some of the branches, and was about to tear them away, but his father prevented him, and desired he would suffer them to remain, and assured him they would be of use before long. William could hardly believe this, but he knew that his father never said any thing but what was true: he had also been taught always to do as he was told. I hope my little readers have been taught the same. We read in the Bible—"Children, obey

your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord." Col. 3 : 20. And I dare say you recollect what the Fifth Commandment teaches. William and his sister had been taught this early; and I can assure you that hardly a day passed but they found the advantage of having learned it.

As his father had told William to let the vine alone, he did so; but he did not find it very easy to feel quite sure that his father was right. The Bible tells us to "do all things without murmurings and disputings," and this is another lesson which it will be well for us to bear in mind.

Only three days remained before William must return to school, and on each of these days he talked again and again to his father about the vine: he said he could not help thinking the branches were dead, for

all the other trees were showing blossoms and leaves, and he was sure the arbor would be too hot in the summer if there were no green leaves to cover it.

William returned to school. Midsummer drew near, and he thought a good deal about coming home; but he was taken very ill; so that he could not be removed, and all his school-fellows went away, and he was left behind.

Perhaps my little readers may have expected some new pleasure, on a particular day, but before that day came something has happened which has prevented their enjoying what they looked for, and thought they were quite sure of. Do you recollect it is written in the Book of Proverbs, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth;" and the

apostle James tells us, "Ye know not what shall be on the morrow."

But although you cannot tell what will happen to you to-morrow, or even during the next hour, yet if you love the Savior you need not be afraid; it is written, "All things work together for good to them that love God." Rom. 8 : 28. And we are told, that as Christ suffered upon the cross for our sins, we may be sure that he will give us all that is for our good, see verse 32. We also read, that "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Psalm 103 : 13. And that "he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." Lam. 3 : 33. And in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. 12 : 11, we are told, that no chastening, for the present, seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yield-

eth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby." I hope my readers will think of these and other similar passages of Scripture when they are in trouble, and pray that they may be led to look more earnestly to the Saviour for pardon and salvation.



As William could not go home, his sister Ann often wrote to him. In one letter she told him about a very pleasant afternoon she had spent with a friend in the arbor. William was glad to hear this, as he was always pleased when those he loved were happy; but he thought to himself that the arbor must be very different from what it was when he saw it in the spring.

Well, time passed on, and the month of October came at last, and William went home for a fortnight. He did not arrive till late in the evening, and was too tired to make many inquiries, but I can assure you all at home were very glad to see him again. I need hardly say that he was kind to his sisters, and dutiful to his parents, or else they would not have been so happy at his return.

The next morning William has-

tened into the garden; the flowers were mostly gone, and the fruit was nearly all gathered; but when he came to the arbor he saw it quite covered over with green leaves, and beautiful bunches of purple grapes hanging from the branches. He was much pleased at the sight, and stood looking at it for some time. Turning round, he saw his father standing in the arbor.

William. O, father, I am so glad you had that dry withered vine taken away, and this beautiful one planted instead.

Father. This is the same vine, and the grapes hang from the very same branches that you tried to pull down.

W. O, father, is that possible?

F. Yes; very soon after you had returned to school the leaves began to appear, and afterwards the fruit—



you may gather a bunch, and tell me if you like them.

W. O, yes, very much indeed—I am very glad you did not have the vine pulled up.

F. Then do not be in such haste again to judge by first appearances. But it may also teach you something

of more importance, and I will talk to you about it in the evening.

The evening came; William reminded his father of his promise. Mr. Johnson told him to bring the Bible and read the 5th verse of the 15th chapter of John.

W. "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing."

F. Now, William, you recollect the vine branches round the arbor, as they were in the spring, how dry and withered they appeared, but they remained on the vine, and as the sap rose they became fruitful, and, as you see, have brought forth much fruit.

Ann. I recollect hearing a sermon once from that text: the minister said, that it was only by the power

of Christ we were enabled to do what is right and pleasing to him.

F. My dear children, this is the truth, and when we see a vine we should remember it. By nature our hearts are inclined to evil; we are not disposed to do what is right of ourselves any more than the dry branches you saw could have brought forth fruit if they had been cut from the vine. This is our state by nature; and, if left to ourselves, we should be as Christ speaks in the 6th verse, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." In this passage Christ shows the danger of those who are not united to him, by that faith which is the work of the Holy Ghost. For by nature we are born in sin, and have such sinful hearts that we are in-

clined to evil till we are brought, by the Spirit of God, to rely on the Savior who was crucified for our sins. This, my dear children, will soften your hearts, so that you will be sorry for your sins which caused your Savior to suffer. And when you feel this, you will repent and trust in Christ for the pardon of your sins; and then you will love him; and, his grace, by the Holy Spirit, will enable you not only to forsake your sins, but to do your duty, and practice all works of kindness and love; as the rising of the sap, from the root of the vine, enabled the branches to bring forth that beautiful fruit you see.

W. Then this is the meaning of what Christ said, "without me ye can do nothing."

A. I recollect in the **SCRIPTURE ALPHABET**, we learned a long while ago,

V is the vine,
And Christ the root,
Supplies each branch
With life and fruit.

F. My dear children, it is Christ, and Christ alone, that can save you. In the 110th Psalm it is written, that "his people shall be willing in the day of his power." He has said—"Those that come unto me I will in no wise cast out;" and in Rev. 3 : 20 he describes himself as standing at the door and knocking for admittance; ready to come in and abide with those that open to him. Pray, then, that you may be made willing. Remember the greatness of his love—"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John, 15 : 13. Christ, who is Almighty God, the Son of the Father, and one with Him, took upon him our nature, and endured the

wrath of God against sin, that those who believe in Him might have eternal life. Think often of the death of our Savior, and how he loved such sinners when he died for them; and pray to him to give you a heart to receive Him. Flee to Him, my child, for your soul is in danger of being lost for ever! Christ Jesus alone can save it. Remember what you read in this chapter of John, that those who do not love Him, even every branch that is not found in Him, shall be "cast into the fire and burned." If you are a partaker of Christ, you will love and praise Him for ever! and His grace will be sufficient to "work in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight," you will be like the fruitful vine, and will abide for ever in His love.

THE END.

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