

**A FAMILY RECORD, OR
MEMOIRS OF THE LATE REV.
BASIL WOODD. AND OF SEVERAL
DECEASED MEMBERS OF HIS
FAMILY, PP. 6-226**

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A Family Record, or Memoirs of the Late Rev. Basil Woodd. And of Several Deceased Members of His Family, pp. 6-226 by Basil Woodd

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FAMILY, PP. 6-226**



Rev. Basil Woodd.

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A FAMILY RECORD,

OR

MEMOIRS

OF THE LATE

REV. BASIL WOODD, M.A.

RECTOR OF DRAYTON BRAUCHAMP, BUCKS,
AND MINISTER OF BENTINCK CHAPEL, ST. MARYLEBONE.

AND OF SEVERAL DECEASED MEMBERS
OF HIS FAMILY.

"THE MEMORY OF THE JUST IS BLESSED."



PUBLISHED BY R. B. SEELEY AND W. BURNSIDE:
AND SOLD BY L. B. SEELEY AND SONS;
AND JAMES NISBET, LONDON.
MDCCCKXXIV.

367.

kindness, her uniform example, and particularly her pious and affectionate letters, when I was about thirteen years old.'

It is scarcely possible, here, to avoid adverting to the numerous instances in which the most eminent and useful characters have traced and ascribed their earliest and most powerful impressions, on the important subject of religion, to the instructions of maternal piety; as though for the direct purpose of affording encouragement to that part of our species on whom the care of infancy so much devolves, to attend most carefully and assiduously to this very important branch of parental duty. The avocations of a father rarely admit of his taking any large share in this department of infantile tuition: and it would appear as though a *mother* herein possessed peculiar advantages. Cherished in her bosom, and brought up in her lap, the warmest and fondest affections of the infant are usually directed in a peculiar manner to *her*: and the corresponding feeling excited in her own breast is wont to impart a softness and a sweetness to instruction flowing from her lips, such as a father can rarely command, and such as often penetrate and form a lodgment in the tender mind, which a less soothing and insinuating mode of conveyance would probably, if attempted, fail to effect. Be this as it may, the facts of the case are too numerous and too remarkable not to merit the special notice of those to whom this observation is directed.

At the age of about seven years, the highly-favoured child under our consideration, had a very narrow escape with his life, from one of those thoughtless and dangerous frolics which have in so many instances proved fatal. A young relative imprudently took up a gun, and, not aware that it was loaded, pointed it towards him, playfully saying, 'Basil, I will shoot you.' By some unaccountable circumstance he was induced at the moment suddenly to turn aside, and the piece went off in another direction; otherwise he would probably have been shot dead on the spot.

His mother, deeply affected by this providential circumstance, thus expressed her feelings on the occasion: 'May I ever remember, with gratitude to my gracious God, this wonderful preservation of my dear child; and his very great escape.'

He was not long afterwards exposed to a somewhat similar danger from the bursting of a gun which he was in the act of firing.

For some years he was placed under the care of a respectable schoolmaster in the neighbourhood. Of this early period of his life, little is known, except that he was of an affectionate and tractable disposition, and more inclined to literary and philosophical pursuits, both in the way of improvement and amusement, than is usual at such an early stage of existence. He has often observed that he could not say when the Holy Spirit first began to impress

his youthful mind, but that he was not conscious of any decidedly religious feelings until he was about the age of fourteen. But the seed of religious principle, by the divine blessing on that species of pious training, to which reference has been made, is doubtless often sown before the age at which evidence of a decisive character can visibly manifest itself; and the impression is then seen to have been already fixed, which is to fortify the heart against those assaults of temptation to which youth becomes exposed in its progress towards maturity. So, there is reason to believe, it proved in the present instance. When he was about the age of fourteen, he was removed to the academy of the late Rev. Thomas Clarke, of Chesham Bois, a gentleman who was highly esteemed as an able and assiduous instructor of youth, as well as a pious and faithful minister of the gospel of Christ; but where, (as he once stated to an intimate friend,) in spite of all the care and vigilance of the master, he was often under the necessity of witnessing conversation and habits of the most vicious and polluting nature; from the contamination of which, however, he was mercifully preserved; a preservation for which he was probably, under providence, much indebted to the early instructions, cautions, and admonitions he had received from his excellent mother. *How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* is, no doubt, a question which has arisen in

the mind of many a youth thus early trained, as well as in that of the pious individual to whom it has been ascribed by the pen of inspiration.

It was probably from the scenes he here witnessed, that he conceived the dread he entertained, and so often expressed, of public schools, and that he was induced to undertake the education of his own family, though involved in professional engagements, which were found scarcely compatible with such an undertaking.

With the above clergyman he remained until he was about seventeen years of age, during which time he was very assiduous in his endeavours to acquire both classical and religious knowledge, and was in the habit of rising an hour earlier than his fellow students, for the purpose of making himself acquainted with the Scriptures of the Old Testament in their original tongue.

In the month of May 1778, he entered as a commoner at Trinity College, Oxford; where, though he had formed a very modest estimate of his own acquirements, he soon found himself fully competent to the ordinary routine of college exercises; and not being ambitious of university honours, he was induced in a great measure to abandon his study of classical authors, in favour of those in which his heart took a deeper interest, as bearing more directly on the sacred office to which he was aspiring, and to which he purposed devoting all his powers.

The state of his religious feelings at this period may be partly inferred from several little essays, short sermons, and letters written at the time, and which are still extant.

One, entitled 'A Contemplation of a True Christian,' is of too great length to be here inserted, but a few sentences may be given as a specimen of the workings of his mind at this period.

'A rebel loved! an injurer pardoned! a sinner acquitted! bought by the blood of Jesus! Wonder, O heavens! be astonished, O earth! 'Tis matter too high for any but a God to imagine; too arduous for any but a God to perform. The sinner is not only redeemed; the condemned malefactor is not only acquitted; but the vile worm is embraced; the rebel is beloved as a child; the polluted wretch is admitted to endless glory, and a seat is prepared for him at the marriage supper of the Lamb. And for whom is this blessing prepared? who—who has a right to eat of this tree of life? who is the subject of this grace, the favoured object of this wondrous love? Have I a right to claim a part in this blessing? Methinks I can put in my plea, that he died for sinners; and though the fig-tree doth not blossom, nor fruit clusters on the vine, yet methinks I dimly discern the marriage token, and can say, though feebly, "I love him, for he hath first loved me." He has gained my consent and affection in some degree, though small; and the desire of my