

**CHRISTIAN CONFIDENCE,
A SERMON OCCASIONED
BY THE DEATH OF S.
COLLINGWOOD**

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Christian confidence, a sermon occasioned by the death of S. Collingwood by Eliezer Jones

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ELIEZER JONES

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CHRISTIAN CONFIDENCE.

A

S E R M O N,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

SAMUEL COLLINGWOOD, ESQ.

(Printer to the University of Oxford.)

AND DELIVERED

AT THE INDEPENDENT CHAPEL,

OXFORD,

ON SABBATH EVENING, JANUARY 10th, 1841.

BY ELIEZER JONES.

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931.



The writer can truly say that nothing but the urgent and repeated solicitations of friends should have induced him to make this discourse public. It was written at the extreme end of the week,—as, until the day of the funeral, (Friday,) a very different text had been selected, and, of course, an entirely distinct train of remarks meditated. He has long hesitated to send so hurried a composition before the public. Some alterations have been introduced therein since its delivery: the author cannot, however, do all he could wish to make it more meet for the reader's eye, without rendering it almost entirely new; and as he must not, in fairness, do that, it must even go forth with its imperfections on its head.

Oxford, March 4th, 1841.

A SERMON, &c.

2 TIMOTHY I. 12.

Nevertheless I am not ashamed : for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

THE design of funeral discourses has been much misapprehended ; and crowds have pressed to hear them from very questionable, if not unhallowed motives. No wonder, therefore, if great disappointment and dissatisfaction have followed ; some insisting that too much was said in praise of the dead—others mortified because all that their fondness would have suggested was not proclaimed. The christian pulpit is not the place to flatter the pride or inflate the vanity of men ; nor was the gospel entrusted to us to be employed in eulogising the virtues of fallen creatures, but to announce the rich grace of the blessed God. The dead have passed far beyond the reach of human applause or slander : the just and eternal Judge has passed irrevocable sentence upon them ; and these discourses cannot, therefore, affect them. But the excellencies of their character, formed upon

the principles of the divine word, displaying his glory who is the Fountain of all goodness, and brought near to us in their walk and conversation as we mingled with them and were benefited by their counsels and prayers, may be profitably set before us ; especially, when their recent departure has softened and subdued our minds, and disposed us to receive instruction. Then may we hope to urge believers, with effect, to be "faithful unto death;" while deeper emphasis invests the admonition addressed to the ungodly, "Be ye also ready!"

Religion, as well as philosophy, has its experiments which demonstrate the truth and power and beauty of its doctrines, as they are seen embodied in the examples of those with whom we are familiar : these doctrines are thus rendered more operative and influential by being associated with our sensible ideas and our most interested feelings, with the additional advantage of being engraven indelibly on the memory. The divine law displays perfect righteousness ; but the light of its majesty overpowers us, and "no man can approach unto it." When, however, we behold its reflected glory beaming in the life and actions of a good man, the lustre is mild and engaging. In the former, it is the dazzling splendour of the noon-tide sun ; in the latter, it is the same light producing the tints and diffusing the perfumes of every beautiful flower, and ripening into perfection every good fruit. Here the law of righteousness puts off its terrors, and appears in a train composed of all the ornaments and felicities of the human condition. So the "God of

glory appeared" on earth as a man. Divine perfections were clothed in our forms, and adapted themselves to our own circumstances; thus most impressively and effectually teaching us "what manner of persons we ought to be." "God was manifest in the flesh," exhibiting his nature by our sensations and emotions; feeling and acting as he would wish men to do.

I have the relief and consolation of knowing, in the present instance, that nothing I might say of that revered individual whose decease we are assembled this evening to improve, could exceed his merits in your estimation; while, at the same time, far short as my observations will assuredly fall of his real worth, I am comforted by the reflection that I shall follow the instructions of his bereaved family by abstaining from encomium, except as may be necessary for the honour of that sovereign grace which made him what he was. Had I been privileged to receive his last advice, to hear the last sentence of wisdom and humility which dropped from his lips, I know full well how he would have charged me only to "glorify God in him." I should have found him still speaking of himself as an "unprofitable servant, having done only that which it was his duty to do;"—still aiming to "win Christ and to be found in him." In this sacred place, we dare propose to ourselves no other object. Our theme and employ in the sanctuary are the sublimest that can occupy mortal minds. "God forbid that we should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."