

**THE CONFLICT OF CHRIST IN HIS
CHURCH WITH SPIRITUAL
WICKEDNESS IN HIGH PLACES:
SERMONS PREACHED DURING THE
SEASON OF LENT, 1866, IN OXFORD**

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The Conflict of Christ in His church with spiritual wickedness in high places: sermons preached during the season of Lent, 1866, in Oxford by Various

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The Conflict of Christ in His Church
with Spiritual Wickedness in
High Places.

SERMONS

PREACHED DURING

THE SEASON OF LENT, 1866,

IN

OXFORD.

BY

THE LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD.
REV. PROFESSOR MANSEL.
REV. J. R. WOODFORD, M.A.
THE DEAN OF CANTERBURY.
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REV. J. F. MACKARNES, M.A.
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REV. E. C. WICKHAM, M.A.
REV. DR. PAYNE SMITH.
THE DEAN OF CORK.

WITH A PREFACE

BY

SAMUEL, LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD.

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1866.

P R E F A C E.

ONCE again in this volume Sermons preached during Lent (1866) by preachers of my appointment are presented to the Church. The subject of these Sermons continues the series of last year. That series dealt with the struggle of the Church with the evils and corruptions around it in the world. This series traces up the conflict higher still; following it into the strife with those bands of spiritual beings whose existence, and many of whose actings, God's Word reveals to us. Greater interest than was ever manifested before, attached to these Sermons during their delivery. Once again it is my earnest prayer to God that by His grace He would make them effectual for His glory, and the good of souls.

S. OXON.

CUDDESDON PALACE,
May, 1866.

Wilberforce

JUL 25 1995

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SERMON I.

Our Spiritual Adversaries.

EPHESIANS vi. 12.

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

IN the course of Lenten Sermons which was preached last year in this place, we sought to set before you as many particulars as could be gathered within such limits, of the strife between Christ, in His Church, and the evil which is in this world.

This aspect of the conflict, even if it were complete in itself, would be but a partial and inadequate view of the whole mighty contention which through the ages is maintained between the Captain of our Salvation and the powers of evil. Not in this remote district of God's measureless kingdom—the battle-field though it be of an especial combat,—but not in it only or chiefly, is that warfare waged. Not with beings of our race only, the newest born, as it would seem, of the reasonable creation, did the strife begin; nor can we rightly understand its character, or duly measure its greatness, unless we take into our calculations those higher and earlier struggles, of which these in which we here bear part are the echo and the prolongation.

To set this, then, in some measure before you, is the object of this present course. We would shew you that not with flesh and blood alone is even here the struggle :

that around us, with us, through us, the mightier forms of more ancient wickedness are still maintaining their long warfare with the God of purity and love. Such a view of this present life, if we succeed in setting it at all duly before you, must be most full of practical suggestions. The greatness of our risk, the fierce and deadly character of the strife in which we must mingle, its past history, its present circumstances, its onslaughts and its helps, the weapons which must be wielded, the dark crisis yet to be encountered, and the measureless issues into which the final overthrow will run out through all eternity,—these, if they indeed sink into our hearts, must affect deeply our whole character, must add earnestness to our prayers, reality to our conceptions of the spiritual kingdom in which we are, and wariness, and courage, and undying resolution to the life we daily lead amidst such unseen but most present powers of good and of evil.

Our first enquiry in such a course must lead us to the questions who these, our enemies and God's, are; what is their nature; what the causes of their enmity to us; what the modes of their assaults, and the limits of their powers; questions, many of them doubtless difficult, some perhaps incapable of complete answer, and yet among them some greatly concerning us, which may have much light thrown upon them by reason, when informed and guided by revelation. It is as to these that I desire, by God's help, to speak to you to-night.

First, then, note the fact that there ARE spiritual beings, greater than ourselves in nature and power. To this the belief of man in all ages bears a remarkably consentient witness. The universal extent of this belief seems to base it upon the traditions of a primæval revelation. But even without such revelation,