

**A PLEA FOR OUR
USE OF THE MEANS
OF GRACE**

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A Plea for Our Use of the Means of Grace by C. A. Houghton

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C. A. HOUGHTON

**A PLEA FOR OUR
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OF GRACE**

A Plea for our Use of
THE MEANS OF GRACE.

BY

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PREFACE.



At no period of her history has the Church of England offered to her children more abundant opportunities than she offers now for making use of the various Means of Grace. And never did more people among us avail themselves of those Means than now through our churches and communicate at our altars. But accompanying this offer and acceptance of Church privileges, there is growing in the minds of many a disposition to disparage outward means. This is due to several causes, in themselves perhaps contradictory to one another, but productive in various minds of the same result. Those who teach most fully the Sacramental doctrines of the Church, are in danger of neglecting the proportion of the faith; and in forming their estimate of the blessedness of the Eucharistic Feast, they sometimes depreciate other ordinances. Those, again, who refuse Sacramental teaching, are evidently losing not one truth only. There is a coherence in truth, by which particular truths stand fast or slip away *together*. And thus this second class of minds, having neglected the Sacramental teaching of our Church offices, lose together with it all definite

conception of the value of any Church ordinances. Meanwhile, the liberalism of the day, professing to free us from worn out restraints; the ill-informed scepticism abounding among us, which is partially the result of an education at present necessarily superficial, and unhappily lacking the steady consistency that would be given it by submission to authority moral and spiritual;—these two negations complete the work that is being promoted by other tendencies; until it is daily becoming a more imperative duty to set before our people in all plainness the obligations under which they lie to make use of all the Means of Grace offered them by their Church.

In the following addresses I have, as the reader will at once see, attempted nothing more than to commend to my hearers the intelligent and devout and obedient use of those privileges which it is our heritage to enjoy. I have not thought it necessary to strike out all the remarks prompted by the particular occasion on which they were delivered. They were addressed to my Parishioners in St. Peter's, Marlborough, during the Lenten season this year.

C. A. H.

May 1st, 1882.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
SERMON I.	
BAPTISM. 1 Peter iii. 21	7
SERMON II.	
PUBLIC WORSHIP. Hebrews x. 25	20
SERMON III.	
READING THE BIBLE. 2 Timothy iii. 16	33
SERMON IV.	
CONFIRMATION. Acts viii. 17	45
SERMON V.	
PRIVATE PRAYER. St. Matthew vi. 6	58
SERMON VI.	
SELF EXAMINATION. 1 Cor. xi., part of 28	66
SERMON VII.	
HOLY COMMUNION. 1 Cor. xi. 23—26	77
SERMON VIII.	
THE RISEN LIFE. Colossians iii. 1—4	89

2

10
11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

SERMON I.

—◆—
1 PETER III. 21.

“WHICH ALSO AFTER A TRUE LIKENESS, DOTN NOW SAVE US, EVEN BAPTISM, NOT THE PUTTING AWAY OF THE FILTH OF THE FLESH, BUT THE INTERROGATION OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE TOWARD GOD, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.”

IN asking you to consider with me the practical subject of the *Means of Grace*, let me first say that those seven particulars, of which I propose to speak, are certainly not all that might be included in the list. There are many others, such as public and private religious Instruction, and Family Prayer. Those, however, which I shall consider with you, will be sufficient for our present purpose. Only while we profess to be attentively considering them, do not let us in our daily life neglect any others which God's Providence may offer us.

And there is another preliminary remark, very necessary, I fear, to be made. There are two classes of people who are inclined not to think aright on this whole subject. Some, rightly regarding God's Grace as of the utmost importance, are unwilling to recognize what seems to be the ordinary plan which it has pleased God to follow in nearly all his dealings with