REV. F. P. HICKEY, O. S. B. PASSION SUNDAY

GRACE NEGLECTED IS WITHDRAWN

Jesus hid Himself." (John viii. 59.) dramatic chapter is this, the A dramatic chapter is this, the eighth of St. John's Gospel. It opens with the touching episode of the woman, taken in adultery, being brought to our Lord. The law condemned her to be stoned; they tempted Him, to see how He would judge her. "But Jesus, bowing Himself down, wrote with His finger on the ground." They asked Him on the ground." They asked Him again, then He answered: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And He went on writing, and they one by one went out. Had that Divine finger written their sins, and did each one see his own staring at him from the ground? And the woman and our Lord were left alone.
"Woman, where are they that
accused thee? Hath no man condemned thee? Who said, No man, Lord. Neither will I condemn thee.

Thus the chapter commences, and ends: "They took up stones to cast at Him. And Jesus hid Him-What a contrast? Our Lord. full of forgiveness and love, is at length so hurt by the unbelief of the Jews and their rejection of His Divine calls, that He hides Himself

My face from him, and he went wandering in the way of his own heart."

Snall hot be scandarized was the warning of Our Lord.

Christ had not come to restore to you shall not find Me" (John vii. 34): I go, and you shall seek Me, and you shall die in your

dren, we will not heed it.
Grace is the seeking by the Good by our own perversity, grace seeks us out, and would bear us back to safety; and we will not.

Grace is Christ knocking at the

patient One departs.

And this rejecting God's grace is be to our Blessed Saviour than rejecting His holy grace? The blessing turns into stone, and we cast it back in the face of the Giver! And who are they, who treat God so shamefully? Those, who refuse this holy time of Lent to come to their Easter Confession. And it is not only those, who openly live out of communion with the Church, who treat God so insultingly, but those who are entangled in the occasions of sin, and have not the courage to break with them. They will do some day, but not yet! Those in bad habits of sin, who make no man-ly effort to free themselves. Those, alas! who pretend to be good, but are making bad confessions through false shame or foolish fear. Those who disobey the Church, let their children go to godless schools, miss Mass, and grow up bad Catholics. Those who might make husband or wife, as the case may be, a Catholic, and instead of good example and prayers, they give them scandal. Each one of these God's grace is seeking out this holy time of Lent, and how many are deaf and disobedient, despising that grace which would save their souls.

The misfortune is, even the patience of Jesus Christ can be worn out. For though He is infinitely good. there is a limit to the number of our sins, and we do not know how near we are to the last one. The last one! Commit that, and then mercy is no more.

Do not put God off. Think how insulting it is. Our Lord comes full of mercy and love, ready to say to us, of mercy and love, ready to say to us, as He did to the woman: "Neither will I condemn thee. Go, and now sin no more." Fear, then, to delay your repentance. Reject not His proffered graces any longer, lest they be withdrawn, and Jesus hide Himself. Oh, what a life that would have not become the server." be, and no Jesus near us to say, "am the way, the truth, and the life

the time of mercy, and then, when it is too late. Now He is the sweet Saviour, Who does not hide Himself from sinners. He welcomes them when they fall at His feet, as that Upon that

FIVE MINUTE SERMON stones of rejection, when He is no longer the Saviour, but the Judge Isaias pictures Him: "His wrath burneth and is heavy to bear: His lips are filled with indignation, and His tongue as a devouring fire." (xxx. 27.) The outraged mercy of God, His rejected grace, His despised love, have changed

Saviour into the avenging Judge!

It is in our power to come to Him now and receive forgiveness, or guiltily to wait, to go on rejecting His grace, till He comes to us then

to condemn us.

How can we hesitate one moment to make the choice? Dear Lord, I come now, in humility and sorrow, to beg pardon and forgiveness; do not bide Thyself from me

THE RISE AND FALL

OF PROTESTANT PROSPERITY Joseph Husslein, S. J., in America

There was a time when much was said and written of the material prosperity of so-called Protestant countries. The voices that then were heard have died into silence or are but feebly audible now. As an argument against the Catholic Church this vaunt of prosperity was never to be taken seriously. can readily understand its power of appeal to the masses, since even the Apostles were misled by such tests and standards of religious truth be and leaves them.

Hid Himself! And what was that?
The most dreadful punishment from God. Isaias had foretold it. "I hid shall not be scandalized in Me."

And our Blessed Lord ex"You will seek Me, and of Solomon, the golden splendors of the ancient temple, the porch of pillars and the house of precious sins." (John viii. 21.) It all means the punishment, for rejecting God's were to glory in afflicting them as if the punishment, for rejecting God's grace, is its withdrawal, and then what a life! and oh! God help us, what a death!

For what is this grace of God? The voice of God calling us, and we will not hearken—the voice of God guiding us, checking us, warning us, hesseching us: and disobedient chil-

beseeching us; and disobedient chil- Church there was to spring, as the flower from its seed, the most perfect material civilization the world had Shepherd for the sheep that have gone astray. Lost in the wilderness sculptures of Michael Angelo, the poems of Dante, and those majestic cathedrals whose beauty and value the modern world has just learned Grace is Christ knocking at the door of our hearts. He would fain enter in, and comfort us, and win us to Him eggin. He knocks and win us to Him eggin. He knocks and with the Catholic Church advanced there to Him again. He knocks, and we likewise sprang up thousands of keep Him knocking, till even the nameless builders who wrought into monuments of stone the inspirations of their faith. There, too, were to meant by the words, "They took up stones to cast at Him." What more stinging, cutting insult could there period of their perfection expressed the truest ideals of human brotherhood and the highest principles of economic justice and Christian charity to which the world has vet attained.

> But time came when the statues in her sanctuaries were smitten to earth by the destructive mallet of the Reformer; when her libraries of lassic and patristic lore were pil laged and her archives scattered to the winds; when her guilds were ruthlessly stripped of their accumulated wealth devoted to charity and the service of God; when her richly illuminated missals, bright with gold and all the living colors borrowed from earth and sky, were cast upon the blazing pyre; when her storied windows, all aglow with scenes from Holy Writ and the lives of saintly men and women, were broken into thousands of fragments; and the matchless music of her Solemn Masses, that rolled in mighty har monies through the high cathedral vaults, was silenced by relentless edicts. The creed of sixteen centuries of Christianity, the perfect and complete expression of the Gospel teaching, which alone had being to all this mighty art, had suddenly become a pernicious superstition in the eyes of men whose own lives bore no imprint of the sanctity of Apostolic times. Enter today the doors of the world's greatest museums and view the wonderful collections of painting, sculpture, architecture and the marvelous works of the loom, will find yourself standing and you will find yourself standing in bewilderment before the mere fragments and remnants of Catholic

away, so far as the hand of man could complete its ravages, and the desolated fanes had been newly dedibe, and no seems to the dark new and the life! and the way, the truth, and the life! (John xiv. 6.) We should be left groping in the darkness and the crooked ways of our own bad life. And oh, what a death! "I go, and you shall seek Me, and you shall die in your sins." (John viii. 21.) No in your sins." on and mercy to our poor souls.

Picture our Blessed Lord now, in the more sunny countries of Italy,

Upon that new culture is based poor woman must have done when she heard, "Neither will I condemn the world was for a time to hear so thee." She was to be stoned, and much, and which today is weighed in the stones were turned into forgive the balance and found wanting by ness by our Lord Jesus, and He was the universal consent of mankind. stoned instead. Come now to Him, Sociologists, economists, labor union with true contrition and a hearty ists, Catholics, Protestants, Jews are with true contrition and a hearty determination to break with sin, and there is abundant grace yet, and the Saviour will lovingly forgive you.

Look at the other picture! Then, when the day of mercy is over, when the has hidden Himself from the diately preceding the great world.

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war, was a dismal failure and a sad There can be no disagree.

That the material prosperity from which the world has turned in protest today is essentially the result of shipers: the Reformation, no one can doubt who has wisely studied the economic history of the past four centur-ies. Such it has always been pro-claimed by Protestants themselves. Careful reflection will show that it is based upon strictly Protestant principles, not in so far as these princi-

truth be thoroughly grasped in order that the new reconstruction may be for Processant and Castolic anke to find the reason for the failure of the custom of working by contract, and past and to base the new social the concentration of so many structure four square upon the un-

this prosperity reached its culmination before the world-war. But it is equally true that it differed in an mere public or national prosperity. essential way from that Catholic ideal of true prosperity which the deceptive dreams. It rests with the Church to show the path to real Christian Democracy.

ment of a few. Upon this excessive opulence of the wealthy classes the claim of the false prosperity was founded. It is a commonplace of alized, history that the greatest oppression and impoverishment of the masses can coexist with the highest external can coexist with the nignest external splendor, wealth and material cul-ture of a nation. Such were the conditions in Rome and Greece in the day of their decadence. Such the day of their decadence. Such was the splendor of ancient Egypt, of Babylon and Nineveh. More sig-Yet when this had been swept nificant than men commonly understood was that question asked in one tion.

themselves warn us that men, left to their personal interpretation, may wrest them to their own perdition. Each one might read out of the Bible or into it his own favorite pre-judices. This false individualism in religion soon had its parallel in the false economic individualism on which the Protestant prosperity was

In all social and economic relations the Church demands that the common good be first and always kept in view. All private privilege must yield to it. But with the new doctrine a new ethical code arose. Each one sought, under the new in-dividualism of the Reformation, to enrich himself to the utmost with regard for the common good of his fellow-men. In Catholic times this tendency of fallen nature would likewise have striven to exert itself, but against it there would have stood forever the teaching of the Church Under the new individualism the duty of State interference and regu-lation was furthermore ignored, since the State too interpreted the Bible after its own prejudices. This meant a slavish compliance with the desires of the rich and powerful who asked for nothing more than an ab-solute freedom of individual bargain-ing with labor. The latter was thou ing with labor. The latter was thus stripped of all its power of collective action which the Church so jealously action which the Church so jealously safeguards. As a consequence enor-mous individual fortunes soon grew up side by side with the most abject impoverishment and oppression of the masses.

Though labor, after centuries of struggle against these false princi-ples, regained many of its rights, yet discontent and dissatisfaction grew Men could but ill conceal their disquiet at the intermittent volcanic rumblings that waxed constantly more ominous beneath the bright surface of the new social and economic prosperity for which Protestant ism was so eager to take the full

In vain did Catholic leaders like Bishop Ketteler in Germany, Car-dinal Manning in England and the great Pope Leo XIII. point out the deception underlying this Dead Sea ment on this, however the minds of fruit. In words never to be forgot men may vary in their proposed ten the Pontifi thus described both plans of social and economic reconstruction. approaching its very zenith and was eiving the adulation of its wor-

"The ancient workmen's guilds were destroyed in the last century, and no other organizations took their place. Public institutions and the laws have repudiated the ancient religion. Hence by degrees it has come to pass that workingmen have ciples, not in so far as these princi-ples are Christian, but in so far as they are Protestant, that is in opposition to Catholic dectrine. It they are Protestant, that is in ployers and the greed of unrestrained competition. The evil has been increased by rapacious usury, which, based upon more sound and lasting foundations. There is supreme need for Protestant and Catholic alike to men. And to this must be added the past and to base the new social structure four-square upon the unchangeable and indestructible rock few individuals, so that a small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the masses of the able to lay upon the masses of the It is true that the new Protestant culture brought a certain type of prosperity. It is true likewise that

mere public or national prosperity. Since that time conditions have changed considerably in many world is seeking again today, though it is still blindly groping in the dark-ness after Socialist delusions and fate of the nations is likely to turn upon the question whether labor will use its power prudently, justly Protestant prosperity was first a ing, a great world crisis to ivic and later a national prosperity.

and religiously. A new era is dawning, a great world crisis to which the struggle of warring na-Protestant prosperity was him with the struggle of warring nacivic and later a national prosperity. Which the struggle of warring nations is only a prelude. There are in modern Germany and England. It is not prospects for the world in modern Germany and England. in modern Germany and England.
In its nature it was never identical
with the common good, as true prosperity must always be. The latter
provides for the real good of all; the

"not in capitalism as based on the not in capitalism as based on the former for the inordinate enrich- Reformation, but in Christian co-

GOD AND SAD MOTHERS

Many mothers are sad these days and they are expressing their sorrow in hot burning words that appear to make their letters tremble with emoaway, 80 far as could complete its ravages, and the desolated fanes had been newly dedicated to a worship which their builders would have abhorred no less than the Egyptian idolatry, a new culture arose. It began in Germany, or of other countries which had all in a greater or less degree adopted false economic standards.

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of our promiser in Germany and some properties of the countries which had all in a greater or less degree adopted false economic standards. standards.

Strange, therefore, though it may still appear to some, the peculiar nature of the new prosperity was not directly due to the invention of machinery but to the newly invented doctrines of the Reformation. Such statements are not made in the carping spirit of criticism, but are based upon evidence. The new teaching rejected the Scriptural truth that Christ established His Church not merely for the administration of His Sacraments, but like wise to keep His doctrine pure and and room for emotions other than sorrow. It is no small blessing to have mothered a hero, and our soltance in the scriptural that others may re-enter into their heritage of liberty, living once again their own lives free from the tyrant's yoke. Mothers' souls might will leap with joy over the realization of the fact that their sons are victims on the altar of freedom. And is it nothing that so many warriors have at last found God and "shown us God"? Their sublime tration of His Sacraments, but like-wise to keep His doctrine pure and undefiled to the end of time. He had for this purpose promised her freedom from error by the assurance of His abiding presence. All this the Reformation ignored. The Church was no longer regarded as the official interpreter of the Sacred Scriptures, though these Scriptures Scriptures, though these Scriptures age learns to glance from earth to

Heaven, there to see the face of the Father: a matchless blessing, for in Gcd alone lies hope of better things; through Him alone will come peace to this blood drenched earth lacerated by the claws of hate which was born of the disappointed greed of a few men who rule the destiny of powerful nations. Surely in this at least is consolation to overtop the

sorrow of soldiers' mothers that their sons are as glad tidings to many who sit in darkness and the shadow death .- America. FISH NETS WE SELL NEVE AND WRITE FOR PRICES

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