

the dark-minded Haman, who held out to the luxurious king, as a bribe for the privilege of slaying the Jews and confiscating their property, the sum of from ten to twenty millions of dollars Esther 3: 9. "The Hebrew people were the messengers of the true God to the heathen, and His instruments for leading them to Himself," and their mission, together with their acceptance of His Son, must be their future glory.

There are three persons whose position and characteristics are worthy of careful attention:—

- I. Esther—the heroic woman of faith.
- II. Haman—the ambitious man of the world.
- III. Mordecai—the good man of duty.

THE PETITION.

SEEKING FAVOUR FROM AN OFFENDED SOVEREIGN.
Isaiah 12: 1; Psalm 2: 12.

The obstacles experienced in approaching the Sovereign:

1. The Royal decree appointing the extermination of the Jews, including Esther. Chap. 3: 10; Gal. 3: 10.
2. Being unable to present any ground of special consideration to the favour of the King. Chap. 4: 11; Rom. 3: 19.

THE MOTIVES OF THE PETITIONER.

1. A sense of personal danger. "If I perish, I perish." *v.* 16; Psalm 1: 1.
2. Desire for the safety of others. "Gather together all the Jews." *v.* 14; Rom. 10: 11.
3. Conviction of duty and present opportunity. "Thou art come to the kingdom for such a time." 2 Cor. 6: 2.

THE METHODS ADOPTED TO RENDER THE PETITION SUCCESSFUL

1. United, earnest and continued prayer. *v.* 16.
2. Due regard to the king's position and authority. Chap 5: 1.
3. Glad acceptance of the king's invitation. Chap. 5: 2.

[FOR OUR MISSION.]

The Five-fold Outcome of Faith.

REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, B.D.

3.—MADE NIGH.

THE believer's sins being pardoned, and peace arising as a consequence (Rom. 5: 1), there is another concurrent blessing, namely, "we are made nigh." This is the way Paul speaks of it, in which he points out the dependence of one blessing upon the other in the order of nature: "Now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, *are made nigh by the blood of Christ*, for HE IS OUR PEACE." Eph. 2: 13, 14. The sin question being settled, the Son question comes in. Our relation to God is entirely changed. The distance, the alienation, the enmity, through faith in Christ Jesus, are all removed, and we stand before God, "Accepted in the beloved." Eph. 1: 6. What a change! And it is all the work of God. John, in the spirit of adoring gratitude, cries out, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, NOW WE ARE THE SONS OF GOD." 1 John 3: 1, 2. And Paul, too,

bears this testimony: "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. In whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Eph. 2: 19-22.

In this we see the fulfilment of the truth that lies in the parable of the Prodigal. We are brought out of the far country, welcomed graciously by God, and at once raised above servitude into sonship. The best robe, the ring, the fatted calf, and the festival joy, all crown the welcome, and complete the favour. All this is not according to the meagreness of our thoughts, but according to the riches of God's grace. It would have been enough to be a servant in the Father's house, doing menial work, but lo! we are made sons. SONS! That is a grand interpretation to give of "*made nigh*," and that is God's own interpretation. Ah! God does not begin and carry forward His work for nothing. He has a great, glorious end in view—one worthy of Himself—one worthy the great cost of sending Jesus out of His bosom. The greatness of His gift bespeaks the grandeur of the end He seeks to attain, "MADE NIGH!" "Delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son." Col. 1: 12. "MADE NIGH!" "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Rom. 8: 16, 17. As we move along this line of truth we must go slowly and thoughtfully, so that we may take it in. It is so Divinely glorious, that like the great Apostle when he looked upon the ascended Lord, we may "not see for the glory of that light." It dazzles us with its splendor. It overwhelms us with its grace. It is God doing "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Eph. 3: 20. As we muse and meditate upon this, and realize it in some measure, we cry out, *Grace! Grace! Grace!* "By the grace of God I am what I am." This is the position that God gives to him who accepts His Son as his Saviour, and as his Lord. And he is to take it, and to hold it. And in the power of it he is to live. It is as we remember this, that we separate ourselves from evil, and seek to become more and more holy. Out of this position rises the sweet incense of praise and thanksgiving, and a strong impulse to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. We desire to reflect the glory that shines upon us. Being made nigh, and enjoying fellowship with God, we are not content to be without participators: therefore, like John we declare what we have seen and heard, that others may have fellowship with us. 1 John 1: 3. Made nigh, we cannot any longer be selfish or self-centred; God become all to us, and His will our law and our life.