

Life is one great adventure, v. 31. These people went out upon a strange path beset with many dangers. Professor Law in a great sermon on "He went out not knowing whither he went," quotes thus from General Gordon: "England was never made by her statesmen; England was made by her adventurers." Not by those who hug closely the beaten track, but by those who blaze new paths are the new worlds discovered.

"Are there not, Festus, are there not, dear Michal

Two points in the adventure of the diver
One—when, a beggar, he prepares to plunge,
One—where, a prince he rises with his
pearl?"

God will take care of you (Golden Text). One time a little chap was obliged to leave the old home for another country. The change was unwelcome and doubtful. Every-

body felt sad about it, but as the family drove together to the station in a cab, the little fellow looked out and turning abruptly to his mother cried, "Why, God's sky is going all the way along with us." That boy spoke better than he knew.

As individuals going out upon life's hidden journey, we can say:

"Within thy circling power I stand;
On every side I find thy hand;
Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,
I am surrounded still with God."

Or, as a nation and empire faring forth uncertainly:

"God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle line,
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine.
Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget."

THE LESSON GRADED

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

For Teachers of Bible Classes

It seems clear both from Neh., ch. 1, and also from the reforms which Ezra introduced that the religious life of the Jewish colony in Jerusalem was not very good. The pressure of the pagan environment and adverse agricultural conditions (compare *raggai*) had been too much for many of them; and so there had been a distinct lowering of spirituality. The Babylonian Jews were alarmed at the situation and sent Ezra to effect a revival. What were Ezra's qualifications for the task? How did later Judaism look upon his work? Let us remember that the same influences which were operating against the spiritual life of Jerusalem operate in our own day.

1. *God in the enterprise.* Read Mark 2:19. Ezra was seeking at the beginning of his enterprise: (a) harmony with God's will; (b) help for the journey. He believed that the enterprise was wholly in line with God's will. But he was not satisfied unless he had God's presence and power with him in accomplishing it. Evidently he believed that men might fail in religious work if they lacked

fellowship with God. The journey was dangerous, but he felt that it would be a betrayal of his faith in God's power to apply to the Persians for a guard. We are impressed by his calm faith in God's interest in the schemes of the little company. In our age, we are in danger of believing that all of our activities are of little concern to God.

"What is it all but the murmur of gnats
In the gleam of a million million suns?"

We need to remember that God makes gnats as well as suns. (See Ps. 147:4; Matt. 10:30; Luke 12:6.) No life, no plan is outside of his interest. There is power and a reservoir of love for every life that will lay claim to God.

2. *Helpers.* Though Ezra was a man of faith, he was not a fanatic. He was possessed of practical ability. He sought to associate others with him in the work. He believed in *organization*, and in *business methods*. He also saw that his helpers were *men of holiness*. And all were to see that there was *no waste* of treasure.

3. *Answered prayer.* How long was Ezra on the journey? (Ch. 7:9.) "The hand of God was upon us and he delivered us from the enemy." Can we expect all prayers to