

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

GOD AND HUMAN SUFFERING

International Sunday School Lesson For July 20, 1947

Golden Text: "Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus."—II Timothy 2:3.

Lesson Text: Job 1:8; 2:7-9; 19:7-10; 42:1-5; James 5:11.

The Prologue to the Book of Job gives us a scene which takes place in Heaven and tells of a conversation between the Lord God and Satan, who is not pictured here as the evil one but rather as a cynic, who doubts the motives of those who love God and try to serve him, insisting that the only motives which rule men are at bottom selfish. As pointed out in our first lesson, God gives Satan permission to try Job, who is described as "a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God, and trusteth away from evil."

As a test, every material thing was taken from Job. His herds, his servants and even his sons and daughters were taken from him. Only his wife was left to him. Job arose, rent his robe and shaved his head (the customary token of great grief) and worshipped God and said: "Naked I came out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away, blessed be the name of Jehovah." The record declares that, in all this, Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

A second scene takes place in Heaven between God and Satan. God told Satan that Job "still holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him to destroy him without cause." Satan, while disappointed that his first scheme had not worked, suggested another "Put forth thy hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will renounce thee to thy face." God replied, "Behold, he is in thy hand; only spare his life."

Thus, Job was smitten with boils "from the sole of his foot unto his crown." Job is pictured as sitting outside the town in the ash heap, scraping off the scurf from his skin with a potsherd, a piece of earthenware, and being told by his wife that the limit had been reached, that he should renounce his faith in God, and die. Job's three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, scarcely recognizing him, sit for seven days and nights to comfort him, but their words are scant comfort to the troubled man. Instead of comforting him, they reason that Job must have sinned, to be so severely punished. Job protests his innocence and finally exclaims, "Miserable comforters are ye

all." In the words of our printed text, Job cries out, "Behold, I shriek 'Violence' and am not answered." Forsaken by his friends, his kinfolk and even by his wife, and realizing that the religion he had known from his youth was not sufficient, Job cries to God to give him a reason for his suffering. In the second section of the 19th chapter, we can see that Job has become more reconciled to his fate, that he knows that God is just and is not blind or deaf to the pleas of his poor, tortured servant. While he still does not know the pattern to which his suffering adds harmony and beauty, he is sure that God has a meaning and that he will himself one day know and understand.

Thus, Job finds peace in his personal experience with God. He now realizes just what faith is—a willingness to trust where he does not and cannot understand. He declares, "Mine eye seeth thee," that is, he has learned enough about God through his experience to justify his faith in him.

Charles Brown has declared, "It is a great moment in any man's life when God becomes a living reality to him; when out of cloud or flame, in the silence of the night, or in the busy day, the living voice of the Eternal is heard. It came to Abraham, to Jacob, to Elijah, who hid his face in his mantle, to Isaiah, to Paul, to Augustine, to Luther, and to the innumerable obscure people who have enriched the history of humanity by noble lives and faithful service. I believe it comes sooner or later to every man who really cares for his fellows, and broods over the mysteries which surround and darken human existence, and looks up for light."

We should remember that Job is not the first man to doubt the goodness of God because of some suffering or trouble that has come upon him. Man has long cherished the feeling that, as long as he remained faithful in his allegiance to God, he should have preferential treatment, special care and material prosperity. It does not work out this way every time, as we know. If God rewards a man for his goodness, who is to be the judge of the "good things" he is to receive? Material prosperity is not always good for man, proving more of a curse than a blessing oftentimes.

One still hears the question, "Why does God permit suffering?" God permits it, it is true, but God does not will anything but good. Suffering, to a great extent, is brought on through disobedience to the laws of nature, one's own disobedience or that of another. God can, and often does; however, use the suffering of man to bring that one back to Him. We should remember that, while we cannot altogether escape suffering, we can, with God's help, triumph over it.

WHO KNOWS?

1. Who is John W. Snyder?
2. When did the United Nations come into being?
3. What has happened to the 12,000,000 persons displaced in World War II?
4. What is meant by saying that there was an appropriation tie-up?
5. Who is I. A. R. Wylie?
6. How many members belong to the United Nations?
7. Who is top commander of the U. S. Navy?
8. What nation has the largest proved oil resources?
9. What French leader declared himself anti-Communist and pro-Western?
10. Can one send food packages to Great Britain?

THE ANSWERS

1. Secretary of the Treasury.
2. June, 1945.
3. About 11,000,000 have been repatriated; the others have been cared for by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.
4. The failure of Congress to pass appropriation bills for the fiscal year beginning July 1st; only one of twelve annual appropriation bills had been passed.
5. A well-known woman writer.
6. Fifty-five.
7. Admiral Chester W. Nimitz.
8. The United States.
9. Former President De Gaulle.
10. Yes; write CARE, 50 Broad St., New York 4, N. Y.

Tests On New Grass Prove Satisfactory

Tall fescue, a relatively new grass in North Carolina, has partly solved the long-felt need for a more productive grass for poorly drained soils where redtop has been used, and for an early grass to grow with ladino clover in the East, according to Dr. R. L. Lovvorn, Agronomy Extension specialist at State College.

This grass which should not be confused with meadow fescue, is a tall growing bunch grass that has the same type of growth as orchard grass, the specialist said. It is very green in color, being darker than most of the perennial grasses, and it will remain greener in midsummer and midwinter than does orchard grass. Also, it is seemingly adapted to a wider range of soil conditions than orchard grass.

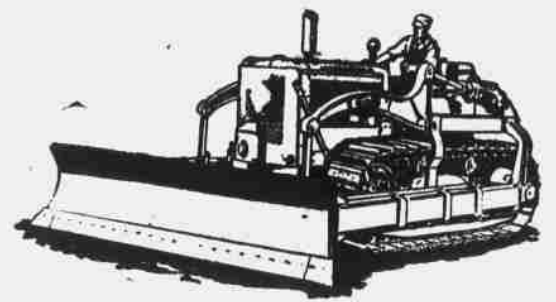
The two varieties of tall fescue that are available in a limited way are Kentucky 31, or Suiter, and Alta. The Kentucky 31 was developed by the Kentucky Experiment Station from a selection on the farm of a Mr. Suiter in Kentucky. Therefore, it is often referred to as Suiter grass. Alta fescue was developed by the Oregon Experiment Station. From experiments carried on in

1946 the following yields from tall fescue were obtained: Alta fescue, 2,555 pounds dry matter per acre; Kentucky 31 (Suiter) 2,492 pounds dry matter per acre; N. C. Strain, 3,167 dry matter per acre; Orchard grass 1,829 pounds dry matter per acre. Only one cutting was made during the summer of 1946 but during the

following summer, five harvests were made. These were as follows: Alta fescue, 5,161 pounds dry matter per acre; Kentucky (Suiter), 5,322 pounds dry matter per acre. "From the results of these experiments," Dr. Lovvorn said, "we think we can safely say that Alta and Kentucky 31 were equal in yielding ability and superior to orchard grass at this location."

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