

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Lesson for September 3
Golden Text—Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.—1 Sam. 15:23

The Lesson as a Whole
 Approach to the Lesson

To the Galatians, St. Paul wrote, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you?" (Gal. 5:7). One might have asked the same question of King Saul, who began well, but ended badly. The root of his failure was unjudged self-confidence and an envious spirit, which were not manifested at first, but soon became evident as he continued his reign. His self-will was first evidenced at Gilgal, where the armies of Israel were gathered together to repel a threatened attack of the Philistines, and were waiting for Samuel to come and offer a sacrifice to the Lord on their behalf. Because of what seemed like delay, Saul presumed to take the priestly place and offer the burnt-offering himself, later attempting to justify his disobedience to the word of God by blaming his action upon the restlessness of the people (1 Sam. 13:8-12). Because of this, Samuel predicted that the kingdom would be rent from Saul, and a man after God's own heart found to rule over Israel (v. 14). From this time on, Saul seems to have been haunted by the fear that a rival might appear at any time, and he soon sensed the fact that David was the one appointed of God to supersede

him. In chapter 15 we see another instance of disobedience, in that he failed to carry out fully the sentence against Amalek, Israel's ancient enemy. Again Samuel declared God was about to set him aside because of his willfulness.

The rest of his history is a sad record of constant declension, ever sinking lower and lower until his fatal day when, after seeking help from a witch, he fell on mount Gilboa and his body was dishonored by the haughty Philistine foes.

Verse by Verse
 1 Sam. 15:10.—"The word of the Lord came unto Samuel." This was direct inspiration. The Spirit of God so controlled the mind and heart of the prophet that he spoke with divine authority.

Verse 11.—"It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king." This is what theologians call an anthropomorphism: God speaking as though He were a man. To repent is to change the mind, or, preferably, to reverse one's attitude. God, who had hitherto upheld and honored Saul, was now about to take a different attitude toward him, because of his failure to do His commandments. This "grieved Samuel," who had learned to esteem Saul very highly, so that "he cried unto the Lord all night." In earnest prayer he pleaded for the man whom God had rejected, but prayer was too late. Saul had sinned unto death (1 John 5:16). God's righteous government had to be maintained as a warning to others and as punishment to Saul for his arrogance and disobedience.

Verse 12.—"Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning." With a deeply exercised heart, the aged prophet could not sleep, but awakened early, only to find that Saul, in easy-going self-assurance had "passed on, and gone down to Gilgal." The sacred memories of that place of self-judgment apparently meant nothing to him. He had gone there to celebrate his victory over the Amalekites, as though everything was right between his soul and God.

Verse 13.—"Saul said Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord." They were fair words with a very pious sound, but they came from a heart that had never learned the meaning of true subjection to God.

Verse 14.—"What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" God had commanded that the Amalekites "and all their possessions" be completely destroyed. Saul and the people had spared both Agag, their king, and the best of the flocks and herds, whose cries stirred the indignation of Samuel as he realized the hollowness of Saul's profession of obedience (v. 9).

Verse 15.—"The people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord." What lack of transparency of character have we here! Saul sought to shift the blame for failure to perform the word of the Lord onto the people, thus endeavoring to shield himself, and then he tried to cover it all with a cloak of piety, pretending that their one reason for taking over the flocks and herds was that they might offer them up in sacrifice to God.

Verse 16.—"Samuel said, Stay, I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night." It must have been with a heavy heart indeed that Samuel prepared to make known to the king, whom he had anointed and presented to Israel, the sentence of dismissal and rejection.

Verse 17.—"When thou wast little in thine own sight the Lord anointed thee king over Israel." Recalling those first days of their acquaintance, when Saul gave promise of a successful career because of his lowliness and modesty, Samuel proceeded to show how Saul had drifted from that which then characterized him, so that now God could no longer favor him, and own him as His chosen ruler over His people.

Verse 18.—"The Lord said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites." This people's doom had been decreed centuries before (Exod. 17:16). They were the first enemies Israel encountered upon coming out of Egypt (Exod. 17:8), and had been relentless in their opposition to God and His people throughout the years since. Now, Saul was commissioned to make a full end of them because of their cruel opposition to Israel. As the Moral Governor of the Universe, God had decided that they must be destroyed, and Saul was designated as the instrument to carry out the will of the Lord regarding them.

Verse 19.—"Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord?" There could be no excuse for appropriating the sheep and cattle for themselves, and so ignoring the command to exterminate completely these evil people and all that they had.

Verse 20.—"Saul said Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord." Protested that he had acted according to his instructions, even while he acknowledged he had saved King Agag alive. Saul endeavored to argue the matter with Samuel and to justify himself, refusing to acknowledge failure or disobedience.

Verse 21.—"The people took of the spoil to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God." Once more the wretched man attempted to put whatever wrong was involved in partial obedience, upon the people,

while protesting that it was with the best of motives they had spared the flocks and herds, contrary to the positive command of the Lord. He declared again that they intended to offer them upon the altar of sacrifice to Jehovah.

Verse 22.—"Hath the Lord as great delight in sacrifice, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?" Samuel was not denying the importance of burnt-offerings and sacrifices in their proper place, but no ritualistic service that man can offer to God will take the place of obedience to His Word. Samuel enunciated a great truth when he declared, "To obey is better than sacrifice," something we all need to remember.

Verse 23.—"Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." Witchcraft includes all manner of sorcery and necromancy, which God had forbidden (Deut. 18:9-12). These unholy practices were closely linked with the idolatry of the heathen nations, who dwelt in Canaan before Israel came out of Egypt. God had sternly forbidden them. Rebellion and stubbornness were just as evil in His sight. Because of Saul's attitude in rejecting "the word of the Lord," he was rejected "from being king" over Israel, although years were to go by before he was set aside completely.

The Heart of the Lesson
 A good start means much in any walk of life, but it is perseverance in the way of righteousness that proves one is really in earnest. How often in the New Testament we have the little word "if" in connection with Christian profession: "If ye continue" (Col. 1:23); "If ye keep in memory" (1 Cor. 15:2); "If we hold fast" (Heb. 3:6); "If we walk in the light" (1 John 1:7). To these many more might be added, all of which are intended to teach us that continuance in well-doing is the manifest proof of the reality of our profession. The story of King Saul should speak loudly to all who profess allegiance to Christ, warning us against lip service and a partial obedience and wholehearted devotion to Christ, so that, like Paul, we may finish our course with joy (Acts 20:24; 2 Tim. 4:7).

W.P.T.B. QUESTIONS

Typical questions consumers have asked the Wartime Prices and Trade Board this week are answered by the Central Ontario Consumer Branch Committee.

Q.—I cannot drive a car now and wish to sell mine. It is a 1937 Ford with good tires and in good condition. How much may I charge? Do I have to fill out any forms?

A.—It would be impossible to tell you the ceiling price allowed for your car without knowing more about it. We have passed your letter along to the Tire Rationing Office of the Board. They will communicate with you direct. A signed statement of sale, with all details including the name and address of the owner and purchaser, etc., must be filed with your nearest

Board office within four days of date of sale. These forms are available at all W.P.T.B. offices.

Q.—I have a furnished room rented in my home. We also supply the linen and bedding but no meals. The girl rents this room by the week. How much notice must I give her to vacate?

A.—If she is a good tenant you must give her six full months'

notice, to vacate this notice must not terminate between Sept. 30 and the following April 30.

Q.—Recently I was charged 15c for a 20 oz. tin of apple juice. I have not been able to purchase this juice for two years but the price then was 2 for 15c and 3 for 25c. Is this increase allowed?

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Waste not - Want not!

When vacation days are over

And it's back to town again -

Don't leave us at your cottage

Like poor FORGOTTEN MEN!

You see, There's such a SHORTAGE -

of both bottles and cartons... it's downright wasteful to leave a lot of them at your summer cottage, when they might otherwise be put to good use all winter long. For bottles and cartons are used over and over again. So please return your summer's collection of empties, in their original cartons, now - to your nearest Brewer's Retail Store, and help us maintain steady supplies for you this winter.

Thank you!

The Brewing Industry (Ontario)

NOTICE TO EMPLOYERS AND THEIR MALE EMPLOYEES

By an order signed on August 15th, 1944, by the undersigned Minister of Labour under authority of National Selective Service Mobilization Regulations:

1. Commencing August 22nd, 1944, every employer is required to check the documents held by each newly engaged male employee, within 7 days of the employee's engagement, to determine if such employee possess documents to show that he is in good standing under National Selective Service Mobilization Regulations (that is, in relation to the Military Call-up);
2. Every employer must report on Schedule 9 to the Registrar for his Mobilization Division, concerning any employee found not to possess documents as referred to;
3. Every employer is required similarly to check the documents held by each male employee newly engaged between May 1st, 1944, and August 22nd, 1944, and to report to the Registrar for his Mobilization Division by August 29th, 1944, on any such employee found not to possess documents as referred to;
4. Any male employee here referred to, is required by the Regulations to present his documents to his employer for purposes of inspection;
5. Penalties are provided for any employer or male employee who fails to comply with these Regulations.

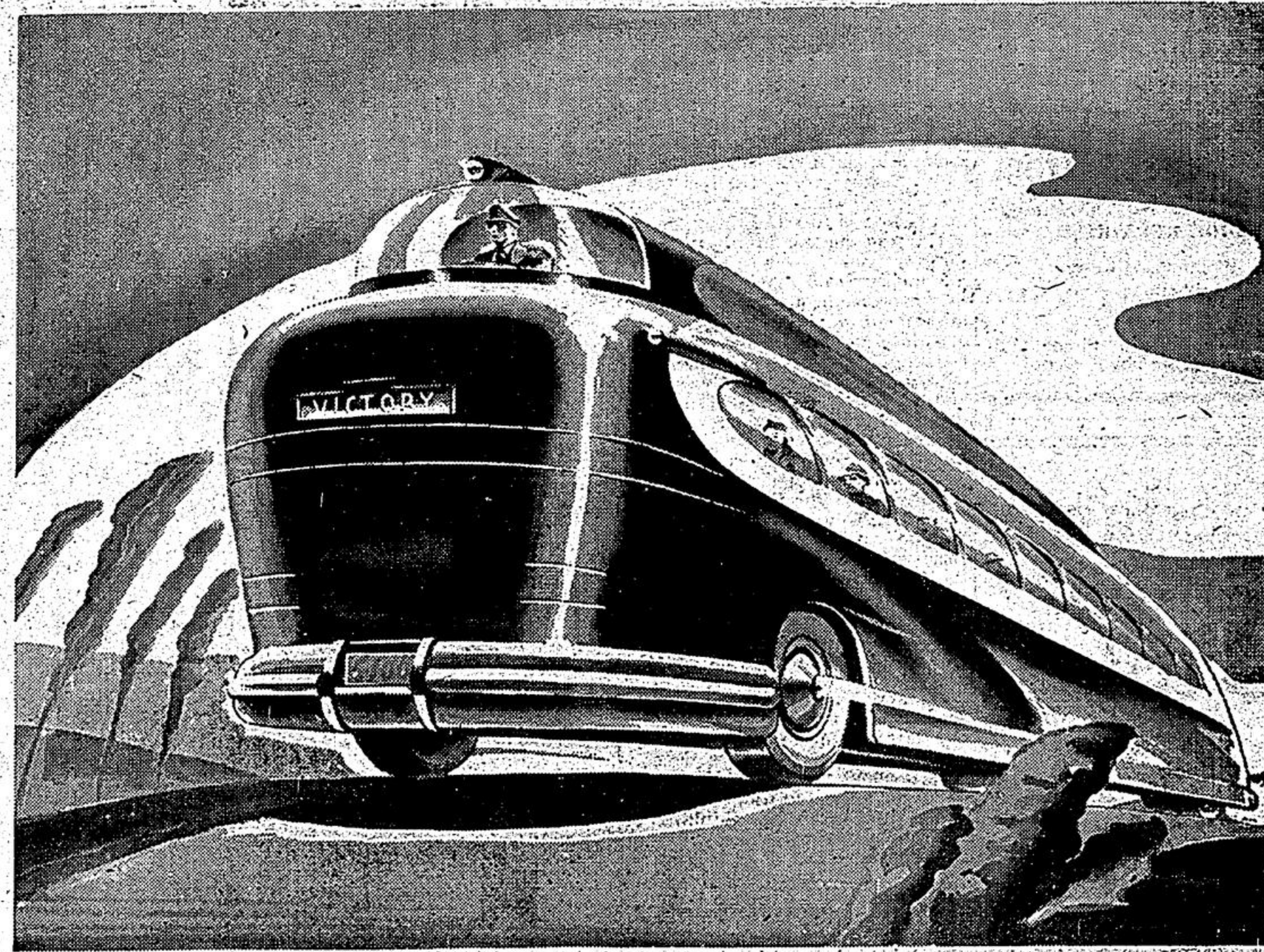
By an earlier order, employers were required to check the documents held by their male employees, and to report by May 1st, 1944, on doubtful cases as well as cases where employees did not possess documents. The procedure for the present continuing check, although being notified to employers in "Notice to Employers and their Male Employees", which is now being mailed, is identical with that set forth in "Employers' Guide", which covered the check made before May 1st, 1944.

Employers are asked to remember that they do not report on men who do possess the necessary documents—only on those who fail to present documents for examination, or where there is doubt that the document presented actually proves good standing.

The employers of Canada co-operated very satisfactorily on the first check, made up to May 1st last. This co-operation was decidedly helpful, and is very much appreciated. Further co-operation is now earnestly requested.

Schedule 9 and details as to documents which prove good standing, are available through the Employment and Selective Service Offices.

NATIONAL SELECTIVE SERVICE
 HUMPHREY MITCHELL
 Minister of Labour
 A. MacNAMARA
 Director, National Selective Service



Happier Days Ahead!

Your post-war buses aren't built yet, but they'll be just as smart as the one in the picture. Right now, Gray Coach Lines is working all out for Victory—transporting men and women of the armed services, taking war workers to work and serving essential civilian travel. However, we haven't forgotten our regular passengers. You are helping us now by being patient and considerate while vital war jobs have to be done. So here is a glimpse of what is already being planned for you. Let us all continue working together for Victory—and for the happier days ahead, when there'll be a fleet of smart new buses on the road to serve you.

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