

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

JONAH LEARNS GOD'S MISSIONARY PURPOSE

Golden Text.—Salvation is of the Lord. —Jonah 2:9

The Lesson as a Whole Approach to the Lesson

The Book of Jonah has a unique place in the Old Testament. It is primarily the book of the divine sovereignty. The confession of the pagan mariners, "Thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee" (Jonah 1:14), is emphasized throughout.

We are told that "the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea" (v. 4); "the Lord had prepared a great fish" (v. 17); "the Lord spake unto the fish" (2:10); "the Lord God prepared a gourd" (4:6); "God prepared a worm" (v. 7); and "God prepared a vehement east wind" (v. 8). It is the Sovereign of the universe who "worketh all things" according to His own will (Eph. 1:11). This answers every question that foolish, unbelieving skeptics might raise regarding the strange experiences recorded.

Typically, Jonah sets forth the great mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, as He Himself tells us in Matthew 12:39, 40. Thus He very definitely puts His seal, His divine imprimatur, on this book, as in verse 41 also, where He confirms the account of the conversion of the Ninevites.

Looked at dispensationally, we may see in Jonah a picture of the obedient Jewish people, who could have been God's messengers to the nations, but instead took the path of self-will and have been swallowed up among the Gentiles, who, however, have never been able to assimilate them. When delivered at last, they will assume the role to which they were originally appointed, and will be used of God to bring the sinner of the Gentile world to repentance and subjection to the King of kings. In no other book of the Old Testament do we have a clearer testimony to the love of God for all men and His desire to bring them to a knowledge of Himself.

Verse by Verse

Jonah 3:3.—"Jonah . . . went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord." This great Assyrian metropolis was one of the most magnificent cities of the ancient world, and probably the most corrupt. Jonah detested the characteristics of its people and had no desire for their salvation. But he obeyed the voice of God and sped on his way.

Verse 4.—"Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." His was a declaration of impending doom, but evidently intended to be a call to repentance with a view to warding off the disaster. Forty, in Scripture, is the number of trial, testing, and probation. God gave the Ninevites forty days to face their sins and thus avert the judgment.

Verse 5.—"The people of Nineveh believed God." There was a marvelous response. The entire city gave heed to the message and received the very word of the living God. The Lord Jesus Christ dwelt upon this, as a warning and encouragement to the people of His day (Matt. 12:41; Luke 11:32).

Verse 6.—"The king . . . sat in ashes." Nineveh's mighty ruler trembled before the prophet's message, and laying aside his royal robes, adopted the Oriental garb that expressed contrition and repentance.

Chap. 4:1.—"It displeased Jonah exceedingly." When all Heaven was rejoicing at the repentance, not of one sinner, but of a vast multitude, we are told that Jonah was very wretched, yet he is altogether unconscious of it. Puffed up with a sense of his own importance, the weal or woe of so many of his fellow-creatures is as nothing compared to his own reputation.

Verse 2.—"I knew that thou art a gracious God." So utterly unconscious is he of the wretchedness of his state of soul, that he can turn to God and express his shameful failure as though he had not failed at all; or even as though the failure, if there were any, was on the part of the Lord Himself.

Verse 3.—"It is better for me to die than to live." It seems almost unbelievable that a servant of God could be in such a frame of mind; but, alas, it was but an aggravated form of that insidious disease,

pride, that so readily finds a congenial place for growth and expansion in the heart of any saint out of communion.

Verse 4.—"Doest thou well to be angry?" The tender question of the Lord might well have broken Jonah down had he not been so thoroughly self-occupied. There is no reproach: just the serious and solemn question that ought to have awakened him at once to his true condition of soul.

Verse 5.—"Jonah went out of the city." On Jonah's part, there was no response in words; but acting in self-will and wounded vanity, he goes outside the city, and, after building a booth, sits under its shadow, to see what would become of Nineveh and of his prophetic reputation.

Verse 6.—"The Lord God prepared a gourd," which growing very rapidly, soon overshadowed the petulant prophet, and thus sheltered him from the fierce rays of the most tropical sun. Because it ministered to his comfort, Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd. This is the first note of joy on his part that we find recorded, and is, in fact, the last as well. His gladness was as truly from selfishness as was his sorrow.

Verses 7 and 8.—"God prepared a worm . . . God prepared a vehement east wind." God next prepared that which would blast this joy. A worm was permitted to destroy the gourd, and then a vehement east wind was likewise prepared by Him, who has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm. The sickening heat almost overcame Jonah, so that he fainted; and in his chagrin and wretchedness he wished once more that he might be permitted to escape his

trials by dying, saying, "It is better for me to die than to live."

Verse 9.—"God said . . . Doest thou well to be angry . . . ?" The prophet's stubborn rejoinder to the Lord's tender inquiry made manifest the fact that he was still harboring resentment, because of God's mercy to Nineveh.

Verse 10.—"Thou hast had pity on the gourd." The previous verses show how troubled Jonah was because God had shown grace to the heathen of Nineveh instead of destroying them. Yet he was concerned greatly about his own comfort and was much distressed when a quick-growing gourd, which had sheltered him from the fierce blaze of the sun, was destroyed.

Verse 11.—"Should not I spare Nineveh . . . ?" God challenged the heart of His servant by emphasizing the ignorance and need of the parents and the little children in that great pagan city. Was he more concerned about a gourd than about 120,000 children, not to speak of the vast numbers of adults? Jonah does not answer, but as he wrote the book, we may see in it the acknowledgment of his grave fault in failing to appreciate the love of God for needy men everywhere.

The Heart of the Lesson

God's love and grace transcend all national boundaries. His heart goes out to all the world. He would have all men repent and come to the knowledge of the truth, that judgment may be averted. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 18:23). He delights in mercy (Mic. 7:18). Judgment is "his strange work" (Isa. 28:21). It is a great pity when His servants fail to recognize this and are more concerned about their own ease

Menonite Tractor Units To Aid West

Volunteer tractor units, organized as a Menonite relief effort, are swinging into action in Southern Manitoba to speed seeding on recently inundated farm lands.

This relief service was announced by C. J. Rempel, manager of the Menonite Central Committee's Canadian headquarters. Mr. Rempel has just returned from touring the flood stricken areas. He has had charge of many Menonite relief projects and feels the need in Manitoba is decidedly acute.

Expect 100 Machines. "From enthusiasm shown by church leaders in the flood district, we expect to have at least 100 tractors participating," said Mr. Rempel. "They will be manned by farmers of the sector and by Menonite students in neighboring communities who have volunteered to help. One of the smaller churches alone has pledged to provide 10 tractors."

Mr. Rempel said seeding in the flood district is "a race against time." The tractor bees were being arranged when he left Winnipeg. He expects they are in full swing by now.

"Our churches have taken an active part in succoring the flood sufferers," Mr. Rempel explained. "Besides that we would like to undertake some activity which is perhaps being missed by other

and reputation than about the needs of men to whom they are commissioned to go as God's messengers.



Your BUILDING SUPPLIES

Joist
Studding
Sheeting
Siding
Flooring
Trim
Moulding

Wallboard
Masonite
Arborite
Tileboard
Plywood
Bric Siding
Asphalt Shingles
Asphalt Rolls

Cement — Lime — Doors — Sash — Prefit Window Units — Blue Coal

P. R. WILSON

Lumber & Fuel

Phone Markham 7233

Locust Hill

agencies. The decision to provide flood but their numbers are by no means predominant in the area to be tractor-helped. "We are operating through the municipalities, rather than through Mennonite circles," he said.

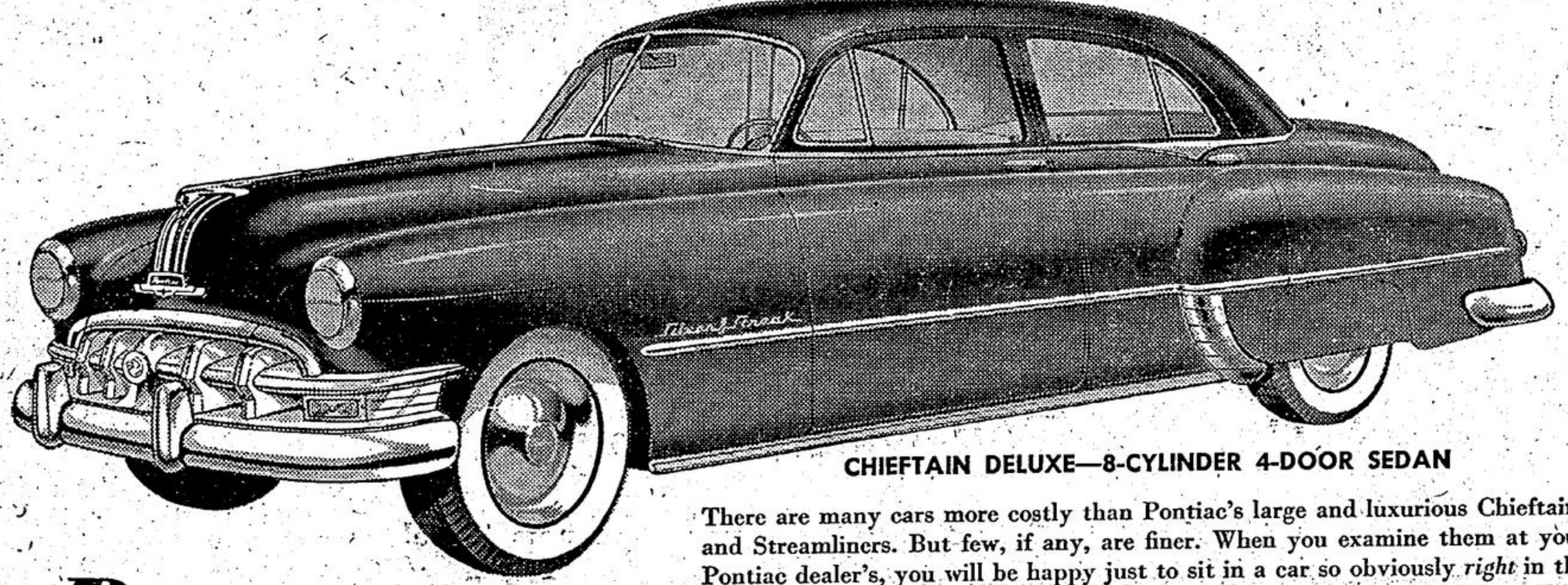
Operate From Three Centres

Tractor brigades will operate from three centres in Southern Manitoba. These are Winkler, Altona and Lowe Farm. In each community local organizations have been set up to supervise the work.

Mr. Rempel said Mennonites have suffered heavily from the

ORDER
Coca-Cola
TRADE MARK REG.
with your groceries

WHY PAY MORE...



CHIEFTAIN DELUXE—8-CYLINDER 4-DOOR SEDAN

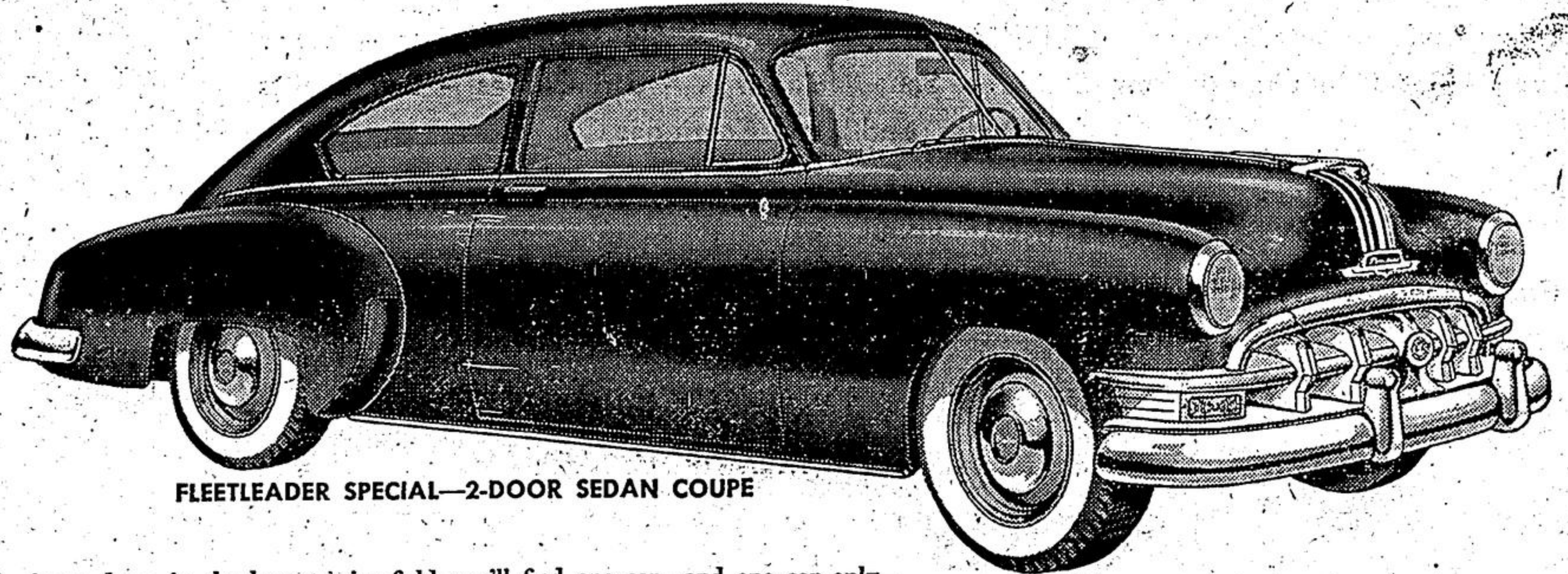
PONTIAC... the most beautiful thing on wheels

There are many cars more costly than Pontiac's large and luxurious Chieftains and Streamliners. But few, if any, are finer. When you examine them at your Pontiac dealer's, you will be happy just to sit in a car so obviously right in the good taste and detailed perfection of its styling and appointments. You will be thrilled to drive a car that is so clearly a superb engineering achievement. You will be proud to own—and to be seen driving—such a fine car. So, ask yourself, what more can more costly cars offer? Why pay more?

The Pontiac Chieftains and Streamliners are offered with a choice of either Six- or Eight-Cylinder L-Head engines; and with *GM Hydra-Matic Drive. *(Optional at extra cost.)

A GENERAL MOTORS VALUE

WHY TAKE LESS?



FLEETLEADER SPECIAL—2-DOOR SEDAN COUPE

Away down in the lowest-price field you'll find one car—and one car only—that brings you everything that matters in a motor car. It is a full-sized six-passenger car! Its styling is famous Silver Streak Styling! Its power is ample, sure, L-head engine power! Its superbly finished bodies are by Fisher! That car is Pontiac's Fleetleader—offered in either standard or deLuxe appointment. It is every inch a Pontiac—yet its price is so low it will startle you! Why take less?

Dollar for Dollar— you can't beat a PONTIAC!

P-450A

What! MY milk rejected?

Don't let bacteria from unsanitized utensils eat holes in your milk cheques. Use

LO-BAX & NOXSOIL

Just before milking, sterilize equipment with a Lo-bax rinse. With 50% available Chlorine, it kills bacteria almost immediately on contact. Right after milking, clean utensils with fast, thorough Noxsoil, the new Dairyman's cleanser.

At your nearest dealer.