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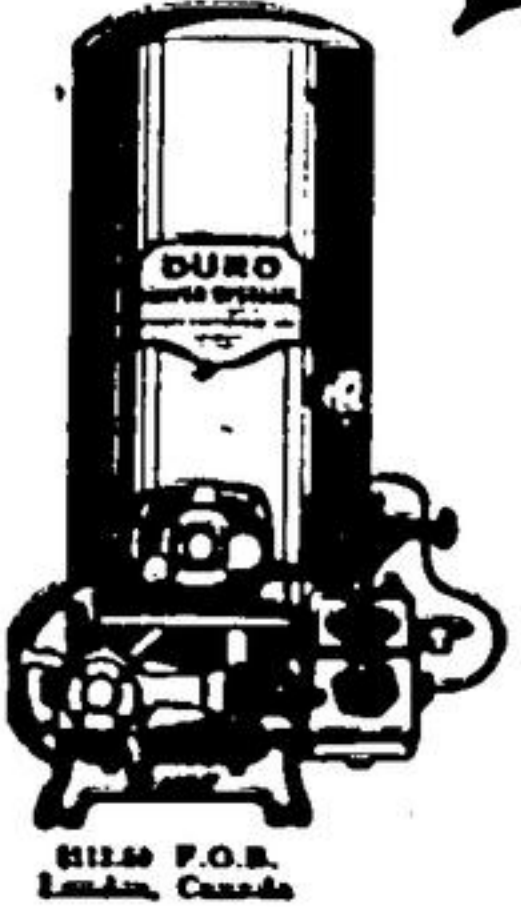


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**DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR**

HUMPHREY MITCHELL  
Minister

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**The Sunday School  
Lesson**

SUNDAY, APRIL 30th, 1950

**WORSHIP THAT PLEASURES GOD**  
Golden Text—Let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. Amos 5:24.

**LESSON TEXT**—Amos 4:4, 5:4-9, 14-15, 21-24.

The words of the chapter are Jehovah's own words (v. 4). They were spoken to the house of Israel, but they teach principles that apply to all people and all ages. It is as true today as it was in the days of Amos that to forsake Jehovah is the way to life, to forsake Jehovah is the way to death. The lesson opens with a command and with a promise. The one who obeys the command will obtain the promise. A wonderful promise it is LIFE. What does it mean to "seek the LORD"? To seek is just the opposite of to forsake (1 Chron. 28:9, 2 Chron. 15:2). It is to turn the face toward Him instead of turning the back upon Him. It is to see His favour by learning to obey His will (2 Chron. 20:3, 34:3). For one who has wandered from Jehovah, to seek the LORD is simply to turn from sin, to turn from our own ways and our thoughts and turn to the LORD in obedience and trust (Isa. 55:7). When we do this, He is ready to abundantly pardon (Isa. 55:6, 7).

There is life for the greatest sinner who will thus seek the LORD. Bethel and Gilgal and Beersheba were all places where idolatrous worship had been established, beginning with Jeroboam's setting up his calf at Bethel (1 Ki. 12:28, 29). To seek these places was to turn the back upon Jehovah. To turn to idolatrous and unscriptural modes of worship today is to turn the back upon God. All these places had sacred memories attached to them. Jehovah Himself had manifested Himself at each of them in one way or another.

In v. 7 we have a striking description of the rulers of that day (R. V.) Is it not a good description of many judges and rulers of our own day? How many there are who seek justice at court, get wormwood instead. To seek the LORD is supreme wisdom, for He is full of power and grace (v. 8). His power is illustrated in four ways: (1) He made the stars, Jehovah made them all. It is well to have Him on our side. It matters little who is against if He is for us. (2) He turneth the shadow of death (the deepest darkness) into the morning with its sunshine and gladness (Ps. 30:5). For how many of us in His wondrous grace, He has done this very thing. (3) "He maketh the day dark with night." He has done this literally again and again, not only in Bible times (Ex. 10:21-23), but recently. (4) He "calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth." This is not merely a beautiful poetic description of rain, but also a profoundly scientific one. God is the Father of the rain. As we are all so utterly dependent upon the rain for food and drink and all things, happy the man who has the author of the rain upon his side. "The LORD" or "Jehovah," the self-existent, eternal—the One who was, is and ever shall be—is His name. Man's strength is nothing against His (v. 9, R. V.).

Sinners always hate the man who rebukes their sin (ch. 7:10-17; 1 Ki. 21:20, 22, 8; 2 Chron. 24:20-22; 25:16; 33:16; Prov. 9:7, 8; Jno. 7:7; 15:10, 22-24). It takes an unusually wise man to love the one who rebukes him. It is poor compliment to a preacher to have the praise of the wicked (Luke 6:26). The one who speaks uprightly will be abhorred to the one who lives crookedly (Jno. 3:18-20). Verse 11 describes many of the rich of today as well as of Amos' day (R. V.). The magnificent houses that they build out of the proceeds of their oppression of the poor will dwell in them. How often this proves literally true. The first half of verse 12 should sink deep into every sinner's heart (R. V.). There is not a sin we commit by day or by night but God knows all about it.

There are three counts in Jehovah's indictment against Israel: (1) "Afflict the just" (cf. God will punish). (2) "Take a bribe." A rapidly growing iniquity in our land. (3) "Turn aside the needy in the gate." The gate was the place of holding court (Deut. 16:18; Ruth 4:1). How difficult it is for a poor man to get justice in courts of law. This is an enormity that God is observing and which he will sternly punish. All that a prudent man can do in such a time is hold his peace and wait upon God, except as God calls him to lift up his voice as a trumpet and show the people their sins (Isa. 58:1). Amos describes his own day as "an evil time." All times are evil until the King whom God appointed shall come (Eph. 5:15, 16; 2 Tim. 3:1; 1 Jno. 5:19). But while the times are evil the individual may be good (vs. 14, 15). The thing for us to do in this evil time is to "seek good and not evil." The result will be that Jehovah, God of hosts, "will be with us" even in this time (cf. Gen. 38:2, 3, 23; Phil. 4:8, 9).

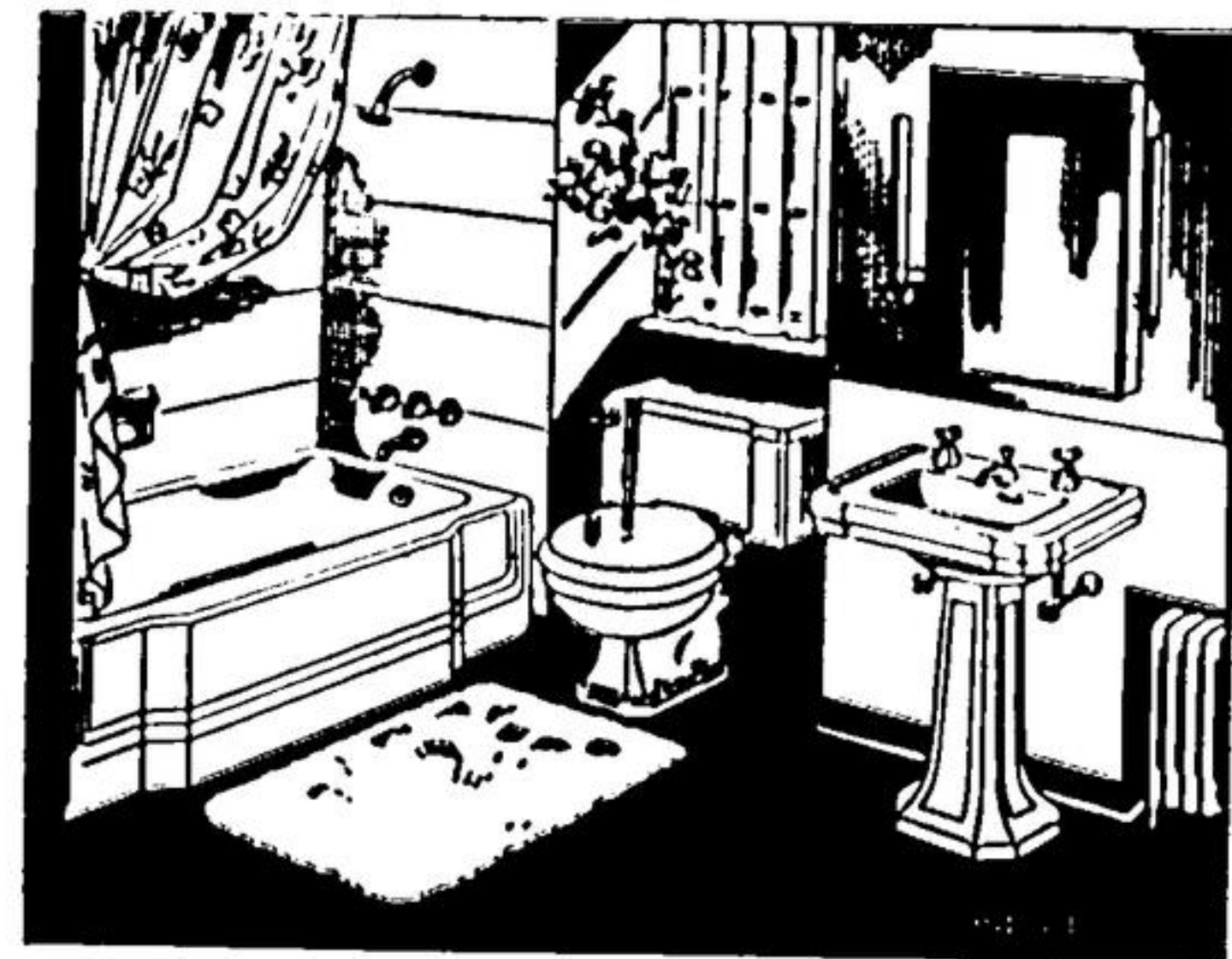
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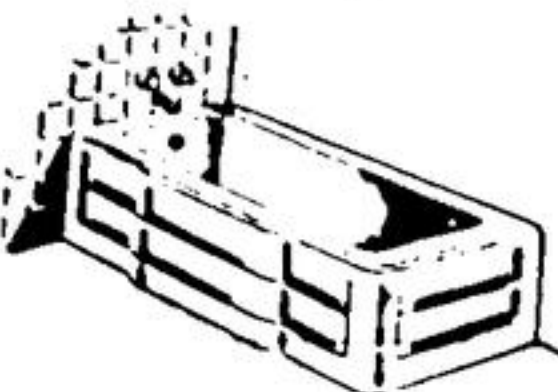
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