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MAY 15TH to SEPTEMBER 15TH

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GEORGETOWN POLICE COMMISSION

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

By Rev. R. O. Todd

THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

LESSON . . . Amos, Chapters 5-8

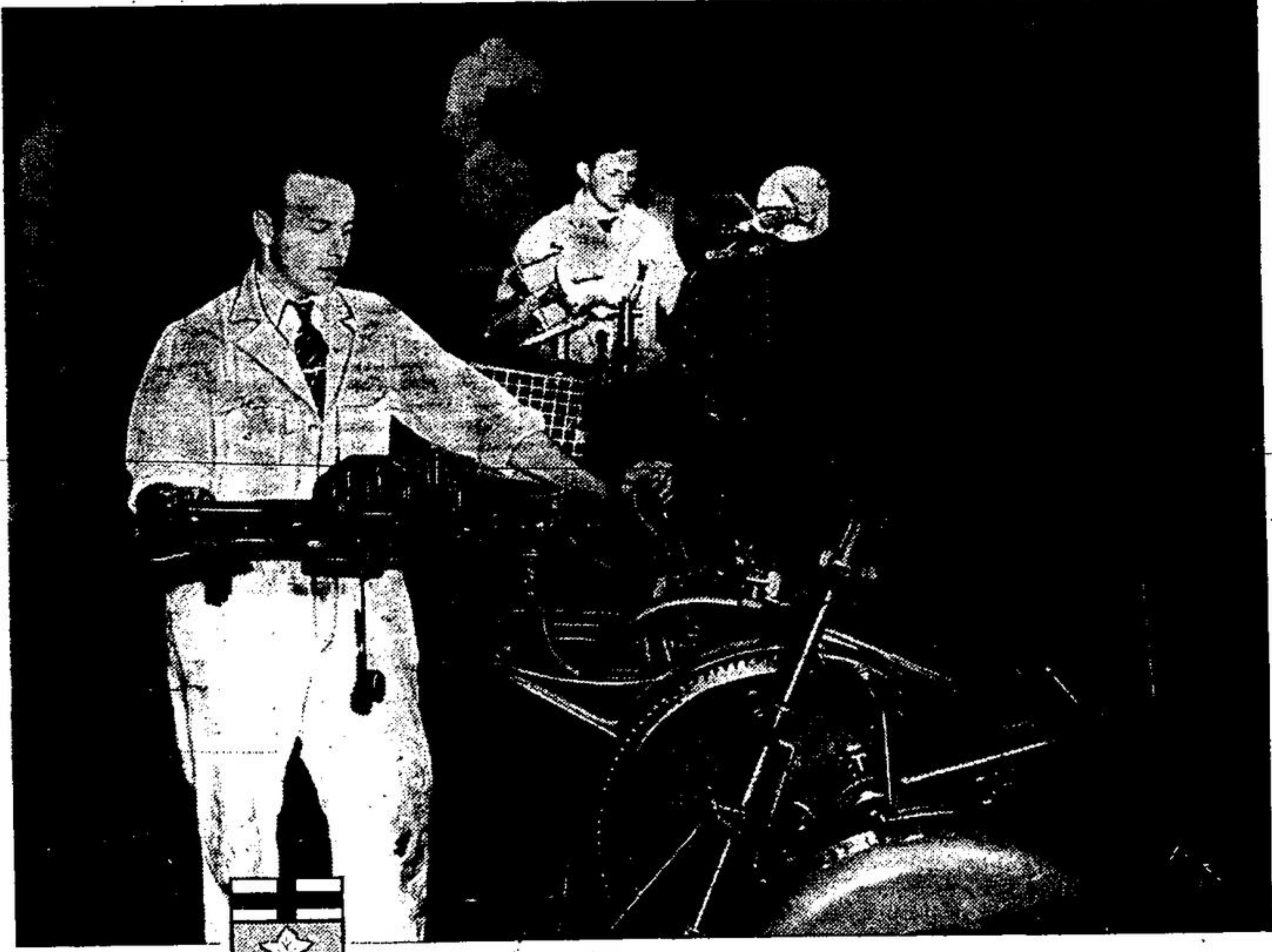
Nearly a hundred years after the successful revolution in the northern kingdom, inspired by the prophet Elisha, and carried out by Jehu against the House of Omri, we find Israel enjoying an era of peace and prosperity. Suddenly, in this situation there is heard the voice of a shepherd named Amos, from the wilds of the southern kingdom. With prophetic voice Amos warns against the results of the social injustice which has issued from falling away from the God of righteousness: He sees a new imperial power arising— Assyria— and announces that Israel will one day fall before this power. He sees Assyria as the instrument of God's justice, bringing judgment upon Israel for forsaking social righteousness. Not a military man nor a political leader, he does not seek to arouse the people against Assyria; rather does he seek to arouse them to a consciousness of their sin, to repentance, to a realization of where they stand before God. He sees that social injustice has so eaten away the moral heart of the nation, that no military preparation will avail for their defence in the crisis that is coming.

As Amos depicts conditions in Israel in his time, we find that prosperity was manifested only in the fact that the rich lived in great luxury at the expense of the poor who were oppressed, and often sold into slavery. (Amos 3: 15; 5: 11) Law-courts were a mockery (5: 8-15) Dishonest commercial practices and profiteering were rampant. (8: 4, 5) So far as the religious life was concerned, it was purely formalistic; there was an outrageous contradiction between popular piety and national morality; financial support to religious ceremonials was lavish, and the shrines were crowded with worshippers. (4: 4, 5; 5: 21-23) Everyone regarded the situation with complacency and optimism (8: 1; 9: 10) They did not realize the seriousness of the moral and spiritual decay of the nation. So Amos announced that some day the judgment of God would take a very real and historical form. When the Assyrian threat on the horizon materialized, then the people would realize the weakness into which their sins had betrayed them. Impossible of thinking the crisis and "darkening" at the hands of the Assyrian, they should find that the God of righteousness is not mocked.

Amos also predicted in chap. 8 vs. 11-12, that the time would come when the Word of God would neither be proscribed nor feared and communion with God would be cut off— a religious famine. It could not be for any lack of support of religious ceremonials, as Amos calls attention to the zeal with which these were supported. But this outward show represented no real seriousness about the God of righteousness. It disregarded the claims of God's righteousness. The life of the people and of the nation in all spheres was in contradiction to the solemn observances of religion which were lavishly performed. The people have failed to be doers of God's Word therefore they will one day cease to be hearers. God is not mocked!

Amos speaks with appropriateness to our own age. Covetousness and profiteering are rampant in our social order. Those who practice them may support the Church and religious ceremonials, but they are ignoring the claims of the God of righteousness. Several weeks ago Bethlehem Steel Corporation announced that the NET earnings for the first quarter of 1947 were larger than for any quarter in the company's history, but regretted that it was impossible to lower the cost of steel because of the high cost of labour. The hypocrisy and covetousness expressed in those words makes one wonder how many other Canadian and U.S. industries are taking the same attitude. This sort of immorality is far worse in its weakening effect upon the nation's morale than intemperance or sexual immorality. A commercialism which looks only for private gain, even though it be at the cost of workers and public, is destructive. One thinks also of the significance of the "black-market" thriving in the midst of a desperate war effort; economically and morally, that was no small matter. Some died while others profited. God is not mocked by ignoring his righteousness in such a way. The nation which allowed the "black-market" will discover itself judged by God.

It is well to ponder the fact that while Amos saw the political danger to Israel from a foreign power in the future, it was the internal evils of Israel that he denounced, realizing that the most essential preparation Israel could make was not military but moral and spiritual. He saw that



HANDS AT WORK...

LEARNING TO PRINT

ONTARIO'S future prosperity depends directly on a sufficient volume of production to satisfy domestic needs and assure for Canada a pre-eminent place in the markets of the world. Every individual product of Ontario's manufacturing plants requires the services of printing at some or many stages of its development . . . order forms . . . production forms . . . invoices . . . shipping bills . . . advertising . . . publishing. The whole printing industry is faced with unprecedented demands . . . and to meet those demands skilled hands are needed. For them great opportunities lie ahead. Higher wages, job security, better working conditions are within easier reach of those who have mastered a skilled occupation.

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Vocational training courses in the arts, professions and trades are offered at training centres located in the following cities and towns in Ontario: Toronto, Hamilton, Kitchener, Windsor, Ft.-William, Brockville, North Bay, Ottawa.

LAST MINUTE NEWS OF THE Sport of Kings



MAJOR TRACK RESULTS



HANDICAPS



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GM-46-1W


without a moral and spiritual reform no military measure would avail. Today we are having our attention drawn to potential danger outside our country. If someone tells us that world peace is being menaced by Russia, or by the possibility of a fascist restoration, we hail him as a prophet. True prophecy, however, turns the searchlight first of all upon the moral and spiritual evils of our society, for these evils make us vulnerable to outside attack. Whatever may be the necessity for real military precautions today, they will never cure the spiritual and moral decay which is taking place through our disregard of the claims of God's righteousness. If Russia is a political danger in the future, we shall never be able to deal with her adequately unless we first of all deal with the real and present dangers to our peace and freedom— the profiteers in commerce. If we fail to deal with them, Russia will be the instrument of God's judgment. The axe (sickle) will be laid to the tree!

Is our religious life of today being corrupted by a failure to be serious about the righteousness of God? Are we approaching a time of famine of the word of God? Already the majority of people do not understand what the Church is all about. We shall not be likely to understand more clearly to-morrow unless to-day we become more serious about the bearing of the gospel upon the life of man. Unless we get a clear understanding to-day of the Christian life, and faithfully practice what we understand, we shall understand less clearly to-morrow. The time for understanding what the claims of God's righteousness are, and for according to them, is now; not at some future date when statesmen and economists on their own initiative and by their own reason have settled world affairs. That future date will never come; and we may die in increasing ignorance of the faith which we professed with our lips but never truly grasped with our understanding, or carried into effect. World affairs will never be settled by the initiative and reason of statesmen and economists. They will be settled only by the nations (beginning with our own) according to the righteousness of God.

FIRE BRIGADE CALLED ON MONDAY

The Fire Brigade answered a call to the home of Mrs. Burgess, Main St. South, Monday noon. A bonfire at the rear of the house had spread and with a stiff wind blowing, was endangering some sheds on the premises. The fire was extinguished by a group of neighbours before the brigade arrived, and no damage resulted.

President of A.I.C.



J. F. Booth, Ph.D., of Ottawa, Associate Director, Marketing Service, Dominion Department of Agriculture, who has been elected president of the Agricultural Institute of Canada. Dr. Booth was brought up on farms in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and graduated from the University of Saskatchewan in 1918. After serving as Agricultural Representative in Saskatchewan for a Commission of the co-operation and Markets Branch for that province. A few years later he took post graduate work at Cornell University, N.Y. and subsequently became senior economist in the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

In 1926 he was appointed head of the Economic Division, Dominion Department of Agriculture, and since that time has been a representative voice in behalf of Canadian agriculture.