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MOUNTAIN SHADOWS

"And when Gaal saw the men, he said to Zebul, Look men are coming down from the mountain tops! And zebul said to him, You see the shadow of the mountains as if they were men." Judges 9:36 (RSV)

Before the days of Robinson Reminders and all the other gadgets we now have
to help us remember what we ought to remember we used to "tie a string on a finger."
The sight of that string - or perhaps we "changed rings" - was supposed to call
out attention to something we sere supposed to do. Now we have all these notepeg boards
books, magnetic bulletin boards, andxait , and other modern ways of reminder.
But there are other things we need to remember that are greater than just an
errand or a grocery list. Se we develop symbols to help us remember. We have
symbols for traffic safety. Do you recall the advertisement that one oil company
used a year or so ago in which were depicted all the different types of traffic
signs -- stop, railroad crossing , curve, and many others. Each one has a distinctive shape so that if you learn this symbol you do not have to read the printing on the sign.

Our country erects monuments to remind us. This is a very old custom. Way back in the Old Testament when the children of Israel passed over Jordan Joshua was commanded to set up twelve stones, "that this may be a sign among you, when your children ask in time to come, "What do those stones mean to you?' Then you shall tell them that the water es fht dordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. ...So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial forever." (Joshua 4:6-7)

Today I want to give you a new symbol. I discovered this symbol a long time ago. It is particularly useful here in the part of the country where we live. It is a handy symbol - you do not need to carry it with you. It is the shadows on the

The basis for this symbol comes from an old, old story in the Book of Judges.

I know people who like to watch Westerns on TV. Well I want to tell you that the
Old Testament has some stories that make our modern Westerns seem pretty tame.

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This story concerns three people named Abimelech, Gaal, and Zebul. You probably never heard of these people. On the other hand most of you have heard of Gideon.

Gideon was a great hero. Abimelech was Gideon's son. When his father died Abimelech tried to take over his father's power. As a matter of fact he succeeded for a few years. He was not content to be just a chieftan or a "judge", he wanted to be king. He started out by hiring mercenaries and murdered all but one of his half-brothers—there were seventy of them. The city of Shecham then declared him king. He represents the first real attempt at kingship in Israel. You see the idea of a king was a Canaanite

AMATAL idea and city of Shecham was a Canaanite city. The real value of the story for the ancient people was that it showed the disastrous result of a union of the Israelites with idolaters.

Within this story there are several other stories. You should read the 9th chapter of Judges just to read Jotham's parable or fable of the trees. That is a sermon in itself. This morning I am interested in a story telling how a man named Gaal tried to rebel against Abimelech. We do not know who Gaal was because this is the only time he is mentioned. He really was no better than Abimelech so I cannot present, as a hero. He was just another greedy man who wanted to get power for himself. He did it in the classic manner. There was some discontent in Shechem so Gaal moved in and the book/us "the men of Shechem put confidence in him." It is the old. old story of rebellion. The ruler of the city was a man named Zebul. He sent messengers to Abimelech to warn him and to give him a plan in order to put down the rebellion. One morning Gaal went out and stood in the entrance of the gate of the city and Abimelech's forces started to move in. This is what we read-"And when Gaal saw the men, he said to Zebul, Look, mean are coming down from the mountain tops! And Zebul said to him, You see the shadow of the mountains as if they were men." The stragem worked and Abimilech defeated Gaal. Abimelech went on to some victories and final defeat at the hands of a woman. But look at the lesson from the shadows on the mountains.

Jesus was said, "When you wee a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, A shower is coming; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, There will be scorching heat; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky; but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?" This is a great concern -- to be able to tell shadows from men, to be able to recognize danger and distinguish between it a mere anxiety, to be aware in our lives of the direction from which the attack will come. Never any more do I look at the mountains and see the shadows and not ask myself, "Am I alert to the real dangers in my life?"

See #216 Mountain Shadows "and when Goal saw the men, he said to yelre, fook men Le coming down from the mountain tops! and Jelul said to him, you see the shadow of the mountains as if They were men." Judges 9:36 (RSV) World's Great Rel. Portry - P. 642. "Shalow, organized the visions, against altimately by the descention of the home of the shalow of fine they, who came wind a short force and affected the relate under some or of the home, and the while we will be shall shalow, and thinks we want to have been appropriate the wife thereto was and the hardware was to keen approached when of the hardware was to keen approached when of the hardware was to keen approached with of the hardware. Some of paine (und in 1930) Some of painte (1730) 1-renerysleymi 3- vind V-political conjustice 5- rocial injustice 2- godensie Function of Religion an appeal to forelist frankly and not be fooled by Old Testament I tistory " Bilevis son by a Canaarite woman of Sheelom and ingress the death of his failer, anded by his maternal of his half brother - are except Joshum - and war made being of Shechem. He story of his right, which hoeall the marker of antiquity, is one of rivolvy, diesension, and bloodship Ik represents the first real artempt at kingship

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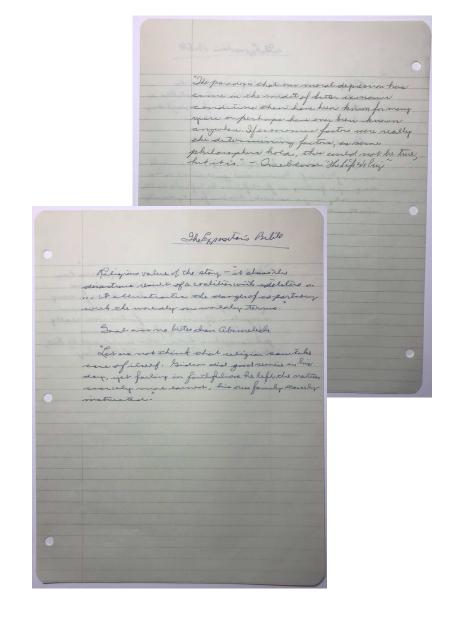
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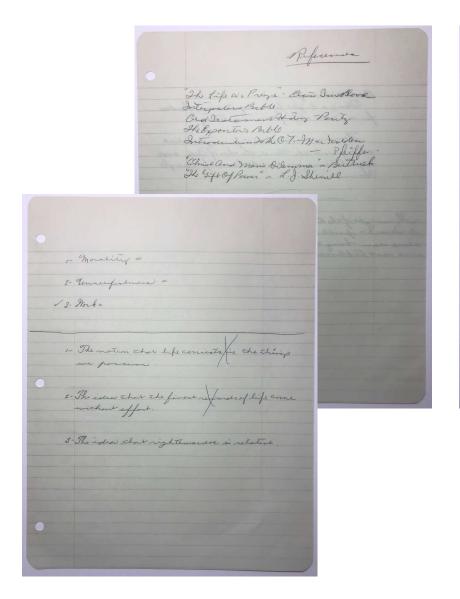
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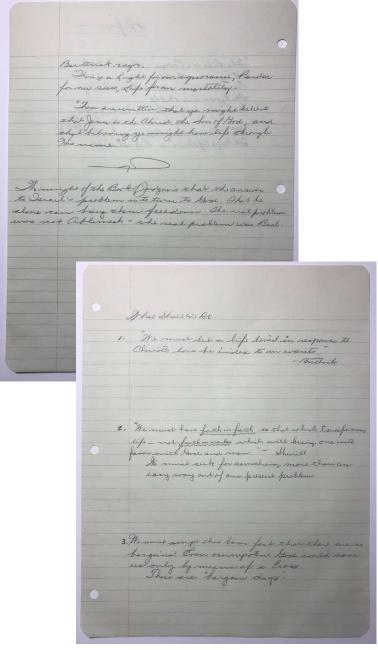
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"These taking refuse is the shade of the bramble which branches a protection in is possible from the which to the lught of about tity. On the obey from the worlders bramble may harbor as fire which can workless bramble may harbor as fire which can succept to destruction enter the mighty cedars of Jodamis Jable. The fact that the warful trees would not abrundess thing of kingslip is the thinking of sevel or the line "Thewards of the brien, Trush is my shedow, seek refige there, contained a deep irony, the turk of which the Slachemites were very sounds desired. Der PD 17:8 "To keep oh sail raint our of human attitudes and elationships requires the introduction of a miss and tension which surrounded abimelection bufapour of power were remembable, in view of the author of judges " regarded the will spirit us to inevitability of a Sulp drama.







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" and when Isaal saw the more, he said to Jehre, food men are; soming down from the mountains tops! and gelil said toling you see the shadows of che mountains as if chery werl A. Well, they were not shadars They were real - abimilects Defeated Goal. c. Shadows on the mountain the symbol of my failure to discover the real surgers is our have jesus once said: "You know has to interpret the appearand of earth and sky; but may to you not know how to interpret the present time? Canwe tell shadows from Can we distinguish between danger and mere anxiety? are we aware, is our lives non which direction the attack

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Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his. He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding Seek ye the Lord while he may be found call ye upon him while he is near For great is the Lord, and greatly to "O Lord, open thou our lips and purify our hearts, that we may worthily magnify thy holy name; and help us to be reverent in thought, word, and act, and to worship thee now and always in the faith and spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord. OFFERTORY SENTENCES They shall not appear before the Lord empty: every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee. Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most Migh. Scripture: I Peter 5:56-11

8/25/57

CALL TO WORSHIP