

VIRGINIA LIGHT
NEWSLETTER OF THE ORIENT OF VIRGINIA

Volume XIV, Issue 2

Summer 2026



CONFERENCE
Registration and
Information



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Sovereign Grand Inspector General Orient of Virginia Illustrious Alan W. Adkins, 33°, GC

My Brethren,

The Scottish Rite Workshop was held on Saturday, March 28, 2026, at Acca Shrine Center in Richmond with good representation from the nine Valleys. We were pleased to have Illustrious and Most Worshipful Matthew T. Szramoski, 33°, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Virginia, to bring greetings on behalf of the Brethren. The highlight of the workshop was the presentation by Brother Philip A. Shortt, 32°, KCCH, Director of Development, Scottish Rite Foundation. Brother's Shortt remarks were well received. I extend my appreciation to Illustrious and Most Worshipful Clifford A. "Skip" Parker, 33°, Orient Personal Representative, for presiding over the Workshop while I was attending the Rite Works Leadership Conference in Dallas, Texas.

On my behalf, Illustrious Brother Parker shared with the attendee's information on several topics, which included: the Rite Works Leadership Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina on April 10-11, the 225th Anniversary of the Supreme Council on May 31 in Charleston, South Carolina (to be live-streamed), and the upcoming Rite Care Programs/Summer Camps scheduled for June and July.

Right Worshipful Leonard A. Rowe, 33°, Treasurer of the Virginia Scottish Rite Foundation, submitted a report on the activities and financial condition of the foundation. The market value of the investment portfolio grew 12.23% the past twelve months. The Foundation has budgeted \$164,000 in 2026 to support the Rite Care Programs/Summer Camps at Longwood University, James Madison University, Old Dominion University, Radford University, and the Richmond Scottish Rite Clinic.

Right Worshipful William A. "W. A." Wells, II, 33°, Conference President, shared details about the 102nd Scottish Rite Conference of Virginia to be held on September 27-29 at the Caesars Casino Virginia in Danville. Please make plans to attend.

Illustrious and Most Worshipful Douglas V. Jones, 33°, Conference Secretary-Treasurer, Illustrious and Right Worshipful John R. "Richard" Rawls, 33°, Orient Membership Chairman, Worshipful Jay Patterson, 32° KCCH, Orient Public Relations Chairman, and Right Worshipful Gerald L. "Jerry" Frey, 32° KCCH, Editor of the Virginia Light, were recognized and given a round of applause for their efforts on behalf of the Orient.



"Lead me, follow me, or get out of my way."
General George S. Patton

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Deadline for next issue:

Fall	August 1
Winter	November 1
Spring	February 1
Summer	May 1

Scottish Ain't Necessarily From Scotland!

Most outsiders—and even many Freemasons—assume that the fraternity's name, Scottish Rite, honors the roots of the group and that the fraternity originated in Scotland. Masonic historians throughout the world still seek the positive answer to this question. The use of the word "Scottish" has led many Masons to believe that the Rite originated in Scotland and that Scotland remains the fountainhead of its activity. Such is not the case.

The earliest documented records trace the actual beginnings of the Scottish Rite to Bordeaux, France, about the middle of the Eighteenth Century. Actually, the first reference to the Rite appears in old French records where the word "Ecosais" (pronounced a-ko-say) – meaning Scottish or tartan – and is found in the French titles of some of the degrees of the Rite of Perfection. During the latter part of the Seventeenth Century, when the British Isles were torn by strife, many Scots fled to France and resumed their Masonic interests in that country. One or two of the degrees are long supposed to have been devised by the Chevalier Andrew Michael Ramsay, a learned Scotsman, tutor to Prince Charles Edward, the Young Pretender. These degrees seem to have afforded a meeting place for those in exile in France, who were adherents of the Stuarts and who were plotting for the restoration of James II and his son to the throne of England.

From France, Scottish Rite Freemasonry was carried to French possessions in the West Indies and thence to the United States. The first Supreme Council was established in Charleston, South Carolina in 1801 and all other regular Supreme Councils throughout the world are descended from it. It is of interest to note that the Supreme Council for Scotland did not come into existence until 1846 and thus does not hold any priority which would call for the work of the Rite to be performed in that country.

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Dates to Save

- May 10** Mother's Day
- May 25** Memorial Day
- June 10** Scottish Rite Day, Longwood University
- June 11** Scottish Rite Luncheon, Old Dominion University
- June 21** Father's Day
- June 30** Radford University Summer Camp
- July 4** Independence Day
- September 27 thru 29** Virginia Scottish Rite Conference at Caesar's Casino in Danville, Virginia.

A Call to Service: The Knight Commander of the Court of Honour

Illustrious Wesley Howard Latchford, 33°

In the journey of a Master of the Royal Secret in the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, certain milestones are reached not through the simple progression of degrees, but through a life lived in commitment to the Fraternity's ideals. The Investiture as a Knight Commander of the Court of Honour, abbreviated as being a "KCCH" is one such distinction that is reserved for Masters of the Royal Secret who distinguish themselves through zeal, devotion, and active service to humanity.

Contrary to common misconceptions, this investiture is neither a degree nor a "half-degree." It carries no promise of future advancement to the 33° Inspector General Honorary, though it remains a mandatory prerequisite for that honor. Instead, it is a recognition of merit, where candidates must be nominated by a Sovereign Grand Inspector General and unanimously approved by the Supreme Council.

One of the most unique aspects Knight Commander of the Court of Honour investiture is its accessibility, standing as one of the few ceremonies of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry that is open to the public. As Illustrious Sam Welty of the Valley of Norfolk – who serves in the role of Sovereign Grand Commander in the Knight Commander of the Court of Honour investiture – notes, "So little in Masonry is available to non-Masons that over the years, endless rumors and conspiracy theories have clouded public opinion of our membership." By inviting family and friends, the Rite shares the further light it seeks to spread throughout the world.

Illustrious Phil Taylor, Personal Representative for the Valley of Norfolk, echoes this sentiment, explaining that "making the investiture public... shows that these values are not secretive or exclusive." He emphasizes that while many rituals are tiled to preserve esoteric teachings, this ceremony is about honor and responsibility – not secret instruction. "It serves as a visual testament that "the principles of Freemasonry are meant to be lived openly."

It is a call to action that reminds every Knight that leadership in the Craft is earned through deeds, not titles.



A Call to Service: The Knight Commander of the Court of Honour

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As the Grand Chancellor in the Ceremony of Investiture, I am present the exemplar with the red cap of a Knight Commander of the Court of Honour which is a symbol of the red robe or kirtle donned by the postulant Knight in the ancient ceremony of investiture representing his own blood which the Knight declared he was ready to shed on behalf of the Church. "But for the Knight Commander of the Court of Honour the blood red cap is a symbol of that nobility of soul which is the parent of all the Knightly virtues." When I place it on his head, the newly invested Knight Commander of the Court of Honour is admonished that by wearing the red cap he is "to be reminded of the zeal which he is to should now, greater than ever, in the cause of the Scottish Rite, and to demonstrate that he is not an ingrate who has forgotten the cause nor the men who have honored it." A further emphasis that becoming a Knight Commander of the Court of Honour is not the culmination of a life's work, but merely the beginning of the next phase of expectation and commitment.

Illustrious Welty also highlights a favorite, slightly more "comedic" moment when he is afforded the opportunity to offer a gentle reprimand of Brethren present who may be distracted when the Knights Commander of the Court of Honour are called to stand as a unified body. "As the Sovereign Grand Commander of the investiture, I get the occasional guilty pleasure of gently reprimanding those Brethren who are 33o Inspector Generals Honorary who fail to stand because they have been distracted from the fact that they, too, are also Knights Commander of the Court of Honour. This is a fun moment of course, but to me, it has a value well beyond the momentary levity."

Illustrious Welty continues, "This moment of being shaken back into awareness, or perhaps startled by our own lapse in attention, creates a wonderful reminder for those who are able to see past the laughter, that we are here for each other, that we are stronger together, and that the united efforts of those who can best work and best agree, can and will accomplish our goals of true liberty, just equality, and sincere Fraternity. While lighthearted, this moment of being shaken back into awareness serves a deeper purpose. It reminds the Knights – regardless of title, decorations, or distinctions – that they are stronger together and that their united efforts are required to achieve 'true liberty, just equality, and sincere Fraternity'."

The ceremony itself is designed to create a shared emotional experience. A particularly moving moment occurs when a single Brother is requested to respond for the entire class. This, according to Illustrious Taylor, "transforms a formal ritual into a human connection" and "emphasizes unity, showing that the honor is about collective commitment rather than personal glory."

Ultimately, becoming a Knight Commander of the Court of Honour is not meant to be a destination. As Illustrious Taylor aptly puts it, "This is not the culmination of a journey, but a new beginning of deeper service." It is a call to action that reminds every Knight that leadership in the Craft is earned through deeds, not titles.

One of the most unique aspects Knight Commander of the Court of Honour investiture is its accessibility, standing as one of the few ceremonies of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry that is open to the public.

Lost Hero: The Mason Who Backed the Revolution

Illustrious Walter J. Klein, 33°

There is not a word about him in Mackey's or Coil's Masonic encyclopedias. No Lodges are named after him. And yet he has been a Masonic and national hero since the earliest days of America's revolutionary movement.

No one has ever doubted his heroic contributions to the Revolution, however the Masonic Fraternity has, for two hundred and thirty-five years, somehow missed honoring him as the brave financier of the Revolution while he was affiliated with Maryland Lodge No. 2, Ancient York Rite.

Who is this Mason who served his nation in its most fragile and endangered years? Brother Haym Salomon.

Born in Lissa, Poland, in 1740 and of Portuguese descent, he left his homeland after its partition in 1772. Salomon's family was highly respected with many learned people. He enjoyed the friendship of Gen. Thaddeus Kosciuszko and Gen. Casimir Pulaski, two other Polish-born American patriots.

He settled in New York where he met and married Rachel Franks, daughter of Moses B. Franks of London whose brother Jacob Franks was a lieutenant colonel on General Washington's staff. Rachel was the sister of Colonel Isaac Franks, judge of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Moses and Jacob

Franks were sons of Adam Franks of Germany, a friend of King George of Hanover, who loaned that monarch the most valuable jewels in his coronation crown. Jacob Franks was the British king's sole agent for the Northern Colonies at New York and his son David was the king's agent for Pennsylvania. One would think that with such comfort and security in the new world Hyam Salomon would swear allegiance to the British crown. He did not.

Salomon bravely joined the American cause, a decision which led to his financial destruction. He was arrested and imprisoned as a spy soon after the occupation of New York by the British in 1776. Salomon was closely confined for a long period of time in the prison known as Provost which stood on the spot later occupied by the New York Hall of Records in City Hall Park. There Salomon and his fellow prisoners laid down every night to sleep, their bones aching on hard oak planks instead of a bed. They were so tightly wedged as a solid mass of bodies that they could turn right or left only on command.



Lost Hero: The Mason Who Backed the Revolution

Continued from page 6.

Salomon knew English, Polish, German, Russian, Spanish, and Italian. Hessian General Leopold Philip von Heister heard of that and appointed him to the commissariat department of the British forces. There he rendered much service to American and French prisoners and helped many to escape. He created dissention among the Hessian officers, prompting several to resign from the service.

In 1778 Salomon was taken by British General Sir Henry Clinton on charges that he had received orders from General Washington to burn fleets and destroy warehouses, "which he had attempted to execute to their great damage and injury." He was then put back in prison, tortured, and condemned to hang.

Yet on August 11 he bribed his jailer and escaped to Philadelphia, possibly with the help of his close friend General Alexander McDougall, commander of the American army of New York. Two weeks later he petitioned the Continental Congress to permit him to work for the cause. Congress did not accept Salomon's offer, but it turned out that rejection worked to the benefit of the young republic and to Salomon as well. He established himself in business, becoming one of the greatest financiers of his adopted city. He was entrusted with the negotiation of all the war subsidies of France and Holland solely on his personal integrity. Several European financial houses trusted and did business through him. When Robert Morris became America's superintendent of finance, he had seventy-five transactions with Salomon between August 1781 and April 1784.

In his 1911 book, Haym Salomon, *The Financier of the Revolution*, the Reverend Madison C. Peters wrote:

"Salomon's matchless enterprise, eminent respectability, remarkable intelligence, irreproachable integrity, his delicate sense of mercantile honor, his unbounded benevolence for all mankind, and, above all, his undying hatred of English tyranny, soon led to his recognition by the leading men of his time, and the uncompromising, implacable foe to British dominion was brought into intimate relationships with the Revolutionary patriots."

Reverend Peters also wrote:

"Not only did Salomon advance large sums to the Government for which he received no return, but the services of James Madison, Edmund Randolph, Generals Mifflin, St. Clair and others were retained in the cause through his bounty."

In a 1791 letter Madison wrote:

"The kindness of our friend in Front Street [Brother Salomon] is a fund that will preserve me from extreme necessities, but I never resort to it without

Lost Hero: The Mason Who Backed the Revolution

great mortification as he obstinately refuses all recompense. To necessitous delegates he gratuitously spares from his private stock.”

Henry Wheaton said:

“Judge Wilson, so distinguished for his labors in the Convention that framed the Federal Constitution, would have retired from public service had he not been sustained by the timely aid of Haym Salomon, as delicately as it was generously administered.”

The secret support of King Charles III of Spain for the American cause was said to have been due to Salomon’s efforts. Indeed, Brother Salomon was friends with all foreign powers in sympathy with the American Revolution at one time or another. Brother James Madison, twice President of the United States, considered the most learned and patriotic member of the Revolutionary Congress, said of Salomon, “When any member was in need, all that was necessary was to call upon Salomon.”

Was this remarkable man ultimately rewarded for all he gave and gave up? Sadly no, Brother Haym Salomon died January 6, 1785, at the age of forty-five. He was bankrupt and left his wife and four children penniless. He was recognized posthumously with a U.S. commemorative stamp hailing him as a “Financial Hero, and by a statue of him and Robert Morris, the financiers of the revolution, with George Washington.

His obituary in *Philadelphia’s Independent Gazetteer* is a tribute to the esteem in which he was held by all.

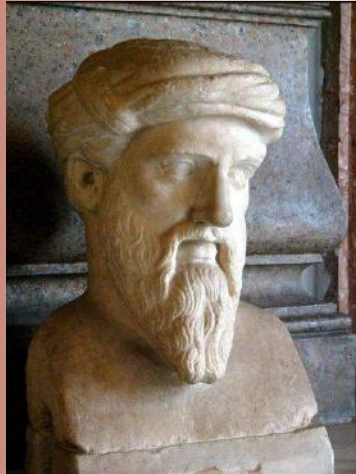
Thursday, last, expired, after a lingering illness, Mr. Haym Solomon, an eminent broker of this city, was a native of Poland, and of the Hebrew nation. He was remarkable for his skill and integrity in his profession, and for his generous and humane deportment. His remains were yesterday deposited in the burial ground of the synagogue of this city.



**L-R: Robert Morris,
Brother George Washington, and
Brother Haym Salomon.**

What Makes the Soul Immortal?

What makes the soul immortal? Why is the body not, but the ideas we all share about spirituality have so much in common across so many disparate cultures? Comparative religious studies and perennialism, the philosophy of an immemorial wisdom that exists in all religions and philosophies, have done much to try and answer these questions. In perennialism, Pythagoras and Plato are renowned for their timeless insights into the human condition.

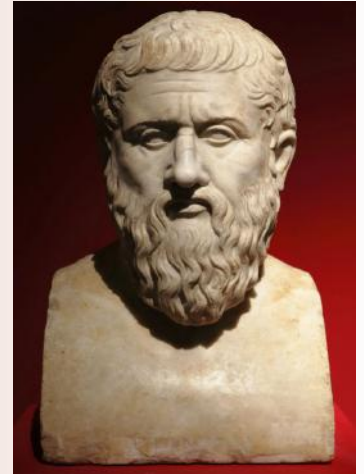


Pythagoras

Brother Ryan Ykstis

“For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?” – *Psalm 6:5*

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Plato

philosophies, have done much to try and answer these questions. In perennialism, Pythagoras and Plato are renowned for their timeless insights into the human condition. While not much of Pythagoras's philosophy survives in writing, not only due to the strict secrecy he imposed on his adherents but also due to the persecution of politicians in his day to his death, Plato on the other hand may be able to help us, as his writings are prolific and well-preserved.

“In my distress I cried unto the Lord, and He heard me. Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips and from a deceitful tongue.” – *Psalm 120:1,2*

Plato's dialogues are among the most unique in all of philosophy, as he never wrote about ineffable subjects such as immortality in any direct manner, but rather he wrote in myths. No dialogue was meant to be taken as literally happening or even discussing subjects literally: everything was symbolic of other concepts. Later students distilled several core concepts in his philosophy, especially that of the ideal vs. the real: that what we see here in the teal world is but a passing shadow and poor imitation of its archetype in the *Ideal World of Forms*, which is eternal, undying and infinite. In many a sense, the Ideal World is far more “real” than the real world itself.

“They speak vanity every one with his neighbour with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.” – *Psalm 12:2*

Brethren, all of us are but passing shadows and imperfect reflections of our ideal selves, and this will be so for all of time... and yet, we as Masons know that we possess immortal souls, not just are reflections of them. God is with us when we pray and act in His Holy Name, and so we walk day by day with the gighest ideal, if we use the lessons of the Craft wisely and actually attempt to unfold the mysteries of godliness as our brethren hope that we will. We are not called to merely adhere to our obligations: we are called to godliness, to find our perfect ashlar within our rough ashlar, and to use Brotherly Love and Affection to spread our light and share a piece of the divine with those who would listen.

Become the myth you want to see in the world, Brethren. Find your ideal self and shine on.

Word Puzzle

P E R F E C T M A S T E R J J K M F N W A V
 Q E T U S B B L E Y R N O F A L S E L L X M
 F S E N O B L E T M U I P B V D E W M J Q C
 I D R E W M U I J B I M E Y T I E D R E Z B
 D V I R T U E S L O W V T K P R Q R E E Q C
 E M U A T Y P D Q L E I M T I S Z L F R N O
 L N E L R P D E P T N E N Y U W N G G G T M
 I M I T A T E W I A W D E W R N A K Y E Y P
 T C E I Z L A Q M R Y L W P A M I L I D M A
 Y X S O A O T U P E B Q E R H Q C N K H S S
 Q N L S P G H Z M A X M R O Y A I X L T A S
 Q M J D O H T X R D G T V M E L N Z W F P P
 S Y H Q W J T E Q E A D V I W F E A Q I E S
 I D L E H P N M T I M E P S Q M O U A F V G
 X W U I G E A X R N E A O E P X H I S P T R
 T E T P V M Z E Q D S O B L X W P L D E Y E
 Y T U D Y N T N I U T P Y X Z I T P E W F E
 D R M L O A M M O S A L T W D O C O F F I N
 E U S E L T W L M T R I Q B L X J R T Y I P
 G I O I X U E K X R E N E W A L E R B M S T
 R X U K I R L T C Y O D F M O I P E S W E R
 E Q L B O E G R V Q P S X Z L B N R E W G E
 E Q P W R K E Q H S A F Y I K A C A C I A X
 S C H O N E S T Y W E M S R I M O D S I W P

FIFTH DEGREE	VIRTUES	DEITY	ACACIA
PERFECTMASTER	COFFIN	NOBLE	FUNERAL
WAGES	NATURE	YOD	SIXTY DEGREES
VENERABLE	RENEWAL	HUMANITY	FALSE
SOUL	WISDOM	GREEN	IDLE
HONESTY	PROMISE	DUTY	DEATH
IMITATE	PHOENICIAN	SYMBOL	FIDELITY
INDUSTRY	GAMESTAR	COMPASS	EQUILATERAL TRIANGLE

Live the Words

Illustrious Joel Bundy, 33°



Who doesn't love a good rock power ballad? After a particularly tough day not too long ago, I decided to turn up the decibels in my car while driving home and listen to some 80's hair-band rock. A little Bon Jovi, Guns N' Roses and Skid Row, then Extreme. I had forgotten how much I loved that band, with their early funky metal sound. This song on the radio was their biggest hit, "More than Words". Although clearly not about freemasonry, it does speak to the idea that sometimes words alone are not enough. It is how we act that is truly more important.

Another way to think about this is to start with your why as your guiding principle, think of the what as where you are going, then know that the how as the blueprint we follow to get there.

Our what. In the Scottish Rite, we know what we are to do as an organization as it is written in our mission statement:

"It is the mission of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, to improve its members and enhance the communities in which they live by teaching and emulating the principles of Brotherly Love, Tolerance, Charity, and Truth while actively embracing high social, moral, and spiritual values including fellowship, compassion, and dedication to God, family and country."

Our how. How we do this is demonstrated through our good works. It is about membership, education, engagement, our ritual, philanthropy, our public image, leadership, and the many organizations we have within our Valleys. These are our commitments to our craft, to our Valleys, and to each other.

Our why? Simon Sinek emphasizes that we need to start with our why, because "people don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it." What is our why? It involves our cause, our purpose, our raison d'être. Our beliefs are further exemplified with our entelechy and values as exemplified through our creed: human progress, liberty of thought, freedom of conscience, and the guarantee of equal rights to all people.

We could spend hours extolling these virtues and how they are applicable to the community, but also to ourselves. Taken together this provides for a richer, fuller experience, and with love and compassion for each other, service to our Fraternity, and the giving of ourselves to those in need, whether it be a child in Rite Care, the hopeful college student, or our extended family beset with disaster. Our why is foundational in being able to fulfill our obligations we took after entering the West Gate, and to make us better men and Brothers. Yes, it is more than words, it is why we should live those words we speak.

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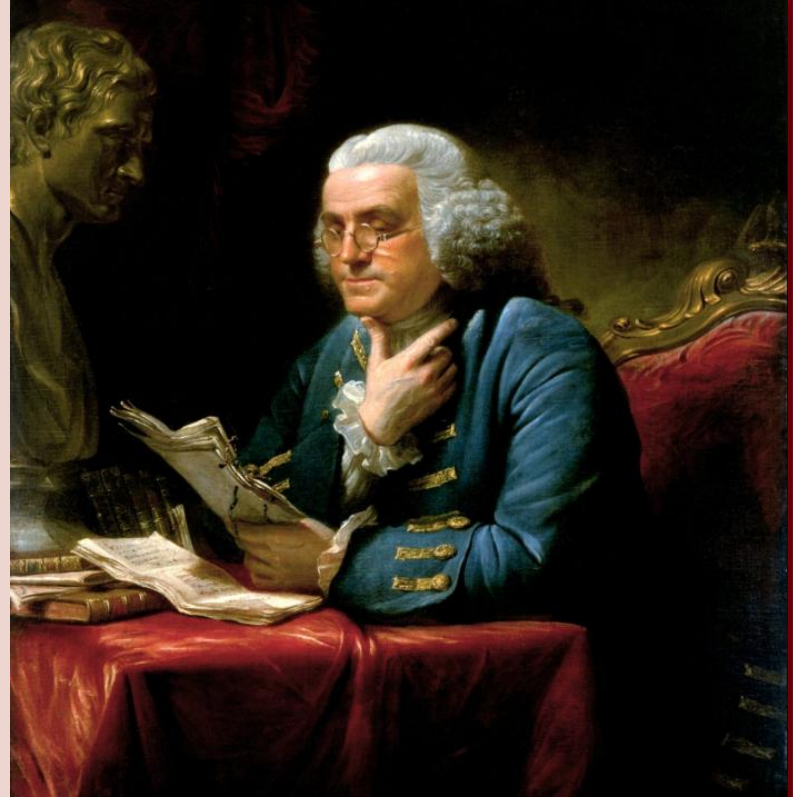
Scottish Rite Virtues

Roger W. Peak, 32° KCCH

We will shortly have our Reunion where we confer or communicate the 4th to the 32nd degree. The members of the Reunion Class will receive their copy of *A Bridge to Light*, and all of us have one as well. Part of the value of a Reunion is to focus on the lessons of the degrees, and the following article by Brother Peak provides an example of how we might integrate these lessons into our lives.

Most Worshipful Brother Benjamin Franklin identified thirteen virtues on which to focus to improve his character. The virtues and precepts that Brother Franklin selected were as follows:

1. TEMPERANCE. Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.
2. SILENCE. Speak not what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.
3. ORDER. Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.
4. RESOLUTION. Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.
5. FRUGALITY. Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; i.e., waste nothing.
6. INDUSTRY. Lose no time; be always employ'd in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.
7. SINCERITY. Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly, and, if you speak, speak accordingly.
8. JUSTICE. Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.
9. MODERATION. Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.
10. CLEANLINESS. Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes, or habitation.
11. TRANQUILITY. Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.
12. CHASTITY. Rarely use venery but for health or offspring, never to dullness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation.
13. HUMILITY. Imitate Jesus and Socrates.



If each of us were to select only one virtue and a relevant precept from the above list to seek to improve ourselves, which would it be?

Scottish Rite Virtues

I am identifying virtues on which I will focus to improve my character. I am reviewing the oaths, mottos, and slogans of those organizations of which I was or am currently a member. As part of this process, I perused Ill. Rex Hutchens book *A Bridge to Light* and identified those virtues that are relevant to us as Southern Jurisdiction Scottish Rite Masons.

Continued from page 112.

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Key Words and Phrases of Degrees

<i>Word and Phrase</i>	<i>Degree</i>
Actthe peacemaker	6th
Attainment	4th
Attraction (force of nature)	25th
Beauty	26th
Benevolent, Benevolence	6th, 8th
Charity	8th, 18th, 20th, 29th
Chastity	20th, 28th
Clemency	29th
Confidence in human nature	20th
Constancy (keeping promises)	11th
Constancy	15th
Constant (in prayer)	25th
Courtesy	9th /10th
Defend right from wrong	28th
Devotion / Devotedness (family & friends)	4th, 9th ,10th, 20th, 23rd
Disinterestedness	6th, 20th
Duality	27th
Duty	13th
Duty to God	28th
Earnest	11th
Education	9th /10th, 11th
Endurance	4th
Enlightenment	9th /10th, 11th
Equanimity	20th
Equilibrium	32nd
Equity	4th, 16th
Faith / Faithful	18th,24th, 27th
Fidelity (in performance of duty)	4th,6th, IT, 15th, 20th, 28th
Firmness	9th /10th, 20th
Fitness	24th
Forbearance	20th
Forgiveness, Forgiving	20th, 23rd, 25th
Frankness	9th, 10th
Generosity / Generous	9th, 10th, 20th, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 28th, 29th

Scottish Rite Virtues

Continued from page 13.

<i>Word and Phrase</i>	<i>Degree</i>
Gratitude to God	20th
Harmony	27th
Heroism	9th /10th, 20th
Honesty	5th
Honor	13th, 20th, 28th, 29th
Hope	18th
Humility / Humble	21st, 25th, 29th
Impartiality	9th /10th
Independence	4th
Industry	5th
Justice	4th, 7th, 16th, 20th, 26th, 28th, 31st
Kindness	20th
Knowledge	12th
Labor	22nd
Lenity	20th
Liberality	9in/10'n, 20th
Liberty (self-control)	2Ath
Light	19th
Love of Brothers	26th
Love of Mankind	20th
Loyalty	9th,10th, 28th
Matter	27th
Mercy / Merciful	4th, 23rd, 26th
Mobility (force of nature)	25th
Modest	21st
Obedience	4th, 28th
Patience	19th, 29th
Patriotism	9th /10th, 20th
Penitent	25th
Perseverance	15th
Probity	20th
Prudence	20th
Punctuality	20th
Purity of heart	23rd
Reason	24th, 27th
Reliable	11th
Repentance	24th
Retribution	13th
Revelation	27th
Self-denial	9th, 10th, 29th

Brother Franklin embarked on a difficult task and admits that he was not entirely successful in improving himself in every virtue he identified. I believe he was correct in specifying the precept for each virtue. A virtue could have many different precepts.

Scottish Rite Virtues

Continued from page 14.

<i>Word and Phrase</i>	<i>Degree</i>
Silence	4th
Sincerity to serve God	23rd
Sobriety	20th
Temperance	20th,28th
Thankful to God	25th
Toleration / Tolerance / Tolerant	9th/10th, 18th, 20th, 26th
Ttruthfulness / Truth / True	4th, 11th, 20th, 28th, 29th
Veneration of God	20th
Vitality (force of nature)	25th
Wisdom	12lh
Zeal (performance of duty)	6th, 20lh, 28th

Your reading may suggest a slightly different list of virtues. I am sure that as I continue to study the degrees, my list will evolve.

Brother Franklin embarked on a difficult task and admits that he was not entirely successful in improving himself in every virtue he identified. I believe he was correct in specifying the precept for each virtue. A virtue could have many different precepts.

If each of us were to select only one virtue and a relevant precept from the above list to seek to improve ourselves, which would it be?

Note: The degrees in the Scottish Rite, Northern Jurisdiction, are somewhat different from those in the Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction. The 25th Degree, Master of Achievement (Benjamin Franklin Degree) mentions the virtues that Brother Franklin selected to cultivate and is the genesis of my project.

References :

- Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Franklin's *Book of Virtues*, (Carlisle, Massachusetts: Applewood Books, 2016)
- Rex R Hutchens, *A Bridge to Light*, (Washington, D.C.: The Supreme Council, 330, 2006)
3. Frank Conway, *The Masonic Pageant: The Scottish Rite Degrees of the Supreme Council*, NMJ (New Orleans, LA: Cornerstone Book Publishers)

**Most
Worshipful
Brother
Benjamin
Franklin
identified
thirteen virtues
on which to
focus to
improve his
character.**

The Craft of Compassion: A Synthesis of Remembrance and Renewal in the Scottish Rite

Brother Gerald L. Frey, 32° KCCH

Scottish Rite is built upon the firm foundation of meaning and purpose, operating on the root principle that its members are craftsmen building for the future. Here it is defined as not for oneself, however for all of mankind. Calling upon each of us to step back from unbridled ambition and its arrogance to a humble servant that is a leader, not a show pony.

This construction – builder modifier is not merely symbolic but is deeply tied to the rhythms of the natural world and ancient traditions and our celestial chronometer.

The Foundation of the New Law

At the heart of this observance is the 18th Degree, Knight of Rose Croix, and its Tenebrae – Extinguishing Lecture. This ritual draws attention to the “Apostle of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity,” a figure who, 2,000 years ago, proclaimed the Law of Love: “Love one another.” Regardless of individual private views, the wisdom of this “New Law” is presented as a fundamental truth for the improvement of mankind, or “we make good men better.”

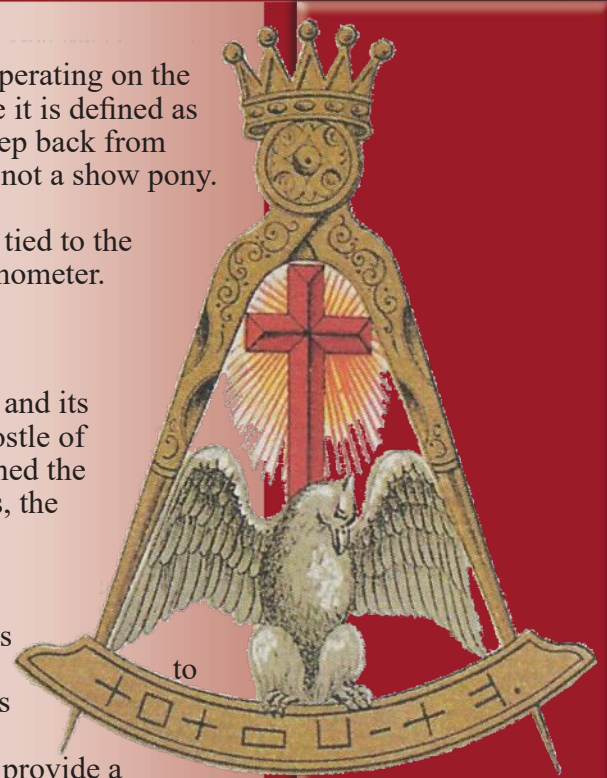
This Law of Love is further illuminated specifically by the scriptural basis found in Matthew 22, which identifies the two greatest commandments: love God with all ones heart, soul, and mind, and to love your neighbor as yourself. The sources suggest that while the “Great Architect” mercifully hides the tragedies of the future from human sight, these commandments provide a steady moral compass. Indeed, the ritual emphasizes that “all the Law and the Prophets” depend on these two core principles of love.

As remarkable as these two greatest commandments are we should reflect upon the underlying yet simple question it began with: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” No less amazing is its summation: “All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

The Ritual of Remembrance

Perhaps one of the more overlooked occurrences of this ritual is the ordering of the Remembrance and Renewal. Within construction parlance it is the foundation. It could very easily have been the other way around, Renewal and Remembrance. It is only after an examination of the order that its rationale becomes clear and proper in its structure, like so much of our ritual, it is tried and true. Or build the foundation before the roof.

Next comes the timing of the ritual, is it an arbitrary date selection from the Supreme Council? Why the vernal equinox? It was not chosen lightly; it was a feast day for centuries; in fact, it predates modern religions by even more centuries. More on that a bit later. We should be questioning it as we sit in our climate-controlled homes, offices, and vehicles. Seasons seem to now have more to do with sports, secular holidays, and consumerism than with the rotation of terra firma around the sun. Nevertheless, this was the annual time, it was the time to determine what survived the winter and decide what they would be planting and its future harvest.



**“We should have
faith in God,
mankind and
ourselves.
We should hope in
the victory over
evil, the
advancement of
humanity, and a
hereafter.
Charity is
relieving the
wants and
tolerating the
errors and faults
of others.”**

Lesson of the
18th Degree

The Craft of Compassion: A Synthesis of Remembrance and Renewal in the Scottish Rite

Continued from page 16.

This is not to say that Scottish Rite invented this astronomic occurrence from their ritual, it does however draw upon the cultural inheritance of our ancient societies for thousands of years before being adopted more or less whole into our ritual. Time was universal long before atomic clocks. Time was told universally by the sun and moon, by the longest and shortest days and halves of those, the venerable equinox, and of course the tides which harken back to the moon.

Central to this is the observance of Remembrance and Renewal, a ritual timed for the vernal equinox, March 20th this year, which serves as a period for both reflection on the past, remembrance, and the spiritual recharging, renewal, of the individual Mason.

The transition from remembrance to renewal ritual is achieved through a specific three-part celebratory recognition designed to honor those who have "completed their earthly labors."

1. Remembering recently departed Brethren:
Acknowledging the loss and the legacy of those who have passed.
2. Breaking bread:
A communal act of fellowship and shared humanity.
3. Igniting a single light:
A symbolic culmination representing the spirit of renewal.

Within the 18th Degree, Knight of Rose Croix, the Prelate's Prayer underscores the emotional depth of this process, asking that the memory of the departed makes those who remain more precious. The lives of our deceased Brethren are viewed as a "living benediction," and the prayer seeks a "Peace of God that passeth all understanding" to comfort those who mourn as they continue with their lives. There it is why Remembrance has to come before renewal.

Renewal Through Faith and Action

The ultimate goal of Remembrance and Renewal is not just a simple internal reflection but external application. The Sacred Volume characterizes this entire process as a summation of James 2:14-26, driving home the essential Masonic concept that "Faith without works is dead."

It is through observations that we can find solutions. Through analysis we determine a plan. Finally, it is by understanding observation and its analysis that allows us to act with confidence that we are indeed motivated to move forward in the Craft as well as our own lives.

The constellations called Faith, Hope and Charity, the punishments and terrors of Hell, the rose, the cross, the pelican, the eagle.

Symbols of this Degree



The Craft of Compassion: A Synthesis of Remembrance and Renewal in the Scottish Rite

Continued from page 17.

This does, however, come without a caveat. Improvise, adapt, overcome is not a given, it is not a sure thing. It is not an opportunity for greed and ambition but should be derived from humility and sense of honor by being a Mason. In turn this means we are to put into action bettering ourselves for the betterment of those around us.

By remembering the virtues of our departed Brethren and recommitting to the Law of Love, the craftsman is called to move beyond mere sentiment. The renewal of ones spirit, humanity, and nature serve as a catalyst for action, ensuring that the principles of the Craft and our Scottish Rite are manifested through tangible service and compassion in the world and those that are fellow inhabitants.

References

Bible

Bridge to Light

Scottish Rite Ritual: Monitor and Guide



Tolerance is also taught as we are led through a myriad of examples from the many and diverse beliefs of the ancients which teach us that neither the cross as a symbol nor the notion of a messiah are uniquely Christian. ... The instructions on the concept of a messiah are suggestive only and are not to be taken as official doctrine or dogma of Freemasonry in general, or the Scottish Rite in particular; the religious test of Masonry is far too universal to admit of such a demand. As Pike says in the lecture of this degree, "No Mason has the right to interpret the symbols of this degree for another, or to refuse him its mysteries, ..."

A Bridge To Light

Masonry and the Importance of Word

Illustrious William C. Jacobson, Ph.D., 33°, G.C.

I am, by calling, a dealer in words; and words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind. Not only do words infect, ergotise, narcotise, and paralyse, but they enter into and colour the minutest cells of the brain ...

—Brother Rudyard Kipling,

Address at Annual Dinner, Royal College of Surgeons, February 1923

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—Brother Rudyard Kipling,

Address at Annual Dinner, Royal College of Surgeons, February 1923

Living life means each of us must select our words and learn by using them. Used well, they can become, as Brother Kipling, esteemed writer, notes, powerful medicine to the body, mind, and souls of all involved.

Masonic lessons are learned with words. Daily we select words that communicate to others. We connect when our words are understood. They are effective when they change what others think and do. Some words work well, whereas others do not. Words not understood do not communicate. Simple, common old words work best. The reactions of others reveal the impact of your words.

After the Battle of Gettysburg, Abraham Lincoln wrote a stinging letter to General Meade when Meade let the Confederate army return to the South after the battle was over. As President of the United States, he was trying to win a war. Lincoln was angry. He never sent it. It was found in his desk after he was assassinated. Masonry teaches us to let cooling thoughts control our words. We never have to apologize for the words we do not use.

Word selection is an acquired skill. The challenge for each person is to find words that can be medicine to others.

Human feelings help select these words and identify the best time to use them.

Some occasions do not require words. As Masons well know, silence is often the most powerful communicator.

Your presence is your message.

Selecting the right words is an art more than a science. Words can cause change.

Continued on page 20.

Your presence is
your message.

Masonry and the Importance of Word

Continued from page 19.

Observing what others do reveals the effectiveness of words.

Words define personal character. They can be used in many ways to connect with others. Humor can set a mood that delivers a message. When using humor, it works best when you are the butt of the joke. Belittling others sends messages that will be returned.

Masonry uses words to teach lessons. Many words need to be repeated to be understood. Repetition seals words in our memory. Representing Hiram well as we live life requires effective words. They help us move along the path to becoming a Master Mason.

In his Lecture to the Thirteenth Degree, "Royal Arch of Solomon," Albert Pike writes of "the Lost Word, which was made known to the Grand Elect, Perfect, and Sublime Masons." In fact, each Mason searches for the Lost Word. It is a personal quest that is different for each person. It requires an interpretation of Masonic symbolism. I have discovered that word for me. It is change. We change each day by learning, unlearning, and relearning what we need to know to master ourselves.

A teacher once shared these words from an essay a senior girl had written to explain how she planned to live her life. She wrote words to this effect: Husbands are expendable necessities. I plan to get married four times.

My first husband will be a banker. My second husband will be a movie director. My next husband will be a beautician. My last husband will be a mortician. Each husband will meet the evolving needs of my life.

These needs she summarized in these words. One for the money, two for the show, three to get ready, and four to go.

The Gospel of John opens with these words. "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God." We begin our Masonic journey by putting our trust in God. It is a lifelong commitment. When we trust God to direct our words, He will. Even our casual words are remembered and can impact what happens next.

Words matter. Remember:
*You will be what you think you are.
 Let failure find its false content.
 Life is lived with and through others.
 Words reveal your intent.
 The human soul, a force unseen,
 Directs behind the scenes.
 Words can find the way to any goal
 Though walls of granite intervene.
 Be patient choosing your words.*

**Your presence is
 your message.**

Masonry and the Importance of Word

Continued from page 20.

*Select them seeking to understand.
When the unseen spirit directs,
The right words are at your command.*

As Brother Mark Twain explained in his novel *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, "Words realize nothing, vivify nothing to you, unless you have suffered in your own person the thing which the words try to describe."

Freemasonry teaches us to select our words carefully and to imprint these words upon our lives. I have found three words that work well in most situations. They are: God Bless You!

Image: Two Famous Brother Wordsmiths—Mark Twain and Rudyard Kipling. (Left) Lithograph of Brother Mark Twain, *Puck*, December 16, 1885. Brother Twain's words "take flight" in the forms of his books *A Tramp Abroad*, *Innocents Abroad*, and *Huckleberry Finn*. (Right) Lithograph of Brother Rudyard Kipling, *Vanity Fair*, July 7, 1894. The three soldiers at upper right allude to Brother Kipling's collection of stories *Soldiers Three*. Source: *Wikimedia Commons*

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Brother Mark Twain



Brother Rudyard Kipling

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P	E	R	F	E	C	T	M	A	S	T	E	R	J	J	K	M	F	N	W	A	V
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F	S	E	N	O	B	L	E	T	M	U	I	P	B	V	D	E	W	M	J	Q	B
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S	C	H	O	N	E	S	T	Y	W	E	M	S	R	I	M	O	D	S	I	W	P

Answers are where you find them not necessarily where you look or expect them.

Count your blessing do not question them.

The Scottish Rite Research Society



Certain faculties of man are directed toward the Unknown thought, meditation, prayer. The unknown is an ocean, of which conscience is the compass. Thought, meditation, and prayer are the great mysterious pointings of the needle. It is a spiritual magnetism that thus connects the human soul with the Deity. These majestic irradiations of the soul pierce through the shadow toward the light.

Arturo de Hoyos,
Ed., Albert Pike's
Morals and
Dogma.
(Washington D.C.:
The Supreme
Council, 2011), 77

The benefits of membership in the Scottish Rite Research Society are many. Some are intangibles, such as the potential for interaction and discussions with the brightest minds in contemporary Masonic philosophy and debate. The most important benefit is the availability of what we all came here for, which is more light in Masonry. This is manifest most particularly in SRRS publications and Masonic conferences.

The tangible benefits of membership in the SRRS include:

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- The Society's quarterly research journal, The Plumblin[®]
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The Twenty-fourth Degree

“Prince of the Tabernacle”

Summary

“This is a continuation of the last degree and examines the nature of knowledge. We must be vigilant not to accept corrupted and erroneous echoes of real knowledge. We have to distinguish for ourselves what is truth; for many do not realize that they are in error when they think they have found the truth. As Masons, we must fight continuously against superstitions, wrong knowledge, false prophets, tyrants, and despots. Our task is to free knowledge from the monopoly of classes, casts, leaders, or priests; and to disseminate it to everyone.”

DUTIES:

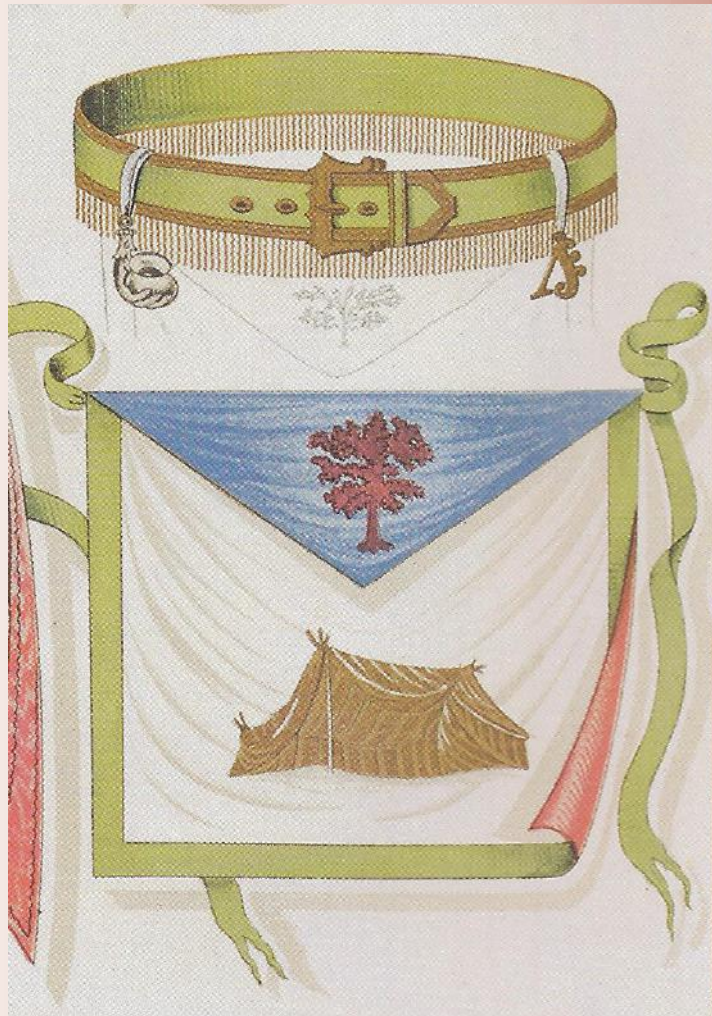
Labor incessantly for the glory of God, the honor of your country and the happiness of your Brethren.

FOR REFLECTION:

Is the doctrine of the immortality of the soul consoling to you or a source of menace and despair or merely a superstition?

IMPORTANT SYMBOLS:

Grips of the apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason, five pointed star, the character Caleb.



The girdle is of light-green Morocco leather, fringed below with gold, and edged with gold lace. From this belt are suspended the jewel of the preceding degree, a silver censer, and the jewel of this degree, the Phoenician letter Aleph.

The apron is of white lambskin, lined with scarlet and bordered with light-green. In the middle is painted a representation of an Arabic tent, in gold. On the light blue flap is a representation of a myrtle tree of violet color, also an emblem of immortality.

The Twenty-fourth Degree “Prince of the Tabernacle”



Continued from page 24



The jewel is the Phoenician letter ‘A’ (Aleph), suspended from a short collar of narrow, watered violet-colored ribbon. It is another manifestation of the Pentagram, or Five-Pointed Star, because the star, viewed from any angle figures the letter ‘A’. Since ‘A’ is the initial of one of the principle names of Deity, Adonai, or LORD, this star is a sign of intellectual omnipotence and autocracy.



The order is a broad, watered scarlet ribbon worn from right to left. On the front is embroidered in gold, a winged-globe and under it a scarab, under which is a brilliant butterfly; all are symbols of immortality.

Continued on page 26

The Twenty-fourth Degree “Prince of the Tabernacle”

Lessons of the Degree

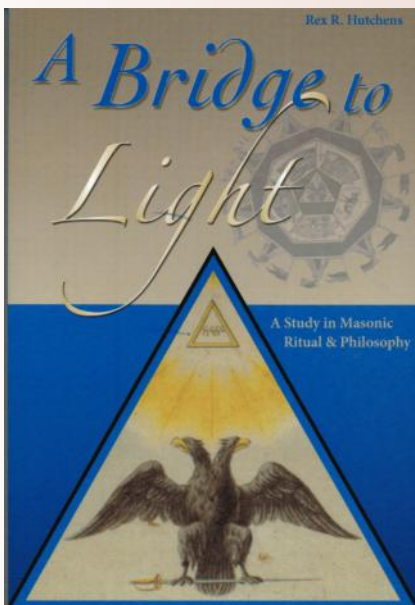
“The power of faith in the Deity and his promises.
The soul is immortal.

There is one, true God, who is pure, absolute intellect and existence”

Continued from page 25

“Having received the instruction of the Chief of the Tabernacle in the 23rd Degree, an adaptation of the ancient initiation into the Lesser Mysteries, we now stand on the threshold of the Greater Mysteries. The previous degree presented the Lesser Mysteries almost exclusively as a Hebrew or Judaic tradition. The mysteries were not confined to the Hebrews and here we encounter deities from the most advanced cultures and countries of the past.” (Hutchens, p. 202)

“The Lesser Mysteries were received by all, but only a few were initiated into the Greater Mysteries. Albert Pike believed that the mysteries were originally few and simple, teaching the great truths of the primitive religion and morality. Over time, this purity was lost, the rites of initiation became more complicated and more degrees were invented to maintain only a few adepts who were initiated into the higher degrees. The method of instruction emphasized in the Mysteries utilized symbols and allegories, treating a mysterious subject mysteriously (p. 354) Masonry still follows this manner of teaching.” (Hutchens, p. 198)



A Bridge to Light

Dr. Rex R. Hutchens, 33°, G.C.

An introduction to the Scottish Rite’s Degrees and symbolism, this book is the most popular exposition available, by one of the Rite’s most articulate philosophers and writers. The 4th Edition of this classic work includes the changes introduced with the adoption of the Revised Standard Pike Ritual; the official Ritual of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A. Highly recommended by the Grand Archivist and Grand Historian.

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