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Evolution of the Scottish rite Rituals Finale



By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH

In the spring of 1765, Stephen Morin and Henry Andrew Francken in Kingston, Jamaica must have been discussing the future of the “Order of the Sublime Princes of the Royal Secret” because shortly thereafter Brother Francken was in New York. Before departing from Kingston, Jamaica he had with him a Patent that commissioned him to set up and bring into being a Lodge of Perfection in New York, which was realized on December 20, 1767.

With passion and drive Francken dove headfirst into cultivating the high degrees. By 1768 Brother Moses Michael Hays was appointed Deputy Inspector General for the West Indies and North America by Brother Francken. Brother Hays then appointed deputies which guided the “Royal Secret” into the new century. One of the deputies appointed was Brother Barend Moses Spitzer who lived in Charleston, South Carolina. He in turn appointed Brother John Mitchell Deputy Inspector General of the Order of the Royal Secret on April 2, 1795.

Mitchell, along with newly created Deputy Inspector General Reverend Frederick Dalcho, was present on May 31, 1801, at the opening of the Supreme Council of the 33rd Degree for the United States of America. Brothers Mitchell and Dalcho, presiding in Charleston, South Carolina over the Supreme Council, began working on rituals. Though realizing that the Supreme Council system was better, they would include Morin’s 25-degree system. Mitchell and Dalcho’s rituals would span from 1801-1821.

By 1821 the Supreme Council still did not have an “official” version of Scottish Rite rituals. It appears to be more of a group effort, as we find in one manuscript the handwriting of several brothers. Moses Holbrook, the fourth Grand Commander, made his own revisions which were used from 1821-1825. Holbrook worked with Brother Giles F. Yates who in turn shared his own ideas and revisions. When all seemed to be going their way, the “Morgan Affair” unfolded and much of the rituals were released to the public.

After the “Morgan Affair” settled down, Brother Albert Pike wrote his Magnum Opus in 1857, but the Supreme Council passed on his work. It took until 1861 to recognize Pike’s work,

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Knight Commander of the Temple



By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH

In the first chivalric degree of the Scottish Rite we find ourselves as a Teutonic knight that has taken vows. Knights took vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and to obey the commands of their superiors. This degree scrutinizes the brother down to his core, searching to determine if he is true to his word even if he is in the wrong, or does contempt exist within him. Are you willing to admit guilt, or admit that you are wrong, and not too prideful to offer reconciliation to a brother?

In the 28° Knight Commander of the Temple, we find a scenario of a Knight who is left to stand a vigil until dawn and is told under no circumstances is he to leave his post. Throughout the night the brother is tested with all sorts of enticements to leave his post. The knight must learn discernment throughout his ordeal. The knight will be tested with the love of a lady, next a test involving his estate, and still he does not leave his post. Then the test of flattery where the knight is congratulated for his hard work. We read in Proverbs 29:5 “Those who flatter their neighbor spread a net for his feet”. The final test is self-sacrifice, should you violate your word, and a vow to protect the poor and helpless.

Throughout life we are all confronted with very similar enticements to lure us away from the path. Beauty is a wonderful thing to behold but not at the expense of one’s honor and life and those around you. Pleasures of the heart are temporary at best but your honor and word is everlasting. Personal wealth/money is sometimes a hard thing to resist. The thought of an easier life is very tempting, as can be a chance to take advantage of someone to gain a financial edge. What is your honor and word worth? How are you perceived by your faith, family and peers? Money cannot replace a man’s virtue and honor.

We are sometimes presented with a dilemma where the right answer is not so clear. For example, when an employer must choose who to lay off to save the company, or a general ordering troops to battle knowing many will not return, or even as simple as a father disciplining his children; all can be very difficult.

We must all search ourselves and test ourselves to see if we are worthy and true. All too often we find ourselves in these situations. How do we know which path to take? First, we look at

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and he was elected Sovereign Grand Commander. Pike continued to revise the rituals until 1880. More revisions were made by Brother T.W. Hugo from 1889-1919. In 1985, Grand Commander Henry Clausen decided that, in the best interest of the Scottish Rite, the ritual should be modernized. Under Clausen's supervision, all 29 degrees were updated and put on a trial run.

However, these rituals did not catch on and were withdrawn and were never made the official rituals of the Supreme Council. This brought the Supreme Council back to Brother Pike's revised standard. This time the rituals had 10 criteria that each of the 29 degrees needed to meet, which included: Ease of staging, preservation of the content of the Pike ritual, and the enhancement of dramatic effect. With these criteria, some degrees (27° and 28°) were reversed. Brother Rex Hutchens 33°, G.C. was charged with putting all of this together.

Our beloved Scottish Rite was made by brothers starting with William Shaw in 1583 to Stephen Morin 1763 and Albert Pike 1857 to recent times with Rex Hutchens. These Brothers knew their duty and dedicated their lives to it, and we are indebted.

"Virtus junxit, mors non separabit"

"Whom virtue unites, death cannot separate."

For further details and information about this article please purchase the following books; they are an essential part of your Masonic library:

- Masonic Formulas & Rituals, Pike/De Hoyos*
- Etienne Morin from the French Rite, De Hoyos/Wages*
- Freemasonry's Royal Secret, De Hoyos*
- Scottish Rite Ritual Monitor & Guide, De Hoyos*

"Journey Passport" Program

The Houston Valley is participating in the "Journey Passport" program which includes 33 challenges that allow participants to earn six unique Scottish Rite challenge coins. The passport program is designed to take brothers throughout the Valley of Houston and the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite. To learn more and get a passport, contact Brother Jason Rees 32° KCCH at: acompass@yahoo.com

The Houston Valley Herald Email List

This publication is printed monthly and distributed at stated meetings of the Valley of Houston for the benefit of the brethren assembled. *The Houston Valley Herald* is also available online at www.HoustonScottishRite.org (Click the "Newsletter" tab). Anyone is welcome to receive this publication via email as well. To join our mailing list, email acompass@yahoo.com

The Houston Valley Podcast & YouTube channel

Please like and subscribe to our channel, it helps promote the Scottish Rite and allows us to continue this great work.

<https://www.youtube.com/@HoustonValleyScottishRite>

Check out our latest episode of the Houston Valley Podcast, the interview of the Lieutenant Grand Commander: Joe Manning, Jr.



Scan for the Houston Valley Podcast!



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our oaths taken in our individual faiths, to our families, and to one other. Does our choice support the heart of the law? We read in Mark 2:27, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." The law never says to break natural laws of love and compassion to save yourself. This reminds me of a question, is it ok to steal bread to feed your family? These types of questions and many more are why we as brothers must learn to be strong leaders in our homes and in our communities.

In the morals and lessons that are taught in the Knight Commander of the Temple, we find answers to age old questions and dilemmas that men struggle with every day. Responsibility sometimes means making the hard decisions that no one else can make. Standing up for what is right when everyone around is saying otherwise. That is courage and the mark of a Good man.

"A Masonic Song" by Robert Burns

**It happened on a winter night,
And early in the season.
Some body said my bonny lad
Was gone to be a Mason.**

**I cried and wailed, but nought availed,
He put a forward face on.
And did avow that he was now
A Free Accepted Mason.**

**Still doubting if the fact was true,
He gave me demonstration;
For out he drew before my view
The Jewels of a Mason.**

**The Jewels all, baith great and small,
I viewed with admiration;
When he set his swage and drew his gauge,
I wondered at my Mason.**

**So pleased was I to see him ply
The tools of his vocation,
I beg'd for once he would dispense
And make a Maid a Mason.**

**Then round and round in mystic ground
He took the middle station,
And with halting pace he reached the place
Where I was made a Mason.**

**His compass stride he laid it wide,
I thought I guessed the reason.
But his mallet shaft it put me daft;
I longed to be a Mason.**

**Good plummets strong he downward hung
A noble jolly brace on;
And off a slant his broacher sent
And drove it like a Mason.**

**Then more and more the light did pour
With bright Illumination,
But when the grip he did me slip
I gloried in my Mason.**

**But the tempered steel began to fail,
Too soft for the occasion.
It melted lean he drove so keen,
My gallant noble Mason.**

**What farther passed is here locked fast,
I'm under obligation.
But fill to him, up to the brim,
Can make a Maid a Mason.**