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Looking Back

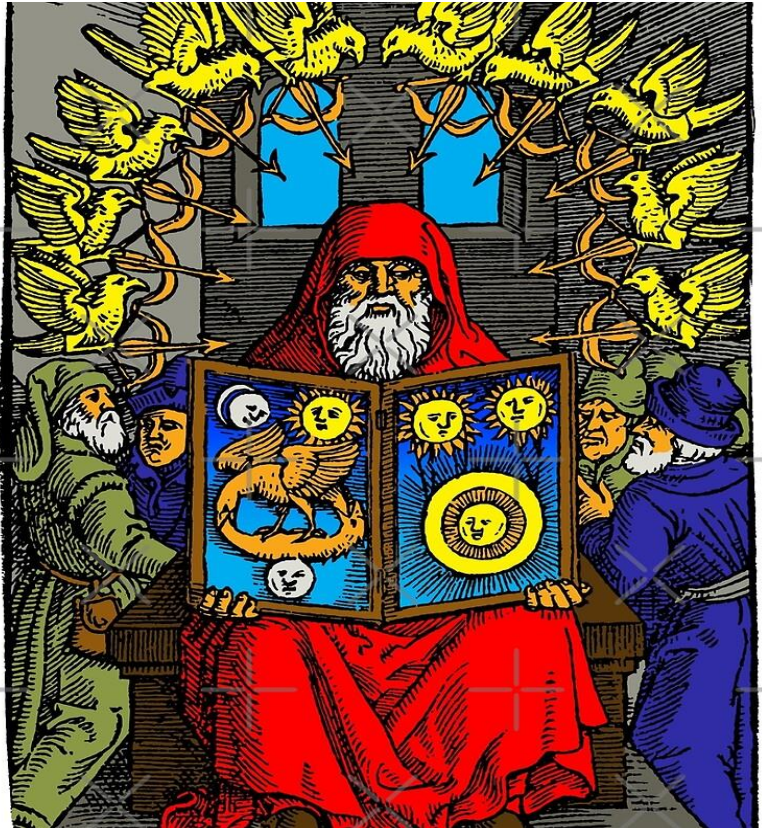
By Randall (Randy) Pope, 32°



Albrecht Dürer, *Saint Jerome in His Study*, 1514

Looking back on my life, most people would consider me a late starter. Instead of finishing college when most people do right after high school, I took the long way around the block and graduated at 41 years old, becoming a teacher and a coach. Growing up, my father was a Master Mason as well as a 32nd degree Scottish Rite Mason. I saw his pictures from his Reunion in front of the Old Houston Scottish Rite Temple in 1955 and other Masonic pictures he had in his office. I knew he was a Mason, but I was never smart enough to ask the right question: How do I become a Mason? This was certainly one of my life's biggest mysteries. As my father was born in 1920 and was raised during a different time where Masons did not speak about Masonry except to other Masons, I learned more about Masonry at his funeral in 1995 than I knew my entire life. Yet, I was still not bright enough to ask the question: How do I become a Mason? My teaching and coaching career has led me to meet many interesting people from very different walks of life. I very much value the relationships I have with former students and athletes that I have interacted with throughout my twenty two years in education. One student and football player I coached, named Candler, is not only an outstanding young man but we grew very close during his four years of high school, and I think of him as an adopted grandson. One weekend I was hanging out with Candler and his dad Tom at their house. While watching them work on restoring an old Ford, the subject of Masonry came up. After hearing many very good things from Tom about Masonry, I finally asked the question: How do I become a Mason? When I look back on that day a couple of years ago I can't help but think about Romans 12: 1-2 which says Do not conform to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing, and perfect will.

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Hermes Trismegistus (Founder of Hermeticism)
Hermes Trismegistus, "thrice-great Hermes," emerged from the amalgamation of the wisdom gods Hermes and Thoth and is one of the most enigmatic figures of intellectual history.

From Darkness to Light

By Seth D. Hudson 32° KCCH

Darkness has ever been the symbol of ignorance, fear, and superstition. The man of our day, living in the resplendent brilliance of an age unceasingly illuminated by gas and electricity has no concept of the anxiety and despair endured by the benighted peoples of past ages. To the primitive man, the night was infested with ogres, nightmares, and demons that harrowed his soul until the pitchy darkness was dispelled by the orb of day. But the short respite was probably passed in dread of another night when his blood would again run cold because of the wicked imps of darkness. Little wonder it is, then, that the sun became an object of veneration and worship. The moon and the stars, though possessing a lesser brilliance than the sun, were also the enemies of darkness and became deities in man's system of pantheism. Fire also became sacred to man because of its ability to dispel darkness.

The cry for light, mere physical light, was probably as general and as sincere as any wail of early mankind. And what slow and painful steps have been taken by man in his efforts to conquer night! It is said that mankind's conquest of darkness has been a slow and stumbling process through the ages, and it is true. Crude devices for producing light continued to evolve to our day. The demand for candle-tree bark and the resinous pine knot passed away barely a century ago. Rude, but ornate lamps for using the oils of plants and the fats of beast, fish and fowl have been in use through the centuries. It is only in very recent times, thanks to modern science, that light has gained the victory. In the place of fire and torch, batteries and LEDs may today be carried,

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This to me embodies what becoming a Mason is all about; if you do not succumb to the temptations of the world and renew your mind in the teachings of Masonry, you will be a better MAN. Candler and I were raised together and spent many hours studying our work. There were many humorous times where I messed up, and Candler and Tom would hold me to task for not getting the work right. Some of the best times of my life have been with these two who have made my Masonic journey so special. We have gone through the York Rite Degrees and are very proud Knights Templars. We also have journeyed through the Scottish Rite degrees together with Tom by our side every step of the way. I am a lifelong reader and love education which I must say came from my mother. After being raised and going through the different Masonic rites, I was still looking for my place and where I fit into Masonry. I love my Blue Lodge and have since discovered many educational paths through the Blue Lodge, but I have jumped into the Scottish Rite with all of the enthusiasm I can muster. I have been a top line signer for six Master Masons, and went through the degrees with three of those much like Tom did for me. I have embraced the Master Craftsman Program in the Scottish Rite and have completed the Master Craftsman Symbolic Lodge, Master Craftsman Philosophy, Master Craftsman History and Ritual, and The Master Craftsman Masters Steps classes and have really enjoyed learning about the rich and amazing history of Masonry. I am currently enrolled in the Ordo Ab Chao class. I was introduced to the Passport Program at my Reunion and have completed roughly 26 of the tasks in the passport and look forward to completing the next ones. I have become a Squire in the Knights of St Andrews and look forward to my Knighting Ceremony in November. I really enjoy being in the Temple Guard and greeting Brothers at the

Front door. I have also, upon the recommendation of a brother, joined the Scottish Rite Research Society. It goes without saying I am thoroughly enjoying my Masonic Journey. Each branch of Masonry has something to offer a Brother who is willing to put in the time and effort. And, I could not be involved in Masonry without the support of my lovely wife Joyce who fully supports my Masonic Journey. I would like to thank the many friends I have made throughout my short time in Masonry from Maynard in Washington D.C., everyone at my Lodge Oak Wood #1444, my York Rite friends and Brothers, and my friends and Brothers at the Houston Scottish Rite. I am so glad I finally asked the question How Do I become a Mason!!!

"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

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With ease and comfort with which we may, as if by magic, flood the places of darkness with noonday brilliance.

"Let there be light" was not limited in its meaning to the material universe alone; for it has been the age-old cry of the soul. Light was the first divinity of the ancients. The Supreme Being to all primitive peoples seemed to be the center of light. Hence, to them, light became the life principle. It was the natural enemy of darkness and so became the symbol of knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge and wisdom then became the arch-enemies of ignorance, error, and superstition.

The central theme of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry is a search after light and truth, and no matter how much light the Mason receives, his desire for more light is never satisfied. Every step taken by a Mason in his advancement has for its aim and purpose the acquisition of further light – wisdom – by which he may overcome ignorance, error, and superstition. Through light alone can all things be made known. When the light of truth and justice shines in our souls and our lodges, then shall we rise above ignorance and error, and we shall merit the honored title, "Sons of Light." "Let the light of truth shine in our Lodge."

Special Thanks

By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH

I wanted to personally thank Brother A. B. OLIVIER 32°. Brother Olivier needed to step away from being Editor and Chief of the Houston Valley Herald. Without him and his esoteric and educational articles the Houston Valley Newsletter would not have been as a success as it has been. Most of the articles were written by Brother Olivier.

Brother Olivier is Good Mason and Friend and we thank him for his dedication to the Scottish Rite and wish him the best on his Masonic Journey.



Editor & Chief

Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH