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Abraham Lincoln (1869) by George Peter Alexander Healy

You are a Man: Be Faithful

By ADAM B. OLIVIER 32°
Editor-in-Chief

Membership in the Scottish Rite is predicated, among other things, on membership in a legitimate Masonic Lodge. Therefore, the minimum requirements to become a Freemason also apply to becoming a member of the Scottish Rite. This includes belief in a supreme being, but it also means that he needs to be a man of good and upright moral character.

Illustrious Brother Pike says in *Morals and Dogma*, when he is discussing the 4° Secret Master:

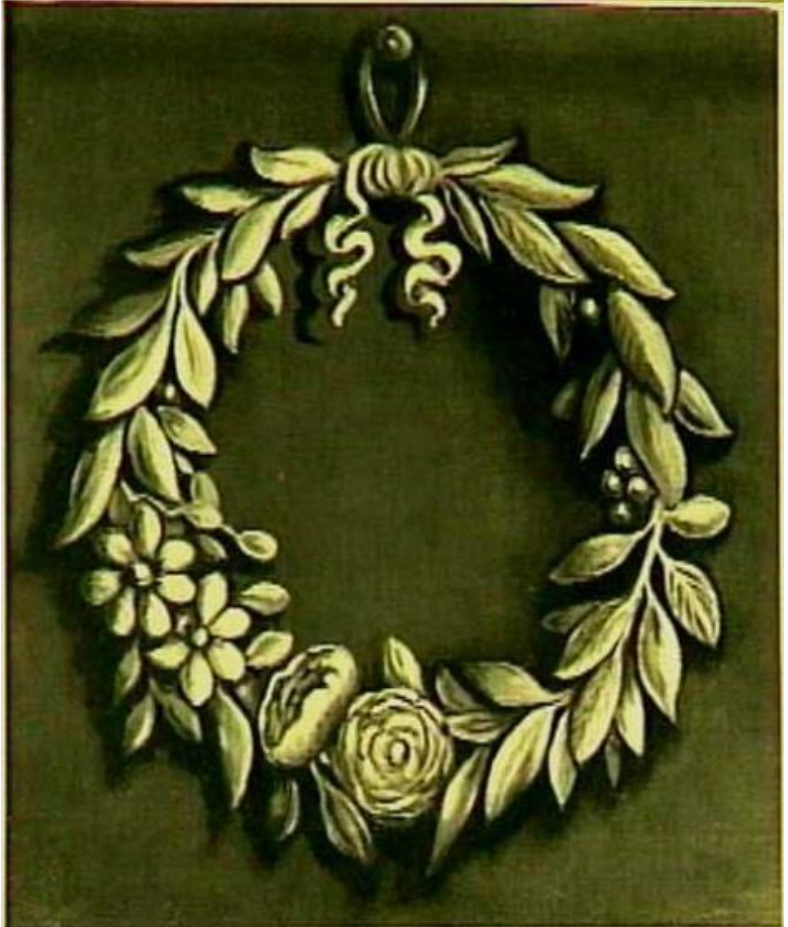
“Be faithful, therefore, to the promises you make, to the pledges you give, and to the vows that you assume, since to break either is base and dishonorable. Be faithful, to your family, and perform all the duties of a good father, a good son, a good husband, and a good brother. Be faithful to your friends; for true friendship is of a nature not only to survive through all the vicissitudes of life, but to continue through an endless duration; not only to stand the shock of conflicting opinions, and the roar of a revolution that shakes the world, but to last when the heavens are no more, and to spring fresh from the ruins of the universe.

“Be faithful to your country, and prefer its dignity and honor to any degree of popularity and honor for yourself; consulting its interest rather than your own, and rather than pleasure and gratification of the people, which are often at variance with their welfare.

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The 4°, Secret Master: Silence, Obedience, and Fidelity

By ADAM B. OLIVIER 32°
Editor-in-Chief



Decoratiestuk met lauwerkrans met bloemen (c. 1675) by unknown artist.

The 4° is atypical compared to most of the other Scottish Rite degrees. It does not heavily rely on narrative or plot to teach its lessons. Instead, it primarily focuses on symbolism and is the foundation for the rest of the Scottish Rite degrees that a new candidate would be going through. Throughout this degree the symbols and lessons are reminders of what the candidate should already know as a Master Mason, and a taste of what he should expect going forward.

The symbols for this degree include: a key of ivory, a blazing star, a wreath of laurel and olive leaves, the great Masonic camp, the three pillars, and the nine Masonic virtues. Three key principles taught in the degree are: silence, obedience, and fidelity. Illustrious Brother Albert Pike 33°discusses all three of these principles in *Morals and Dogma*.

Secrecy is something critical for any Freemason who has gone through any degree – be it the Blue Lodge, the Scottish Rite, the York Rite, or any other esoteric order within the craft. This is why secrecy is first introduced in the Entered Apprentice degree.

Brother Pike makes it clear that we are not a secret society for the sake of being a secret society. Imagine if the world knew, in exact and intimate detail, our obligations and modes of recognition. While there is nothing nefarious or wrong that the general public could find, it would put us at a significant disadvantage. It would be much more difficult to differentiate who is an actual Mason, and

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Continued from front, "You are a Man: Be Faithful".

"Be faithful to Masonry, which is to be faithful to the best interests of mankind. Labor, by precept and example, to elevate the standard of Masonic character, to enlarge its sphere of influence, to popularize its teachings, and to make all men know it for the Great Apostle of Peace, Harmony, and Good-will on earth among men; of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity."

Being "faithful" is not just having a belief in God, it is have the courage and constitution to be a good man. A man who is not faithful to his family as a father, or son, or husband should not be a Freemason, or a Scottish Rite Mason.

A man who is not faithful to his country and betrays her, or hates her, would fundamentally disagree with some of the lessons of the Scottish Rite's degrees – especially if his country has a republican form of government.

Finally, a Mason who is already not faithful to the Craft will not be a good Scottish Rite Mason. Like all other esoteric orders in Freemasonry, the Scottish Rite requires work and effort to put on reunions and stated meetings, to organize club meetings, and to learn the intricate esoteric teachings in the thirty-two degrees.



Theodore Roosevelt (1904) by Harris and Ewing

Some of the greatest Masons of the past that we remember today were men of character. They were gentlemen, statesmen, honest, leaders, and faithful in every sense of the word. Average men can be Masons, and Scottish Rite Masons, but they should be striving to be something beyond what most people we call "average".

Announcements

2022-2023 Capital Campaign

Join us in building the Next Chapter of the Houston Scottish Rite's Library Story by contributing to the expansion of the main library shelves. Donations of all sizes welcome!

With a minimum donation of **\$500**: You will have a bookshelf dedicated to you or someone you admire. A nameplate will be engraved and placed on a bookshelf in the Main Library.

Minimum donation of **\$100**: You will receive an Architect's Circle kit (limited supply!) including: Architect's Circle Commemorative Book Bag, Architect's Circle pen, Architect's Circle Certificate, and a book from the Premium book list.

Minimum donation of **\$50**: You will receive an Architect's Circle pen, and a Book from the Premium book list.

Minimum donation of **\$25**: You will receive a book from the Premium book list.

For more info visit www.HoustonScottishRite.org and click "Education Foundation" under the "Philanthropy" tab.

Per Capita Program

The endowed, life members, and dues exempt members are encouraged to donate \$30 or more per year to offset their per capita membership assessment. Donations can be made through the Valley's website at: www.HoustonScottishRite.org.

Continued from front, "We Live for Knowledge and Wisdom."

who is just a cowan. More importantly, imagine you realize that a Mason is trying to communicate he is in peril. But then, only after you go out of your way to help him, you find out that he is not a Mason and was just doing something that his friend who is a Mason taught him. Without secrecy our modes of recognition and distress would become practically worthless outside of a lodge room. You can also consider how important it is that Masons are able to trust each other, and that one Mason can keep the secrets of another.



Picture of Roman Aureus coin's obverse and reverse.

Obedience can, and has been, misinterpreted throughout history. Christians and non-Christians alike probably recognize the quote, "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Christians are called to respect lawful authority, such as paying taxes, so long as they can still render what is required to God. Similarly, as Freemasons, we must respect and uphold the laws that are made by our democratically elected governments.

For those Masons who are so fortunate to live in democratic republics or parliamentary states, they and their fellow citizens are able to enjoy the fruits of forefathers who established sacrosanct institutions that govern their nation. With that being said, it is written no where that we are called uphold evil laws or autocratic governments that wish to withhold the natural rights of men. Autocracy is fundamentally anti-Masonic. That goes for unjust and oppressive laws passed by these states as well.

While someone might claim that standing opposed to an autocratic state - even one with evil laws - shows a lack of obedience, Brother Pike makes it clear that it does not. Our obedience should be to a form of government that has the consent of the governed and to laws and men that hold righteous morality and the rights of men close to their hearts.

Fidelity is not something to be taken lightly. Malicious and unscrupulous men can claw their way to the top. Men of poor character can manipulate others and get into positions of power. But, the men that the world remembers with fondness were those that did great things for their tribe, their country, or for mankind. These men we often find ourselves admiring decades, centuries, or even millennia later can often be described as honest, honorable, dutiful, and moral.

Brother Pike underlines many of these qualities and says that we should strive for them.

"A Freemason, therefore," Pike wrote, "should be a man of honor and of conscience, preferring his duty to everything beside, even to his life; independent in his opinions, and of good morals; submissive to the laws, devoted to humanity, to his country, to his family; kind and indulgent to his brethren, friend of all virtuous men, and ready to assist his fellows by all means in his power."

"Thus will you be faithful to yourself, to your fellows, and to God, and thus will you do honor to the name and rank of Secret Master; which, like other Masonic honors, degrades if it is not deserved."

Contributing to *The Houston Valley Herald*

If you are interested, contact Brother Adam B. Olivier 32° at HoustonValleyHerald@gmail.com if you wish to contribute articles or pictures for future issues of *The Houston Valley Herald*.