



# THE HOUSTON VALLEY HERALD

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION

FEBRUARY 23, 2023

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 02

## Every Man Has a Purpose, Endeavor On

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



*Lost on The Grand Banks* (1885) by Winslow Homer.

In this very short, four-page chapter of *Morals and Dogma*, Pike writes about the lesson of the 15° which, in his own words, are “Fidelity to obligation, and Constancy and Perseverance under difficulties and discouragement.”

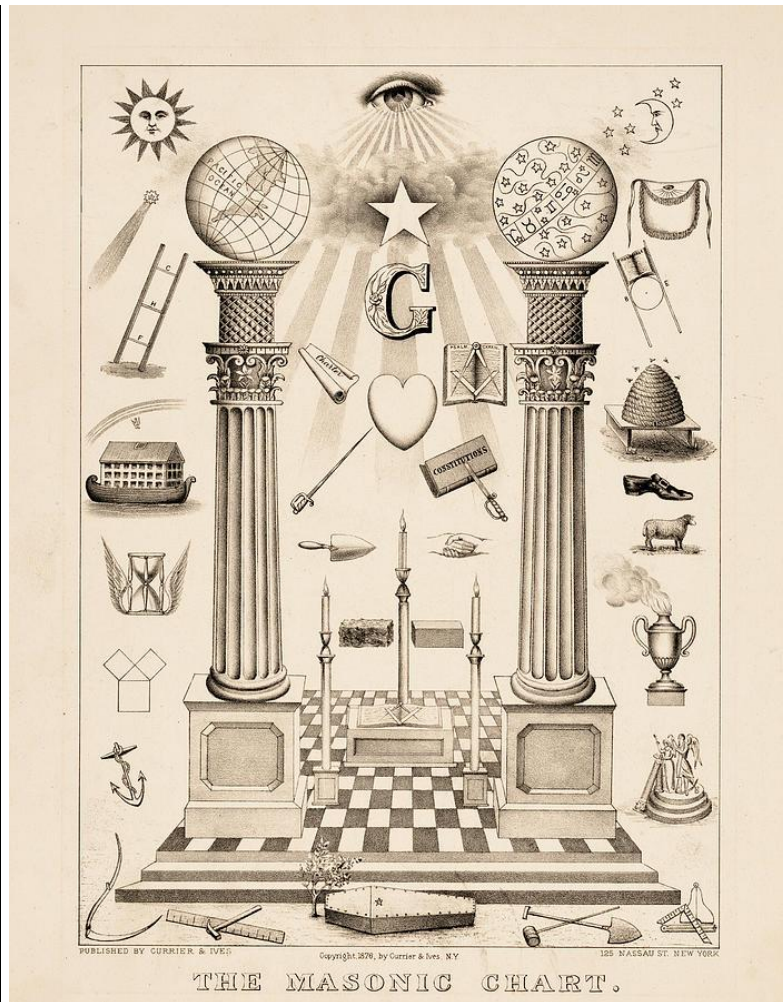
Sometimes we are not held back by our enemies or our physical weaknesses; sometimes we hold ourselves back for nothing more than the inconvenience of inevitable failure. Have you ever decided to stop reading a book because it was slightly above your reading level, or maybe you read a few words you were not sure the meaning of? Have you ever played a video game on “Easy” just because you only wanted to win?

“It is the motionless and situationless that most frets and impedes the current of progress,” wrote Illustrious Brother Albert Pike 33° in chapter fifteen of *Morals and Dogma*. “...The Masons that doubt and hesitate and are discouraged; that disbelieve in the capability of man to improve; that are not disposed to toil and labor for the interest and well-being of general humanity; that expect others to do all, even of that which they do not oppose or ridicule; while they sit, applauding and doing nothing, or perhaps prognosticating failure.”

It is not hard for the modern man, and the modern Mason, to allow mediocrity to embrace him. It is easy for a Mason to commit to doing something for his lodge, or his fellow brother, and then fall short. It is so easy to use the excuse that we are not being paid for our time, and that everything in Masonry is “volunteer.” Did that kind of stupid inadequacy suffice for great Freemasons like Sir Francis Drake, Benjamin Franklin, or Winston Churchill? Do you think that George Washington would have fallen short on his commitments to his lodge, or his brethren, or himself?

In our modern society, it is not only acceptable for men to fall short, but it is sometimes actively encouraged. We are told that it is okay to be weak and that we may even be better off if we are quiet and stick to our small corner. This kind of rhetoric is profane and evil – it directly conflicts with one of the central points of this degree, which is that every man has a purpose. We are meant to overcome challenges and create things. We are meant to build, and we are meant to improve ourselves as well as others. At the very least we should strive to find the purpose in our lives to honor God, and

*Continued on the back.*



*The Masonic Chart* (c. 1876) by Currier & Ives.

## Freemasonry: What We Are

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

After a newly raised Master Mason turns in his final proficiency, he must face some uncomfortable truths that no brother from his lodge probably had the heart to confess to him. Now that he has taken the first steps into his winding Masonic journey, and now that he has memorized the foundation of Masonic knowledge, he has no other tasks assigned to him by his lodge. The brother has technically done everything he has to do to be considered a fully made Mason. If everything goes wrong, he will slowly drift away from his lodge because he feels he has nothing else to do there but listen to the secretary read minutes and perhaps break out the popcorn if two past masters argue over an electric bill.

While most Masons in the United States who came from average or subpar lodges can probably relate to the paragraph above, it does raise an important series of questions. If a new brother is not “tricked” into an officer position or some kind of place of responsibility in his lodge, does the Craft actually have something to offer him? Besides the fact that going to a lodge’s stated business meeting is “something to do” once a month, is there any true meaning or purpose to it? Another important question that brother may have: if the blue lodge offers him nothing after he has completed his proficiencies, is the Scottish Rite just a well-decorated version of his blue lodge?

Illustrious Brother Albert Pike 33° wrote about what Freemasonry is, and what it does, in his magnum opus *Morals and Dogma*. In

*Continued on the back.*

Continued from front, "Every Man Has a Purpose, Endeavor On."  
our ancestors who lived entire lives just so that we could exist.



**Duty** (1883) by Edmund Blair Leighton.

"But gloomy and discouraging as was the prospect, with lukewarmness within and bitter opposition without, our ancient brethren persevered," Pike wrote. "Let us leave them engaged in the good work, and whenever to us, as to them, success is uncertain, remote, and contingent, let us still remember that the only question for us to ask, as true men and Masons, is, what does duty require; and not what will be the result and our reward if we do our duty."

## 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](http://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](http://www.HoustonScottishRite.org).

Continued from front, "Freemasonry: What We Are."

Chapter fourteen he writes, "The practical object of Masonry is the Physical and moral amelioration and the intellectual and spiritual improvement of individuals and society."

If the new Master Mason read that, he might remember how he felt before he became a Mason. Specifically, he would remember that he thought he was going to learn so much about history, or philosophy, or that he was going to transition from being a good man to being a great man. But, instead, he is just sitting in a business meeting while the time passes by. What our new Master Mason has not realized, and has not been told, is explained by how Pike starts off chapter fourteen.

"It is for each individual Mason to discover the secret of Masonry," Pike wrote, "by reflection upon its symbols and a wise consideration and analysis of what is said and done in the work. Masonry does not *inculcate* her truths. She *states* them, once and briefly; or hints them, perhaps, darkly; or interposes a cloud between them and eyes that would be dazzled by them. 'Seek, and ye shall find,' knowledge and the truth."

The lesser-discussed symbols of Masonry, such as the beehive or the anchor, mean something. They should not just be ignored or forgotten. The reality that the newly-raised Master Mason will hopefully come to is that his lodge helped him do the *bare minimum* and now it is his duty to keep learning. There is a wealth of wisdom in the symbolism of the blue lodge in the Monitor, and that Pike wrote about in *Esoterika* (which is much easier to digest than *Morals and Dogma*). What Pike says, though, is that there is more than what it does for the individual.

"Essentially philanthropic, philosophical, and progressive, [Freemasonry] has for the basis of its dogma a firm belief in the existence of God and his providence, and of the immortality of the soul; for its object, the dissemination of moral, political, philosophical, and religious truth, and the practice of all virtues. In every age, its device has been, 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,' with constitutional government, *law, order, discipline,* and *subordination* to legitimate authority – *government* and not anarchy.

"But it is neither a political party nor a religious sect. It embraces all parties and all sects, to form from among them all a vast fraternal association. It recognizes the dignity of human nature, and man's right to such freedom as he is fitted for; and it knows nothing that should place one man below another, except ignorance, debasement, and crime, and the necessity of subordination to lawful will and authority... Therefore it teaches its members to love one another, to give to each other mutual assistance and support in all the circumstances of life, to share each other's pains and sorrows, as well as their joys and pleasures; to guard the reputations, respect the opinions, and be perfectly tolerant of the errors, of each other, in matters of faith and beliefs."

Freemasonry is the embodiment of The Enlightenment. While not every man is a Mason, nor should he be, there are Masons in every free country in the world. The bedrock principles of Freemasonry provide the world with an ideal that has freed billions of people from tyranny and oppression, and opened up republican democracy and the equality of men to every continent.

If the new Master Mason is able to realize what Freemasonry offers him and the world, then at some point he will be ready for the Scottish Rite, which has been described as "The Fraternity's university." In the Scottish Rite a man finds refined concepts that were perhaps briefly mentioned in the blue lodge, as well as more "Light" and mysteries to behold. He also finds an expanded social fraternity from brothers around his region and a new culture of Masonry to embrace. Freemasonry is a fraternity, a university, a self-improvement tool, a community, and a secular guardian of The Enlightenment.

### A Note From The Editor

If you wish to contribute to *The Houston Valley Herald*, contact Brother Adam B. Olivier 32° at [HoustonValleyHerald@gmail.com](mailto:HoustonValleyHerald@gmail.com). To view all previous issues, visit the Houston Valley's website and click on the "Newsletter" tab on the right.