



Kinds of Masons

A dialogue between a new Brother and an experienced, knowledgeable Past Master.

Things are not always as obvious as they might first seem!

Based on the Old Tiler Talks
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(published in the USA in 1925)

KINDS OF MASONS

"I am almost through!" The New Brother displayed a sheaf of membership cards to the Past Master. "Soon I will have joined them all and become every kind of Mason there is."

"What do you know about the kinds of Masons there are?" asked the Past Master, interested. "You have not been a Master Mason long enough to gain all that knowledge!"

"That's not hard to gain, with all the brethren poking petitions at you. There are Chapter Masons and Templar Masons and Royal Ark Masons and Council Masons and Conclave and ..."

"Whoa! Whoa!" the Past Master cries, "Sorry! I didn't quite understand. I thought so.... you obviously haven't learned yet."

"Learned what? Are there other kinds of Masons?"

"Oh aye!" answered the Past Master. "A great many kinds! But some you haven't mentioned stand out more prominently than others."

"Oh well, tell me then! I thought I had joined most of them..."

"You don't join these. You become one, or are made one, or maybe even grow into one of them".

"For instance, there is the King Solomon Mason. He thinks that everything that Solomon did as a Mason is right and everything he didn't do is wrong. To him Masonry was conceived, born and grew up in the shadow of King Solomon, and every word of the legend is literally true, much like the man who refuses to believe the earth is round, because a verse in the Bible refers to the 'four corners of the earth!' The King Solomon Mason lives his Masonry according to his light; perhaps it's not his fault it is so dim".

"To the ritual Mason the importance of Masonry is the form of its words. A good Mason in his belief is one who can repeat a lecture from end to end without a slip. A man may do battle, murder, or cause sudden death, commit arson or run away with a neighbour's wife; if he knows his ritual letter perfect, it 'was all a mistake!' The man who doesn't know his ritual letter perfect is not, in this man's eyes, a good Mason; not though he gives to charity with both hands and carry love for his fellowman in both head and heart.

"The practical Mason looks at life from a utilitarian standpoint. He prefers electricity to candles for Lesser Lights because they are simpler and prefers candles to electricity because they are cheaper. He thinks a choir impractical because it produces nothing permanent, and would rather spend the money for printed matter or a new carpet. He is at his best when raising money for a new temple and at his worst when asked to express himself upon the spirit of Masonry. His hand is in his pocket for charity, but never for entertainment. He is usually on the finance committee, and recommends a budget in which rent and heat and light are bigger than relief.

"The heart Mason is the opposite. He is full of impractical schemes. He wants to start a new temple which will never be built. He talks much of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, but is absent when the hat is passed and the committee on funds needs a few workers to go out and gather in. The heart Mason is the lodge sob-sister; he usually seconds any motion to spend any amount of money for flowers or to send a brother away for his health, and always makes a little tear-filled speech about the fatherless loved ones, even if the dear departed died a bachelor.

"The business Mason belongs because he thinks it helps his job. He usually sits next to the solid business man in lodge and likes to tell people what he does. If he is a Past Master, he never comes to lodge on time, so that he can get a special welcome at the Altar. His favourite speech is about the man who tried to advertise his business in lodge and how evil this was; in the speech he always mentions his own business. He wears an extra large sized pin and prints squares and compasses on his letterheads."

"Then there is the belly Mason. He is most faithful in attendance at lodges where there may be a feed. He will cheerfully spend the fifty pence bus fare and a long evening to get a pounds worth of sandwiches. If there is to be a sit-down meal he will sit up all night to be on time. If the affair is in another lodge and needs tickets he will take time off from his job to hunt a brother who has a ticket and doesn't want it. He's the Mason that gets asked "Excuse me, can I get to the buffet!" as he is always blocking others' path. And is always the first to fill a 'doggie bag!'

"And then there is the regular Mason - the fellow who does his best with the time and brains he has. He is the great bulk of the fraternity. He pays the dues and fills the chairs and does the work. Sometimes he is a fine ritualist, but he is usually an earnest one. He is not very practical, and would spend more than we have if it wasn't that he is too sentimental to permit the charity fund to be robbed. He passes the pies or sandwiches, and if there is any left he gets his; but he doesn't care so long as the evening is a success. He isn't so much a student of the Craft, but something in the heart of Masonry has reached deep into his heart, and so he comes to his Lodge and does his best. He is not learned, but he is not stupid. He loves his Lodge, but not so much he cannot see her faults. He is most of us."

"And what class of Mason am I?" asked the New Brother, uneasily looking at his sheaf of cards.

"You have cards enough to be considered a Mason for almost any reason," answered the Past Master. "But OK, I'll take your word for it. What kind of Mason are you?"

"I don't know for sure, but I know what kind I am never going to be!" answered the New Brother, putting his many membership cards away.