



A Mason's Christmas

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

A MASON'S CHRISTMAS

"I don't believe in a Christmas celebration by the Lodge. I don't think we ought to have one or be asked to contribute to one or in any way engage in Christmas festivities."

The Brother spoke emphatically and with marked disapproval of the little ante-room group nearby, making happy plans for Xmas.

"That's very interesting," commented the Old Past Master. I like to hear points of view unfamiliar to me. Would you mind telling me why?"

"Of course not. It's very simple. Masonry is not Christian. King Solomon, of course, wasn't a Christian, nor were either of the Hiram's. Masonry admits to her ranks any good man of faith; Christian, Jewish, Mohammedan, Buddhist... it makes no difference, so he has a Faith. Then, as a Lodge, we celebrate a holiday belonging to one faith. Now I personally am a Christian, and of course I celebrate Christmas. But my Brother across the way is a Jew, who does not recognize Christianity. To ask him to spend his proportion of Lodge funds in celebrating the birth of a Leader in whom he does not believe would be exactly like asking me to celebrate, with my proportion of Lodge money, the birth of Confucius. Of course, I have only one vote and the majority rules, but when it comes to personal contributions to a Masonic Christmas celebration, my hands will never come out of my pockets."

He shoved them deeper in as he spoke to emphasize his intention not to open his wallet!

"Hhhmmmm!" answered the Old Past Master. "So, you think your Jewish Brother across the way doesn't recognize Christianity? Don't you mean he doesn't recognize Christ as the Son of God? Han on! Oh! Brother Samuels." The Old Past Master called across the anteroom.

"Here a minute, please?"

The Jewish Brother rose and came forward.

"Thanks Brother. I just wanted to ask you if you are in favour or against the Lodge Christmas celebration?" asked the Old Past Master.

"Me? I am in favour of it, of course, both for the Lodge appropriation and the individual contribution."

"Thank you," nodded the Old Past Master. Then as the Jewish Brother went back to his seat, he turned to the Brother.

"You see, my son, our Jewish friend is not narrow. He does not believe in Christ as the Redeemer. But, to him the Christmas celebration is not one of His birthdays, but of the spirit of joyousness and love which we mean when we sing, at Christmas time, of Peace on earth, good will towards men! If you argue that 'peace' is only a Christian word, he might even quote to you the words of One who said, 'I bring you not Peace, but a Sword.'

"Now let me explain something to you. The Jew has just as much right to refuse to recognise Christ as the Son of God, as you don't consider Mohammed the Prophet the followers of Allah say he is. But as an educated man, you must know that Mohammed was a good man, a devout leader, a wise teacher. As an educated man, you admit that the religion founded by Buddha has much in it that is good, and you admit that Confucius was a wise and just leader. Were you in the land where the birthdays of any of these were celebrated, would you refuse your part in the people's joy in their Leader, simply because you followed another? I trust not. Well, neither do our Jewish Brethren or our Mohammedan Brethren, desire to be left out of our celebration. They may not believe in the Divinity of Him we, as Christians, follow, but if they are good men and good Masons... they are perfectly willing to

admit that the religion we follow is as good for us as theirs is for them, and to join with us in celebrating the day which is to us the glad day of all the year.

"Believe me, boy, Christmas doesn't mean Christ's birthday to many a man who calls himself Christian. It is not because of joy that He was born that many a good man celebrates Christmas. It is because his neighbour celebrates it, because it is a time of joy for little ones, because it is a day when he can express his thanks to his God that he is allowed to have a wife and family and children and friends and a Lodge, because of that very 'peace on earth' spirit which is no more the property of the Gentile than the Jew, the Chinese, or the Mohammedan.

"It is such a spirit that Masons join, all, in celebrating Christmas. It is on the Masonic side of the tree we dance, not the Christian side. When this Lodge erects its Christmas tree and throws it open to the little ones of this town, you will find children of all kinds there; black, white, yellow, and brown, Jew and Gentile, Christian and Mohammedan. And you will find a Jew at the door, and among the biggest subscriptions will be those from some Jewish Brethren, and there is a Jew who rents cars for a living who will supply us a dozen free to take baskets to those who cannot come. And when the Jewish Orphan Asylum has its fair, in the Spring, you will find many a Christian Mason attending to spend his money and help along the cause dear to his Jewish Brethren, never remembering that they are of a different faith. That, my son, is Masonry."

"For Charity is neither Christian nor Jewish, nor Chinese nor Buddhistic. And celebrations which create joy in little hearts and feed the hungry and make the poor think that Masons do not forget the lessons in the Lodge, are not Christian alone, though they be held at Christmas, and are not for Christians alone, though the celebration be in His honour. Recall: 'By the exercise of Brotherly Love we are taught to regard the whole human species as one family, the high and low, the rich and poor, who,

as created by one Almighty Parent, and inhabitants of the same planet, are to aid, support and protect each other'.

"It is with this thought that we, as Masons, celebrate Christmas, to bring joy to our Brethren and their little ones, and truly observe the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God, whether we be Jew or Gentile, Mohammedan or Buddhist." The Old Past Master ceased and stood musing, his old eyes looking back along a long line of Lodge Christmas trees about which eager little faces danced. Then he turned to the Junior Mason.

"Well," he said smiling, "Do you understand?"

"I thank you for my Christmas present," came the answer. "Please tell me to which Brother I should make my Christmas contribution?"