



Geometric Rubbish

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
by Carl H. Claudy
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GEOMETRIC RUBBISH

"There are a lot of things in Masonry," began the New Brother to the Past Master.

"Bravo!" cried the Past Master, sarcastically. "Who told you all that?"

"And some of them," continued the New Brother, "are more or less rubbish. I mean I yield to no one in my love for the Craft, but I see its faults. And when I am expected to learn the science of geometry as a part of Masonry I know it's a joke. There is no more sense to including geometry in the second degree than there would be including palaeontology or..."

"I love to hear a man say he can see the faults of Masonry," interrupted the Past Master, "because then I am in the presence of a master mind. Generations of philosophers have made Masonry what it is. When a new brother can plainly see its faults he is greater than all of these."

"Of course I did not mean it that way. I just meant that I, er, you know..."

"Do I? Well, then I suppose I'd better not mince words about it. To say there is no sense to geometry in the second degree is to advertise the fact that you know nothing and care less for the symbolism of the order. Take from Masonry its symbolism and all you have left is a central thought with no means of expression. Imagine a great musician, deaf, blind, and paralyzed, his heart ringing with wonderful melodies and harmonies, yet unable to give them expression, and you have a mental picture of Masonry without symbolism. Symbolism is Masonry's means of expressing thought, and geometry, in the second degree, is not an arithmetical study, but a symbol."

"Geometry was an outgrowth of the first science. The first glimpse brute man had there was aught in nature but haphazard chance or the capricious doing of a superior overlord was when he learned the stupendous fact that two and two always make four."

"From that humble beginning and recognition of the master law of the universe-which is, that law is universal, unchanging, and invariable-grew the study of things; their surfaces, their areas, their angles, their motions, their positions. Modern methods have gone farther than Euclid, but his work was perfectly done and Euclid's geometry stands today as a perfect thing, as far as he took it."

"Geometry is the science of order. Reaching back to the first recognition that there was order in the world, it may stand for anyone who has eyes to see, as it does stand in Masonry, for man's recognition of God in the universe. It is a symbol of universality. By geometry we know that natural law on earth is nature's law for the stars. There have been few atheists in the world, but I venture to say that none of them have been geometers or astronomers. They know too much to deny the existence of the Great Geometrician when seeing His work."

"Geometry is everywhere. It is in the snowflake's measured lines of crystallization. There is geometry of the honeycomb and the geometry of the cone of a fir tree. Mountains stand or fall as they obey or disobey the laws of geometry and the spider in her web and the planets in their orbits all work according to the universal laws of geometry."

"'I think God's thoughts after Him,' said the great astronomer Kepler, looking through his telescope and thinking of the geometry of the skies."

"If we know two angles and one dimension, we can find the other dimension. Man has angles and dimensions; and if we know enough of them we can find the rest. One of a man's angles is his love of Masonry. Given a real love of Masonry as one angle, a willingness to live her precepts as the other and we can tell what sort of a man he is now, used to be, and will be in the future."

"It is a real geometry the second degree commends to you, my brother, because it is a symbol of law and order, of Deity, of universality. But it is spiritual geometry which you should study rather than the propositions of Euclid, bearing in mind that they are symbols of that which Masonry most venerates, most wisely teaches, and most greatly loves."

"Our ancient brother Pythagoras discovered the wonderful demonstration of the Great Architect which is the forty-seventh problem of Euclid. And so when I hear a young squirt of a Mason, with his eyes barely opened to the long path which is Masonry winding through the stars to God, say that the geometry in the second degree is rubbish, I wish I could take him out in the back and treat him as I would a small boy who found humour in church and fun in sacred things, and..."

"Oh! Whoa! Stop!" cried the New Brother. "I was wrong. I didn't understand. Say, where can I get a geometry book? I want to know more about that forty-seventh problem."

"In the Lodge Library," growled the Past Master. "And, say, son, when you get it in your head, come back here and explain it all over again to me, will you?"