



## **Wages**

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

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

Based on the Old Tiler Talks  
by Carl H. Claudy  
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## WAGES

"We ought to revise the ritual. It has so much in it that doesn't apply nowadays..."

"I have heard that said about the Bible, too," the Past Master interrupted the New Brother. "What particular part of the ritual do you want changed?"

"Well, for instance, 'and pay the Craft their wages, if any be due.' That doesn't mean a thing today. We pay 'wages' or dues to the lodge- the lodge doesn't pay us wages of any kind."

"Haven't you been present at a Craft payday yet? You sure are out of luck," answered the Past Master.

"Why, what do you mean? Have I missed something?"

"If you have been a member of the Craft for six months and haven't received any Masonic wages, you must be among those the fathers of Masonry had in mind when they wrote 'pay the Craft their wages if any be due.' Evidently no wages are due you, or you would have received them.

"I have been a Mason so long I forget what it's like not to be one. I receive my Masonic wages regularly, and always have. Most members of the Craft get their wages regularly. It's a shame you don't work so that some are due you.

"Masonic wages are paid in many coins. Last week my son-in-law lost his job through a misunderstanding. He is not a member of the Craft. He asked me what I could do. I told his one-time boss the story as my son-in-law told it to me. The boss asked me, 'Is this on the square?' I told him it was.

"I know you for a true square man, on the level' he answered.

'Tell the boy to come back.'

"Last year a friend and Brother was in the hospital. I went to see him two or three times. He never had much of an idea about Masonry before he was so ill; he seldom attended the Lodge. Now he never misses a meeting. And he never fails to chat with me going and coming, or when I meet him on the street. He is one of my wages; a small act of brotherhood brought him to appreciate that the lodge wasn't just words. I don't know how much good he has done since he has been really interested, but I do know that he lays it all to my visiting him.

"Over my bed is an electric light. I read before I go to sleep and reach up and turn it off when I am tired. Both it and the books I read came from another Brother; he's the librarian at the big temple. He heard me trying to explain the meaning of a symbol and asked me if I had ever read a particular book. It sounds foolish now, but then I hadn't, and I said I never heard of him. The light and the books were the answer. Now I am never without a book of some kind, and it's astonishing what even a Past Master can read if he reads long enough. Masonic wages, my boy, are worth much fine gold.

"Two years ago, my little granddaughter was involved in a car accident. After I got over the first shock, I began to wonder what could be done. It looked like a, illness and a hospital, and nurses and doctors and problems beyond her father's and my means.

"But I didn't trust the lodge enough. We have seven doctors on the rolls. One of the seven was at the hospital every day.

Jim, the florist, kept her room a bower. Bill, the preacher, brought a different young girl to see her every other day, until she had a wonderful circle of friends. Boys I only knew by sight stopped me on the street or came to the house or hospital, and when she was strong again, she always said it was as much because of the loving care everyone took of her grandfather's girl as because of the surgeons. Masonic wages beyond my dreams, my boy, but Masonic wages, nevertheless.

"I never learned much in the way of a trade or business. I'll never be much of a financial success. But is there a man in this town who can call more big businessmen by their front names than me? I once thought it was just because I was Master. Now I know it isn't. Several Brethren have asked me to their homes to chat about Masonry. I've gone as gladly to the bricklayer and the crossing policeman and the elevator man. When men like these tell me I've meant something in their lives that money can't buy, I don't care so much that I never earned much cash.

"Don't revise the ritual. Masonic wages are those which are paid in love and brotherhood and mutual help and information and inspiration and charity and assistance and being pals. They are worth much more than money. Take the Masonic wages out of a lodge and you would need to revise the whole fraternity. The payment Masons make to Masons is the most valuable which a man can receive. And you want to revise it out of existence!"

"No, I don't," answered the New Brother. "Now I'll tell you something. Brother Bill, told me to say that to you. He started by telling me how grateful some brother was because I had helped him out of a hole. Bill asked me if I'd received any Masonic wages yet. When I said I hadn't, he said you were

paying them and that the way to get mine was to talk to you about the Ritual and, guess what, I've been paid"