

**ADDRESS TO CANDIDATE ON RECEIVING THE BIBLE  
IN THE THIRD DEGREE CEREMONY**

by Ellwood C. Wilder, P.M. Hawaiian Lodge #21

My Brother,

Now that you have been raised to the Sublime degree of Master Mason, it is proper that you should be informed of the significance of the work, of the workings of the Lodge, and of Masonry in general.

This is known as the Blue Lodge and is the parent or Mother Lodge of Masonry.

In it are conferred the Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason degrees. There is nothing higher in Masonry to which you can attain, but if you find the work interesting, and wish to pursue it further, after a period of six months you may do so along one or both of two branches.

One is known as the Scottish Rite which advances by numerical degrees beginning with the fourth and ending with the thirty-second with a thirty-third degree that is honorary. The other is the York Rite which goes through the Chapter and the Commandery, ending with the degree of Knights Templar.

The work in each is very beautiful and leaves a lasting impression in the deepest emotions of all who take it seriously.

As the Blue Lodge is the mother lodge of Masonry, so a man's standing in his Blue Lodge controls his entire standing as a Mason. If a Mason is suspended or expelled from his Blue Lodge it automatically severs his connections from all other Masonic Bodies.

There are two kinds of meetings: Stated meetings and called meetings. Stated meetings occur at the time stated in the by-laws of the Lodge and must be held at the time and in the place designated, whether the day be a holiday or not, unless special action has been taken to postpone over the holiday. They are always held in the Third Degree.

In them all business is transacted, applications for degrees are received and balloted upon, examinations in the work of the proficiency of the Third Degree are held and any other matters which may come before the Lodge are considered.

Called meetings are held at the call of the Master and may occur at any time. In them degrees are conferred, funerals conducted, and, if a Brother has acted in a manner unworthy of a Master Mason and charges have been preferred against him, trial commissioners are elected to try him.

There are certain duties and privileges which obtain to a Master Mason, and upon his proper performance of them largely depends his usefulness as a Mason and the success of his Lodge. Masonry severely frowns upon any man who neglects his family duties, nor does it expect anyone to undergo any particular inconvenience in its behalf, but anyone who expects anything out of Masonry must be willing to put the very best that is in him into it. Some of the duties are attending meetings, attending funerals, visiting the sick and particularly in assisting the Master in committee work and on investigations when assigned to them.

It is a Master Mason's privilege to attend all functions of the Blue Lodge and to visit other Blue Lodges than his own, but the greatest privilege of all is that of being recognized before men as a worthy member of the noblest organization ever perfected by man.

So far, I have explained to you only the material side of masonry.

You were told that Masonry is a moral science which implies that in it are found great moral precepts. The Blue Lodge ritualistic work is symbolical of man's transition through his life which is exemplified in beautiful allegory and great moral lessons.

The first degree illustrates birth from an outer oblivion or darkness into the light of life and the great lesson which it teaches is that no man should ever enter upon any great or important undertaking without first invoking the blessing of God.

The second degree illustrates the period of vigor and action of a man's life, his instructions in the useful arts and sciences and his application of the same in the construction of worth and beauty. The great lesson of this degree is so to live that innocence, purity and things that are sacred will be held in the highest reverence.

The third degree illustrates the end of a useful and beautiful life and its transition from earth's fleeting and uncertain pleasures to the lasting glories of a brighter and better land, and is the Masonic answer to the question, "Whither are you traveling?" In it is taught the greatest of all masonic lessons: that when human strength and wisdom fail, we should ever remember that Divine assistance is vouchsafed us through the medium of prayer.

That my Brother is the Keystone in the beautiful arch of Masonry.

Do your duty as manfully and as faithfully as you can and when you have reached the limit of your ability, ask God in the secret precincts of your heart for strength and courage to carry on.

The great lesson which runs through all of Masonry is to seek Divine assistance and guidance through prayer, that we may live cleaner and kinder lives, and leave the world a little better for our having had the privilege of passing through it.

Masonry, however, is like life, in that you cannot get more out of it than you put into it.

The mere ceremony of becoming a Master Mason makes no man any better than he was before, but the earnest endeavor to live up to the beautiful teachings of Masonry cannot help but make any man better.

Robert Burns beautifully sums it all up in a verse of "The Cotter's Saturday Night" :

"And mind your duty duly mon and night Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray Implore His counsel and assisting might, They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright."

It is fitting, that on such momentous occasion as this, the candidate be presented with a token to commemorate it, and there is certainly no more fitting token than a copy of the Great Light of masonry, the Holy Bible. This is the Holy Bible upon which you were obligated. It is a beautiful Masonic edition of the Standard King James Version with interesting illustrations, references and allusions to Masonic history.

It is hoped that as the years roll by, you will find it an ever-increasing source of faith and hope and a happy reminder of this occasion and of the brotherly love in which it is given.