

ENCOUNTER THE CHALLENGE
By Neil M. Smalley Grand Master

Today we are faced with many challenges to renew and restore our beloved fraternity to the prominence it once held in our society. Masons are known to be builders, but how often do we stop to think about what we are building? We consider the Grand Architect to be the builder of the vast universe, yet how often do we stop to appreciate it and to give thanks? We can gaze at the rugged and beautiful Rocky Mountains and easily be in awe, close our eyes and give a prayer of thanks to Almighty God. However, in our communities, do we look around and give thanks for the handiwork of the Great Architect of the Universe? We pass the town drunk, it is difficult to see him as a work of God. Yes, he is a work of God but perhaps a neglect of man. If we were to stretch forth a helping hand or give him a word of encouragement, we may be able to help that man achieve his rightful place in society.

Every day we have the opportunity to do things, which make us better individuals as we are constantly engaged in building our own personality and character. Our image projects not what we think, but what we are. Day by day we build ourselves by the deeds we do.

As Masons, we also have a responsibility to help build a better society. We tell the world that as Masons we take good men and make them better. Are we really doing that today in Masonry? How often do we see our brethren leave the lodge after receiving the three degrees and never return again? Why? Did we fail to impress upon them the beauties of Freemasonry? Did we perhaps perform the work in a slipshod fashion? Did the officers mumble the words that had been poorly memorized? If so, they see little to impress them with the dignity and integrity of Freemasonry.

No man becomes a Mason simply by receiving the three degrees; it requires work on his part and it requires work on our part. We must impart the knowledge to him and then give him a job to do. If we instruct him properly with the history, principles and precepts of Freemasonry, and then keep him busy, he will return as you.

I recently read this item (author unknown) and believe it has a great message for us today:

"A favorite pastime with many people is rearranging furniture."

Don't you think it is about time we, the human race, get busy and rearrange our mental furniture? Well, I do, and think we had better do it quickly.

First of all, we should take everything from the walls of the mind. Then we should sweep the floor and scrub it so it will be clean.

Next, we ought to change our thoughts -- let us move the hatred table into the love corner, the sinful dresser behind the door of forgiveness and the beds of prejudice by the wall of kindness.

After this is done we can rest with a clean mind and life.

My brethren, let's join together and Encounter the Challenge to build a better self and a better society.