

**Illinois
Masonic
Education
Themes
*September***

**Grand Lodge Committee
on Masonic Education**

September–Freedom, Fervency, and Zeal

Review the final Paragraph of the Tenants and Cardinal Virtues Lecture in the Entered Apprentice Degree.

Discussion Questions

1. According to the Entered Apprentice Degree what mineral represents “Freedom”?
2. What is the difference between fervency and zeal?
3. What does this passage charge the Entered Apprentice with?
4. How might a Mason demonstrate fervency toward his masonic development?
5. Why do you think Chalk, Charcoal, and Clay were selected? *i.g.* Why not water or fuel?
6. What other element might you use to represent?

Notes and Guided Answers

1. Chalk
2. Warmth versus happiness. (from Mackey)Fervency- ardent devotion to duty. Zeal- advance the morality and happiness of one’s fellows.
3. “It is hoped and expected that you will apply yourself to the study of masonry...” Though this meaning has evolved (see supplements).
4. Try to seek more answers than “learn the catechism/ritual work”
5. Reflect on this idea. Get creative.
6. Reflect on this idea. Get creative.

September Supplements

Chapter Twenty-six

FLOOR-DRAWINGS, CLOTHS, CARPETS, AND TRACING-BOARDS

As long ago as 1730 there were emblems in the English lodges of three particular qualities—Freedom, Fervency, and Zeal—and those emblems were chalk, charcoal, and clay!

In the early lectures is one version of a catechism relating to them:

Q. How long should an Entered Apprentice serve his Master?

A. Seven years . . .

Q. How should he serve him?

A. With Freedom, Fervency and Zeal.

Q. Excellent qualities! What are their emblems?

A. Chalk, Charcoal and Clay.

To the modern mason the question as to why these three messy substances should be present, or should even be represented, in a speculative lodge might prove a poser, but they are the undoubted forerunners of a part of lodge equipment with which at first sight they have nothing whatever in common.

Freedom, Fervency, and Zeal.

The earliest lectures in the eighteenth century designated freedom, fervency, and zeal as the qualities which should distinguish the servitude of Apprentices, and the same symbolism is found in the ritual of the present day. The word *freedom* is not here to be taken in its modern sense of *liberty*, but rather in its primitive Anglo-Saxon meaning of *frankness, generosity, a generous willingness to work or perform one's duty*. So Chaucer uses it in the *Prior's Tale*, (v. 46:)

"A knight there was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the time that he first began
To ride out, he loved chivalrie,
Trouthe and Honour, *Freedom* and Chivalrie."
See *Fervency and Zeal*.

CANDIDATES.

Freedom, Fervency, and Zeal. Freedom, fervency, and zeal are worthy aspirations or qualities but to symbolize them by *chalk, charcoal, and clay* adds little to our understanding or appreciation of them. Even children in the 20th century are not impressed very much or very long by such oversimplification. Such things should be revised out, for they are not very ancient and serve no useful purpose. There is no hint of this symbolism in the *Gothic Constitu-*

tions and they do not appear in any of the exposed rituals of the first half of the 18th century.

To say that something is done *freely* means willingly, generously, readily, and without restraint, all approved action by a Freemason, but to explain this by comparison with *chalk* hardly seems necessary or appropriate, though it is true that *chalk* stands lowest (No. 12) in the scale of hardness and, therefore, will leave a mark when drawn across the surface of any other solid matter.

Charcoal is carbon, which is not only not *fervent* but is unusually obdurate and durable. The apparent fervency of charcoal is really the fervency or chemical activity of oxygen which unites with it to make heat. Charcoal is so resistant and enduring that surveyors in the field sometimes bury a shovel full near a station or corner where a post or other marker may be removed, the charcoal remaining there for centuries to be dug up by some other surveyor. Oxygen would be the proper symbol for fervency, though an invisible gas is not fitted for symbolical use.

Clay, formerly called *earthen pan* and possibly *hard pan*, might be a symbol for persistence, adhesion, or stubbornness but it is too inert to illustrate *zeal*. That would be better done by mercury (*quicksilver*), which darts about restlessly, or by sulphuric acid, which "bites" into the hardest metals. (See *SYMBOLS*.)

Free Man; Freeman. See *QUALITIES*
TIONERS AND

Another interesting note is in his work, *The Mason's Words*, Robert G. Davis 33° G.: C.: references the early Tracing Boards being drawn by chalk and charcoal often on clay tile. It was the responsibility of the newly made Mason to clean the drawings with mop and pail.