Masonic Principles - History and Philosophy
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We are all conscious of the existence of the invisible mysteries of what we term attraction, or forces in our material world, such as those of gravity, magnetism, chemical affinity, etc. As an example of attraction we may cite the movement of the earth which whirls away into space at the rate of one million six hundred thousand miles per day. As if freed from some invisible bonds the earth goes gaily on her way until she gets to a certain point, and just as she appears ready to bound away into the invisible beyond, the Sun metaphorically says to her: "Come back" and the Earth by virtue of the Sun's attraction, wheels round and circles back again. It is obvious to every intelligent student of science that the stability of our material world is dependent on the working of these invisible forces, and that the slightest breach of any one of Nature's laws, attractions or forces must result in confusion and disaster. This brings to our attention that significant symbol the "All Seeing Eye" which was borrowed by the Freemasons from the nations of antiquity, for inasmuch as the Foot was often adopted as the symbol of swiftness, the Arm of Strength, and the Hand of Fidelity, so on the same principle, the open eye was selected as the symbol of watchfulness, and the eye of God as the symbol of Divine watchfulness and care of the universe, as written in Psalm 121, verse 4, "Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." In the Apocryphal "Book of the conversation of God with Moses on Mount Sinai" the idea of the eternal watchfulness of God is thus beautifully explained: "Then Moses said to the Lord, O Lord, dost thou sleep or not? The Lord said unto Moses, I never sleep: but take a cup and fill it with water. then Moses took a cup and filled it with water, as the Lord commanded him. Then the Lord cast into the heart of Moses the breath of slumber; so he slept, and the cup fell from his hand, and the water which was therein was spilled. Then Moses awoke from his sleep. Then said God to Moses, I declare by my power, and by my glory, that if I were to withdraw by providence from the heavens and the earth, for no longer a space of time than thou hast slept, they would at once fall to ruin and confusion, like as the cup fell from thy hands." And so it was in the earliest periods of the world's history wise men were prompted to make a study of those great and unchangeable laws designed by the Great Architect of the Universe. The name of Tubal Cain is recorded as being the first worker in metal. Still, other scholars spent their lives in the study of pure metaphysics. The researches of these men in the hidden mysteries of nature and science and the discoveries made, served to demonstrate that great truth implied in that sacred symbol in the center, every law and force of nature serving to demonstrate the existence of a Supreme Intelligence. It was also found that the same laws which control the material world also apply to human affairs, for the foundations of human training, are always in their beginnings from generation to generation. It remains now, as always, in the processes of time that the greatest function of education is that of inculcating the habit of self-discipline which in its broadest interpretation is the ability to do the right thing, at the right time, and in the right way. This means practicing consistently a habit of both mind and body. In the life of individuals the greatest need that persists throughout time is that of some absolute standard. The symbols by which our art is illustrated now are intended to convey some great truth. Our working tools, our postures, and the signs and symbols we use should ever remind us that we are subject to these excellent laws designed by the Great Architect of the Universe. These laws bestow happiness to those who obey them, but plunge into misery those who depart from them. Listen to these works of Robert Burns:

"Ye powers who preside o'er the wind and the tide

Who marked each element border;
Who formed this frame with beneficent aim,
Whose sovereign statute is order."

>The morals contained in our symbols and emblems are to some extent explained in the lectures on our working tools. In the charge after passing, the candidate is earnestly recommended to study the science of geometry, that branch of mathematics dealing with the properties of space, and which has been established as the basis of our art. By geometry we may curiously trace Nature through her various windings to her most concealed recesses. By it we discover the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of the Grand Artificer of the Universe. By it we discover how the planets move in their different orbits, and demonstrate their various revelations. By it we account for the return of the seasons and variety of scenes which each season displays to the discerning eye. Numberless worlds are around us all framed by the same Divine Artist which roll through the vast expanse and are all conducted by that same unerring law of Nature. He who knows nothing of the philosophy of Freemasonry will be apt to become in time lukewarm and indifferent, but he who devotes himself to its contemplation and makes a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge will feel an ever increasing ardor in the study, whereby the truth of our teachings may be demonstrated with mathematical exactness.