



 THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUALISM



The summary of concise Principles (also listed on our back cover) had been passed to the gifted medium Mrs. Emma Handinge Britten, from the "spirit" of the great reformer Robert Owen. In 1901 the Spiritualists' National Union of Great Britain adopted the seven Principles as a basis for the philosophy, science and religion of Spiritualism.

Springdale Church, which was founded in 1939 as an S.N.U. (Spiritualist National Union) Church, is dedicated to following the pattern of teaching established by the S.N.U. of Great Britain. They are quite similar to those of the N.S.A.C. (National Spiritualist Association of Churches) of the United States, although their nine Principles are slightly different to our seven.

Harry Boddington gives us a more in depth version of the seven Principles in the following excerpts from "THE UNIVERSITY OF SPIRITUALISM":

FATHERHOOD OF GOD

"Spiritualism defines God for no man. Definitions imply limitations and we refuse to limit the illimitable or define the indefinable; but one fact is clear, the great first cause, called God, manifests by and through law. Men and angels may utilise these laws, they cannot change them. Logically, we cannot conceive of a first cause, for all causes must themselves be caused. Eternity means backward as well as forward, but the human mind is so constituted that the brain would break down if it did not set some limitation on imagination.

In all worlds we find implacable law in manifestation and, since love is the highest manifestation of that law, we bow our heads before the incomprehensible. By combining it with the protective idea which fatherhood connotes, we make concrete to our imagination the great lawgiver and designer "who doeth all things well." We cannot conceive of justice setting aside natural law to work miracles for a favoured few. Nor love creating a world of unhappiness and consummating His folly by brutally punishing those of His creation who are incapable of accepting the statements of priests.

BROTHERHOOD OF MAN

The brotherhood of man cuts at the root of all inequalities of opportunity. It expresses a family relationship that ought to prevail all over the world. It makes criminal the degradation of "subject" races. They should be helped, not exploited for commercial purposes. In family life we do not take advantage of each other's necessities. The family ideal must embrace all humanity. Political work must be directed towards general culture, with perfect freedom for all to

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work towards the same goal.

Everything that prevents us living clean, wholesome lives must be eradicated. Your politics, your work, your home life and your studies - everything - enters into the religion of Spiritualism, which will thus sweep all shams and hypocrisies away. The religion of Spiritualism plants your feet on every reformer's platform, and makes deeds, not creeds, the pathway to heaven.

COMMUNION OF SPIRITS

This is the sheet anchor of modern Spiritualism. Christians assert that revelation ceased two thousand years ago. We affirm that God's laws never change, and that revelations from the spirit world are still coming through. Scientists are now adding their testimony to ours.

Our experiences help us to understand the religious systems of the world, and, because of this fact, we hope to become the unifying force that will eventually bind them into one harmonious family. The true meaning of the word "religion" is "to bind back to God." Hence Spiritualism is a religion in the highest sense of the word.

CONTINUOUS EXISTENCE

You cannot "prove" either beginnings or endings; but we teach the immortality of the soul with its characteristics and memories because it is consistently taught by all returning spirits. They prove their individuality by the matter and manner of their communications. They all teach that true growth is of the soul, and is attained by effort and development in love, wisdom and experience. We do not merely believe we shall live after the change called death; we affirm that it is a demonstrable fact. By direct scientifically recorded evidence we have satisfied ourselves that the grave merely receives the physical elements of which the body is composed, and that consciousness persists after the decay of the body.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

If you accept this principle, away goes the premium on sin implied in the "vicarious atonement," which teaches that man can shuffle the consequences of his misdeeds on to the shoulders of a "saviour." It is quite untrue. The law of cause and effect follows us into the spirit world and automatically adjusts all relationships. This refusal to adopt orthodox ideas brings us into conflict with sectarians. But returning spirit people prove that cant, selfishness and hypocrisy, equally with all the virtues, set laws in motion which produce inevitable results.

It is better to ask forgiveness from the person you have wronged

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than pray to God to take over your sin while you leave the victim suffering. Make sure of your victim's pardon. You will find God's forgiveness follows as a matter of course. Realisation of our responsibility and a willingness to live up to it allies us to positive powers of goodness and changes our spiritual surroundings.

In the spirit world, we find that even sins of omission point their accusing fingers at us, and that realities are no longer obscured by the customs or hypocrisies of modern life. Degraded thinking produces limitation of psychic perception and true progress starts as soon as we "render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and to God the things which are His."

REMORSE AND REWARD (Compensation and Retribution)

Spirit people teach that sin is most detrimental to the sinner. It stunts his spiritual growth and links him to associations in sympathy with follies. The infraction of spiritual laws produces pain as surely as the breaking of a limb under physical law. Virtue is its own reward, because it sets forces in motion which eventually produce happiness, even though man's stupidity may delay it during his earthly life.

There is no vindictive punishment in the after-life, and the inevitable reaction of vice is unhappiness. But suffering, bravely endured, always proves a stepping stone to progress. The development of a strong character means the development of spiritual powers. All spirits teach that they grow "brighter" as they learn the lesson that prayer to God is best expressed by works for humanity. Thus it comes about that God is not mocked. Character is the surest passport to heaven.

Darkness and wrong thinking are synonymous terms from the spirit standpoint. Right thought leads to right action, which automatically dispels the clouds of illusion created by selfish indulgence and the misuse of life's opportunities. Spirits continually beg us to try and set laws in motion while still in the body, and thus lay up "treasure in heaven" by developing the gem of a beautiful life and avoid spheres of darkness. By spreading a knowledge of these laws, the spirit people hope to sweep away all unhappy conditions from earth and the lower spiritual planes which evolve from it.

ETERNAL PROGRESS

It is only men's folly that prevents the reign of the kingdom of heaven upon earth. It will materialise as soon as we recognise the futility of commercial, sectarian and political selfishness and intrigue. The need for this correct "poise of the mind" is thrust upon the discarnate spirit at every turn. Each gravitates to his own place, and it speedily becomes apparent that, as thought carries

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its owner to scenes and conditions that reflect his own mentality, there is no burking the issue.

On earth, the big purse buys power and respectability, but in spirit life earth's petty schemes are found to be a positive hindrance to spiritual growth, unless they were formulated with a genuine desire to advance human progress. The reborn into spirit life, therefore, study to eliminate every thought that has a purely selfish origin, and this is the magic wand that opens up the pathway of eternal progress.

They discover that true happiness is only possible where strict truth, love and justice permanently abide. The religion of Spiritualism teaches us to apply these laws while on earth, and compels tolerance to all opposing creeds. But - though tolerant - we must be firm in our adhesion to principles. The canting hypocrisy which demands that we must play up to orthodoxy, money powers, or any other form of "authority" is nauseating to sincere reformers. Let history be your guide.

Very few reforms make headway so long as they compromise with error. The true man becomes a brave soul. The brave soul brooks no departure from "right thought, right speech and right action," to quote Confuscus. Cunning and diplomacy are frustrated by the operation of this simple formula, and those who practise it become the leaders of men on earth and the ministering spirit of God both here and hereafter."

The whole structure and philosophy of Spiritualism is embodied within our Principles as a result of spirit counsel that had been received through mediums in the past. Without basic principles or laws only chaos and discord can exist. Essential truths are what other truths are based on, whether practising Spiritualism, dealing with a relationship, or attempting to repair the family automobile.

Spiritualists have no fixed creeds or dogmas that would impede any future mental re-evaluation because we know that revelations are arriving from the spirit world through mediums on a CONTINUING basis. We need the flexibility to be able to adjust our conception of life if we are to be a progressive religion and meet the needs of society at any given time. This does not mean however that we should allow "ideas" from robust thinkers to creep insidiously into our movement and churches that are clearly not covered by the simple terms of our existing Principles.

For this reason it is important that education levels as well mediumistic gifts be kept in an expanding mode. Although our existing seven Principles are intended to be used as a guide, we must remember that they have also been consistently and continuously PROVEN for over a period of a hundred years. ❁