

Commandments and Principles

*Ship me somewhere east of Suez
Where the best is like the worst,
Where there ain't no Ten Commandments,
And a man can raise a thirst...*

Rudyard Kipling's *On The Road to Mandalay*

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1. *Woodland Way* – Issue # 28 (winter 2002):



Editorial

(extracts)

Holy Moses! I'm sure running late this quarter. Must be because this is the winter edition and we've had such a warm autumn that I haven't felt inclined to settle down and finalise it sooner. Speaking of Moses, many years ago when we lived in Caulfield I used to play squash with a Jewish neighbour who assured me that it was a common saying around the Synagogue that "You'd have to be pretty naïve to think that the Pharaoh's daughter found Moses just floating in a basket in the river!" Whatever his parentage though, Moses sure must have been a darned good channel for spirit communication. Until the arrival of modern time wacko claimants, he was one of few credited with having channelled God; let alone been a physical medium for the materialisation of God's finger!

Seriously though, what Moses did and what was written about him were probably two different things and, like Jesus of Nazareth, the biblical character Moses portrays a very powerful medium.

When I began putting material together for this Edition, the theme began taking shape as *Sin, crime and religion*. What with Governor General Peter Hollingworth in hot water over his cover ups of child abuse during his career within the Anglican Church; and much more prominent publicity to Catholic Church cases in the USA and other parts of the world. And now, as I try to pull the Issue together, we have the Channel Nine Sunday, 2nd June 60 *Minutes* interview of RC Archbishop of Sydney, George Pell, exposing similar cover-ups at the highest levels in Catholicism in Australia. There must be intense embarrassment and shame for these religious institutions let alone potential insolvency from the weight of financial compensation being awarded to the victims, mainly in out-of-court settlements.

I could not help contemplate the criminal aspects of the child abuse acts – and the subsequent unethical cover-ups – vis a vis what constitutes sin within the biblical teachings: That is, within the moral codes laid down for society as it existed some two and three thousand years ago. And, of course, contemplate the stupidity in not changing those religious ethical codes, century after century as civilisation has progressed. (Whilst also stubbornly rejecting other revelations from spirit, perhaps even from the Great Spirit.) This problem within Christianity is tactfully and eloquently expressed by Silver Birch (*Silver Birch Companion* – p103/4):

When Silver Birch was asked what he thought of the Ten Commandments, he agreed that they were out of date; it was suggested he should draw up another set of commandments.

"You must not regard the power of the spirit as it was expressed in any period of man's long history as being the final word in all divine revelation," said the guide. "Your world must realise that revelation is continuous and progressive, fitting itself to the stage of understanding of the people to whom it comes. It must not be so far ahead of them that they cannot understand it. It must only be so much in front that it is within their grasp. Always the wisdom of the power of the spirit is but one step ahead, and when man achieves that step, he is ready for the next in the infinite ladder of wisdom. Why should that which obtained in the days when the race was still in its comparative infancy, and had special application to people governed by special conditions, be made to fit circumstances of today which are vastly different? But I have only one commandment, that you serve one another: that is all."

Now I haven't got a great depth of knowledge when it comes to the Bible, but it stuck in my memory that adultery and theft and such things were amongst the "Thou shalt nots" but I couldn't recall anything about paedophilia and the like. A little bit of investigation showed that male homosexuality was out, at least in America: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's ass" - if you'll pardon a little levity in this serious matter. And homosexuality is an 'excommunication-able' offence in Catholicism (refer the *TIME* essay *They Still Don't Get It!* on page 26 [of the *Journal*] for the reasons why), and especially amongst Archbishop Pell's flock where gay people are denied communion – whatever that misnomer of a rite is supposed to achieve! But there was nothing specific in the 10 C's concerning child abuse in any form. Things were undoubtedly different in those days. Life expectancy was much shorter and children begot children at much earlier ages; so the age of consent (if there was one) must have been much lower. Molestation of prepubescent children may not have been a significant problem.

Would it have made any difference to the acts of these depraved men of the cloth if there had been any religious prohibitions in these regards? Maybe, maybe not. I suppose it depends, too, on how they viewed absolution and the need to confess their sins. More likely, at least within the Roman Catholic Church, a contributing factor on the behaviour of some errant priests (and nuns) is their vow of celibacy – which may attract the depraved in the first place. They may recognise that they have a problem and seek to suppress it by entering into celibacy. The question then arises: 'Would they have succumbed to the sins/crimes they committed if they hadn't entered the priesthood – and the temptations which came their way in that environment?' That is, 'Does celibacy foster depravity?' *Prima facie*, I would venture to say 'No'... but one bad apple in the barrel would probably lure others into the barrel (of temptation). And it occurs to my sense of humour, if you'll pardon levity again: comparatively, Eve tempted Adam with good apples!

With my interest in the Ten Commandments and apples and such things aroused, it didn't take long before I found a sizeable tome on the subject in a second-hand bookshop... and discovered that the Ten C's are sometimes called "The Decalogue." However, I have found that there is no common "Decalogue" recognised by Jews, Catholics and Protestants and so it should not have, in my humble opinion, a capital 'D'. And so, after agonising about using a word contrary to my computer's spell check program (it doesn't like the plural), I have called the theme of this Issue *Decalogues*. As for *Sin, Crime and Religion* I have left that to the **TIME Review** section for coverage. The pens of TIME's contributors can paint a far better picture of the rotten state of religious institutional affairs than I.

To introduce the *Decalogues*, I have selected a few highly pertinent extracts from Joseph Lewis's *The Ten Commandments* and these begin on page 13 - the Devil's number! Where to find in the Old Testament the basis of the Ten Commandments, how they have been extracted, and how the "Word of God" differs between Jews, Catholics and Protestants.

Just to orient readers' understanding, I should draw attention to the fact that *The Ten Commandments* was published by the Freethought Press Association, NY. 'Freethought' was a term given to a wide range of seekers after the Truth who turned away from organised religion. With the rapid advances being made in the sciences, man's comprehension of matter and the universe, liberalisation of views and the breaking down of the Church's domination of ethical affairs, many intellectuals sort to denounce the old and outmoded teachings of Christianity and to look elsewhere for philosophical understanding. Spiritualism itself was often associated with the Freethinkers and audiences at the great public lectures and debates were commonly shared. It is not surprising that the copy I obtained of *The Ten Commandments* bears the rubber stamp impressions of the NZ Rationalist Association Inc. Library (and a 'Withdrawn' stamp!) The Rationalists were probably at the extreme right of the Freethinkers. Essentially, they followed reason rather than inspiration and Scriptures in their approach to theology.

To apply a degree of balance to the preceding extracts from *The Ten Commandments*, and to put a perspective of the New Testament against the Old, I have followed up with a few short extracts from an *Encyclopaedia Britannica* Research Paper entitled *Jesus and The Ten Commandments*.

About this point it readily became apparent that I was going to have to continue the theme *Decalogues* to the next Issue. The EB paper contains excerpts from two writers on the subject and, if I get space in the next Issue, I will include the second excerpt, from a book *The Law of Love* by C Keisling, 1971, in full. It brings out the positive approach to moral instruction as opposed to the Mosaic Law's negative approach. But for this Issue, we have room for just a few quotes from the first excerpt which points up linkages between the OT and the NT (in Matthew's Gospel) and the changing emphasis from negative to positive Law. That is, from the "Thou shalt nots" given by the Law-maker, Moses, to the "Thou shalt" taught by Jesus.

Proceeding on from these papers, in the next Issue, I want to lead on to the *Ten Spiritual Commandments* and the *Ten Laws of Right* given by Robert Owen (in spirit) through the mediumship of Emma Hardinge, circa 1861. And racing ahead, I can see that the natural follow on to these *Decalogues* will be the emergence of the *Principles of Spiritualism*. I have my work cut out for the coming year!



2. *The Ten Commandments:*

Extracts from

The Ten Commandments

By Joseph Lewis

Freethought Press Association, 1946

PREFACE

Page ix:

Some of the old laws of Israel are clearly savage taboos of a familiar type thinly disguised as commands of the deity.- Sir James G. Frazer.

IS LIFE a journey of enough importance to require help and assistance until our destination is reached? Is our mental equipment at birth all-sufficient to direct us safely and securely along the path of life? Is man a creature of predestination, or is he merely a temporary, animate being born to face the struggles of existence without the slightest help?

Was man given knowledge to face the difficulties he is sure to encounter, or is he but one of the myriad forms of life resulting from the ever-changing conditions of the universe, to be tossed helter-skelter upon the sea of existence?

Some say that he is; others, that he is not. Some say that we are specially created beings formed in the likeness and image of an all-powerful Creator; others, that we are but tiny insects too insignificant to be important enough to require special attention; others, that we are but the result of the conditions around us; while still others tell us that we are the masters of our own destiny.

Surely, with this vital difference of opinion concerning man's place on earth, we are justified in at least investigating this essential phase of life in an endeavour to learn the truth concerning our existence, and thus fortify ourselves for the struggles necessary to meet the difficulties of life.

If man has been furnished with a chart to guide him while on earth, it should be infallible, it should be flawless, it should be perfect.

To be perfect, a chart must be scientific in every detail. It must be in conformity with, and not in opposition to, Nature. It must tell us what to do as well as what not to do.

Pages xii, xiii:

There are some, however, who tell us that the efforts of those who labour to understand life and living are wasted in seeking to formulate their own code of conduct for the human race. They tell us that no one need make an effort to seek such knowledge; they tell us that it is already here in a special revelation from the "God of the Universe" in what is known as the Ten Commandments.

What are the Ten Commandments?

We are told by some that the Ten Commandments were written by "God" himself - that they are divine, infallible and imperishable. We were told, while still upon our mother's knee, the story of how Moses was put into the bullrushes to be saved when the cruel Pharaoh ordered that all male children be destroyed; how Pharaoh's own daughter found him, saved his life and nurtured him; how afterwards he became the great leader of the Children of Israel; and how, when God wanted to reveal to his children his laws, he sent for Moses; and how, after Moses had fasted for forty days and nights on Mount Sinai, God gave him two tablets upon which were engraved this most priceless message for the guidance of human beings.

So firm is the conviction of those who accept the Ten Commandments as God's divine precepts, that they believe that all the ills and torments with which mankind is plagued are caused by not practising the tenets of the Decalogue as revealed by God to Moses.

It has been variously contended that the Ten Commandments are so all-embracing that in addition to containing God's rules for the guidance of the human family and its mission while on earth, they contain also the very foundations upon which are based our laws and governments, and without which civilisation could not exist!

It is also contended that if the Ten Commandments were universally accepted, all strife, discord, hatred, prejudice, misunderstanding and injustice would vanish from the earth. There would be no more deception, dishonesty or deceit. With the Ten Commandments as our guide, the human race would live together as one perfect and harmonious family.

INTRODUCTION

What Are The Commandments?

Page 1:

WERE ONE to turn to the Bible for the Commandments, he would find them difficult to discover. They are not written on the first page of the Bible. They are hidden among its many pages and obscured by a multitudinous number of texts. If the reader thinks that the "Ten Commandments" are as specific and as definite as the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution of the United States, he will be sadly disappointed. To find them is like looking for the proverbial needle in the haystack.

There is no table of contents in the Bible, nor is there an index to the Holy Scriptures to indicate where the Ten Commandments may be found.

Were acknowledged leaders of the various religions based upon the Bible asked where the Decalogue could be found, there would be much confusion and contradiction on their part. Some would say that the Ten Commandments are recorded in the 20th Chapter of the second book of the Five Books of Moses, called *Exodus*. Others would state that they are to be found in the 5th Chapter of the fifth book of the Five Books of Moses, called *Deuteronomy*; while others would maintain that Chapters 22 and 23 of the *Book of Exodus* contain the revealed words. And yet 'covenants' as binding as the so-called Decalogue are found in Chapters 31, 32, 33 and 34 of the *Book of Exodus*.

In view of these facts, let us 'search the Scriptures' ourselves and see what we find.

Page 2:

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AS REVEALED IN THE BOOK OF EXODUS

Although we have been told that the Ten Commandments can be found in Chapter 20 of the Book of Exodus, I think that the preceding chapter, describing the deliverance of the Commandments to Moses, should be quoted as it provides an introduction to this momentous event. . .

[But I do not as we haven't the space! Let us move on. Ed.]

Pages 8 - 10:

And now the supremely important event is to take place: The Ten Commandments are to be issued!

I quote *Chapter 20, verses 1 to 17*:

- 1 And God spake all these words, saying,
- 2 I *am* the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
- 3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
- 4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:
- 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me;
- 6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
- 7 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
- 8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
- 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:
- 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:
- 11 For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.
- 12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.
- 13 Thou shalt not kill.
- 14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- 15 Thou shalt not steal.
- 16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
- 17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

I count in the above quotation seventeen separate and distinct verses, with at least thirteen separate and distinct "commands." That these seventeen verses and thirteen separate and distinct commands have since been condensed into what are known as the "Ten Commandments" is something that will require analysis, for we shall find that not all the religions which accept these Commandments arranged them alike. Some religious systems fail to include certain provisions that are not in harmony with their ritual, while others number them differently.

And then again, why particularly ten? Why not a different number or an odd number? Why not only One Commandment incorporating all the rules promulgated by the Bible Deity?

Anthropologists tell us that the explanation is simple. They tell us that our fingers are the basis of our arithmetical table, and for that reason we count and measure in units of ten.

Our criticism of the method employed in imparting these Commandments, or of the use of so many when a lesser number might have been sufficient, is not exactly the point which prompts this study. The important matter under consideration is that we are told that there is a set of Ten Commandments in the Bible, and that they were handed down by the God of the universe for the peoples of the earth to follow as essential to their happiness and salvation.

There is, however, no justification for calling these *the* Ten Commandments. There are nine additional verses to the chapter that could very properly be included and are just as vital as the "Commandments" now condensed into the Decalogue.

[But again, for our purposes, these are superfluous bumph which we do not have space for: Nor the 16 Commandment verses of Chapter 5 of Deuteronomy and the comparison and analysis of them word for word, and meaning within meaning, with Exodus. The point has been made that if they are the word of God as given to Moses on Mount Sinai, then they should not have been tampered with by mere mortal man. Ed]

THE CONFLICTING ARRANGEMENT OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AS REVEALED BY A COMPARISON OF PROTESTANT, CATHOLIC AND HEBREW VERSIONS

[Lewis details the respective Ten Commandments, based upon the Exodus version, in 3 columns and laboriously draws out the differences in wording and meaning. But essentially there is one major difference and that is that the Catholic version omits the second and then splits the tenth into two to cover the gap! For simplification, I shall extract only the Protestant version and then give Lewis' commentary on the Catholic divergences, Ed]

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| First Commandment | Thou shalt have no other gods before me. |
| Second Commandment | Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water that is under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. |
| Third Commandment | Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name In vain. |
| Fourth Commandment | Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. |
| Fifth Commandment | Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. |
| Sixth Commandment | Thou shalt not kill. |
| Seventh Commandment | Thou shalt not commit adultery. |
| Eighth Commandment | Thou shalt not steal. |
| Ninth Commandment | Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. |
| Tenth Commandment | Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's. |

Pages 27, 28:

The Catholic Church stands convicted not only by evidence taken from its own records, but by its own authorities. The listing of the Ten Commandments as they appear in the Douay Version of the Bible has additional value to us besides furnishing incontrovertible evidence in indicting the Catholic Church for deliberate deception in omitting the Second Commandment from the Decalogue.

That image worship is a degrading superstition and was condemned by the early Church Fathers in scathing terms, is one of the amazing contradictions of Catholicism. St. Augustine, undoubtedly the foremost of the group, said: "He who worships an image turns the truth of God unto a lie." Even the crucifix, which is worshiped and adored today, is as much an idolatrous instrument as the image of a man or woman. It was introduced as part of the worship of the Church only in the latter part of the sixth century, and finally authorised by the Council of Constantinople, 692 AD. ... *[And Leslie Price adds: "As late as 1900 most free churches in the UK had no cross. Similarly, pictures of Jesus were originally prohibited to those who regarded him as divine, so those sentimental paintings one finds in Christian Spiritualist Churches should go out the window. Jehovah's Witnesses are closer to the early church on images, as they are on festivals, too."]*

It would require too lengthy an analysis to give the complete reason why the Roman Catholic Church violates this Commandment and omits it from its version of the Decalogue. Suffice it to say that when Constantine embraced Christianity, he found that the incurably superstitious would not relinquish their idols, and so the Church, after a feeble and unsuccessful effort, merely incorporated image worship as part of its ritual. The financial returns more than justified the compromise with "God's Word."

In order to make up for the omission of the Second Commandment, the Catholic Church moved up the third and made it the second. It will be interesting, as we continue this comparison, to see for ourselves how they schemingly provided for the "ten."

[To make up the gap, The RC's split the 10th into two – so that the 9th becomes "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife". This is in addition to the RC 6th (Proto and Jewish 7th) "Thou shalt not commit adultery". Hence a double whammy on 'jumping the fence'!]

Page 52:

There is more revealed in this narrative of the Bible concerning the Tables of Stone and the Ten Commandments than merely the fictional basis of the revelation from Sinai. It is also indisputable evidence of a flagrant piece of religious fakery. This is the imposition upon mankind of a corrupting and demoralising series of superstitious taboos as a divine code of morals. This we shall proceed to prove.

[And Lewis goes on then for another 560 pages demonstrating his point!

One has to question: Are the policy making leaders of the Jews, the Catholics and the Protestants of today any better than their forbears? Ed.]

3. *Jesus and The Ten Commandments:*

Extracts from

Jesus and The Ten Commandments

An Encyclopaedia Britannica Research Paper

This EB paper presents excerpts from two books which discuss the attitude of Jesus (and the times as reflected in the Book of Matthew) to the Mosaic Law as delivered through Moses. The first book is *The Anchor Bible: Matthew* and comes from what is presumably a chapter - *Jesus and the Law*. The second, is from *The Law of Love* by Christopher Kiesling, 1971.

The following brief extracts should serve to provide some perspective of the Christian Bible embracing the teachings of the Old Testament:

Jesus and the Law:

...The attitude of Jesus to the Mosaic Law must be seen against the background of the Covenant [*the 10 C's*]; likewise, discussions of the ethical demands of the NT writings are pointless without reference to the community in which those demands are to be met.

... More than one commentary has suggested that the misnamed "Sermon on the Mount," particularly that part of it known as "The Beatitudes" (x 3-12), was deliberately meant by Jesus to be a superior declaration of the divine will in contrast with an (implied) "lower" revelation under Moses. ... Without the Law there would have been no Gospel: ... without the Covenant of Sinai and the election of Israel there is no understanding of the Gospel. ... Jesus' attitude to the Law was positive...

... Jesus' attitude to the Law has run a whole gamut of comment, some of it theological..., some of it frankly reminiscent of nineteenth-century liberal humanitarianism. Nearly all the commentaries ignore the salient fact of the background and upbringing of Jesus as a loyal and devoted son of Israel. His appeal was not to any new interpretation of the Law...

... Jesus could be moved to anger at manipulations of the Law... [for example:] When Jesus protested that the Sabbath was God's gracious gift to man, and not an institution intended to dominate man's life (Mark ii 27), he spoke from the prophetic tradition, from conviction that that men under the Covenant should be free from self-concern to serve God. ... ("To you the Sabbath is given over, and you are not given over to the Sabbath" - Rabbi Simeon, towards the end of the second century A.D.)

[Perhaps the most pertinent message in the foregoing is that it was recognised by and at the time of Jesus of Nazareth that the Mosaic Law had been given for a different time and culture of understanding. There was not to be a new interpretation of the Law, but a new Covenant, relevant to the prevailing needs. The state of human affairs, of course, is continually changing and, in accord with change, we need new revelations, inspired or otherwise. Ed.]

Woodland Way – Issue # 29 (spring, 2002)

The Law of Love:

[Kiesling elicits his own 'spiritual law' (of love) from the New Testament – as if to recognise, even apologise for, and provide a substitute for the shortcomings of the Ten Commandments of the OT and their inclusion in the Christian Bible. As such, Kiesling's work is an excellent bridge between *The Ten Commandments* as presented above and the *Ten Spiritual Commandments* presented hereafter. Ed.]

... The law of love embraces but goes beyond, and deeper than, the Ten Commandments. Christ's explanation of the law of love is found mainly in the parables of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37) and the last judgment (Matt. 25:31-46), in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7), and in the Farewell Discourse in St. John's Gospel (especially chapters 14-15). Christ exemplified the fulfilment of the law of love in his own life in his relationships to his Father and to the people with whom he came in contact. One who obeys this law of love, as Christ explained and lived it, will fulfil the Ten Commandments, whether or not one can recite them from memory. St. Paul grasped this truth when he wrote:

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbour has fulfilled the law. The commandments "You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not covet," and any other commandments are summed up in this one sentence, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom.13:8-10; cf. Gal. 5:13-14).

Positive Approach

There are several reasons for shifting the emphasis of moral instruction from the Decalogue to the law of love. One of these reasons is that love morality is positive, while commandment morality is largely negative.

Except for the commandments to keep the Sabbath holy and to honour one's parents, the Ten Commandments tell us what not to do, rather than what we should do. They set a minimum which must be observed if there is to be any saving relationship to God at all. But when moral instruction emphasises the negative and the minimum, an immature morality easily develops. Concern throughout life may become focused on avoiding certain evils and being content with a

minimal goodness, rather than on doing the maximum amount of good for God and for fellowmen. A person may become indifferent to the fact that God cannot be freely worshiped and the gospel preached in many parts of the world. A person may feel no pangs of conscience about undernourished children in his own city, as long as he has not literally stolen food from them. He may experience no guilt about the exclusion of Blacks, Puerto Ricans, or Jews from his own neighbourhood, as long as he has not inflicted some physical injury on them to keep them out. He may be conditioned, not to work for the welfare of his fellowmen and the reign of God, but simply to avoid actions which would cut him off from God.

The law of love, on the other hand, directs a person to positive attitudes and actions, and to the promotion of God's reign and the welfare of all men, even enemies. To love someone is to have his welfare at heart and to act to realise it. Love is not content to omit what would harm another; it strives to give all that will enhance the life of the loved one. The law of love directs us to work for the realisation of God's purpose in creation and history and for the betterment of all men, regardless of their sex, race, national origin, social position, or other differences.

We are restricted, of course, in what we can actually do for others. We have only limited time, energy, and goods at our disposal. Our first duty is to those with whom we are closely associated in everyday life, such as members of our own families, companions at school or work, friends. Even love of God must frequently channel itself into expressions of love of neighbour rather than into pure devotion. But Christian love itself is not exhausted in its care for the people close to us. It sensitises us to the needs of all men, everywhere, and prompts us to do what we can, however little, to help them. It will urge us, therefore, to take advantage of the opportunity to vote for political candidates or legislation helpful to people whom we will never meet, to donate money to provide medical care for children on the other side of the world.

A person who is governed by the law of love will surely do the minimum necessary to retain his relationship with God, that is, he will keep the Ten Commandments; but he will do more than that...

Not only is it possible for people to observe the Ten Commandments only externally for the wrong reasons: they have repeatedly fallen into this superficial observance throughout history. The preaching of the prophets of the Old Testament was directed, in large part, to reproaching the Israelites for their external fulfilment of God's law without appropriate interior motivation. If we read the Sermon on the Mount, we see that Jesus also was concerned about the inner spirit which should animate external fulfilment of the Ten Commandments. Before presenting one's gift at the altar, one should be reconciled with one's neighbour (Matt. 5:23-24), for one does not honour God, the Father of all men, by harbouring enmity toward one of his children. One should not kill, indeed, one should not even be angry with his brother (Matt. 5:21-22). Not only is adultery to be avoided, but even lust within one's heart (Matt. 5:27-28).

The Ten Commandments are ultimately ways of expressing love for God and neighbour. Without this interior love, their observance may maintain order in society, but that is not all that God intends that the commandments should do. The emphasis on Christ's law of love is an effort to get at the very inspiration of observance of the Ten Commandments.

The Commandments, or what they forbid and prescribe, are not being rejected today. On the contrary, when the Ten Commandments are viewed in the light of the law of love as some of the ways of expressing love concretely, they are also seen to be laying down a positive minimum for Christian life. They are seen less negatively and more positively. In telling us what not to do, they indirectly inform us about the very least positive action which is required of us. Not to kill one's neighbour means that one must love one's neighbour at least to the extent of respecting the integrity of his life. Not to commit adultery is to respect the wholeness of a neighbour's marriage, a positive act of love toward him. So the law of love enables us to see that, though negative in form, the Ten Commandments have a positive content of love. The law of love is, as we have said, the key to a Christian understanding of the Decalogue. . .

A final reason for approaching morality through the law of love rather than the Ten Commandments is that the law of love is a more authentically Christian guide to conduct. This is the law which Christ himself repeatedly urged on his disciples. When asked by the Pharisees which is the greatest commandment of the law, Jesus did not give one or all of the Ten Commandments. Rather, quoting Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, he answered: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And the second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets" (Matt 22:37-40). To his disciples he said: "A new commandment I give to you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35).

Jesus' disciples appreciated the centrality of love in Jesus' teaching, and in particular love of neighbour. In the First Letter of John we read: "If anyone says, 'I love God' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also" (1 John 4:20-21). The Letter of James states: "If you really fulfil the royal law, according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself,' you do well" (James 2:8). The First Letter of Peter reminds us: "Above all hold unfailing your love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8)...

Christ clearly stressed the law of love rather than the Ten Commandments for some good reason. We would be unfaithful disciples if we were not to emphasise what Christ himself stressed as important now that, through more thorough knowledge of the Scriptures and the history of Christian thought, we know more clearly, the message of Christ.



4. *Ten Spiritual Commandments*

Woodland Way # 29 – Spring 2002 – Editorial (extract):

Circa 1861, when Modern Spiritualism was riding on the back of an explosion of psychic phenomena and a quest for spiritual truth rather than the dictates of organised religion and its absurdities in the face of scientific discoveries, there came a new ‘revelation’ – from a discarnate social reformer, Robert Owen, through the mediumship of one Emma Hardinge. The ‘revelation’ was, if you like, a new set of standards by which *homo sapiens* – wise man – should fashion his civilisation. Indicative that they should replace the old *Ten Commandments*, they took the form of *Ten Spiritual Commandments* and *Ten Laws of Right*. They were recorded by RO’s son, Robert Dale Owen (who was present at the séance), and they were preserved for posterity in an address given by Emma (now Mrs Hardinge Britten) in 1871 which was published at the time (and then more permanently recorded in the Spiritualists’ *Lyceum Manual* in 1887). [But refer Paul Gaunt’s essay *The Formation of the Seven Principles of Spiritualism* later in this collection for a retake on the order of events.]

Regrettably, these *Spiritual Commandments* and *Laws of Right* are expressed in somewhat archaic terminology, difficult to readily comprehend, and therefore little known amongst Spiritualists today.

Essentially, the *Ten Spiritual Commandments* are a guide to mankind for the pursuit of spiritual understanding of the essence of being. The first four advise to continually look within oneself for an understanding of consciousness, awareness of God, and “who you are”. The other six relate more to living together with one’s fellow men and creatures – the exercise of conscience in guiding one’s actions, and respecting the majority relative to one’s personal desires.

The *Ten Laws of Right* then give more specific guidance for healthy equilibrium in life – in a positive style and without the moralistic black and white judgement of “Thou shalt not... ”.



Let us first read how EHB described the dramatic séance in which Robert Owen dictated his Decalogue(s):

An extract from:

Autobiography of Emma Hardinge Britten, 1900

Posthumously edited and published by her sister, Margaret Wilkinson

CHAPTER X

*“The mightiest souls of all time hover o’er us,
Who laboured like Gods amongst men, and have gone
Like great bursts of sun, on the dark way before us,
They’re with us, still with us, our battles fight on.”*

BEFORE proceeding further on my travels, it seems to be in order to refer to some of the eminent personalities who constituted the ranks of Spiritualists with whom I was associated during my long years of public life and work. From my first entrance into American Spiritualism, I became well acquainted with Mrs Fox, and her daughters Katey and Margaretta, the so called “Rochester Knockers,” and one of my most esteemed friends was Mrs Leah Fox Underhill, the eldest of the renowned Fox Sisters.

This lady was the best test, rapping, and physical medium I ever met, as well as one of the kindest and most noble-hearted of women.

After her marriage with Mr Daniel Underhill, a highly respected citizen of New York, although she was placed in wholly independent circumstances, she never flagged in her devotion to the cause she had espoused, but opened her handsome house in 37th Street, New York, for winter evening receptions, in which, whenever I was in the city, she kindly invited me to become her associate. At these delightful reunions, as I have stated in a former chapter, hosts of noteworthy celebrities were frequently present.

After the general receptions broke up, a few privileged friends would remain to share a social supper, always laid out in the basement dining room, on the famous old Rochester dinner table, at which the first Spirit circles of the age were held, under the auspices of the Fox sisters.

At these seances of Mrs Underhill’s, the manifestations were so powerful and startling, that they would seem in cold recital too incredible to justify repetition. One occasion only I will allude to, namely, that of a seance that was subsequently reported in the New York papers by one of the parties present, and therefore there can be no impropriety in quoting the account.

“Immediately after supper we all adjourned to the suite of reception rooms, our company consisting of our host and hostess, Emma Hardinge and her mother, who were then staying at the house on a visit, Oliver and Mary Anne Johnson, Robert Dale Owen, William Lloyd Garrison, and a few others. The first Spirit that manifested by loud rappings and calls for the alphabet, was Robert Owen, who announced that he wished to give a set of Spiritual Commandments through Emma, if she would kindly submit to his control, whilst his son, Robert Dale Owen, should transcribe them as the entranced medium spoke. Upon this, Emma Hardinge, passing to the open piano, played for a few minutes a grand and solemn improvisation; then returning to the rest of the party, apparently under strong influence, she

announced that she was ready to receive the good Spirit's inspiration, provided only he would give three affirmative knocks at the end of every *correct* sentence, or interrupt her by two knocks at any words that he objected to.

"The medium then commenced speaking slowly, but emphatically, and with two corrections only from the controlling Spirit, who spelled out by raps the words he wished to substitute, there were given ten Spiritual Commandments, and ten Laws of Right.

"After this scene terminated, Mr Underhill asked and obtained by rappings several answers to questions concerning the fate and ultimate end of the terrible American war, between North and South, then raging. When he queried, 'What will be the next move on the great chequer board, Spirits?' the reply by raps was 'Go to the piano, Emma.'

"Emma Hardinge obeyed, and played first 'John Brown' and several of the war song tunes then so popular. Almost at the close of the first strain, a high shrill voice piped out from above our heads, 'Lower the lights.' This order was obeyed, and instantly the music was accompanied by sounds as of the marching of a heavy body of soldiers, then came repeated explosions as of the firing of musketry, all given in different tones, some like the snapping of a pistol, some like the roar of distant artillery. Anon we had clashing as of swords, then a confused hum of voices, moans and faint cries. Meantime every object in the room was in motion. It seemed as if the very carpet would be tom up, it shook so, and bulged up as if moved by a strong wind.

"At length the player broke into a march of her own composition, concluding with a magnificent performance of the Dead March in 'Saul.' So loud and in such perfect rhythm was the beating of muffled drums and slow marching of feet during this closing piece that one of our party went to the front window softly, and drew aside the blind to see if there was not a regiment marching through the street with muffled drums beating. It was then near four o'clock in the morning, and the street was all silent and deserted.

"This was the closing scene of an ever-memorable, but by no means rare séance with Leah Fox Underhill and Emma Hardinge. Mr R D Owen and Wm. Garrison were about to return to Boston by an early morning train.

"The servants being all in bed and asleep, the ladies got some breakfast, during which (and wiping many tears from their eyes) they declared the scene they had that past night witnessed would never leave their memories whilst life lasted.

R.D.Owen."



THE LYCEUM MANUAL
Golden Chain Recitation - No. 109

Ten Spiritual Commandments

I Thou shalt search for truth in every department of being: Test, prove, and try if what thou deemest truth is truth, and then accept it as the word of God.

II Thou shalt continue the search for truth all thy life: And never cease to test, prove, and try all that thou deemest to be truth.

III Thou shalt search by every attainable means for the laws that underlie all life and being: Thou shalt strive to comprehend these laws, live in harmony with them, and make them the laws of thine own life, thy rule and guide in all thine actions.

IV Thou shalt not follow the example of any man or set of men: Nor obey any teaching or accept of any theory as thy rule of life that is not in strict accordance with thy highest sense of right.

V Thou shalt remember that a wrong done to the least of thy fellow creatures is a wrong done to all: And thou shalt never commit a wrong wilfully and consciously to any of thy fellow-men, nor connive at wrong done by others without striving to prevent or protesting against it.

VI Thou shalt acknowledge all men's rights to do, think, or speak, to be exactly equal to thine own: And all rights whatsoever that thou dost demand thou shalt ever accord to others.

VII Thou shalt not hold thyself bound to love, or associate with those that are distasteful or repulsive to thee: But thou shalt be held bound to treat such objects of dislike with gentleness, courtesy, and justice, and never suffer thine antipathies to make thee ungentle or unjust to any living creature.

VIII Thou shalt ever regard the rights, interests, and welfare of the many as superior to those of the one or the few: And in cases where thy welfare, or that of thy friend, is to be balanced against that of society, thou shalt sacrifice thyself, or friend, to the welfare of the many.

IX Thou shalt be obedient to the laws of the land in which thou dost reside: In all things which do not conflict with thy highest sense of right.

X Thy first and last duty upon earth, and all through thy life, shall be to seek for the principles of right, and to live them out to the utmost of thy power: And whatever creed, precept, or example conflicts with those principles, thou shalt shun and reject, ever remembering that the laws of right are - in morals, JUSTICE; in science, HARMONY; in religion, THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD, THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN, the immortality of the human soul, and compensation and retribution for the good or evil done on earth.



The Ten Spiritual Commandments

In 'modern terminology'

(As re-stated by the Editor in Issue #29)

- I Seek the spiritual truth of your own being and of existence itself; and when you find that which you best believe to be the Truth, then live by it.
- II Keep an open mind on your *path to spiritual enlightenment* for there will always be more to uncover – for as long as you exist.
- III Nothing is sacrosanct. Strive to comprehend, take nothing for granted or as 'gospel'.
- IV Be guided by your highest sense of right; do not blindly accept the doctrines, creeds and dogma of others.
- V Never wilfully do wrong to your fellow creatures; nor condone such wrong.
- VI Do as you would be done by.
- VII Choose your friends and close associates; but respect the rights of those you do not choose to be associated with.
- VIII Respect the welfare rights of the majority when there is a clash between the many and the few.
- IX Obey the laws of the land – unless they conflict with your highest sense of spiritual right.
- X Continuously seek for understanding of the higher attributes of life; and then apply them in everything you do.



5. *The 'Mrs B' communicator (via Judith Peterson):*

Woodland Way # 29 Editorial introduction (extract):

How convenient, synchronistic, was it for Mrs B to 'turn up' just when I needed her? More likely, it was part of a plot in the spirit world to lead me, manipulate me, into 'choosing' to do *The Decalogues* as a theme last Issue with the natural follow on being the RO/EHB *Ten Spiritual Commandments*. I feel like a very lucky puppet!

Judith has not seen the *Lyceum Manual*, the 1871 report, nor this draft Issue yet and so her consciousness has not had prior access to the 10 SC's and 10 L of R's. Nor will she have until the 20 are complete. To date, August 7, she has done the first 7 – but the last 2 did not record. The tape was going round, the red light was on indicating recording was taking place... but, blank tape! I quizzed Mrs B later that same evening and she advised it was deliberate and that the 10 SC's need to be split 5 and 5 as they form two parts and that I would see why they didn't want me to have the second part in due course. I can now see the natural split, but to me, the split is 4 and 6... But I can appreciate the difficulty of communication and the gist of what she was conveying. (And with later information and hindsight, I see the Mrs B comments on the fifth as a bridge between the two; and I can also see the tenth, still to come, as being a summation of the other nine and an introduction to the 10 L of R's.)

And so, instead of having my poor commentary on the *Ten Spiritual Commandments*, you have Mrs B's expansionary exposition! Well, at least on the first 4 in this Issue, with, expectantly, the second group plus commentary on the *Ten Laws of Right*, in the next Issue. Let us see where it leads us!

A few further points given by way of introduction to the actual transmissions:

- I'm not sure just how to classify what occurs – whether Judith actually enters an altered state (which would be a trance condition) or whether she is being inspired, fully retaining her normal consciousness. She's not certain herself! The delivery may be oral or written. The flow comes and Judith simply lets it happen. For the sake of simplicity, we could use the broad terminology 'channelling'; but I prefer to think in terms of it being an 'inspired condition'.
- Although the advent of the occurrences is fairly recent (first recognisable at the 2001 Candle Lighting Service) Judith feels that there has been a 'knowing' since she was about 9 years old of certain things that would happen in her life. Most of these have come to fruition, the most remarkable one being that she would have twins, which she did at age 26! Public speaking has been one which, to date, has remained unfulfilled... but Destiny beckons.
- The 'utterances' (and, Judith tells me, the writings) generally flow at a fairly rapid speed. There are few pauses; and I find it very hard when transcribing to actually identify the paragraph endings from any pauses in the flow of words, let alone sentence endings! I have endeavoured to punctuate it as best I can; and in so doing, believe a side benefit has been that I have been forced to better grasp the depth of meaning in the words.
- The thought processes show that the composition is prepared as it is delivered. The intelligence behind the words is 'thinking aloud' if you will grant that expression for the two consciousnesses involved. And the communicator appears impatient to spill the flood of thoughts into words. I have had to clarify points by adding missing words or showing the correct word in []. Judith's brain appears to pick up the wrong word occasionally or to leave a word or two out – not surprising in the speed with which it comes.
- The singular and plural are often misstated. I sometimes, but not always, corrected these. Some I let stand as they came and showed the correct context in [] to help show the reader the manner in which the thought processes occur. Judith gets the impulse for the word, but since she is not constructing the sentence with her own mind, her brain seems to use the first context that occurs to it.
- Judith works with her eyes open (most of the time) but her gaze is over the heads of her audience or at the floor or a wall as she concentrates on the flow of words. It is evident from her expression that she is 'catching the words' as they come rather than constructing the composition of the words.

So, with those few introductory words, 'Mrs B', Judith and I invite you to *read on...*



The 'Mrs B' communicator's elaboration of The Ten Spiritual Commandments via Judith Peterson

Thursday evening, 11/7/02: Spiritual Commandment # I

Thou shalt search for truth in every department of being: Test, prove, and try if what thou deemest truth is truth, and then accept it as the word of God.

Good evening. *Thou shalt search for truth in every department of being...* For what is truth? Truth, to me, is the link of our own self, our own essence with all that is. Truth has been damaged in man's interpretation of what the essence of

divinity is. Truth within our being is our soul link to who we are on this physical plain, and to who we are on a spiritual level of existence. The truth in its ultimate essence of being is simply The Truth.

But everyone seeks the truth, and yet not many are willing to put aside their own interpretation of such. The truth, in itself, is quite simple. On this physical plain our existence is just that – it is physical: It is linked to the capacity of thought which although it gives, in the etheric level before it reaches the physical level, it is, in itself and of itself, pure in thought.

Truth, of its own self, is a wondrous thing. How many here, themselves, can state that they walk in the truth of their own being? They walk in the truth of their understanding of where they are in the system of things. It is my understanding, to speak to you tonight, to delve into the very crevices of your being and search for that wholeness of who you are... for that is the truth. Disregard all that you may have been taught. Disregard all except your own understanding which is achieved through your own link. There is no other way. One cannot immerse themselves in someone else's interpretation, for they need to go within their own vibration of being to find the truth. Although it is the same in essence, everybody's pathway is different from... from accounting for their experiences on this earth plane.

We know the truth that life as a physical being extends once the breath of this earth plane has left the body. We understand that there are levels of our being that cannot be seen by ourselves from the physical, from outside our own being. However, when one links in with their own being, through their emotional body – for it is the emotions that will take you to the spiritual level – and however our emotions are affected by our existence, as we have been brought up in our environment of nurture – is what we must achieve [strive] to push aside. These are our own judgments and feelings that come with any interpretation that comes to us. We need to stand back; we need not to judge and we need to see the truth. It's like looking from the outside in. One needs to delve within every part of their being and push aside all that is not whole. And, when I say whole, I mean the Truth: the essence of who you are; your divinity, the spark of creation that is within you; as it is within all else. However this spark cannot be interpreted unless one has gone back to the raw simplicity of their own being. The understanding of who they are within the scheme of things.

Within this cosmos there are many levels of understanding. However, the purity of your own essence is the only way you can move through to the link with the divine. Yes, we can communicate with energies on other levels, on a spiritual level. However, the vibration of our own being is what we attract, to link with. If one can go back to the truth to the understanding of their own form in its simplicity, this is when they are masters of their own soul, masters of their own destiny on this level of understanding. It is, however, for previous thoughts implanted within us from our teachings, particularly from the religious doctrines that we have been fed in our lifetime. It is the religious movement that has taken us further away from our own understanding of who we are. It is to peel back the layers, to look within all levels of our own being, to heal areas that we have come across in our lifetime that may have taken us away from the simplicity of who we are.

When we are born we are in link with the divine. It is this divinity that we need to access. It is this divinity that is accessible to each and every one of us. There is no one that cannot attain lordship over their own being.

It is intent, purpose, discipline and understanding; and sitting within the simplicity all being, within the simplicity of nature which gives its life force, and its divine essence within us: And together they vibrate out into an understanding of who we are.

Within the department[s] that you call the different corners, nooks and crannies of your own being, search. Search for that understanding. Look for that link of who you are: The understanding of your purity, your beauty and your divinity. Do not believe that you yourself cannot attain the purity of your own truth. For your understanding of truth generally is someone else's understanding that, someone else's knowledge that, you have taken on board. Find the wisdom within the knowledge. Find the understanding of your own essence. It is the truth that will set you free. Thank you.

Sunday afternoon Psychic Pot Pourri 14/7/02: Spiritual Commandment # II

Thou shalt continue the search for truth all thy life; and never cease to test, prove, and try all that thou deemest to be truth...

For what is the truth? We are born in this physical existence and then, day after day, we are given knowledge, or immersed [in] and absorb knowledge, which is around us. But whose knowledge is that? If one has been seeking within, or thinking around [about] spiritual truth, or has been born into a family that has taken this meaning of spiritual truth as an assertion of a religious capacity, one has moved so far from the truth of their own existence that one needs to question everything that they come across. One needs to question daily, minute by minute, all that they hear and all that they see, for religion is an attempt to unify the people. Whether one can see it as a controlling factor or not, it has taken you away from the essence of who you are. It has taken you away from the being, the spiritual entity that is within you. For we have been given an intermediary between us and the Divine. And when I say 'Divine', I mean the Creator, the Source or whatever term or label you put on that. And it is religion in itself and of itself that has taken the power of the individual, that has taken the essence and the spirit of each human person on this planet. It is not teaching you to look within yourself. It is not teaching you to find your own spirituality. It has put labels and doctrines and boxes and boundaries around all knowledge that is given. It does not teach you to find your own inner self, your own inner spiritual well, and then to link that with the Divine.

It is my purpose here to express to you that you must question all that you have learned in this lifetime. We sit here and we think we express the truth. We express the truth in our own understanding of our own existence to the nature and nurture of our own being as we have grown in this lifetime. But I would say to you, you have merely scraped the surface. I would say to you that you need to look deeper, ever deeper within your own being. Look within the nooks and crevices of all parts of your own self for it is in the simplicity of your own being and your own essence that you will find the truth.

All doctrines on this earth plane have a minimal amount of truth in their teachings. If one looks to the seed in the teachings and then interprets the knowledge with their own experience and wisdom, one will find that link of spirit within. The link that sets you free in your truth: The link that will set you free in your own spiritual being. Do not take on board anyone, and I mean and I reiterate anyone else's truth or understanding.

We are all individuals. However I do realise that in our own essence it is all the same. It is the simplicity of our spirit, of our beauty, of our divinity. We are all created of our own life. One does not want to look at this and believe this. One wants to blame and judge other people. But we are our own makers of our own reality. We have the ability to be masters of our own destiny, of our own soul, and of our own spirit. We have the capacity to be lords unto ourselves – with lordship over our own spiritual being.

Who has taught you this? Can you tell anyone in your life that [who] has told you to search within for your own meaning and purpose? For when one seeks the spiritual energy of himself, linked to the Divine, if that is to your interpretation, one needs to get back to the simplicity of their own essence, the simplicity of their own being, and question all that they have been taught, all that they have been told. For it is only through their own truth and own simplicity of being that they will find the spiritual essence that they are. And when one finds this spiritual essence, their divinity, their own consciousness, that is what links them to the Divine. For we are all divinity, a spark of Creation within our own self. We need to peel back the layers of who we are, of who we have become on this physical earth. We need to peel back those layers to find out actually who we are and, should I dare say, what we are: For we are spirit. We are spirit manifested on a physical earth plane, in a physical body. For as we touch the spiritual essence of who we are we need to move through the emotional body. And it is within the emotional body that one reaches the astral and their own spiritual being. And if this emotional body harbours hurt from their environment and their nature, from their nurturing in this existence, the task is yet more difficult. There is no time to look at these problems in these past events and mull over them for days, weeks, months and years. Look at them, find within the essence of what they are; what you have been for. Find the lesson for it is all for a purpose.

One creates their destiny. One creates their life. So why not create the life that you choose to have?

Do not judge people, for in judgement one is not accepting. And when one is not accepting, one is not living a wholeness in the purpose of the Now, in the moment, of the time. All moments in time have all spread before them. And if one is to delve into a past [event], or a hope for the future how can they access what is actually here now? People's minds, their logical minds, inhibit or suppress the spiritual energies that come through because the imagination has been denigrated in a lifetime. It is not taught. Spiritual education is not taught in our school system. When does one see it? When does one learn it? Where are we taught it?

I say to you: Sit in the silence, in the knowing of your own being, and all will be found. The spark of who you are, in your own intent, in your own belief, is strong. But, one does not believe in it.

I would dare to say that most people here today believe that is the truth. But if truth is the lesson, if truth is measured by who you are, I would say: Peel back the layers of who you are. Find the essence. Find the spirit. You are but a vibration of love, a vibration and a spark of divinity within yourself that will make you whole. I say to you to search for the truth and reach for wisdom, for the truth that sets you free. Thank you

Thursday, 18th July: Spiritual Commandment # III

[Audrey wanted to work in the pitch dark which meant Judith should stay seated rather than allow Mrs B to stand up and 'orate' - so I gave Judith the written third Spiritual Commandment to read before we turned the light out. After our opening prayer and a longer than usual wait for Judith to begin (it was about 7 or 8 minutes) One Moon (another of her controls) came. And I should say here that subsequently, it has been explained to us that Mrs B, OM and Adronis, another wise speaking control are "of the same soul vibration". That is, they are part of a band of spirit entities with interchangeable access to one another's understanding and knowledge even though they present themselves as separate personalities. Ed.]

Thou shalt search by every attainable means for the laws that underlie all life and being: Thou shalt strive to comprehend these laws, live in harmony with them, and make them the laws of thine own life, thy rule and guide in all thine actions.

OM: Good day...

GW: Ah, hello, One Moon. A little difficulty there tonight?

OM: It is the seed of consciousness that gives us our place within the system of things, within the web of existence, within this understanding of reality. The rules that govern this are integral to our being. They are part of us, and it is only through peeling back the layers of the self that one attains - on this physical level - that one reaches to the truth. And that through it all, the harmony that governs this sphere, the law of the ongoing Spirit within all things, of the linear progression of one's soul to the spheres and levels of understanding.

It is within this sphere where we talk of the earth and the earth plane that we move further from the understanding of the law of our own being. But I would say to you: to sit within the silence of yourself, within the understanding of who you are: A spirit manifested on a physical existence, at this time.

But this spirit that you are – this glorious being that you are – it exceeds further than one could even ever imagine. It exceeds in all levels of a linear progression, as well as in a lateral understanding. In... in your understanding of God, [you] are further away from the God we talk of. We talk of the Source. In our understandings of [the Source], we delve deeper, further, to the Essence. We are, in our own evolvment, so much further away from this Source.

But it is the ongoing spirit within you that we speak to. It is the ongoing spirit of your soul that moves through this human sphere, and within this sphere we need to peel back the matter, the physical existence, to return to the flame

of divinity that you are. And it is within this flame, once you have contacted the Essence of who you are, your consciousness has expanded to a point of no return.

It is not something you can taste and then forget about. From that initial taste, more taste comes, more understanding. A higher purity of your own being is accessed. And it is this spirit, this understanding of where you are within this web of multiple layers of existence, that you need to reach forth and find.

And always, further and deeper. You seek further and further, until you believe that you understand so much more. But let me tell you: You still will only understand a speck, or specks of the divinity that you are. For as you vibrate in your understanding and learning, and your consciousness, and the more pure you become the more you can access, the more understanding that you gain from us who work with you from this side. It is from us as we progress ourselves.

We come down through stages and stages and levels of others who will teach and tell you the song. But behind those words are many of us linking in with your spirit. And it is within your spirit, individual to you alone, that we touch. And as you accept more of the purity of who you are, you will understand more yet again. And then the same words have different levels of understanding, engaging with the spirit of the Source that speaks to you.

Realise who you are. Thank you.

Mrs B: Good evening. [Mrs B comes, after some 5 minutes silence]

I'd like to add a postscript, from the previous speech that just occurred, and it's regarding the laws that do actually govern us and our humanity and our plane of existence.

In essence and integral to themselves, it is the truth. But, of course, the truth in its simplicity is who we are: And our understanding of this and of the laws that govern us, ourselves, is the one Source, the one divinity or one God. That is Who we work with – Who is the umbrella above our universe and our spirit and ourselves, in this incarnation.

Now it is this truth, or this integral being that is ongoing. It is so simple and yet it has many facets within itself; that's the facet, as you say, that we are all linked within this web. This web is the brotherhood of, of humankind, of man. It is the spirit we all share. And in knowing that we are all part of the one Source and the one Spirit that links us strongly together at a spiritual level, how can we ever judge our human fellow? How can we ever judge those we walk our path with? Because we are all one, in Essence. We are all just individualised in this incarnation. And, if we look at the laws that govern this incarnation, we see ourselves as physical matter, as individuals. But we are not. We are linked deeply within our spirit and within the Essence of divinity, of the spark that is within all kingdoms on this earth plane.

The mineral kingdom, the plant and the animal: They all have this consciousness within them. This seed of consciousness which is the Truth – which is the essence of our being. And we need to understand what that essence is. Don't keep searching outside yourself. It is all within yourself. Sit within the silence and find it. Thank you.

Thurs 25th July: Spiritual Commandment # IV

[Back working in the light and with the medium standing and 'delivering'. I give her the written Commandment; she reads it aloud, and, after about 2 seconds pause, Mrs B begins inspiring the words that flow... Ed.]

Thou shalt not follow the example of any man or set of men; Nor obey any teaching or accept of any theory as thy rule of life that is not in strict accordance with thy highest sense of right... We have been talking constantly about sitting within your own self, in your own essence, within the simplicity of all things; and this is where we find the truth; the truth of our own being and the truth and sense of all that is. We do not need to look in books, we do not need to have a teacher guiding us. When we can find our own solace within, there is an extension of that, that then weaves out into the ethers attracting all that we are ready to understand. It is one of the laws of existence on this level and plane of humanity that when one finds their own spiritual essence, and goes within that, they can no longer judge thy fellow persons, they can no longer judge thy fellow man: – because they have understood the concept that we are all One.

When we are finding our own understanding of what we see as our God, or our Source, or our 'Rule of Life' we are following that part of our being which is already set in reality, and set within our being before we manifest or [in]carnate in this sphere. We are touching the Source and the divinity in the spark of life that we are. The only truths that there are is [are] found within that spark and understanding of our divinity. Nothing else: And all else follows. It is only within that sense of self and our spiritual essence that we realise we are incarnating in a physical understanding for the lessons and knowledge to increase our own being and understanding of who we are.

Because it is within ourselves and who we are and that spark of creativity, that consciousness, that seed of the Lord-of-all-that-is is what we touch. However, it is only within that understanding that we are given information within and about our own selves. It's like the diamond where we are seeing facets and different pictures as we are ready to see them. If we are seeing things before we can understand them we can no longer comprehend them. It is a slow process and it is only within the very simplicity.

You will find many teachers of the past who have come through as what some people term as 'masters'. They have only succeeded in evolving and understanding more of their own being and essence which is within us all. It is the same consciousness. It is just that perhaps that they are extending their own ability and time within their own solace and silence to find and understand more than the common or average person does.

The law of humanity in this sphere is physically governed by the laws of truth: the truth is but the essence of who you are and what you are within the scheme of things: within the understanding of the web of existence.

When I speak of sitting in the silence - when one can commune with nature and commune with people from a source and a understanding of a level of development where one is pursuing more of their essence, more of that facet of who they are - it is only through pursuing that with intent and will and discipline that one will find more, continuously

more. There is never a time when you look to another person's teachings or understandings and take them on board without sitting within your own silence, your own being to understand whether, yes, that is true.

It is only through understanding of yourself alone that one can progress and pull away the layers of who you are to find the greater divinity: Continuously, always within you. The truth of all being, whether you are incarnated on a physical level or not is your spiritual understanding. It is your link of who you are within the scheme of things, within the web of existence.

We are all one in essence. And when one understands that facet of 'we are all one within this web' how can, as I said, you judge your fellow person? How can you look outside for more knowledge when it is all within you? Continuously, you are told "it is all within you" but people do not have the strength to look within themselves: Because this strength has been harmed by the nurture and nature of your existence; and in that way, most people do not have a self worth, self love. How can one expect to extend this love, this facet of unconditional love to their fellow person when they do not hold it for themselves? Find the integrity of your own soul. Find the integrity of your own purpose within the system of things that govern this existence. Thank you.



Editor's comment:

As one studies the Spiritual Commandments, and as one reads the Mrs B communications, one realises that they are incremental. New aspects are added to the underlying Commandment: To search for The Truth: To search for That Truth throughout one's physical life; and throughout one's spiritual life/existence.

The Spiritual Commandments and communications provide guidance for the search for Truth. Incrementally, for example, they encourage one to consider one's relationships to others as well as to the Whole.

The communications hammer home, again and again, the message to search for the truth: perpetually, until one finds the Ultimate Truth. In this, they may seem repetitive. But when one re-reads them, one finds they are building blocks, upon which a permanent change in one's thinking may be built.

We, most of us I expect, have a mindset because of the cultural environment in which we have been nurtured; a mindset established, ingrained, since birth which needs to be broken down, and at deep levels within us. Even within the human psyche, perhaps. Thus, it is not surprising that the point of asking who you are is laboured.

I am cognisant that the underling Commandment is no different from the Delphic Oracle's "Know Thyself". And I expect it applies equally in the discarnate spirit world as it does in this incarnate spirit world – for we are spirit, here and now. It is the quest of all consciousness – to find the Truth behind existence.

What else might *Spiritual Commandments* contain? Beyond a quest to "Know thyself"? We await the dissertations on the remaining six to find out! [In the subsequent Issue of *Woodland Way*]



Woodland Way – Issue # 30 (summer 2002)

Spiritual Commandment # V

Thou shalt remember that a wrong done to the least of thy fellow creatures is a wrong done to all; And thou shalt never commit a wrong wilfully and consciously to any of thy fellow-men, nor connive at wrong done by others without striving to prevent or protesting against it...

As I will say again and reiterate again: 'We are all part of the same web of existence.' What one breathes out, another breathes in. We are integrally entwined with each other. Our spirit is like an overall umbrella of the one consciousness and the one divinity or Source. We are but aspects of that individualised on a physical level. So, therefore if one is accustomed to denigrating their fellow person in any form whatsoever, they are in fact denigrating their own essence. They are moving away from the source of unconditional love. The word[s] 'unconditional love' is [are] bandied around quite flippantly. However, it is the integral essence of our truth. It is a vibration of energy that attracts the same energy. One's growth within the spiritual understanding of who they are manifests tenfold from the energy that they are putting out and then, therefore, receiving back again. This 'receiving' of energy [is] based on the vibration of who they are. And if they are, within that web of existence and the system of things and the scheme of understanding, choosing to harm their fellow person – whether that fellow creature is but a small animate object as an ant, they are still linked within the consciousness that governs this physical realm of understanding; and when one hampers or tampers with the consciousness, regardless of how they believe that consciousness is developed or evolved, they are in fact, turning the energy back toward themselves.

As our understanding is, like attracts like, but not only in an understanding of the energy coming back to you, but in the vibration of the system and the spirit of understanding behind all manifestation of matter. It is this spirit contact which is elaborating our own essence. It is extending our own essence of who we are from the vibration we are emitting. The vibration we are emitting is based on our thoughts and our own understanding, and our actions in this universe. If we choose to act with harm to any creature, whether it is in thought or physical act, and as subtle as whether we're choosing not to act when we see another in a poorly condition, or being treated as such, it is the same essence – all touches you in one level or another. You may not feel the manifestation explicitly, but have no doubt and have all understanding that it returns to you. Whether good is put out or ill is put out, it still returns to you. Some

would say tenfold. Regardless of the amount of energy that comes back to you, it is directed from your own being and understanding and actions within this field of humanity.

We are all part and linked on that web of existence. We are all part of the one Source. Whether you're intending to see the integral Source that's behind all things or whether you're choosing to see this god or that god. Because you have named different energies God, they are not the God of the one being, the omnipotent, omnipresent all endeavouring Source that is behind your divinity. You are exactly a spark of the same Source.

Look to yourself; extend your own understanding within the simplicity of who you are. Forget about the materialistic nature of humankind. Forget about all other existential things outside of yourself, your environment. Go within, within the silence. If one can [could] sit in nature as the Buddha or the Christ or Mohammed did – for days and days on end in that silence, who do you think you're communicating with? You are communicating with your own self, with your own Source and your own spirit, and then, through that to all that is. When one is communicating on that level, they can no longer turn back the tide to who they were before. They have a full understanding of their essence as being exactly parallel and equal to the essence within a plant, within an ant [ant?]. It does not matter, it is the one spark of divinity in consciousness, no matter how evolved that is at this particular time in the physical manifestation of the creature or the living Source we're talking of.

It is my understanding, purely to talk to you to look within the silence of your own self. There is no question that cannot be answered. When the mind comes in, or should I say, the thoughts in the brain that have been circulated from your own environment and your upbringing, peel them back. Look behind them. One will find they are not your thoughts at all. They are not part of the spiritual essence that you are. They are not part of the godliness of who you are, within the essence of your own spiritual understanding.

Look to evolve and in that evolvment, all you are doing is looking into more crevices, around more corners of the essence of who you are. It is all the same. Explicitly and with implicit understanding, I say to you: Your spirit is a divine spark of all that is at the Source of creation, the beauty and joy and wonderment of all is within you. Look at yourself. Look at your thoughts. Pull and push those away that do not fit the higher vibration of an understanding of your godliness within yourself.

There are many people who will teach and talk of certain understandings – that [and] yes, they may open doors for you within your own essence. But I say to you: You are your own master, you are your own greatest teacher. Find the worth and love of who you are. How can you not love the magnificence of the wondrous being that you are in essence, in spirit, and in form. How can you not be in awe of the absolute glory that you are within spirit, when you are but a manifestation of the Creator? Of the divinity and of the Source? How can you not love that part of your being? How can you not choose to extend it? I say to you: It is because you have not got the self love to begin with. When you do, manifesting thoughts, deeds and words – the love of who you are, you will see more of your essence because the vibration that you are will attract more of the same to solidify your thought. When it becomes a thought in itself through the experience and understanding of your own essence, you have grown in wisdom. You have extended further into the Essence. You have looked at another facet of your being. I am saying to you: It is all there. You need to search continuously, forevermore – whether you are physically manifested or further through the planes and levels of understanding of the spiritual world, you will still be peeling back layers of who you are to get back to the integrity of your soul.

[Here, 'Mrs B' came and bent over to me and, in a quieter, entreating and rather personal way addressed her next comments specifically to me. And then, stepping back, she continued the oration as if to a larger audience...]

We are, all, as I have said, God within ourselves. We can all be masters of our own soul, of our own destiny - moment by moment, not in the grander scale of things, moment by moment. If one looks at the emotion they have at a particular time: Look to the emotion: Look why are you feeling that emotion? An intensity [And intensely?], and with integrity, I say to you: If you look within that emotion, you will be peeling back a layer of non-self* worth. [refer * footnote] It is an idea that has been put on you for whatever reason. One you generally have not questioned. How many of your own understandings, of your own philosophy is actually truly yours? Question it. Question everything that comes. Question your own mind, question your own thoughts. And, within the question you will extend the understanding; you will extend the answer that comes to you because you are more prepared to extend your own knowledge and in that, your own wisdom. When you are more prepared to be a lateral thinker, and think past what you have been told, you grow. You grow like the spark to the flame, to a roaring raging fire. And that fire is the brilliance of your own essence. That fire is the brilliance of the divine within you; that strikes out in all levels of understanding. You may not see it on a physical level if... But I say to you with certainly that it moves through the ethers and strikes where it is meant to strike. You are but a vibration, and that vibration of divinity has only been padded by other thoughts and understandings. Peel them away. Peel them away until you find the truth of who you are. And within that truth, you will find that you, too, are a god. You too are able to do things that, of a phenomenal understanding, things that you would not even dream you could do. Mostly because you don't believe you can. But I say to you: With certain growth and levels of understanding of planes of existence as you peel back to the truth, that is what you become. You become able to manifest anything that you may have been told was a miracle. Because within those people that were able to ascertain and deal and expediate [expedite] the miracles on this earth plane, they were only more in touch with their own soul, their own essence and their own spark of who they are.

I would say to you also that the rules that govern these laws of humanity, on this earth plane, are exactly the same within the immediate levels of progression on the spiritual world. Because you are only peeling back more and more of the essence of who you are, which is already encased within you on a physical level. However, it takes the greater person to be able to look at the expansiveness of their own soul on this physical level of earth. Because we are limited by what we have been fed, in the sense of what we have learnt. Not many people are sure enough, and in love with their own self and centre and their own essence to be able to stand tall, stand strong and firm and say "Yes, I am. I

am a spark of the divine. I am a god also.” Because if one says those words, one knows what they may get from the majority or mass of humanity at this time. But I say to you: That is what holds you. That is what halts you in your existence and your understanding and expansiveness of who you are. Do not listen to any other source but who you are. There is no rule that surpasses your own understanding within your own essence. And as I said before when I initiated this conversation: It is up to you to stand tall and strong. When your fellow man is under the bullet; when he is under the hammer or the spite of the tongue, step forward in your strength. Step forward with the mass of love of who you are and stand with your hand on that person. Support that person and, as you do so, the more that stand, the less that there is [are] to procure that type of vibration, that type of thought, that is en masse on your earth at this time.

Thank you.

* Non-self

Curiously, synchronistically, the very next morning as I continued my reading of Arthur Osborn’s *The Meaning of Personal Existence* (refer *Woodland Way* No. 29), I encountered his discussion of “Not Self”. That is, “Not God”. Ed.

Page 154:

We observe in ourselves a constant stream of psychological change, fluctuating moods; likes, dislikes; ideas and concepts ever changing. Yet at any moment of this restless kaleidoscopic sequence of our personal life we may say "I". This "I" is the changeless background of our living. The sense of I-ness is universal and therefore pervades all our activities. It does not differ from one person to another. It is the core of our Being from which all experiences arise.

We referred to this Universal Selfness when considering the Buddhist anatta doctrine (p. 145). But we now also consider the empirical egos or mes. The empirical ego or me arises as the result of becoming identified with aspects of the phenomenal realm. The Universal Self must be supposed to postulate the phenomenal Not-Self as a universal opposite which like a cinematograph screen reveals the contents of the projected light. Thus is brought into manifestation a play of opposites, an apparent duality of Self and Not-Self. There is not in fact a real duality but only a pseudo projection of otherness in which the Universal Self reveals and defines aspects of Its Infinite potentialities.

Without this "first" act of universal projection, this "creation" of apparent duality, there could not be a universe of forms. Yet the Universal Self remains unaffected even though from this primary "act" of projection there appears the multiplicity we call the "World Process". A person after dreaming a rich variety of events awakens with the unity of his mind unaffected. I have developed this concept more fully in *The Expansion of Awareness*.

Spiritual Commandment # VI

Thou shalt acknowledge all men’s rights to do, think, or speak, to be exactly equal to thine own: And all rights whatsoever that thou dost demand thou shalt ever accord to others...

If we’re recognising that we’re all part of the web of existence ... if we’re recognising that we’re all part of the one Truth, then, when one thinks of their peers, when one works with their peers, we are all one and the same. We are all one under the umbrella of the divine Will, putting aside our own ego self-will to work in harmony with the All. We are all One.

Humanity is all one – as in with the group soul, it is circles upon... radiating from the individual to the circles within the bigger circle; continuously expanding and teaching humanity come in the one group soul as in comparison to other energies and entities that may live in other planes of existence.

One, in their recognition of their own true [self], sitting within their own soul understanding, understands the link to all that is. They understand the Truth; and they understand the Creative thought that is within them. When one is actualising that particular vibration from their own understanding one can not do anything else but recognise each and everybody that they come across as their one soul, as the one group, and all part of the one essence of humanity.

When one does extremely [ultimately?] sit within the vibration of their understanding of who the Creator is, one then has no aspiration whatsoever but that their fellow man is another part of themselves. We are one. When one thinks in their thought, action, word or deed, that cannot be possible when they have touched their own soul or essence – because within that understanding they are all one.

We are all one: The brotherhood of humanity as such. One cannot link to another level of existence - whether you are talking of physical, astral or mental existence - without touching that vibration of their soul. It is within the etheric energies around you. As you mix and touch your thought, word, deed or action it also impregnates theirs.

If one has an understanding of who they are in the existence of things and the understanding of what they are in this existence of things, there is nothing but love in the heart from the richness of the Source that is all One. It is our will and the Divine Will together that goes forth as a mantle of humanity, as a brotherhood of man. And this is the essence, this is the essence that we have lost along the way. This is the vibration of the One Source. Do not ever deem to think that your vibration or your self on this level of existence is anywhere better than the fellow creature that stands next to you. Do not ever deem to think or purport that your existence is any more special than anyone else’s.

We are all linked within the web of existence. All problems and troubles within humanity’s field of existence would not exist if we taught each other the existence of the brotherhood of man: Of humanity, of love and the essence of the world that is. Thank you.

Spiritual Commandment # VII

Thou shalt not hold thyself bound to love, or associate with those that are distasteful or repulsive to thee: But thou shalt be held bound to treat such objects of dislike with gentleness, courtesy, and justice, and never suffer thine antipathies to make thee ungentle or unjust to any living creature...

As I have spoken before, if we are aware of our place in that web of existence; if we are aware and have found solitude within our own self and therefore our own soul, then we have removed our self-will and are linking in the divine Will. If that is the case, then there is never a time that one can see themselves knocking [not getting?] further. When one can not be of help to their fellow person.

I understand strongly, very strongly, that the vibrations of people that you come across do however affect your own. They do impinge on your own auric understanding and thought and yes, if you spend a great deal of time in that mixture of energies, you will not be able to rise above it continuously – you'll be stagnating along a similar level. But, if we are all in the understanding of the humanity, the brotherhood that exists within us all, how can one ever, even, consider that their help is not needed?

Every person that comes across you, whether they actually hear your words or [see] your acts, just seeing your auric emanation is enough for them to see their own life. If they do not visualise the light in your soul, [nevertheless] it has touched their soul on a subconscious level and changes will manifest within that person whether they are aware consciously of it or not.

So, if that is the understanding of our existence on this plane... Our understanding is to search for the truth: It is the search for the truth that the Creative Source does exist: That the Divine Spark is within all of us: That the soul with its personality linked within it is a manifestation of the spirit on a physical level. If we have that understanding, never a moment, never a thought or vibration will impinge on you that will make you judge your fellow man. So if they come and they are disgraceful to your presence, you would get a surprise. Do not seek to deal with it longer than the time necessary, but if you rebut that person you have rebut[ted] the soul – you have rebut[ted] a partner, a brotherhood on this plane of existence. We are all one and it is not until we are all manifested as a group soul of humanity that there will not be the case of a rising in consciousness on a mass scale of humanity. There are the seeds of consciousness within all people. However, some have manifested this consciously and this consciousness is a higher vibration at this time.

Those people are the ones that are helping to bring the folds together, [to] bring all back together, to the one Source. It is the light of humanity that flows past the ethers of this physical earth plane. Many see, many watch. It is like an understanding, an exploration of what humanity can achieve. Are they able to achieve a brotherhood of consciousness? Are they able to achieve a brotherhood of man truly, literally in a sense that your brother is like yourself? That you can view your brother as you are viewing yourself in a mirror, with no distaste whatsoever. With the same understanding that you would give to yourself or to a loved one. Can we pass our love further than the family field? Can we pass it further than those that we do like? For that is the true link, in the true spark of divinity, in the soul of humanity that they can serve all their brothers on this plane. That they can impart the divine wisdom and beauty of life and all that is. Thank you.

Spiritual Commandment # VIII

Thou shalt ever regard the rights, interests, and welfare of the many as superior to those of the one or the few: And in cases where thy welfare, or that of thy friend, is to be balanced against that of society, thou shalt sacrifice thyself, or friend, to the welfare of the many...

As I have spoken, when one sits within the solitude of their own self and finds the essence of All-that-is, the understanding of all that comes from the divine Source, one has found their own soul; one has understood what the truth is. They are immersed in that understanding. It becomes them. It isn't something they can turn off. It has become them.

When they have that understanding, they are able to move forward and pass through the ethers and the physical levels, constantly passing and impressing people with their own soul essence, with their own understanding of the divine. Once they have achieved that - whether we're talking on a physical level or through the movement through the planes of existence back to the Source – once they have understood their link with All-that-is, they are becoming selfless. There is no longer that small self, that ego self, that personality. And that is the understanding of when one puts the group first. That is the understanding of when one steps back themselves and puts the brotherhood of humanity before all else.

It is only after one has found their own link, to All-that-is, and the understanding that comes with that, that they are even possibly able to achieve that. If they are faking that part of their existence without that understanding, I would say to you, my friend, that it is not true. It is based on an ego of some sort. It is based on their own self trying to be selfless but yet stand on a stage where that is accorded to them and some way they are getting a feedback on a positive level for their own ego. For when one has touched their soul; when one has touched the sign and understanding of all that is, one never thinks of themselves. One's own self-interest becomes secondary to the Divine Flame – which is the brotherhood of humanity. One's own self – their smaller self, if you like – is set aside to meet the needs of All-that-is. Whether it is friend or foe, because in that understanding there is never a foe because we are all one on the web of existence, all expressing the Divine Spark on a conscious level of whatever our understanding and our gift at this time is. Our opening of our own self.

But rest assured, my friend, you will not touch the group energy of selflessness, the archetype of that energy, until you have touched your own soul ... until you have the broader awareness that you are but like a cell on the body of a human person. One cell amongst billions of cells, all together vibrating to be the one energy and the one source, the one archetype, and, in this case, humanity. It is the brotherhood, and that is all.

If I was [were] to give you one particular truth, it would be to search for all the brotherhood together: To put them all together in an understanding of love and an understanding of Who the divine is. In an understanding that they themselves are a spark of that divine.

So, when I say to you, that you put yourself secondary, it is only after, and able to come after, you have touched your soul, and realised who-you-are. Thank you.

Spiritual Commandment # IX

Thou shalt be obedient to the laws of the land in which thou dost reside: In all things which do not conflict with thy highest sense of right. ...

When one has attained their own link and understanding of Who and What the Truth is, no law that has been man-made will ever ask for the same service as one's own understanding has brought about – has come about.

The law of the land is a physical man-made law. It has no interpretation whatsoever to the divine law because it is generally made as a cultural, financial, national border interest. It is not made through love. It is not made with a sense of the brotherhood of humanity. It is made with self-interest totally. So, my friend, to me I would disregard all. I would only stand in the truth of my own understanding and knowing of what the right law is. And the right law is love. It is simply the giving and receiving of love. Receiving from all levels when we're talking from those discarnate, to the giving of law and love and service on this plane. It is love only. It is service only to your fellow man that deems your truth, your law, and your obedience.

And when we say obedience, we are not asking for a manipulation or a control of your own thought process; because when you have found what the link is, when you have found your own understanding – you give of yourself, you give of your heart, your love, your wisdom to all that come across your path – because we send them to your path. We send them on the road towards those of the higher conscious who are vibrating the love and service. And service from their understanding of the Divine Will: Not from their own will because many still serve with that motive of a personal ego, self, within the scheme of things.

We are talking of the selflessness. How can one man rule and [set the] law of obedience whether it is the government of your country or not. How can one man's law override the parts [??] the law of the divine Will? It is not possible, my friend.

If that government's law was of a right mind of the divine spark that it should behold, it would not be challenging you to obey a particular law – because it's understanding would know that your understanding is in no need of obedience. Because you have all understood that Who-you-are is the essence of the divine Spark. That is the only law and life that fits within your being for you to obey ... and as I said, the abeyance is only because you understand. There is no pressure on you to follow the path of the divine. The only reason you're following that path is because you've seen the truth and you understand: And that is your right, your law and the only thing that you walk on your path towards. An expression of the goodwill of man: To all men... not to this person or that person because of whatever weaving or vibration that they emit.

If a government had a law of truth, may I say, there would not need to be a law of truth, because humankind would have evolved to the point where there is no need. Thank you.

Tuesday, 20th August, 2002: Spiritual Commandment # X

Thy first and last duty upon earth, and all through thy life, shall be to seek for the principles of right, and to live them out to the utmost of thy power: And whatever creed, precept, or example conflicts with those principles, thou shalt shun and reject, ever remembering that the laws of right are - in morals, JUSTICE; in science, HARMONY; in religion, THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD, THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN, the immortality of the human soul, and compensation and retribution for the good or evil done on earth...

This is going to be a summary of the entire Ten Spiritual Commandments. We started off beginning in talking of the Truth. The Truth is essential for every person to seek throughout their life. It is the Truth and only the Truth that will set you free. And will I say, yet again, each time that you believe you have perceived the truth, search further – search deeper because the truth will continuously change as a larger aspect of your soul, self, your divinity incarnate through your soul experiences [during] this life on earth.

We talked about the web of existence. An integral understanding needs to be made by you, my friend, on the web of existence. There are many parts, a myriad of parts, to this web of existence and it is only the focal point of where you are at the time that an understanding and an awareness of this becomes so. All the truth that you have ever heard, particularly through the religious doctrines, have done nowt but take you further away from the Truth.

I talked also of sitting in the solitude of yourself, sitting in the silence within nature, to understand the integrality of your being. Because it is when you are in this silence, when you are in harmony with nature, when all the vibrations and energies around you, and within you, are all in cyclical flow – it is only at these times, in the silence, that you will find the Truth: That you will find further and yet further again the aspects of your soul which are but the Truth.

This awareness... in this awareness, when you have this understanding, all else follows. And may I yet reiterate that again: All else follows. It is in that understanding that you realise the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man. You realise the cause and effect of all your acts whether they are thoughts, words or deeds. You understand the power of your own being, your own essence – because you are divine. You are divinity incarnate on this earth plane. You are but a speck, a form in physical manifestation: But you are a spiritual being.

Spiritualism, in itself, was founded on the principle of Freedom. It is the closest thing to your own nature. It is the closest understanding that will set you free. It gives you the truth, it gives you your own link to the divine, and all that is.

When you have experienced this awareness, and this understanding, may I say, there is [are] no limits upon your being and your understanding. You could no longer hurt one of your fellow men. You could no longer do anything but walk in the highest attribute and vibration of love. You could do no more than serve your brother man. You could do no more than put yourself back for the group to come forward. It is in the group understanding that our consciousness is now moving forward.

May I say, that the time and the platitudes that... the philosophies of Spiritualism have had their time. They have had this understanding since the birth of its being. And yet in this understanding, we are still procrastinating. What else is there left to do? May I say, once you have experienced spiritual communication, why do you need further truth [proof]? Why do you need further proof, may I say? Because you have understood.

These people that are communicating with spirit on the other side of the veil are still lacking within their own purpose, and lacking within their own strength of self. As I have said to you, you are creator gods. Your intent is creation; your mind between, the link between, spirit and the physical form intent creates all that is around you. It is your will, your discipline within this and the vibration of love that will move you ever forward, back to the light of Truth, whether you are in a physical incarnation or further afield in the spiritual levels of manifestation.

May I again say to you, sir, it is found within the self, totally within the self – there is no need for an intermediary between you and the Divine. And once you have touched this soul of your Self – once you have touched the beauty and the love and joy of your own being, you could not consciously, my friend, treat anyone else but with equality. You could not judge your fellow man because you understand the progression of the self through the spirit back to the Source. You could not judge another person merely and simply because you know, you understand their path back to the Truth, back to the Source, of the Divine is their path – and it is not for you to judge.

As I have said, sit in the silence. All else follows. You do not need any teachers, any books, any amount of outside input. You have been told continuously it is all within you. And yet, who takes the time, who takes the effort, to delve in there? Who takes the effort to delve within their own self and their own essence? Very few, my friend. And that is why there are very few with the ability on this path to move forward to the higher attributes, of the higher echelons, of spirit that are working with the form on the universal plane of the physical. It is my understanding to say to you, whether you talk of the Harmony of science, whether you talk of the Justice, the Morality within that, it is all a *fait accompli* when you have struck the Golden Chord within yourself. There is no question and no doubt how you will perform on this physical level of earth other than in service; other than in service because you know we are all One. You have the understanding that we are all One seeking the Source to manifest it on this physical plane.

May I say that the reasoning we have come to delve and deepen the Spiritual Commandments is because it is a timing, my friend. It is a timing where there is an awakening. The Freedom that was in the ethers when the manifestation of spirituality of Spiritualism came into form has now progressed. Look around you. Universally you will see people moving towards the Source in whatever manner or understanding they are still seeking more – seeking the divinity within. No longer is this earth plane and its monetary materialism attracting every soul on the planet. There is a timing, my friend. It is the timing of now, an understanding of your own integral power within. You are but a creator god yourself. Understand this. Understand that when you move through the astral or spiritual levels of existence, the vibration of love that you have in your heart – that you share and serve with your fellow man – is what is attracted in likeness to you.

It is this understanding: if I was to give you one Commandment, and one alone, it would be to Know Thyself: Because in that understanding, you know All. You know your Brotherhood of Man; you know the Fatherhood of God. And it is simply, and I reiterate again, until your last breath on this earth plane, you will search continuously for the Truth – because as your vibration, which is inclusive of love and service – as that increases, you will be able to see more of the Truth that was already there before, more of the understanding [that] is available to you.

And to you, my friend, I say: “Go forth and spread the word of Spiritualism as it attains to your spirit alone, and your divinity alone: Because it is within that, when you have that understanding of Yourself [your Self?],” I say to you: “All else follows.” Thank you.



Would you expect a summation of Mrs B’s commentary on the *Ten Spiritual Commandments*? From me? Well, they leave one somewhat reflective and speechless! There is certainly a strong thread to this perspective of the web of existence which she weaves for us!

We in the physical have our perspectives of reality set in finite surroundings. We can conceive of the infinite as something which is not finite – a bit like ACD’s knowing “that which is not truth.” But we are pointed in the direction and advised that we should search for our understanding of Existence all our lives. To that end, my friends, we each have to tread our own path... and may we all find much happiness along the Way.

No... thank you, Mrs B! Ed.



6. *Ten Laws of Right:*

Ten Laws of Right

THE LYCEUM MANUAL - Golden Chain Recitation – No. 110

- I Manifest TEMPERANCE in all things. Whether physical, mental, moral, affectional, or religious.
- II Give JUSTICE to all creatures that be; Justice being the exercise of precisely the same rules of life, conduct, thought, or speech that we would desire to receive from others.
- III Show GENTLENESS in speech and act; Never heedlessly wounding the feelings of others by harsh words or deeds; never hurting or destroying aught that breathes, save for the purpose of sustenance or self-defence.
- IV Speak TRUTH in every word or thought spoken or acted; But reserve harsh or displeasing truths where they would needlessly wound the feelings of others.
- V Exercise CHARITY in thought, striving to excuse the failings of others. Yes and charity in speech, veiling the failings of others; charity in deeds, wheresoever, whensoever, and to whomsoever the opportunity offers.
- VI In ALMSGIVING be generous. Visiting the sick and comforting the afflicted in every shape that our means admit of, and the necessities of our fellow creatures demand.
- VII Exhibit SELF-SACRIFICE at all times; Wherever the interests of others are to be benefited by our endurance.
- VIII Be TEMPERATE yet firm in defence of our views of right; And protest against wrong, whether for ourselves or others.
- IX Display INDUSTRY in following any calling we may be engaged in; And in devoting some portion of our time, when otherwise not obliged to do so, to the service and benefit of others.
- X Manifest LOVE - above and beyond all; Seeking to cultivate in our families, kindred, friends and, amongst all mankind generally the feeling of that true and tender love which can think, speak, and act no wrong to any creature living; - Remembering always, that where love is, all the other principles of right are fulfilled beneath its influence and embodied in its monitions.

We shall ever hold these ten *principles of right* to be obligatory upon all men, as they are the deductions evolved from the laws of being, and therefore in strict harmony with the divine order of creation. Man's opinion concerning science and theology are subject to change according to surrounding circumstances, training, or personal experience; but the *religion of right, morality, and love*, and the *commandments of Duty*, originating from the principles inherent in life and being, can never change until man ceases to be, or the harmonies of the universe are themselves changed.



Editorial introductory note:

The *Ten Laws of Right* are an adjunct to the *Spiritual Commandments* – and essentially good moral guidance for everyday living in the physical world; whereas the *S C's* may be said to be applicable throughout our entire spiritual existence, here and hereafter.

A few minutes prior to Judith's arrival on 20th August I printed off a copy of the L of R's intending to cut them into single statements for her to 'read and deliver' each in turn as we had with the S C's (bearing in mind that I had deliberately not printed them in the last Issue of *Woodland Way* so that Judith did not have access to them before I put them to Mrs B). However, it suddenly occurred to me that it might be a lot simpler and appropriate that Mrs B deal with them collectively.

Here is what Mrs B had to say:

"We can talk on the *Laws of Right* because, in essence, it is the vibration of love. It is service to your fellow man. It is the understanding that you and everything you do is accountable. It is the time. I say to you my friend, that it is all an understanding. If you have that knowledge of yourself and therefore of your part within the Godhead, then you will know that there is nothing but service. There is nothing but love; and there are all forms and manners to achieve this.

It is in speaking, words, deeds to your fellow man, continuously. It is to do deeds of goodness and with never any expectation of receiving a gain. It is to understand that on this pathway there are times when you may be in friction with someone. But it is to hold your tongue; it is to make and ensure that you never experience or express a cross word.

Because you understand, my friend; you understand this other soul has come to you – is mirroring something for you. They are taking from you, subconsciously, an idea or a vibration of the Godhood. And if you dismiss them, if you use a cross word, you have moved from your own centre of truth, divinity and understanding.

As I say to you, it is like spelling out a book. We can give the follower rule after rule after rule to follow, but that still does not give them the strength and the empowerment of their own divinity and their own self - initially which is found, as I said, in the silence of being: 'to know yourself'. Of course, then these acts of servitude, these acts of charity and temperament, of course they all unfold because you have that integral understanding.

We could give pages of guidelines to the adept or to the seeker – pages upon pages – but the initial crux, the one point I strive to impart to you, is in the knowing of the self: **All else follows.** Thank you.



And so, I leave you to ponder and understand Mrs B's words and the circumstances of their delivery for your own edification. And, as my friend Magnus would say: With your kind permission, let us move on... *Ed.*



7. *The Seven Principles of Spiritualism*

- Editorial introduction
- The Seven Principles
- *The Formation of the Seven Principles of Spiritualism*, by Paul Gaunt

Editorial introduction

Woodland Way – Issue # 31 (Autumn 2003):

The Spiritualists' Decalogue gave way to the *Seven Principles of Spiritualism*. The origin, the timing, and authorship of the 7 P's and the *Ten Spiritual Commandments* has been clouded in uncertainty for some years. I encountered this mystery when I did the SNU's Diploma course a few years ago - and my reading of old books uncovered some interesting aspects of the trail. I think it was through our common interest that I met (by email) Paul Gaunt, another student in spiritualist history.

Paul discovered reference to a vital missing link and was keen enough to pursue missing documentation at the British Library / Museum. He then authored an essay on his findings and was good enough to send me a copy along with photocopies of the documentation and literature he had obtained from the Museum. His excellent essay and discoveries begin on page 15. The bottom line of it all is that Robert Owen, in spirit, did not author and inspire through Emma Hardinge Britten the 7 P's; rather, Mrs Britten developed them over a number of years – no doubt in collaboration with many inspirers.



The Seven Principles of *The Spiritualists' National Union*

Members of the SNU recognise the following Seven Principles:

1. The Fatherhood of God.
2. The Brotherhood of Man.
3. The communion of spirits and the ministry of angels.
4. The continuous existence of the human soul.
5. Personal responsibility.
6. Compensation and retribution hereafter for all the good and evil deeds done on earth.
7. Eternal progress open to every human soul.



THE FORMATION OF THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUALISM

By Paul Gaunt

"You and I are spirits as much now as we ever shall be. Though now in a casket of clay, our spirits possess in germ all the attributes that we shall ever enlarge in the grander vistas of eternity; and so, whatever influences and powers the disembodied spirit exerts, we exert also."

Emma Hardinge Britten,
Cleveland Hall, London. Sunday evening, April 30th 1871.

In June 2000, *Psychic News* published an article which I wrote entitled:

Did Robert Owen, in 1871, communicate the basis of the Seven Principles through the mediumship of Emma Hardinge Britten?

Without reiterating in depth, I have been a Spiritualist for over 30 years and in my younger days in Spiritualism, I spent several years living and working at the *Arthur Findlay College*. Having accepted and indeed

given many talks on the Seven Principles of the *Spiritualists' National Union*, I too had credited the origins of these Principles, which give the *SNU* its basis of National Spiritualism and its philosophy, to Robert Owen.

If I were today embarking upon Spiritualism for the very first time, looking at its philosophy and perhaps taking one of the *SNU*'s excellent education courses, I would be told that in 1871 Robert Owen had communicated the basis of the Seven Principles of *SNU* Spiritualism through the mediumship of Mrs Emma Hardinge Britten.

Having suffered a heart attack some years ago, I found I had an awful lot of free time. I therefore took one of the education courses, which covered the History of Spiritualism. One of the Course questions, requiring an answer of 2000 words or more, covered the formation of the Principles. Rather than refer only to the recommended Course books, I decided to originate my essay and try to retrace the steps of history to the evolution of the Seven Principles.

I could not, however, find any positive reference in 1871, when Robert Owen was stated to have communicated the Seven Principles through Emma Hardinge Britten. The only reference I could find, took place in or around 1861, (I cannot provide the exact date, as reference to the communication is given only by an event by the words, "the terrible American war, between North and South" - hence 1861/65). This communion took place, according to Emma Hardinge Britten's autobiography, at the house of her close friend, Anne Leah (Fox) Underhill. Also in attendance at the seance was the son of Robert Owen. During the seance the then Emma Hardinge succumbed to the control of Robert Owen, whilst Owen's son, Robert Dale Owen, transcribed *Ten Spiritual Commandments*, and *Ten Laws of Right*. These appear in the *Lyceum Manual* as Golden Chain Recitations, 109 and 110.

In my original article I also expressed doubts that the communications between Robert Owen and Emma Hardinge Britten were unlikely to have taken place in England during the year of 1871 as promoted by the *SNU*. This was due to the information I had found written in Emma's own hand and published under the title of *Nineteenth Century Miracles* in 1883 wherein she writes that in October 1870 she married Dr. William Britten. In November of the same year Dr & Mrs Britten arrived in Britain for a brief visit to collect Emma's mother, and all had returned to America to reside near Boston.

I have since found, however, references to a visit in 1871 that does not appear in her aforementioned publication, nor in her autobiography. I have found that she *did* spend some considerable time in Britain in 1871. She had given orations for twenty-one consecutive Sundays in London, then made a tour of the provinces; Liverpool, May 9-12, Bradford, May 14-16, Manchester, May 17-24, etc. I also stated in the original article that I could find only one communication between Robert Owen and Emma Hardinge Britten, as already mentioned above. This reference, as read in her autobiography, does cause a problem which will no doubt become apparent further into this article.

Since the publication of my original article and indeed since the completion of the education course, I have relentlessly continued my research, scouring as much 19th century material as was available to me. I was contacted by several kind people as a result of the article but still the searching continued.

Then, as a gift for my 50th birthday earlier this year [2001], I received a long sought after title by one of our great pioneering workers, whom I often feel has been greatly forgotten (for the unmeasurable work that he did in the propagation of Spiritualism, and in the establishment of the *Spiritualists' National Federation* which brought about the *Spiritualists' National Union Ltd.*, in October 1901) - Mr J J Morse. Morse's autobiography, *Leaves from My Life*, was published in 1877, and which, until August of 2001, had remained most elusive. In this revealing book, James Morse states:

*My position as a spiritualist may be briefly defined thus, as expressed in the eloquent and gifted utterances of that inspired teacher Emma Hardinge Britten, as detailed in her able lecture, **The Creed of the Spirits**, delivered at Cleveland Hall, London, on Sunday, April 30th, 1871: "I believe in God; I believe in the immortality of the human Soul: I believe in right and wrong; I believe in the communion of spirits as Ministering angels."*

Morse continues:

I do not want the reader to imagine that the foregoing is introduced as a definition of Spiritualism, with a view to creedalise it. It is simply a statement of general principles that to me, and to their authors, seem worthy of our acceptance. Spiritualism is no creed, but a constellation of starry truths...

I have been able to get a copy of the aforementioned address by Emma Hardinge Britten at Cleveland Hall in 1871, as printed in *The Medium and Daybreak* and reported to be:

One of the grandest addresses that has ever been listened to on the subject of Spiritualism. The hall was extra seated, yet every available inch of sitting room was occupied, and additional seats had to be improvised to meet the requirements of friends who came rather late. Many strangers were present - some who had never been at a meeting on Spiritualism before; others, well known faces from distant parts of London and the provinces.

The printed copy from the Cleveland Hall lecture is substantial in length and covers the influence of Spiritualism in the previous twenty-three years. I am very tempted to quote more fully from it, but feel that I would be unable to keep it in good context except to say that while Emma Hardinge Britten was talking of Spiritualism she said:

Spiritualism is wholly unselfish. It proclaimed from the first the Fatherhood of God - that you all admit; and with it the Brotherhood of Man - and that you don't all admit.

She talks about the stern laws of compensation and retribution and then says:

But Spiritualism teaches of that God who is a spirit, of that immortality which constitutes the very gist of human existence, of that life - practice for which religious systems have been established as a guide. What more do we require to constitute the elements of a religion?

In delivering her four original principles Emma Hardinge Britten says:

I shall here speak briefly of the creed which is evolved from Spiritualism. I may not pause now upon the methods of evolution. You have heard some of them in the past discourses; you may apply those to the results which I now offer:

- *I believe in God.*

- *I believe in the immortality of the human soul.*
- *I believe in right and wrong.*
- *I believe in the communion of spirits as ministering angels.*

Each one of these statements is accompanied with a description and meaning and she continues:

These are some of the points of my creed, and all of them I have proved.

The conclusion I have made therefore is that Robert Owen had nothing directly to do with the formation of the Seven Principles. To reiterate her words, "*my creed, and all of them I have proved*". On the surface it would seem that these statements, which have become packaged within the present day Seven Principles, were the fruits of observances and experiences provided to her by twenty-three years of Modern Spiritualism. Visualisations perhaps, of a progressive religion based upon unfolding proofs, a hint of which may be found in the titles of orations given by her. For example, when on 3rd May 1871 Emma spoke at the hall of the Mechanics Institute, Northampton, her talk was entitled 'THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS!'

The Medium and Daybreak article did however, provide the reference to Robert Owen by writing:

As a supplement to the oration, Mrs Hardinge electrified the audience by reading Ten Spiritual Commandments, which she had written in a very rapid manner on the previous morning under the influence of Robert Owen, whose centenary takes place next week. They were wonderfully characteristic of that revered philanthropist, and present perhaps the most comprehensive view of religious ethics which the world has ever seen.

The Commandments, which are as follows, were presented to *Medium and Daybreak* publisher Mr James Burns, who then held the manuscript and copyrights, by Mrs Britten requesting he print them for his own benefit and that of the cause and to circulate them as opportunity offered.

(I) *Thou shalt search for truth in every department of being - test, prove, and try if what thou deemest [truth] is truth, and then accept it as the Word of God.* [refer 'Mrs B's' address, beginning page 22. And, NB: The extra word 'truth' was added in the Lyceum Manual version. Ed.]

(II) *Thou shalt continue the search for truth all thy life, and never cease to test, prove, and try all that thou deemest to be the truth.*

(III) *Thou shalt search by every attainable means for the laws that underlie all life and being; thou shalt strive to comprehend these laws; live in harmony with them, and make them the laws of thine own life, thy rule and guide in all thine actions.*

(IV) *Thou shalt not follow the example of any man or set of men, nor obey any teaching or accept of any theory as thy rule of life that is not in strict accordance with thy highest sense of right.*

(V) *Thou shalt remember that a wrong done to the least of thy fellow creatures is a wrong done to all; and thou shalt never commit a wrong wilfully and consciously to any of thy fellow men, nor connive at wrong done by others without striving to prevent or protesting against it.*

(VI) *Thou shalt acknowledge all men's rights to do, think, or speak, to be exactly equal to thine own; and all rights whatsoever that thou dost demand, thou shalt ever accord to others.*

(VII) *Thou shalt not hold thyself bound to love, or associate with those that are distasteful or repulsive to thee; but thou shalt be held bound to treat such objects of dislike with gentleness, courtesy, and justice, and never suffer thy antipathies to make thee ungentle or unjust to any living creature.*

(VIII) *Thou shalt ever regard the rights, interests, and welfare of the many as superior to those of the one or the few; and in cases where thy welfare or that of thy friend is to be balanced against that of society, thou shalt sacrifice thyself or a friend to the welfare of the many.*

(IX) *Thou shalt be obedient to the laws of the land in which thou dost reside, in all things which do not conflict with thy highest sense of right.*

(X) *Thy first and last duty upon earth, and all through thy life, shall be to seek for the principles of right, and to live them out to the utmost of thy power; and whatever creed, precept, or example conflicts with those principles, thou shalt shun and reject, ever remembering that the laws of right are - in morals, JUSTICE; in science, HARMONY; in religion, THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD, THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN, the immortality of the human soul, and compensation and retribution for the good or evil done on earth.*

As noted above, there is a serious contradiction as to when Owen gave these *Ten Spiritual Commandments*: either in New York in or around 1861, or in London in 1871. It may well be possible that Owen entranced Emma twice and gave the same spiritual commandments, but to me this seems unlikely. I believe it more likely that there was an error in her autobiography and perhaps her reference to the NY seance should have read *Ten Laws of Right* only.

As the 1871 Cleveland Hall meeting was well reported and a big issue made of the speech (*one of the grandest addresses that has ever been listened to on the subject of Spiritualism*) the supplemental inclusion of the *Spiritual Commandments* – that she had received the previous morning as a communication from Robert Owen which she wrote down and then gave the copyright to James Burns – strongly suggests that this was given as she said on 29th April 1871 in London and not as stated in her [posthumously published] autobiography, in NY.

Many Spiritualists believe that the basis of the Seven Principles were given as a 'full set', by Robert Owen through the mediumship of Emma Hardinge Britten. In fact, much if not all of what Owen gave through Britten is little known or associated, as Owen's communications in print do not bear his name. It is only in association with the

Principles does his name come to light. This may be because Emma did not make it a practice to speak of the spirits who controlled her. It was an open question whether or not any control was in operation during her orations. [She always spoke in her 'own' voice.] Only on two occasions in her works have I found she actually names Owen.

There may also be another reason, and that is that on May 1st 1871, Emma Hardinge Britten gave Mr James Burns the manuscript and copyright for the aforementioned *Ten Spiritual Commandments*. (And this may well have included some other manuscripts, i.e., *The Creed of the Spirits* and the *Ten Laws of Right* as all these were published and used by Burns.) Perhaps Burns felt there was no need to say who gave the *Ten Spiritual Commandments*, concerned more with the content value, for he and Britten in later works simply put *Given by the spirits*.

In 1859 there were already principle statements to cover spiritualist beliefs and definitions of Spiritualism. These were presented at a convention held at Plymouth, Mass., USA. They were changed and updated as Spiritualism grew. At the fifth national convention in America, these principles became generally accepted in England and were printed under the title of *The Principles of Modern Spiritualism*, by A.E. Newton. They were published again by James Burns into a four page tract series called *Seed Corn*. Churches, societies and groups, promoting Modern Spiritualism could have their details, etc. printed on the tracts which were handed out to the public. These tracts cost one shilling per hundred to produce and the principles contained in its pages were impressive and as important today as they were then.

I firmly believe that the original statements that have become, in part, today's Seven Principles were inspired by the personal experiences and inspirations of Emma Hardinge Britten. Her utterances portrayed in the lecture at Cleveland Hall in 1871 included the above mentioned *Ten Spiritual Commandments* - reportedly given by Robert Owen through her mediumship. It is easy to see where confusion can evolve. Two separate issues delivered in one lecture and reported on in one article: the makings perhaps of a hasty misconception?

The continuance of the Principles formation was again a process of observation and participation. As Spiritualism in the early days began to grow, so too did the expectations of the Spiritualist. Phenomenal and paranormal activities aside, Spiritualism's growth provided a doorway to unlimited understanding and knowledge of life. As Emma said at Cleveland Hall about the potential of the doorway to spirit communication:

... They have taught us that not a single act or deed, not a thought or word of our mortal existence, is lost. They have brought us face to face with the ordinary acts that we perform, and left us no excuse for evading the responsibility that is set upon every one of us.

With the continued growth of Spiritualism therefore, so grew the development of the system of its basic religious beliefs: its sets of options or principles that would give Spiritualism the foundation of its philosophy – and eventually, in October 1901, the legal foundation of a National Spiritualism.

In a speech *What Has Spiritualism Taught, and What Good Has It Done For Humanity*, delivered at Oldham Spiritual Temple, in 1887, Emma Hardinge Britten covers the progress of what was termed 'Modern Spiritualism'. The speech includes twelve points with the twelfth containing the following:

Spiritualists have no creed but may all unite in the following simple summary:

- *I believe in the Fatherhood of God,*
- *The Brotherhood of Man,*
- *The Immortality of the soul,*
- *Personal Responsibility,*
- *Compensation and Retribution hereafter for all the good or evil deeds done here,*
- *And a path of eternal progress open to every human soul that wills to tread it by the path of eternal good.*

We can see that by 1887, the original 1871 principles have been added to, updated and upgraded by Mrs Britten; and, I have no doubt, through personal experience of insight. If we now add the last principle from the original set given at Cleveland Hall in 1871,

- *I believe in the communion of spirits as ministering angels*
- we have the complete basis of the Seven Principles.

It may be perceived by some however, that the basic principles of National Spiritualism can be found in part within the *Ten Spiritual Commandments*. I believe this perception to be taking the statements out of context and trying to fit them into an available slot.

To further exclude Robert Owen directly from the so-called Principle foundations, Mrs Britten concludes at her Oldham speech, *And all these noble teachings have grown out of the grand work the spirits have effected since the year 1848!* And again, at the formation of the Spiritualists' National Federation reported in *The Two Worlds*, July 25th 1890, after giving the summary of religious faith, the principles, as at Oldham, it was reaffirmed that the Principles were not given by one person but:

And as all this had been reiterated by beings in the actual experience of what they taught, through her own mediumship, and that of countless other independent sources...

Even after the *SNU* came into being, the Seven Principles underwent subtle changes. I can only guess they read as they do today from around the 1920's-30's. The *SNU* does now however state that the Principles are 'unalterable'.

It would appear also that from reports, tracts, books and booklets printed on, or containing the Seven Principles – like *The Seven Principles of Spiritualism* authored by the then first secretary of the Union, Hanson G Hey in 1910 and rewritten by subsequent *SNU* Presidents George Berry, and Harold Vigurs; and books like *Spiritualism, its History Phenomena and Doctrine* by J. Arthur Hill published in 1918, and so on – no mention of Robert Owen's involvement or even suggested involvement of giving the Principles through the mediumship of Emma Hardinge Britten in 1871 is given at all! It is only when we approach the 1950's does Robert Owen's name start to be associated with the Seven Principles.

The authorship of this association seems to come from two main sources, Ernest Thompson and Harry Boddington. I am not completely sure if these men were involved in the education system of the *SNU*, but this may explain where the association between Owen and the Principles originated. If this information was misread from the 1871 Cleveland Hall article, HIS Spiritual Commandments and HER Principles, the link could therefore have been mixed in error.

Many will say that the 'wheres', the 'whys' and the 'by whoms' are not important and are irrelevant – which in part I would agree with. But the Seven Principles have a profound significance in our Movement and to advertise Spiritualism worldwide using Robert Owen as the author of these Principles is like building a house of sand. Spiritualism is based upon a demonstrable truth and its promotion must be expressed with facts.



8. *For The Record:*

American Spiritualism's 'Nine Principles' Declaration of Principles of the National Spiritualist Association of Churches

1. We believe in Infinite Intelligence.
2. We believe that the phenomena of Nature, both physical and spiritual, are the expression of Infinite Intelligence.
3. We affirm that a correct understanding of such expression and living in accordance therewith constitute true religion.
4. We affirm that the existence and personal identity of the individual continue after the change called death.
5. We affirm that communication with so-called dead is a fact, scientifically proven by the phenomena of Spiritualism.
6. We believe that the highest morality is contained in the Golden Rule: "Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye also to them."
7. We affirm the moral responsibility of individuals and that we make our own happiness or unhappiness as we obey or disobey Nature's physical spiritual laws.
8. We affirm that the doorway to reformation is never closed against any human soul here or hereafter.
9. We affirm that the precepts of Prophecy and Healing are Divine attributes proved through mediumship.

Editorial comments (ad hoc!):

- #1. I very much like, and sometimes use, the terminology "Infinite Intelligence" for God, albeit it means the same incomprehensible creative power behind all that is.
- #2 & 3 This corresponds with the English "Brotherhood of Man" in that we humans are physical expressions just as everything else is. We are kindred spirits – with other humans and with all that is – and we need to be in harmony with our perceived (and unperceived) environment.
- #4 Readers will be aware of my questioning the concepts of immortality and eternal life being applicable to our individuality (in recent Issues of *Woodland Way*); and that there is a conflict between such concepts and omnipotence, the "Infinite" and "Eternal Now." Thus I like the American statement which merely recognizes a future beyond death but does not speculate upon the extent of such future.
- #5 Here we have reference to the scientific testing and verification of phenomena; an appeal to the rationality behind the Spiritualist religion. The Principle subtly implicates the scientific verification of phenomena with the conclusion that the phenomena prove life after death – a liberty with which I have no difficulty.
- #6 "Do as you would be done by" is somewhat archaic and lacks reason in my view. Many people(s) have not been brought up to expect much from others and so have little concept of respect for others. Also, in this world economic environment of rich and poor classes, many are not in a position to "do as they would be done by." In terms of morality, not everybody enjoys the same standards by far!
- #7 First, we must understand Nature's laws! I would not presume to do so. It appears to me to be a rather clumsy attempt to restate the laws of cause and effect, compensation and retribution, Karma, etc. without putting any time factor - or state of existence - reference into the equation.
- #8 So long as we exist, the doorway to reformation is always open: But when we become fully "reformed" do we cease to exist - as individuals? If the goal is to blend back into Edwin Butler's hypothetical orange, some may say "What the heck? I'll stay around a while longer!" I understand what they're trying to say, but again, I think it is expressed rather clumsily.
- #9 The references to "Prophecy and Healing" appear to have been tacked on as an afterthought – rather than being coupled in as an inherent part of the capacity for communication through the veil and the ability to receive the "ministry of angels" (as it is in the English Principles). The English could spell out more specifically the gifts of spirit, whilst the Americans could promote them much higher in their order. Also, I have to take issue with the final two words "through Mediumship" which smack of egotism and the elevation of mediums to vicarious positions – atypical of "holier than thou" religious leaders. To repeat my (becoming) hackneyed expression: "One does not have to be spiritual to be a medium (or to be religious)" Just look at those with developed mediumistic gifts who practice black magic – and realise that "like attracts like", with an 'infinite' spiralling range of degree.



Robert Dale Owen's Fourteen Principles

In 1871 Robert Dale Owen (son of Robert Owen) published *The Debatable Land* after 10 years of research following his first spiritualist book *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World*. On pages 123 to 128 he cites not 7 but 14 principles on which **intelligent** Spiritualists may unite. (Spiritualism must have had its fair share of nutters in those days, too!) To quote:

The following may be taken as the great, leading principles on which intelligent Spiritualists unite:

1. This is a world governed by a God of love and mercy, in which all things work together for good to those who reverently conform to His eternal laws.
2. In strictness there is no death. Life continues from the life which now is into that which is to come, even as it continues from one day to another; the sleep that goes by the name of death being but a brief transition/slumber from which, for the good, the awakening is immeasurably more glorious than in the dawn of the earthly morning, the brightest that ever shone. In all cases in which life is well-spent, the change which men are wont to call Death is God's last and best gift to his creatures here.
3. The earth-phase of life is an essential preparation for the life which is to come. Its appropriate duties and callings cannot be neglected without injury to human welfare and development, both in this world and the next. Even its enjoyments, temperately accepted, are fit preludes to the happiness of a higher state.
4. The phase of life which follows the death-change, is, in strictest sense, the supplement of that which precedes it. It has the same variety of avocations, duties, enjoyments, corresponding, in a measure, to those of earth, but far more elevated; and its denizens have the same variety of character and of intelligence; existing, too, as men do here, in a state of progress. Released from bodily earth-clog, their periscope is wider, their perceptions more acute, their spiritual knowledge much greater, their judgement clearer, their progress more rapid than ours. Vastly wiser and more dispassionate than we, they are still, however, fallible; and they are governed by the same general laws of being, modified only by corporeal disenthralment, to which they were subjected here.
5. Our state here determines our initial state there. The habitual promptings, the pervading impulses, the life-long yearnings, in a word the moving spirit, or what Swedenborg calls the "ruling loves" of man – these decide his condition on entering the next world: not the written articles of his creed, nor yet the incidental errors of his life.
6. We do not, either by faith or works, earn Heaven, nor are we sentenced, on any Day of Wrath, to Hell. In the next world we simply gravitate to the position for which, by our life on earth, we have fitted ourselves; and we occupy that position because we are fitted to it.
7. There is no instantaneous change of character when we pass from the present phase of life. Our virtues, our vices; our intelligence, our ignorance; our aspirations, our grovellings; our habits, propensities, prejudices even – all pass over with us: modified doubtless (but to what extent we know not), when the spiritual body emerges, divested of its fleshy encumbrance; yet essentially the same as when the death-slumber came over us.
8. The sufferings there, natural sequents of evil-doing and evil-thinking here, are as various in character and in degree as the enjoyments; but they are mental, not bodily. There is no escape from them except only, as on earth, by the door of repentance. There as here, sorrow for sin committed and desire for an amended life are the indispensable conditions, precedent of advancement to a better state of things.
9. In the next world Love ranks higher than what we call Wisdom, being itself the highest wisdom. There, deeds of benevolence far outweigh professions of faith. There, simple goodness rates above intellectual power. There, the humble are exalted. There, the meek find their heritage. There, the merciful obtain mercy. The better denizens of that world are charitable to frailty and compassionate to sin, far beyond the dwellers in this: they forgive the erring brethren they have left behind them, even to seventy times seven. There is no respect of persons. There, too, self-righteousness is rebuked and pride brought low.
10. A trustful, childlike spirit is the state of mind in which men are most receptive of beneficent spiritual impressions; and such a spirit is the best preparation for entrance to the next world.
11. There have always existed intermundane laws, according to which men may obtain, under certain conditions, revealings from those who have passed to the next world before them. A certain

proportion of human beings are more sensitive to spiritual perceptions and influences than their fellow; and it is usually in the presence, or through the medium of one or more of these, that ultramundane intercourse occurs.

12. When the conditions are favourable, and the sensitive, through whom the manifestations come, is highly gifted, these may supply important materials for thought, and valuable rules of conduct. But spiritual phenomena sometimes do much more than this. In their highest phases they furnish proof, strong as that which Christ's disciples enjoyed; proof addressed to the reason, and tangible to the senses; of the reality of another life, better and happier than this, and of which our earthly pilgrimage is but the novitiate. They bring immortality to light under a blaze of evidence which outshines, as the sun the stars, all traditional or historical testimonies. For surmise, they give us conviction, and assured knowledge for wavering belief.
13. The chief motives which induce spirits to communicate with men appear to be – a benevolent desire to convince us, past doubt or denial, that there is a world to come; now and then the attraction of unpleasant memories, such as murder or suicide; sometimes (in the worldly-minded) the earth-binding influence of cumber and trouble: but far more frequently the divine impulse of human affection, seeking the good of the loved ones it has left behind, and, at times, drawn down, perhaps by their yearning cries.
14. Under unfavourable or imperfect conditions, spiritual communications, how honestly reported soever, often prove vapid and valueless; and this chiefly happens when communications are too assiduously sought or continuously persisted in: brief volunteered messages being the most trustworthy. Imprudence, inexperience, supineness, or the idiosyncrasy of the recipient may occasionally result in control by spirits of a low order; as men here sometimes yield to the infatuation exerted by evil associates. Or, again, there may be exerted by the inquirer, especially if dogmatic and self-willed, a dominating influence over the medium, so strong as to produce effects that might be readily mistaken for what has been called possession. As a general rule, however, any person of common intelligence and ordinary will can, in either case, cast off such mischievous control; or, if the weak or incautious give way, one who may not improperly be called an exorcist – if possessed of strong magnetic will, moved by benevolence, and it may be aided by prayer, can usually rid, or at least assist to rid, the sensitive from such abnormal influence.

In all this there is no speculative divinity. And I admit the probability that if, through spiritual source, you were to inquire whether the theological guessings, touching the essence of the Godhead, of Arius or of Athanasius come nearer to the truth, you might get no reply, or perhaps the answer: "We are uninformed as to that matter;" with the remark added, it may be: "We do not entertain such discussions here."

Are they not in this, wiser than we? Up through the mists and horrors of the persecution ridden Past, the common-sense convictions are reaching us that we have no conceivable means of settling any such controversy; and, again, that, if we had, its settlement would not influence by a hair-breadth the morals or the welfare of man.



Andrew Jackson Davis's Two Principles

Andrew Jackson Davis (1826-1910) was one of the earliest pioneers of the Modern Spiritualism and Lyceum Movements. In his autobiography *The Magic Staff*, 1857, he refers to the two highest principles by which man can live. I do not have the specific page reference but I well recall that these two principles were simply:

Justice & Harmony

How simple and straightforward! And what a good (harmonious) note on which to end this treatise!



Finis