

The mother of Modern Spiritualism..



Emma Hardinge was born in 1823 in the East end of London. As a child, Emma could predict coming events and often saw the spirits of dead relatives and family friends.

In 1855 Emma first visited America and, at the boarding house where she was living, she met a Spiritualist couple with whom she visited a medium. The spirit communication Emma received there was an experience that changed her entire outlook on life. Emma discovered that she had a mediumship ability for table tipping and wrapping, where spirits made themselves known by table movements and noises.

In 1856, Emma held a table séance that spelt out a message from a friend who had died in the ship 'Pacific.' However, this ship had only recently sunk and at the time no one knew. Following this message Emma became well known as a medium and demonstrated several forms of mediumship. She practised her mediumship in the same building along with Miss Kate Fox who was one of the 'Fox' sisters from Hydesville.

After a while Emma gave up platform mediumship and séances to concentrate on inspirational speaking about spiritual matters; she would take the platform, pass into a light trance and knew little of what then happened until she again came to herself. Emma travelled throughout America and to many parts of the world giving lectures and inspired addresses on the subject of Modern Spiritualism. By public speaking and prolific writings Emma help to encouraged the formation of many Spiritualist groups, societies and churches throughout the world.

The origins and concept of the Seven Principles came through Emma's mediumship and she encouraged Spiritualists' to adopt a summary of her original principles as a statement of faith to live by. It is believed that Robert Owen both in life and from the afterlife may have influenced this summary of the philosophy of Spiritualism. Many Spiritualists accepted and adopted Emma's principles and they were later adapted to become know as the Seven Principles of Spiritualism as necessary objects in the Memorandum of Association of the SNU.

In Britain, attempts were made to bring together the various individuals, Spiritualist churches, groups and societies. The concept of a national federation of Spiritualist churches was discussed and written about in 1889 by Emma Hardinge Britten in the 'Two Worlds' magazine, a publication she had launched in 1887. Emma arranged a meeting in Manchester of interested Spiritualists to discuss the formation of an organisation that could unite Spiritualist churches throughout the United Kingdom. The meeting held on 1st April 1890 agreed to issue a circular giving information and requesting comments from Spiritualist churches, societies and individuals. And in July 1890 a first national conference of Spiritualists was held in Manchester.

It seems that Emma Hardinge Britten played a pivotal role in organising and bringing together Spiritualists both by her powerful inspired speaking and her ability to communicate by pen and publish to a wider audience. At the first National Conference in 1890, Emma advocated her concept for the fundamental basis of Spiritualist philosophy which later became the Seven Principles of SNU Spiritualism. Resolutions were carried unanimously that have since shaped the direction of Modern Spiritualism.