

# **SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION**

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Spiritual Evolution by Amanda M. Hicks

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**AMANDA M. HICKS**

**SPIRITUAL  
EVOLUTION**



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA

**SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION**

**SIX STUDIES**

By

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Berkeley, California



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TO THE  
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*For Reading:*

The Gospel according to John.

*For Memory:*

John 15:1-17    John 17:20-26  
Ephesians 3:14-21

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## INTRODUCTION.

Evolution is defined by science as a process of systematic development by which things that are have come to be what they are.

Add to this Le Conte's definition, "Evolution is the Divine Method of Creation."

These studies in spiritual evolution are based on the axiomatic principles that "all forces of nature are forms of divine energy, and all laws of nature are regular modes of operation of divine energy, or will." Many men of science have thus far been content to limit the principle of evolution to physical and mental development.

We shall find a rich vein of thought opening to our minds if we follow the lead of some of the most profound men of science and philosophy of today who recognise that the principle of evolution includes also spiritual development.

This is the theme to which we are to give our attention in these studies.



## FIRST STUDY. SPIRITUAL HEREDITY.

Heredity in a biological sense is the name given to the generalization drawn from observed facts that plants and animals closely resemble their progenitors.

Men of science who have failed to extend the principle of evolution beyond the physical and mental have naturally failed to include spiritual heredity as a factor in human evolution.

That we may see this subject in its true perspective we turn to the prologue to St. John's Gospel and take as our starting point the time, the person and the work of the Word as set forth in John I, 1-14.

"In the beginning was the Word.

The Word was God.

All things were made through Him.

In Him was Life.

The Word became incarnate and dwelt among us."

One great purpose of the Word in coming to earth in the flesh as Jesus the Christ was to establish here and now a spiritual kingdom in which the will of God shall be done as it is done in heaven.

That man might know his true place in the divine order it was needful to make known God as a Father and every man as a possible son of God.

The Old Testament gives only glimpses of the truth that God is a father. Jesus came to reveal to man in its fulness the truth that God is "Our Father." He came not only to teach us this truth by word of mouth; He came to show us the Father. Having lived among men his life of perfect purity and love, of lowly service and sacrifice, he said in that wonderful upper room talk, "He that hath seen

me hath seen the Father." John 14:9.

The correlative of God as Father is man a son of God. Man's greatest privilege on earth is to be a child of God. Man's unique endowment, the power of choice; not absolute but relative. But even so this power is so far reaching, so wonderful that no one has yet sounded the possibilities it presents to the human soul. Man cannot choose whose child he shall be physically; cannot choose his physical parentage, hence cannot choose his physical heredity. But he can choose whose child he shall be in a spiritual sense, hence can choose his spiritual heredity, and so not only become a son of God but a partaker of the Divine nature as his birthright.

When Jesus came in the flesh to his own people they did not as a people receive him; but some did as individuals receive him and to these he gave power to become sons of God. Those who received him became sons of God by a process which is called birth. John 1:12-13.

Birth is not the beginning of life. It is transition into a larger sphere of life, a life of opportunities for growth and development that could not be known in the pre-natal state.

Much mystery has been thrown around the fact of a spiritual birth, and yet the conditions of spiritual birth have been set forth in words and by symbols that startle us by their simplicity. In each case we find either expressed or implied a divine invitation or command; a simple human act of choice, and a divine response, a Gift.

Here is a typical case. My sheep hear my voice. This is the call of the shepherd. They follow me.

This is an act of choice. I give to them eternal life, the divine gift. John 10:27-28.

The conditions of spiritual birth are like that. They are like opening a door in response to a knock, Rev. 3:20; like asking for and taking a drink of water, John 4:10; like eating offered bread, John 6:51; like accepting an invitation to a wedding feast, Mat. 22:1-5; like coming home from the "Far Country" to the Father's house, Luke 15:11-24; like chickens fleeing to the sheltering wings, Mat. 23:37; like taking an offered gift, "The Gift of God is eternal Life." Rom. 6:23. A gift cannot be given unless there is one with a will to receive it. God himself cannot bestow the gift of life which comes with the new birth, upon one who does not choose to receive it. Yet a little child may choose to take this gift. Our little ones need not go into the "Far Country" before they come to be at home in the Father's house; before they are born into the Father's family. "Suffer the little children to come to me. Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Spiritual birth is set forth by Jesus as the one condition of entering the kingdom which he came to reveal upon earth. The fact of spiritual birth in individuals is to be known, not by a wordy profession, but by a life; known as the wind is known, by its effects; known as the life of the vine is known in the branches by their power to bear fruit. John 15:1-17.

Through spiritual birth man becomes not only a child of God and by heredity a partaker of the Father's nature; he becomes an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ. Rom. 8:16-17.

It is well at times to take account of our riches.