

REV. PAUL R. SMITH REVIEWS:

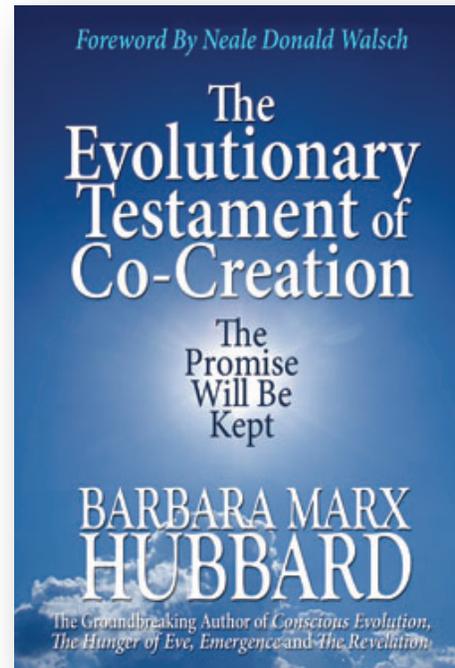
The Evolutionary Testament

By Barbara Marx Hubbard

T*he Evolutionary Testament of Co-Creation* provides a modern commentary on selected passages from the New Testament that can be delighted in by all who are open to new wisdom. Although Barbara Marx Hubbard relies on the scriptures of Christianity and the symbol of Christ in her work, her writing transcends a given faith by offering us a wonderful vision for the future of all humankind.

Hubbard views Jesus as “the future human” and speaks of the Jesus everyone can recognize and be inspired by, whether they’re a deeply committed religious person or equally committed agnostic. Hers are not merely lofty philosophical and theological ideas. Rather, Hubbard points to current life situations and explains how ancient wisdom from the Bible can impact us in useful ways today. As a futurist, Hubbard is elegantly familiar with the history of scientific and cultural breakthroughs, as well as cutting edge envisioning. She brings this future vision to bear on many ancient passages from the New Testament, rendering them as fresh as if we were reading today’s newspaper—or even next decade’s newspaper (if they’re still around by then).

Although she claims to be neither a scholar nor a theologian, Hubbard, writes in the style of Origen, the vastly influential second century Christian theologian and teacher. Origen believed there were three levels of understanding within the Bible: the literal, the moral, and the spiritual. A literal interpretation of the words is but the first stage of any scriptural exploration. Those further along conduct a moral investigation into the text, while the most mature readers seek a spiritual interpretation, which involves a metaphorical and mystical reading of the scriptures. Hubbard writes from the highest level of the metaphorical and



mystical, in that she plumbs the depths of these passages and finds in them new, highly relevant messages for today's world.

This is a book to be read slowly and fully digested. Study groups make an ideal setting for this, because they invite us to think in new and fresh ways and enable us to move beyond the deadening debate of literalism and doctrinaire trivia. What a world ours would be if even just the Christians would read and hear the New Testament in this refreshing way.

My own vision, as a New Testament scholar and mystic, expanded while I was reading Hubbard's words. The word "Spirit" (in both Hebrew and Greek) is the same word for breath, and this book provides a breath of the fresh air of Spirit for today. Hubbard says, "My personal mystical experience of the living Christ in 1980 catalyzed this book's creation." Like all the mystics throughout the ages (including Jesus) her words have been inspired by her own mystical experience. She practices what she preaches about the reality of receiving direct communications from Christ, and at times writes words that come to us straight from Spirit, using italics to distinguish these sections from her own voice.

This book is aflame with countless wisdom sparks, like: "Bureaucracy offers us less than the sum of its parts," and, "Within each of us exists a wellspring of inner scriptures." This notion of 'inner scriptures' echoes the Old Testament thought of God's word being written on our hearts, as well as the New Testament primacy of speaking the prophetic word direct from Spirit.

This is, in one sense, a new "translation" of parts of the New Testament for those interested in what Spirit is saying to us now—through the lens of what Spirit has said to us in the sacred scriptures of the New Testament.

A modern day mystic, Hubbard's spirit is clearly in touch with the Spirit of Christ. Even so, her feet are firmly planted on Earth while her heart points toward a more beautiful human future.

Rev Paul R. Smith, retired Baptist minister

Author of *Integral Christianity: The Spirit's Call to Evolve*