

READERS' QUESTIONS

Plant Responses; Who Initiates? The Woman Within; Jesus' Disciples

PLANT RESPONSES

Question: We are taught that in plants the light ether is partially dormant and the reflecting ether is lacking. Thus, it is reasoned, sense perception and memory, which are the qualities of these ethers, cannot be expressed by the plant kingdom. How is this to be reconciled with recent scientific findings showing that plants do respond “emotionally” to stimuli and do seem to have a sensitive nervous system?

Answer: In *Letters to Students*, Max Heindel wrote that “plant life is growing more sentient. The lateral limbs of trees produce more abundantly than do vertical branches because in plants, as in us, consciousness results from the antagonistic activities of the desire and vital currents. Lateral limbs are swept through their entire length by the desire currents which circle our planet and which act so powerfully in the horizontal animal spines. The desire currents rouse the sleeping plant life in the lateral limbs to a higher degree of consciousness than is the case with the vertical branches, which are traversed lengthwise by vital currents radiating from the center of the Earth. Thus, in time, the plants will also become too sensitive to serve as food and another source must be sought.”

Occult science agrees that response to stimuli among plants certainly does exist. The primary difference between occult and material science in the interpretation of this phenomenon appears to be concerning the source of the response. Occult science teaches that the different life-waves have different levels of consciousness. The consciousness of plants resembles that of dreamless sleep. Occult science also teaches that the source of response to outside stimuli is not actually the plant itself, but a higher Being, a Group Spirit, who helps the plant to function and through whom, in a sense, the plant

is evolving.

This may be hard to accept in the light of what modern science has to say, but that does not nullify the validity of the occult teachings. The occultist uses faculties which he has developed within himself, and the material scientist uses an inanimate instrument. It would be a great mistake to think that this mineral device can perceive more than a spiritually developed individual. Material science has only recently become aware of things that occultists have been saying for years.

THE INITIATOR

Question: Much is being said these days about spiritual Initiation. Who is the Initiator? Is it Christ?

Answer: The various spiritual Initiations which the aspirant undergoes as he proves himself ready represent steps in the life of Christ. Christ is the Wayshower for all humanity—both for those who are endeavoring to take the straight upward path of evolution and those many who are proceeding along the slow, steady, spiral path.

The Initiator of any individual Ego is a Teacher—a highly advanced human being who has become a Hierophant of the lesser Mysteries appropriate to the country in which the candidate resides. In the case of the preparatory school for the Rosicrucian Order, the Initiator is one of the Elder Brothers of the Rose Cross, who has been aware of the candidate's strivings and appears to him at the appropriate time.

Although the Teacher assists the candidate as necessary, it must be stressed that spiritual Initiation into a truly occult Brotherhood is an inner experience which can come to the candidate only after he has proven himself worthy. Such Initiation can



Watercolor, James J. Tissot (1836-1902)

Christ's Exhortation to the Twelve Apostles

Some of the twelve disciples, including John, may be among the Compassionate Ones, all of whom have passed the Vulcan Initiation.—Cosmo, p. 592

never take place until the candidate, by living lifetimes of purity and service, has achieved the requisite development of his latent spiritual powers, which the Initiator then teaches him how to use dynamically. The task of the Initiator is to show the candidate these latent faculties and dormant powers and to demonstrate for the first time how the candidate may awaken this static energy into dynamic power.

FINDING THE "WOMAN WITHIN"

Question: We are told in *Mysteries of the Great Operas* that celibacy and the suppression of the sex drive are not the same thing and that we must want to be chaste rather than have to force ourselves to be chaste. "This can only be done by what the mystic calls 'finding the woman within himself.'" How is this accomplished?

Answer: It is indeed true that we must want to be chaste, so that we willingly dedicate ourselves to living the life of purity and service which gradually enables us to control our thoughts and feelings. By using our creative faculties on the mental plane (mathematics, music composition, etc.) we transmute the sex urge into spiritual channels.

"Finding the woman (or the man) within" refers to the balance which every Ego must establish within himself—the balance that eventually mani-

fest in perfect bipolarity. Each Ego is essentially bisexual, although at the present time in evolution it generally manifests in alternate re-births as male and female. Perfect balance will come about with the inception of perfect bipolarity.

The process of "finding the woman within" will not be completed until the first Initiation, when we face the Dweller on the Threshold—the composite entity created as the result of all our individual sins. The Dweller always appears as a creature of the opposite sex. Once this creature is met and mastered, the candidate for Initiation is allowed to proceed into higher spiritual knowledge and power. He then has found the man, or the woman, within himself, achieving complete mastery over his passions.

JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES

Question: I have heard it stated by more than one person that Jesus and His twelve disciples have all been reincarnated several times, and that they are all inhabiting physical bodies right now. Some people have even gone so far as to claim that they, or some of the people they know, are various ones of the disciples. One man claimed to be John and another said he was Peter. What is your opinion on this subject? Some of those laying claim to such lofty development appear very human to me indeed.

Answer: Jesus and His disciples have never reincarnated in physical bodies, although they are all perfectly able to do so. The reason is that He, with His band of twelve highly trained helpers, is working with the various churches from the invisible planes, and that work is entirely unconnected with material affairs. However, it is usual for a great Teacher to come in each age, and as we are now nearing the cusp of the Aquarian Age, we may confidently look forward to the coming of such a One, who more than likely, will be Jesus, as this Teacher is coming to give the Christian Religion impetus in a new direction.

When Jesus and His disciples do reincarnate, it will not be necessary for them to announce themselves to the world, for the life led by each will proclaim his identity. □