

DOCTRINE FOR THE YOUNG

“ACCEPTANCE”

by the Rev. Frank Rose

One of the most important religious issues is ‘acceptance.’ Can you accept the Lord? Can you accept other people? Are you able to accept yourself? All three are essential to a healthy religious life. Let’s start with self.

Acceptance of self includes a number of things. Can you accept the fact of your existence? Are you content to be the sex you are? Is it all right with you that you were born on a certain date, at a particular place and into your own set of relationships (parents, stepparents, brothers, sisters, etc.)? If you find yourself struggling against these facts of your existence, you will grow very tired, but will achieve nothing. You have better things to do with your energy than to try to change something that cannot be changed.

Can you accept your limitations? When the Writings say that of yourself you are nothing but evil, does that teaching hit you too hard? It does not mean that you are doomed to hell. The fact is that you were born for heaven. It simply means that you are capable of being cruel, deceitful, greedy, stubborn and a host of other things. It can be very refreshing to accept the fact that you are just like other people, and that all people have ugly things in their nature. Accepting your own limitations does not have to be a gloomy exercise. This leads to the next point of acceptance.

Can you accept the Lord’s ability to fill your heart with heavenly loves, and brighten your mind with beautiful thoughts? Is it all right for you to be created into the image and likeness of God? You have this gift from birth. In a deeper sense, you come into the image and likeness of God as you develop spiritually. Can you accept that possibility, or do you prefer to hold on to the idea that you are no good, and that you will never amount to anything? Somehow, it is easier to be negative about ourselves than it is to admit that we can become angels, and that the Lord has given us tremendous abilities that make that possible.

Life includes many more people than ourselves. Again and again we are faced with the question—can we put up with other people? Are we willing to let them exist? Do we feel that we have the right to reject some people and accept others? Just notice your own prejudices and you will see how hard it can be to allow other people to exist. Relax. All the people ever created will live forever. No one can stop that from happening. Learn to enjoy other people, and be glad that they exist, and you will find that your life improves. Try this. Look at the people you know, whether you like them or not, and say to yourself, “the Lord created that person, and has prepared a place for him, or her, in heaven.”

Eventually, we have to face the question: can we accept the Lord? There may be times in your life when it will seem to be weak and foolish to believe in God. Look more deeply and you will

discover that it takes a lot of courage to accept the reality of life, and that life shows design and purpose. That purpose concerns you and your life. From the moment of birth, the Lord has led you, very wisely and gently. He does not need to have you know this or believe it. He leads you anyway. You can come to see that that is the way life is. There is a God. He created you. He loves you. He wants you to be near Him in heaven. He is leading you every moment of your life. People who accept that, and are willing to be led by Him, are called “innocent”. They have discovered the most important thing about angels. They are angels because they are willing to accept themselves, they gladly accept others, and joyfully accept the Lord’s love for them.