

This is Christmas Day, and a very merry Christmas to each and every one of you. As we give out gift of peace to the world, let us be thankful for all the wonderful blessings which are ares.

We give thanks for dear ones far and near; we give thanks for present joy and remembered miracles. We give thanks for the gift of the Christ born unto the world in Bethlehem, and for the realization that it implies the birth of Christ in all of us. We give thanks that to a degree perhaps more than we know that that Christ is born within our hearts this day. We give thanks for the gift of life, the gift of light, the gift of substance, the gift of peace, the gift of wisdom, the gift of power. We give thanks for gifts we give and for every gift we received. We give thanks for the love that is outpoured this Christmas Day, the love that enfolds our family and friends, that lifts and lightens the hearts of the lonely everywhere, and the love that makes us know our oneness, oneness with one another and oneness with God who is love Himself. We give thanks this Christmas Day for Christ reborn in our hearts and lives. Yes, we are so grateful this Christmas Day of 1975 for we have so many recognized and even unknown blessings.

Many lovely and mystical things have been said about Christmas, but certainly no one can fully encompass the whole meaning of Christmas. Christmas is forever a wonder in the heart, it's a light in the mind, it's a glory in the soul. You never really get to the end of it. It's an expanding universe of inspiration that ever reveals some new beauty, some new light, some increased awareness of all that is lovely. Yes, it is a hallowed time. It's a time that is more than just a season of the year; it is a season of the heart giving out, a time rich with the mysteries of God, with the warmth of human love, that for a brief moment transcends all barriers. This day is hallowed with the special light of Christmas.

Once upon a hill in Bethlehem there shone round about the humble shepherds the mystic while light of God in which there is no shadow. Regardless of outer appearances, the effulgence of that light is in our hearts today. The centuries have never quenched it; the dust of history has not dimmed it; time has not tarnished its ineffable glory. So let us hear the glorious hope in the Scriptural words, "The people that sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them that sat in the region of the shadow of death, to them did spring up the light."

Let us think for a few moments of the words of Jesus, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of light." Through the centuries that light in the hearts of the followers of Jesus has spread to the outer most parts of the earth filling the darkness of ignorance, fear and superstition, bringing healing as a transforming influence in the lives of the humble and the mighty. Wherever that Christ light shines, the light of the divine activity within any person, cruelty and injustice are banished from the heart, belief in sickness and poverty is overcome, and people are lifted up out of their fears and doubts and adversity.

Let us rejoice on this Christmas Day of 1975 that the light of the Christ still shines for all persons. It was the deep divine spark in the heart of every man, woman and child. Let's give thanks that its transforming light will guide all the people into a new releasement of understanding, justice and hope, love and brotherhood. This day, Christmas Day, is intended to be a day of joy and happiness, a day of the free sharing of our bounties and blessings. But so much more, it is intended to be a time to commence the whole experience by which we all become one with the spirit of Christ and realize the Christ consciousness within us.

Undoubtedly, the outstanding message of Jesus was that concerning love. Jesus emphasized the principle of universal love, and he brought it to the world at a time when it was most needed. He said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself..." If this was applied universally, it would mean love, peace and harmony would exist every-

where. The concepts that Jesus taught concerning love is not a religious doctrine to be confined to one group of people; it is a spiritual principle to be applied by all people everywhere. If all persons would express love everywhere one for another in the way that Jesus suggested, certainly war and strife and disagreement and tension would be ended. Mankind would be able to do the right thing at the right time, and every person would be able to see and understand things from the highest spiritual point of view. Maybe there is no greater need in the world today than the need for expressing this love for one another.

We must be able not only to extend our love consciousness and our understanding to our families and friends but to everyone everywhere regardless of race, creed or color. We must be able to sense the needs and the intense longings of all persons in all parts of the world. This takes some doing. To do this we have to lay aside self-interest and intolerance. The doctrine of universal love states that men are created equal and have the right to work out their own evolution and the inevitable goal of their present existence. So the message of truth that Jesus set forth was for all persons, and the light he shed among mankind was light for the darkest part of every country and race.

So as you think about the real reason for celebrating today, you must come to realize that hurry and worry and tension have no real part in this process no matter what the day appears to bring. Remember, we are told in quietness and in confidence that these shall be our strength. Try to keep this in mind as the pressure of daily activities bear upon you. Whatever the time of day, do not for a single instant give in to the idea that you are too busy to take time out for a short period of quiet contemplation in which you can feel your oneness with the Christ, with the God potential of your own being. If you can be alone only for one moment, it is so important that we devote some time to being still, quieting our thoughts and emotions, renewing our energy by turning in prayer to the source of our being, getting ourselves plugged in as it were. Whether it be at the beginning of the day or the close of this important day, take a little time to know your oneness, to become a channel for the flow of love and peace, to become aware of the hope which believes, of the faith that creates, and of the love that sees the image and likeness of Christ in every person. Let's remember that the activity of the divine influence is flowing through us and through all persons today who are committed to this spirit, and there is a great blessing that is outdoing its ministry.

May the love of God bring you unceasing joy; may the wisdom of God bring you increased understanding and cause you to behold the divine level in all persons and situations, and may the peace of Christ unfold in you and through you to every person on this wonderful Christmas day. May Christ be in your Christmas, may the joyous peace and the heavenly happiness of this glad time be yours now and throughout the time of this approaching new year. May it be a good Christmas.