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OF MANLY P. HALL'S
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Dear Friend:

Many persons today believe in the constructive power of creative thinking. The concept is by no means new, however, and goes back to the religious beliefs of antiquity. In ancient healing rituals, all who attended the services were asked to unite their thoughts and meditate upon the recovery of the sick person. Many modern churches have congregational participation in the singing of hymns, the recitation of the Doxology, and spoken or silent prayer. Modern organizations are asking that devout individuals unite in prayer for world peace, and for the alleviation of suffering everywhere. Mystics have long believed that good and kindly attitudes and emotions are a real power in advancing the well-being of humanity.

There was a medieval belief in Europe that it was quite possible for persons psychically sensitive to actually see Santa Claus in his sleigh drawn by the prancing reindeer, racing across the sky on Christmas Eve. These mystics insisted that the thoughts of small children -- and older ones, for that matter -- united in the gentle feelings of the season, actually create a thought form, vitalizing the image with high hopes and happy anticipations. This thought form, in turn, exercises a kind of influence on all well-disposed mortals everywhere. Constructive vibrations pouring into the atmosphere from hundreds of millions of children at the same time, therefore help to transform the tired vibrations of their disenchanting elders.

Let us say this: Four countless young people everywhere, the Christmas Festival is a powerful reminder of the essential doctrines of Christianity. It revives the story of the birth of Christ, of the shepherds watching their flocks, and of the angelic host singing above the manger in Bethlehem. On Christmas Eve, a great deal of positive and constructive thinking flows out into space, and perhaps this mystery is more important than we are inclined to believe. Recent experimentations have indicated that a group of persons praying or meditating together will hasten the growth of plants. Some kind of energy flows from man, and this energy can help or hurt according to its quality and the mood of the one who projects it.

Nothing is helped by negative thinking. We may insist that Christmas has become merely an economic disaster; we may stoutly maintain that religion and faith have been exploited by human selfishness. Most of all, we may feel, perhaps, that we have outgrown the sentimentalism that sustained the

Christmas spirit for nineteen centuries. But what do these negative attitudes accomplish? Do they add anything to the joy of life? Do they make us healthier or better people? Are we more fortunate because of our sophistication, or are we a little more weary because we have lost the child-heart in ourselves?

It may be well to remember that there are only two kinds of thinking--constructive and destructive. Any attitude that does not make a constructive contribution to our psychic lives is harming us in some way. We really cannot justify ourselves on the ground that our negative thoughts are more realistic and factual than our positive attitudes. In man's inner life, every negative attitude creates a kind of psychic toxin. Is it not possible that millions of negative attitudes flowing out of the minds of disillusioned persons, weaken the moral structure of our world? We may or may not wish to believe in the reality of psychic energy, but we have certainly not disproved its existence. One thing we can prove, however: every unkind word, every criticism, exercises an auto-hypnotic power upon ourselves. The more we say that things are bad, the more we believe our own words.

For the good of all concerned, therefore, let us make this Christmas a very positive and constructive spiritual experience for ourselves and for those around us. We are all a little tired, and fatigue so often contributes to negative thoughts. Let us forget whether other persons are exploiting Christmas; let us not think of the exchanging of presents as a burden upon both the purse and the spirit. Rather, let us rejoice that we still live in a world in which the Christmas Holiday is important to half the population of the earth. Let us build upon the Christmas symbolism a gracious structure of kindly relationships and continuing thoughtfulness. Nothing is meaningless if it brings inner fulfillment of our instinct to share our joys and our thoughts in the name of our religion. In these days, especially, we cannot afford to weaken any fabric that can support or sustain constructive attitudes.

On Christmas Morning, why not add one more gift to this Holy Day? If you are in the midst of your family, or with a group of friends, invite those who are with you to gather for a few minutes and unite in a message of glad tidings from your hearts into the mysterious space around you, remembering always that this space itself is the presence of the Blessed God. If you are alone, let your thoughts mingle with the love and gratitude of all mankind. Perhaps in this way, you and your friends and children, and your children's children, can make the flowers of peace and human understanding grow more rapidly in the deserts of conflict and unhappiness. There is the story of the River of Life that flows out of the mystery of holiness. Would it not be wonderful indeed if from our thoughts and hopes and prayers and ideals, from our simple believing and our gentle faith, a great stream of good could flow forth -- a stream that might indeed be a river of life for the healing of all the nations?

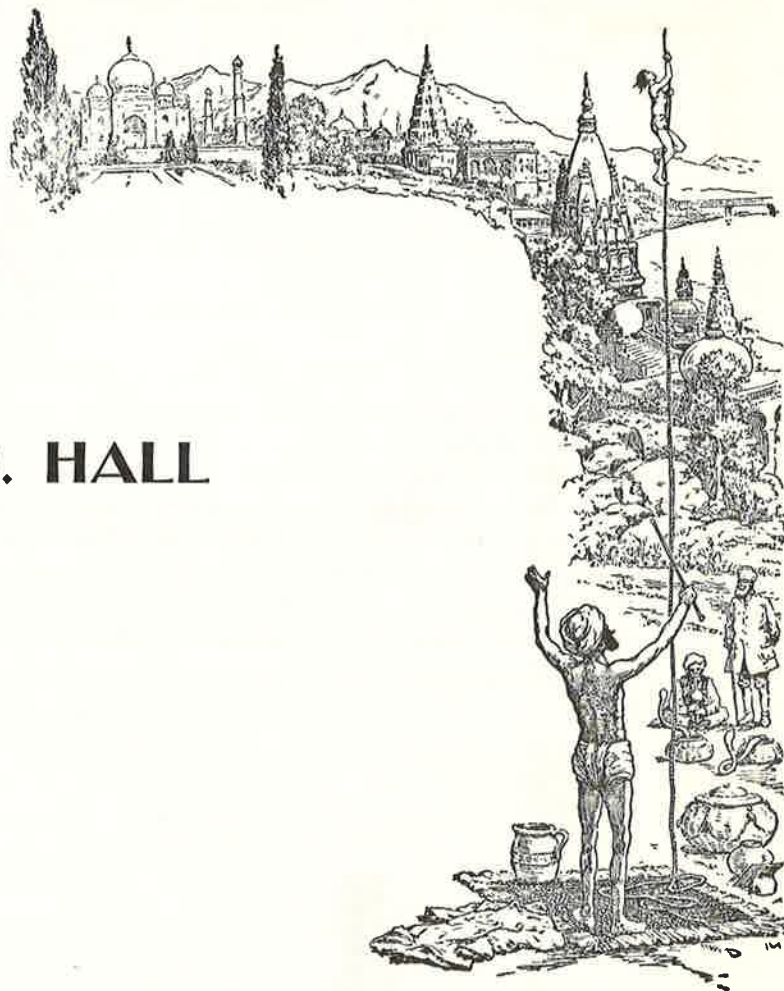
However you wish to view this important holiday, enrich it in every way you can. Free your heart from bitterness and criticism and discontent, and add a little song from the deepest part of yourself. Bless it and send it forth to become part of the music of the spheres.

May Christmas bring you and yours a rich experience of insight and understanding.

Most sincerely yours,

Manly P. Hall

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