

Amid the threats of disturbance to our own security; among the annoyances and upheavals in some of our industries and businesses, caused by the Nation's efforts to prepare for its adequate defense; faced with uncertainty for the future in our individual, as well as our collective lives, if we might feel tempted to question our right to be thankful at this time, we need but address ourselves for a moment to contemplation of what has happened and what is going on at this very moment in other once-free nations, to bring home to us a full realization of our present fortunate state.

Could we, for instance, picture ourselves and our families working feverishly by day, and possibly losing our sleep a good part of the night, as are the people of England; could we realize the desperation with which they are preparing to ward off any attack that may be launched upon their homeland, then certainly we should be able to offer up our Thanksgiving with true appreciation.

Or, painting an even more tragic picture, could we visualize this Country occupied by despotic invaders; our every possession torn from us; many of our leaders executed or in exile; our families separated from us or among the missing; could we know what it means to be forbidden to speak, to read, to assemble, even to worship as we will, then, indeed, I am sure, every one of us would feel an overpowering sense of gratitude to the Almighty, who has preserved us from such a dire fate.

Thanksgiving Day, 1941, finds us still in the fullest possession of every one of those rights and freedoms, those opportunities which America has always offered its citizens. If we decide tomorrow morning to go to Philadelphia for a football game, or to another State for Thanksgiving Day with relatives or friends, there is no one to say to us "Nay," there is no one to question our coming and going. Not only are we free in body and mind, but our people are enjoying the highest standard of living of any people among the earth.

It is good, indeed, that we have, at Thanksgiving and at various times throughout the year, occasion to reflect upon the blessings that are ours. All too much in the past have we failed to do just this, with the result that, enjoying all the privileges that are ours, we have come to take them for granted as possessions that *must always* be ours.

How false is such an assumption has been evidenced many times over in the events that have taken place since Hitler first began his mad onslaught. Two years ago freedom was not a peculiar possession of the American people, or of the English-speaking people throughout the world, but it was enjoyed by many millions throughout Europe and Asia. Today, these same millions know that freedom can be lost, because they *have* lost it. Whereas they, too, once were free to go and come, to assemble and to speak as they would, today their every action is closely watched and regulated, their individual freedom is no more, their individual and national future is one of despair. . . .

In a Nation which was forged in the white heat of passion for the rights of individual citizens, the choice of sides in the greatest of all wars cannot be escaped. Whether or not we finally enter upon the field of combat with material weapons, we must hold fast to the principles of individual liberty of thought and of conscience to which we have been committed since first we