

HM King George VI's Broadcast, 9 May 1945.



TO-DAY we give thanks to God for a great deliverance.

Speaking from our Empire's oldest capital city, war-battered but never for one moment daunted or dismayed – speaking from London, I ask you to join with me in that act of thanksgiving,

Germany, the enemy who drove all Europe into war, has been finally overcome. In the Far East we have yet to deal with the Japanese, a determined and cruel foe. To this we shall turn with the utmost resolve and with all our resources.

But at this hour, when the dreadful shadow of war has passed far from our hearths and homes in these islands, we may at last make one pause for thanksgiving, and then turn our thoughts to the tasks all over the world which peace in Europe brings with it.

LET us remember those who will not come back; their constancy and courage in battle, their sacrifice and endurance in the face of a merciless enemy: let us remember the men in all the Services, and the women in all the Services, who have laid down their lives. We have come to the end of our tribulation, and they are not with us at the moment of our rejoicing.

Then let us salute in proud gratitude the great host of the living who have brought us to victory. I cannot praise them to the measure of each one's service, for in a total war the efforts of all rise to the same noble height and all are devoted to the common purpose. Armed or unarmed, men and women, you have fought and striven and endured to your utmost. No one knows that better than I do; and as your King I thank with a full heart those who bore arms so valiantly on land and sea, or in the air; and all civilians who, shouldering their many burdens, have carried them unflinchingly and without complaint.

WITH those memories in our minds, let us think what it was that has upheld us through nearly six years of suffering and peril. The knowledge that everything was at stake – our freedom, our independence, our very existence as a people – but the knowledge also that in defending ourselves we were defending the liberties of the whole world: that our cause was the cause not of this nation only, not of this Empire and Commonwealth only, but of every land where freedom is cherished and law and liberty go hand-in-hand.

In the darkest hours we knew that the enslaved and isolated peoples of Europe looked to us: their hopes were our hopes; their confidence confirmed our faith. We knew that if we failed the last remaining barrier against a world-wide tyranny would have fallen in ruins. But we did not fail. We kept faith with ourselves and with one another: we kept faith and unity with our great Allies.

That faith, that unity, have carried us to victory through dangers which at times seemed overwhelming.

SO let us resolve to bring to the tasks which lie ahead the same high confidence in our mission. Much hard work awaits us, both in the restoration of our own country after the ravages of war and in helping to restore peace and sanity to a shattered world.

This comes upon us at a time when we have all given of our best. For five long years and more, heart and brain, nerve and muscle have been directed upon the overthrow of Nazi tyranny. Now we turn, fortified by success, to deal with our last remaining foe. The Queen and I know the ordeals which you have endured throughout the Commonwealth and Empire. We are proud to have shared some of these ordeals with you, and we know also that together we shall all face the future with stern resolve and prove that our reserves of will-power and vitality are inexhaustible.

THERE is great comfort in the thought that the years of darkness and danger in which the children of our country have grown up are over – and, please God, for ever. We shall have failed, and the blood of our dearest will have flowed in vain, if the victory which they died to win does not lead to a lasting peace, founded on justice and good will. To that, then, let us turn our thoughts on this day of just triumph and proud sorrow; and then take up our work again, resolved as a people to do nothing unworthy of those who died for us, and to make the world such a world as they would have desired for their children and for ours.

This is the task to which now honour binds us. In the hour of danger we humbly committed our cause into the Hand of God, and He has been our Strength and Shield. Let us thank Him for His mercies, and in this hour of victory commit ourselves and our new task to the guidance of that same strong Hand.