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The Churches and Hitler

The joint declaration by the heads of the churches of Great Britain—bearing the signatures of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Archbishop of York, Cardinal Hinsley, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, and Rev. Walter H. Armstrong, moderator of the Free Church Federal Council—as to the basic conditions of permanent peace is a document of high importance. In addition to the five standards which they themselves proclaim as essential, they re-affirm and adopt five further principles which were laid down by Pope Pius in his message to the College of Cardinals last Christmas.

The outstanding characteristic of the combined declaration to which special attention should be directed is that at every point it is in outright hostility to Nazi philosophy, ambitions and actions. Coming from these sources it could not be otherwise. Nazism is the deadly foe of everything that is decent and humane in life; but it has a special hatred for the Christian church in all its manifestations and forms. There is no place for Hitler, his beliefs and practices in any Christian church, be it democratic libertarian or authoritarian; and upon this great issue, which involves not only everything the churches embody and stand for, including their right to exist—since there will be no place for Christ or Christianity in a Nazified world—there is a basis for unity of conviction and action which, if it could be attained, would speedily bring this monstrous stronghold of savage heathenism, the very citadel of anti-Christ, crashing to the ground.

The secular renegades to democratic civilization make specious defences for their treason; but a churchman, who can find virtue in Hitler or Hitlerism, has forsworn his faith. That there are such creatures, some of them highly placed, is part of the impenetrable mystery of the world-wide reappearance in the hearts and minds of men of the blood-cults of sub-human primitive savages. An underlining of these standards set up by the church dignitaries of Great Britain by their brethren throughout the world, would throw a mighty moral weight into the scales against Satanism.

"The right to life and independence of all nations, large, small, strong or weak, must be safeguarded." Thus said Pope Pius a year since; thus say the church leaders of Great Britain. It will be seen that this is a flat repudiation of all Hitler's territorial aggressions in Europe. Among the nations whose rights to life and independence must, in keeping with this standard, be first restored and afterwards safeguarded are Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands and Belgium, over-run by Hitler; Albania and Ethiopia by Mussolini; and all the Asiatic communities which are oppressed and threatened by Japan.