

This is the first Christmas in many years which does not find the world engaged in a major war. Christmas should bring home to all peoples, regardless of race, creed or nationality, what it really means to the world that this year marks the conquest of the Nazi-Fascist-Japanese drive to dominate the world. We who are here in Nurnberg, far from home but close to the scenes of the war, have thrust upon us a new appreciation of the significance of Christmas.

Twenty centuries ago, there was laid in the manger at Bethlehem the Great Witness to the eternal truth that Might does not make Right. Christ taught that there is a right and a wrong in human conduct which in no way depends on physical strength. This belief has been summarized in the familiar sentence that "Thrice armed is he whose cause is just." The Nazi-Fascist-Japanese alliance tried to establish a regime based on exactly the opposite philosophy of life.

Just before the great war, Adolf Hitler had a meeting of the officers of his High Command. We have captured the minutes of that meeting and put them in evidence at Nurnberg. He said to his generals:

"I shall give a propagandist cause for starting the war, never mind whether it be true or not. The victor shall not be asked later on whether we tell the truth or not. In starting and making a war, not the right is what matters but victory -- the strongest has the right."

Over and over again the Nazi leaders reiterated this foul philosophy.

We may rejoice at this Christmas season that once again it has

been demonstrated that cruelty, oppression and false dealing will disintegrate the strongest power and will at the same time arouse moral forces in opposition that will certainly, though perhaps slowly prevail. No more dramatic vindication of the truth that power does not make right has been seen by the world than in the last two years.

In the early years of the war, Germany had every physical superiority. She had unity, the Allies lacked cohesion; she had a plan - the Allies had only confusion; she had preparation, armament, air power - the Allies had neglected their military forces; she had victory - they had a long series of defeats that were so great as to be disasters. Two years ago it really looked possible that the peoples who believed in moral and spiritual forces would go down under the crushing weight of Nazi physical force.

Today we see these who relied on strength alone, who despised right and scoffed at wrong facing an accounting. We are seeing their acts held up for reexamination in the light of moral principles and legal precepts.

Sir Hartley Shawcross, Attorney General of England, in his great opening address at the Nurnberg trials said:

"The British Empire has twice been victorious in wars which have been forced upon it within the space of one

generation but it is precisely because we realize that victory is not enough; that might is not necessarily right; that lasting peace and the rule of International Law is not to be achieved by the strong arm alone, that the British Nation is taking part in this trial."

Like all human efforts, the attempt to measure the conduct of the defeated by moral standards is an imperfect one - I have no disposition to claim it faultless. But I do say that the utter and irreparable collapse of the doctrine that might makes right is the most significant feature of the Nurnberg trials. Whatever other shortcomings we representing the victors may have -- and they are numerous -- we do not adhere to the doctrine that because we have power we can do no wrong. If we did, there would be no trial. We are patiently -- too patiently many think -- examining the acts of the Nazi leaders. We are trying dispassionately -- too dispassionately many think -- to test those acts by the principles which must prevail in a sound and peaceful international order, principles by which hereafter the conduct of the victors, no less than of the vanquished, will be tested by world opinion.

Once again, the world is proceeding on a basis that power and might are subject to moral responsibility. There may be -- there are many deviations from the principle and many failures to live up to the ideal. But at least the teaching of our times has returned to the

Christian ideal that the strong, no less than the weak, must answer to the moral forces of the world and again demonstrate that right will generate the might to vindicate itself.