

“The Unity of the Spirit”

Ept. 4 : 3

One of the most remarkable things about the war is that it has led to a federation of different forces such as the world has never seen before. But what I wish to speak of now is the union of France and Britain in this great strife. If moral considerations were out of place in discussing the subject, the pulpit should leave it alone. It is not the business of a preacher of the Gospel to deal with questions which have no bearing upon individual or national character. But if there are any great questions of this sort,—and I doubt it very much,—this is not one of them. On the contrary, the present union of France and Britain is full of ethical and religious suggestiveness to us all.

And its significance is increased when we remember that no small part of the past annals of Europe is taken up with the record of conflicts between them. It is only a little more than a hundred years since Waterloo. And though, in the Crimean War, they fought on the same side, and against one of their now wavering Allies, their present union is not only the most important, but the deepest in their whole history. While the government of Britain is monarchical and that of France republican, they are both imbued with the democratic spirit, both chivalrously sensitive to human rights, both eager in defence of human liberties. They are fighting now for an idea, so sacred in itself and so divine in its origin that, under its compelling influence, they cannot do otherwise. The old rivalries are buried, and the new rivalry is a rivalry of service and sacrifice in the common cause of freedom.

When we recall the unpreparedness of Britain at the outset of the war, what she has done in it is simply marvellous. Her contemptible army has grown to six million men, some of whom, indeed, have now finished their course upon the field of battle. And those who must needs remain at home are formed into a busy camp that welcomes work and welcomes self-denial, and that, amid all the havoc and pain, refuses to be dismayed. And though Canada has done much to prove her loyal devotion and her sympathy with