

ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

THE Epistle to the Ephesians, although one of the shortest of St. Paul's writings, is one of the richest in spiritual teaching. Within these six chapters is contained matter sufficient for the study of a lifetime. I suppose there are no more wonderful six chapters in existence. Before entering upon a more detailed analysis of these chapters, allow me to mention some leading thoughts derived from a study of this epistle.

1. We are impressed with the harmony of the Three Persons of the Godhead in the work of man's redemption and spiritual growth. They are revealed in these chapters as cooperating in the most perfect harmony. Especially is this the case with regard to the Father and Son in relation to this work. The writer seems to conceive them almost as one Personality working in two directions to achieve man's forgiveness. We see the Father and the Son working with absolute unity of purpose to restore man to the height from which he has fallen. From a perusal of this epistle we can conceive the difficulty which the early Fathers experienced in formulating the creed of the church; and we should be thankful to Athanasius and the other theologians who formulated for us the precious creed of the Council of Nice.

2. The next thought which strikes one on a cursory examination of the epistle is the grandeur of its teaching - the grand sweep of its doctrine. The apostle here soars on the flight of eagle's wings, comprehending in his gaze, the beginning and the end of time.

The epistle contains the doctrinal depth of the Epistle to the Romans with something of the prophetic grandeur of the Book of Revelation.

To illustrate what I mean: The epistle speaks of redemption being planned by God before the beginning of time; and we are told that Christ's redemptive work affects not only man and this world but that all things in heaven and in earth are united in Christ.

3. Another noticeable feature of our epistle is the number of key-words of theology used in it. I do not know other six chapters in Scripture equally rich in this regard. For example, we have the word "grace" used either as a verb or as a noun ten times. We have the word "faith" used eight times either alone or in connection with the name of Jesus Christ. We have the word "love" used fifteen times either as a verb or as a noun. We have the word "holy" used four times, and the word "peace" is used six times, while we are told twice