

BOOK REVIEWS

DIMENSIONS OF ETERNAL LOVE

By William Huntington S.S.

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In an age when Arminianist "free-offerist" fantasies have penetrated the body Calvinistic to a degree unprecedented, anything written by William Huntington (1745 - 1813) is bound to be dynamite. Slandered in his day as Hyper-Calvinist and as an Antinomian, Huntington has been largely forgotten by the generations succeeding him, and even now, 180 years after his death, when his name is brought up from the mists of forgettery, it is targeted for largely negative and even vituperative criticism. Such criticisms have been manifest in recent months in some popular evangelical and Calvinist journals. It is, however, quite instructive and enlightening, not to say, surprising, to read the man's work directly for one's self, instead of simply swallowing the criticisms made of him by some of todsay's "opinion-formers". One can then intelligently form his own opinion.

To this end, Focus Christian Ministries have produced this fine little book containing two of Huntington's writings, "The Dimensions of Eternal Love", and "The Final Exhortation", this latter being Huntington's "last blast of the trumpet" as it were, prior to his death. It is the first-mentioned sermon that fills most of this volume, and it was, of course, written in Huntington's true style.....he preached it first, extemporarily, then, some time afterwards, wrote it down, expanding it with multitudinous ramifications and extensions that came to him as he did so. No doubt, for ordinary mortals, Huntington's mode of sermonizing would be out of the question, indeed a seminary student would find himself reprimanded for such an approach ! But Huntington was, well, he was Huntington, and with him the method worked superbly ! The man must have been a walking talking concordance-cum-encyclopaedia of Scripture, and "Dimensions of Eternal Love" exemplifies his amazing faculty in this respect.

Taking Eph. 3 : 18-19 as his text, Huntington expounds the breadth, length, depth, and height of the love of Christ. His approach to this is really quaint and simple, he speaks of the "length" of Christ's love, for instance, as in terms of time, that it began in eternity, stretches through all the reaches of time, and then goes on into the measureless infinities of time to come.....eternal love. All the ramifications of this for God's elect people are then brought out, the expositions are a delight to read ! In similar quaint style, he goes on to examine the other

dimensions, adumbrating how the “breadth” of God’s love extends over His Elect, a people that expanded from the small beginnings with the line of Seth, then through Noah, Abraham, and ultimately to encompass some of every tribe and nation. A love that is indeed, discriminating in its breadth, reprobates are excluded from its aegis. In the “internationalization” of the church under the Apostolic gospel, Huntington draws attention astutely to Peter’s vision of the great sheet lowered from heaven with all the unclean beasts in it. The exposition here is most illuminating as he explains the spiritual typography manifest in that vision. The material given here was new to me, and I was amazed to see how Huntington could bring out insights into scripture here that I had not hitherto encountered, and all of it thoroughly supported by Scripture itself.

In the application made from this exposition, Huntington shows what must have made him so popular with the masses of his hearers. He certainly was a “soul doctor” and adept at applying the spiritual truths embodied in a text to the healing of spiritual wounds in the souls of poor sinners. His ministry, whatever critics may say of it, and whatever faults may have attended him in various ways, (and no man is perfect, and that includes Huntington’s critics), was eminently appreciated over a wide realm, from working-class to even the King.

The second of the two works reprinted here, “The Final Exhortation”, based on Revelation 3 : 3 is taken from notes made by a hearer during the last sermon Huntington preached, and hence is in outline, rather than the full expansion that the preacher would have made himself. It is nevertheless an edifying piece of work, though I found his usage of the letters to the 7 Churches to be somewhat lacking in foundation when he applied them to 7 periods of Church History. But notwithstanding this, the material contained herein is most apposite to us today. Contrary to those critics who would persist in styling Huntington as an Antinomian, we find here “Watch, first *against sin*, that it does not get the upper hand of us and prove our master...” and “it is through the Spirit” that we “do mortify the deeds of the body” (Rom. 8 : 13). And again, he warns that we should “watch *against errors and heresy*”, and to “*watch the hand of God in His providences towards you*”, and to “*watch unto prayer*”. Finally, “*to watch your frames and feelings...*”

Amongst all this is found Huntington’s prophetic warnings concerning the revival of Romanism, and the opening floodgates of infidelity that threatened from within Protestantism. His words ring all too ominously true. Whatever modern critics may say about his “prophetic insight”, it has come true, all too true !

Focus Christian Ministries have presented this excellent little volume in high quality format. I found the exposition very satisfying to the soul, and a delight to read. I found myself reading a paragraph, and then spending upwards of twenty minutes meditating on all the ramifications of what I had just read. Truly, a profound little book, one to come back to, again, and again !