

**FOUR KEY-WORDS OF  
RELIGION: AN ESSAY IN  
UNSYSTEMATIC DIVINITY**

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Four Key-Words of Religion: An Essay in Unsystematic Divinity by William Reed Huntington

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**WILLIAM REED HUNTINGTON**

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## FOUR KEY-WORDS OF RELIGION

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WILLIAM REED HUNTINGTON, D.D.  
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I.  
**LIFE.**

## I.

### LIFE.

BACK of everything lies LIFE. "As I live," is God's oath. If then one would discourse coherently about religion, let him begin with Life. Nor must he be discouraged by the fact that the word cannot be defined. The very best things, all of them, elude definition; it is only the second-best that submit to the indignity of letting themselves be explained. We know what life is because we ourselves are living souls, but as for putting this knowledge into words, saying life is this, or life is that, let us leave the attempt to the system-makers who give a synonyme and name it a definition. The most pretentious of all the attempts at defining life made in our day<sup>1</sup> is with difficulty kept out of the jest-books, so droll is it in its circumlocution. There is another thing that ought not to discourage us, and that is our knowing life to have been a late comer on this planet. The fact that evidences of vegetable and animal vitality appear only in the more recent strata of the earth's crust does not really militate against my opening declaration that back of everything lies life, for we have learned

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Herbert Spencer's.