

**A GUIDE TO THE  
CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF  
SAINT JOHN THE DIVINE IN  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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A Guide to the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine in the City of New York by Edward Hagaman Hall

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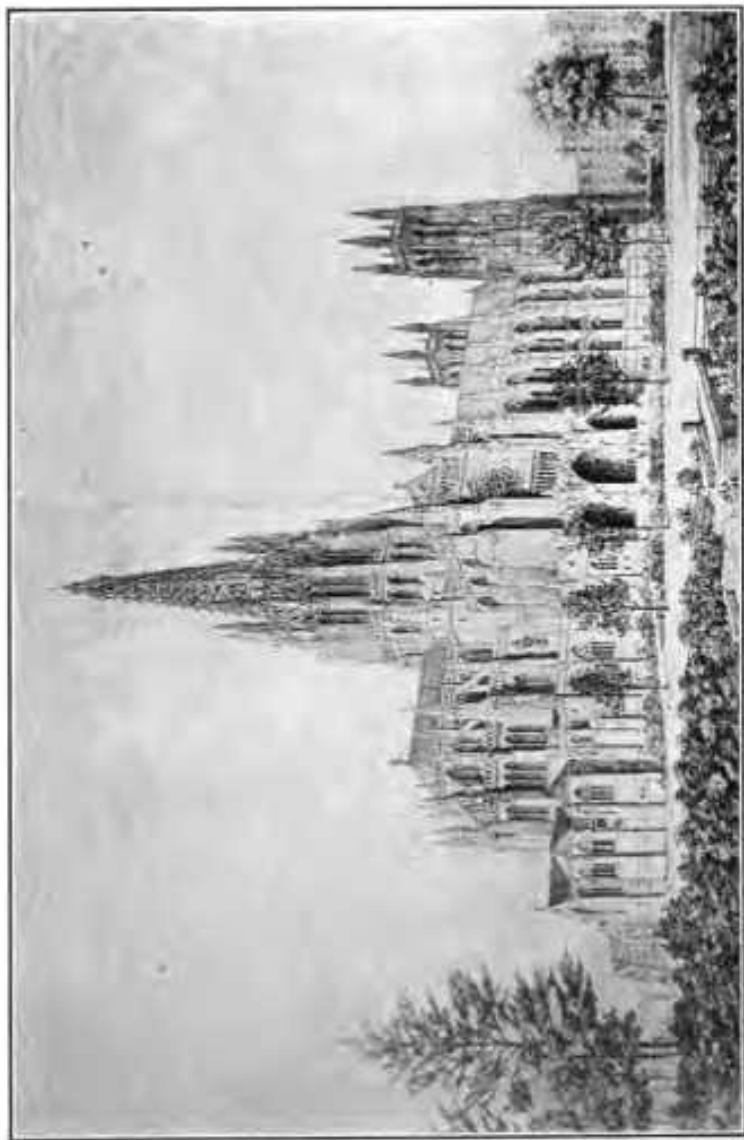
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**EDWARD HAGAMAN HALL**

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THE NORTH ELEVATION OF THE CATHEDRAL

A Guide to the  
Cathedral Church  
of  
Saint John the Divine

in the City of New York

by

Edward Hagaman Hall, I. D. D.



New York  
The Laymen's Club of the Cathedral,  
1921

Third Edition.



THE EXTERIOR OF THE CHOIR, CHAPELS AND CROSSING, LOOKING SOUTHWEST  
(Choir School at left)

A

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

I





## Part One

# The Spirit of the Cathedral

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## The Real Cathedral

On Morningside Heights, in the City of New York, on ground consecrated by the blood of our forefathers in the War for Independence, stands a trinity of institutions which represent with singular completeness the three-fold nature of man: Columbia University, which ministers to the Mind; St. Luke's Hospital, which ministers to the Body; and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, which ministers to the Soul.

This little book is designed to assist visitors to understand the meaning and purpose of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Some such aid, either written or oral, is needed, for a great cathedral cannot be comprehended in the glance of an eye. Certain features, such as its magnitude and general beauty, are obvious; but inwrought with these is a wealth of meaning which is the *soul* of the Cathedral—the *real* Cathedral—and which reveals itself only on intimate acquaintance. When Ruskin called Amiens Cathedral "The Bible of Amiens," he used a figure of speech applicable to all cathedrals. The Cathedral of St. John the Divine is "The Word in stone." It is a sacred book, written in massive pier and ponderous arch, in sculptured marble and carved oak, in stained glass window and inlaid mosaic, in embroidered fabric and woven tapestry, whose pages are full of delight, inspiration and help for those who will take the trouble to read them.

The Cathedral performs its function as a place for the praise and worship of Almighty God in two ways—statically in the grandeur and beauty of the temple, and actively in the services held within it.

### **Praise in its Greatness**

Like other great cathedrals, St. John the Divine first impresses by its size. Its magnitude is not only becoming to its rank as the chief church of the great Diocese of New York and necessary for the accommodation of large congregations, but it also has a spiritual purpose, for it gives one the feeling of something bigger than one's self and of a Power greater than one's own. "The Cathedral gives me a feeling of humility," said a man to Bishop Greer one day. "When I go in," said a college girl to him, "I forget myself." And a man whom the Bishop met in the Ambulatory said to him: "If I came here regularly, something about it,—its size, its spaciousness, its loftiness, its great receding Choir—something about it would compel me to be a churchman."

### **Praise in its Beauty**

The Cathedral is designed also to praise God in the glory of its Beauty. Ruskin, in "The Laws of Fesole," says that "all great art is praise." Here we have the three great and enduring arts of Architecture, Sculpture and Painting (the latter as yet only in stained glass,) combined in a wonderful Te Deum of Beauty. For centuries the great cathedrals of the world have been the caskets of certain kinds of art—or, rather, of certain kinds of expression of art—not elsewhere to be found; and in this respect the Cathedral of St. John the Divine fills a place in our American life which no secular building can fill. In the beauty of its general form, in the beauty of its detail, in the beauty of its symbolism, and in the record of

human achievement in godly living which these express, the Cathedral stirs the most reverent emotions and creates the noblest aspirations.

### **Praise in its Service**

But these silent though eloquent physical features are only adjuncts and helps to the active expression of praise in the Cathedral Service. In this, the impressive rites of the church and the congregational participation are aided by music brought to a high degree of perfection, and the preaching from the pulpit aims to interpret the Christian religion in terms of the practical every-day life of to-day.

In short, the Cathedral endeavors to employ all that is beautiful and majestic in Art and Service to bring God closer to men and to draw men closer to God.

Those who live near enough to the Cathedral to be able to attend its services frequently can appreciate the words of a man who lived most of his life in one of the great cathedral towns of England, and who said:

"I account it one of the greatest blessings of my life, and a circumstance which gave a tone to my imagination which I would not resign for many earthly gifts, that I lived in a place where the cathedral service was duly and beautifully performed. . . . If the object of devotion be to make us *feel*, and to carry away the soul from all earthly thoughts, assuredly the grand chaunts of our cathedral service are not without their use. I admire—none can admire more—the abstract idea of an assembly of reasoning beings offering up to the Author of all good things their thanksgivings in a pure and intelligible form of words; but the question will always intrude, Does the heart