

**THE CHURCH-IDEA:  
AN ESSAY TOWARD  
UNITY**

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The church-idea: an essay toward unity by William Reed Huntington

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**WILLIAM REED HUNTINGTON**

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# THE CHURCH-IDEA

AN

ESSAY TOWARDS UNITY

BY

WILLIAM REED HUNTINGTON D.D.

RECTOR OF GRACE CHURCH NEW YORK

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TO THE FRIENDS OF  
**The Church of the Future**  
AND THE BELIEVERS OF  
**The Church of the Past,**  
THIS ENDEAVOR  
TO SKETCH IN OUTLINE  
**The Church of the Reconciliation**  
*IS ADDRESSED.*





## PREFATORY NOTE TO THE ORIGINAL EDITION.

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THE following papers contain some things which in a purely theological treatise would be superfluous. But clergymen are not the only public the writer has had in mind. There is, in America, a constantly widening circle of educated and thoughtful people who take a keen interest in such subjects as are here discussed, but whom it would be unreasonable to credit with any extended knowledge either of Church History or of Systematic Divinity. The book is chiefly meant for readers of this class. Care has therefore been taken to free the argument, in its main drift, alike from technicalities of language and obscurities of allusion. Everything of an exclusively professional interest has been thrown into the foot-notes, and can be readily avoided.



## PREFACE.

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It demands less courage to reprint this little book to-day than it did to print it thirty years ago. The outlook is more hopeful and therefore the hazard less. Acquiescence in sectarianism, as being presumably the ordinance of God, has ceased to be the almost universal state of mind it was in the United States of 1869. Doubtless it is a wide-spread temper still, but it is not what it was then. Many influences have been at work, through all these years, opening men's minds to the possibility of larger agreements and a more generous comprehension. The Vatican Council, and the resultant change of base; the Parliament of Religions, with the discussions consequent thereupon; the Lambeth Conferences, and their congeners, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational; the revision of King James's version of the Scriptures; the compilation of the consensus Catechism of the "Free Churches"; the upspringing in the Roman Church of "Americanism" or "Heckerism"; the cropping out of ominous tokens of decadence in the Latin races; the sudden apparition of "Chautauquas," Young People's Christian Endeavor Societies, Ep-