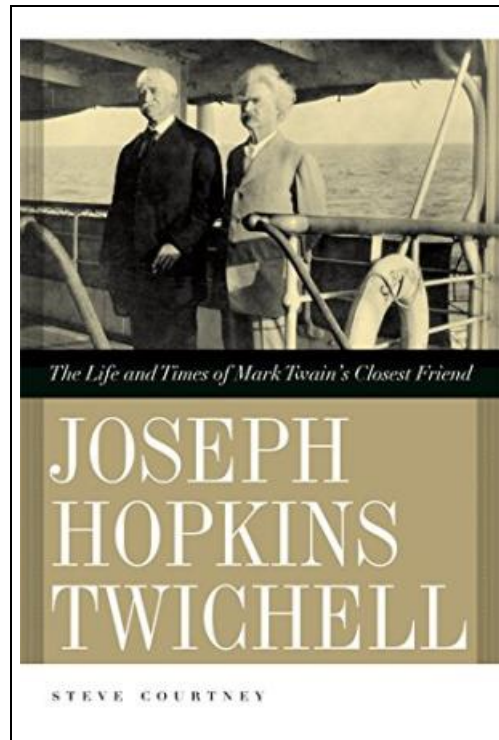


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University of Georgia Press, United States, 2010. Paperback. Condition: New. Revised ed.. Language: English . Brand New Book. Bewilderment often follows when one learns that Mark Twain s best friend of forty years was a minister. That Joseph Hopkins Twichell (1838-1918) was also a New Englander with Puritan roots only entrenches the odd couple image of Twain and Twichell. This biography adds new dimensions to our understanding of the Twichell-Twain relationship; more important, it takes Twichell on his own terms, revealing an elite Everyman-a genial, energetic advocate of social justice in an era of stark contrasts between America s haves and have-nots. After Twichell s education at Yale and his Civil War service as a Union chaplain, he took on his first (and only) pastorate at Asylum Hill Congregational Church in Hartford, Connecticut, then the nation s most affluent city. Steve Courtney tells how Twichell shaped his prosperous congregation into a major force for social change in a Gilded Age metropolis, giving aid to the poor and to struggling immigrant laborers as well as supporting overseas missions and cultural exchanges. It was also during his time at Asylum Hill that Twichell would meet Twain, assist at Twain s wedding, and preside over a number of the family s weddings and funerals.Courtney shows how Twichell s personality, abolitionist background, theological training, and war experience shaped his friendship with Twain, as well as his ministerial career; his life with his wife, Harmony, and their nine children; and his involvement in such pursuits as Nook Farm, the lively community whose members included Harriet Beecher Stowe and Charles Dudley Warner. This was a life emblematic of a broad and eventful period of American change. Readers will gain a clear appreciation of why the witty, profane, and skeptical Twain cherished Twichell s companionship.

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