

What "Joining the Church" Means.

By William H. Belden.

The following letter written to two young girls upon their making a public profession of their faith in God, may help some other, like them, + is humbly offered with ~~great~~ great joy by the writer as his beginning of return to work ^{in the midst of} ~~after~~ a long but greatly favored convalescence:

My dear Nieces,

I learn that you are to unite with the church tomorrow; + tho' I shall not be present there, I remember how I always come down from the pulpit at the close of the communion-service + welcome by hand-shaking the persons who have just joined Christ's Church; + so I want to do with you, as well as I can..... I am not able to write to you as I should like, at this interesting time. You will suppose I have learned what The Church is, what it means to "join" the church, &c. I can only try to refer you to one passage in the Bible which will help you understand these things. In the

Is It A Mystery?

"Confess the enveloping mystery we must," says a writer in the Herald & Presbyter of latest issue concerning the question "why the lives of the great & good should be suddenly, & to man's poor vision prematurely, terminated." The instance chiefly in point seems to be that of Phillips Brooks' "untimely grave."

Must this view prevail? It has the sanction of a public opinion so largely unchallenged that, if the opposite view be the Christian one, there need hardly be apology for an effort at rebuttal. Heathen & Christians seem agreed ^{to} lament, ever since Virgil made his fortune by writing of Marcellus "serus in coelum redeas;" the dismal habiliments of wo

the celestial ³ country which
most people of our time would be
ashamed to admit was not their hope.

disfigure the persons of those who have just been dismissing their loved ones to heavenly mansions; + faith shudders at the glare + forgets that the risen Savior has promised: Behold! I make all things new.

Surely it is ~~not all~~ no mystery that the lives of the ~~great~~ ~~foot~~ should be suddenly terminated. Is sudden death terrible to them? Is slow lingering death preferable to them? Or is the godly commonwealth the ~~loss~~ loser? Not the company of the godly here, on earth, but the whole commonwealth of them in their various dispersion through earth + heaven? Or are the interests of saints in this world only, worthy our exclusive + selfish devotion? For the great + good who die here, live ^{on} elsewhere; their glorious powers have surely been

3

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ly bishoprics? and when we
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if that denial ⁴ were certain
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that the great + loving Father
is better served in Heaven than
on Earth when His own permis-
sion, or behest, removes those
whom He not less than we
knows as great + good, into that
greater world?