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Letter to Charles Petit McIlvaine

Charles Hodge

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Rev. Charles Hodge to Bishop C. P. McIlvaine

Princeton, June 23rd, 1862

My dear Charles,

The newspapers inform me of your return from Europe & presence in Washington. I write to you for a selfish object. I want to avail myself of your influence with the Government. The only favor I have ever asked of men in our ministry is the appointment of my son John Bayard Hodge as Second Lieutenant of infantry in the U.S. Army. I ground this request not so much in the fact that he is competent for the duties of such a position - being 27 years old, of sound constitution, exemplary moral & Christian character, of great integrity & honorable feeling - but, I admit mainly on the fact that I have done what I could to serve my country not only as a minister & professor for forty years, but as an editor of the Princeton Review, the oldest & widest quarterly Review in the Country (the North American excepted). I have strenuously advocated on all the great questions of the day sound, conservative, patriotic views. Some of the articles from my pen have been reprinted in various forms & circulated to the extent of fifty, and in some cases a hundred thousand copies. Seeing that newspaper editors & politicians of every grade succeed in their applications for office I have felt chagrined that my request for the lowest of military commissions should be disregarded. I have been the more surprised at this seeing that my request was backed not by the mere formal endorsement, but by the zealous advocacy of Gov. Ogden, Hon. Wm. Pennington & Ten Eyck & Representatives Nixon & Stratton all of this state, besides other influential gentlemen. My son is now a second lieutenant of the 10th New Jersey Regiment stationed at Washington, W. R. Murphy being Colonel.

Know that you have free access to the secretaries & president & knowing that you have their full confidence, I venture to ask that you would use your influence to secure the object I have in view. I do this the more freely because I am convinced that doing a like service for you would give me the sincerest pleasure.

I wrote to you on this subject several months ago but my letter did not reach Washington until after you had left that city on your way to Europe.

Affectionately your friend,

Charles Hodge

Charles McIlvaine, D.D.

Notes: Charles Hodge A.M., D.D., LL.D. was a member of the Class of 1815 at Princeton and McIlvaine of the Class of 1816. William Pennington's class there was 1813. As was Hodge, he was a Princeton Trustee. An ex Governor of New Jersey, he was Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives when he died in 1862.