5-18-1859

Letter to Francis Wharton

Charles Pettit McIlvaine
popularity of talents will have but a subordinate and very subordinate influence in the choice; last of all the consideration of a man's having means of supporting himself to some extent. Our standard is at the mast-head now, and has always been, and to that we owe all. It must not come down one inch to please anybody, or gain anything. Such as ——, I think a good deal of, and probably he would be a good choice in New Jersey—as good as could be arrived at there,—to avoid much worse—but we must have a more house-top man,—one who is more grown a great deal in the stature of gospel strength, and boldness and decision—one to be a Captain when spiritual boldness and decidedness for Christ are the great qualifications.

"Yrs. very affect'ly,

"C. P. McILVAINE."

"Piqua, May 18.

"My dear Mr. Wharton:

"Just before I left home, I rec'd yours acknowledging my last. I had some conversation with Mr. ——. He thinks Dr. A. would secure a larger vote than Dr. B., would be more easily supported, and would accommodate himself more readily to the Gambier plan. I like the idea of the Assistant residing at G—— if a suitable person, and I like Dr. A. for that purpose, but either would suit me. Dr. A. is Calvinistic, and in his strong positiveness of view suits me. Dr. B. you know has a prayer-meeting in his Sunday-School room, or at least it began there, and he intended, if it grew large enough, to have it in his Church. I was at them both. He is good there. A dash of Calvinism as A. has, gives definiteness, fixedness, strength, confidence in evangelical views, and saves them from dangerous neighborhoods and mixtures of uncertainties. But I love both—B. would bring us an increase of N. Y. interests in Gambier. Mr. —— says there is great activity for L——, and that he thinks they can count on a good many. I cannot imagine who they all are, but care must be taken that none whom we desire stay away—for want of knowing that they are called to a special and most important work. Much depends on an un-rent garment. But there must be much calling on God—"Shew whom thou hast chosen." He can bow all minds to one. Let us feel our need of His guid-
ance and grace. Let us not put off prayer till we meet to vote. Let us each privately, constantly ask the Lord to take it all in His own hand.

"Yrs. very affectionately,

"C P. McILVAINE."

About this time a movement was begun to collect an additional number of hymns to those in the Prayer-book. Dr. Wharton was one of those appointed by the General Convention to form a Committee on the Hymnody of our Church. In this work he was very active, and the following letters have been selected for their bearing on this subject and for their intrinsic interest.

"Baltimore, March 17, 1857.

"My dear Sir:

"I shall be most happy to contribute to your proposed work, and have been long casting about for materials wherewithal to set forth a Hymnal of the kind you have in view. It would be a valuable book at any rate, and if well arranged, would I think be adopted by the Church. Would it not be almost necessary for those who are to co-operate in this business to have one meeting at least 'eye to eye'?

"Let us take a Scriptural Basis:

(1) Psalms—versified.

(2) Hymns—and paraphrased Scripture.

(3) Spiritual Songs.

"Under this third head would come in such a song as Bishop Meade imagines to be *'addressed to a Star.' Was ever such a prosaic mind? As if the 'Star of Jacob' and 'Star of the East' were not recognized titles of our Saviour! Still, our book must be for all 'sorts and conditions of men;' men, whom God has made of bone and sinew, as well as those whom he has fashioned of finer fibre, and for different work. Let me hope that Bishop Burgess and Bishop Williams will be consulted. They have peculiar claims to be so in such a department. But may I suggest caution as to other Episcopal members of your 'Commission'—or composition rather,—whose talents may be great, but who

* Star of Bethlehem.