
Levi Pennington

People

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Levi Pennington Writing to Bertha May, October 15, 1946

Levi T. Pennington

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Miss Bestha May Pennington,
830 S.E. Sellwood Blvd.,
Portland 2, Oregon.

October 15, 1946.

Dear Bertha May:--

Your letter, which you dated the 16th. but which was mailed the 14th., has just arrived, and I wish I knew just what to say in reply. I am not at all sure that we understand the situation.

In the first place, I wish that you could believe that our greatest wish for you is your spiritual welfare. We have never sought to say or do anything that would harm you spiritually or would interfere with your spiritual development. On the other hand, we have tried to shield you from influences that were not wholesome, and from supposed friends whom we could not trust but whom you have sometimes trusted, to your sorrow and disillusionment later. You have always been inclined to doubt our judgment in regard to these things, and have accepted the advice of others, and both you and we have suffered for it later.

Just why you have so often spoken against us I have never been able to understand, nor why, when you have found that we were right and have promised never to talk against us again that you have not kept that promise. I am sorry indeed that you have done the same sort of thing in connection with your relations with some of the Sunnyside Friends. I do not know whether you asked forgiveness of those folks in public or in private.

I have no inclination to scold you, but if I could say something that would help you, I'd be more than glad to do it. I do not know what mission it is that you are attending, nor how good it is for your health to take on that much extra. How many times has it been that you have broken down in health because you did so many things outside of your regular job? We are much interested in the maintenance of your health, and have seen you again and again disregard our advice as to rest and care of your health which you need, and have seen you lose your jobs because you could not keep up your work and do all the other things that you were determined to do.

We do not want in any way to even try to prevent you from anything that would be for your best interests, spiritually, mentally, morally, socially, physically or in any other way. But we do long for spiritual, moral, social and physical stability on your part. You ask us to forgive you, and drop the matter and not even talk about it. As to the forgiveness, you have that, as you have been forgiven before. It hurts to know that you have been talking about us again unfavorably, but we are more grieved for you than we are for ourselves. And I wish that we could understand the matter more fully. It might help if we knew who the folks were who told you that we would not like for you to attend a mission service; to know the Sunnyside folks whose forgiveness you felt that you must ask; what other things you said about us in addition to the statement that we would not want you to attend a mission, and things of that sort.

You need, as it seems to me and to Mother too, to learn to decide soberly and seriously, what you ought to do, and then

do it, when it is hard to do as well as when it is easy. I know you do not like to talk about financial matters, but your attitude in that matter is of a piece with a number of other things that have brought grief to all of us. You've earned, in the aggregate, thousands of dollars since you went to work in Portland. You have had nobody to support but yourself, and have had your board and room provided in each job. Again and again you have said that you were going to save your money. But you have gone right on spending it, hundred dollars after hundred dollars, with nothing to show for it, and not a cent laid up for a rainy day until recently, when you were going to lay aside \$50.00 a month. Well, you know how long you stuck to that. And now you have taken the savings account book and just what to expect I do not know. You do spend money for medical care, for medicines, etc., but it does not all go that way, by any means. And what will you do when you can no longer earn money and need perhaps much more medical care than you do now? I wish with all my heart that you had a thousand dollars in your savings account right now, laid up for the time when I fear that you will need it very much.

It may seem to you that this matter is not important, but you'll never be a strong character unless you learn to do the things you set out to do and promise to do, and leave undone the things that you know ought not to be done. Mother and I will not be here always, to provide a place for you to come when you are out of work and ill; and there is no reason to expect that anybody else will do that sort of thing for you for long, nor should you ask it nor expect it. There is no knowing what will be left when Mother and I are gone. Either of us might have a long and expensive illness that would use up practically everything that we have. And if we were able to leave you something far more substantial than anything that we possess, what confidence could we have that you would handle it satisfactorily and not lose it, when you have handled your income for these years in a way that has left you practically nothing of the many hundreds of dollars that you have received beyond your living expenses?

Well, we love you, as we always have; we want the best possible things for you, in every way; we forgive you; and we would be glad indeed to see you again soon, but that does not seem very likely. Mother has the house cleaned; we have the grapes gathered and turned into grapejuice, hoping some day to have sugar to make jelly; all our nuts are harvested except the walnuts at Rex, and Harold Byrd is going to harvest them; and we are definitely planning to go to the coast Thursday morning, with the Byrds coming out Friday morning to stay till Saturday evening. I have finished my work for the Community Chest; I have little more that I can do for the European Relief drive; I am to speak on behalf of this drive at the Christian Church tomorrow evening; and we hope to be off for El TeePee early Thursday morning.

With love from both of us, and the hope that God will richly bless and help and keep you,

Affectionately always,