

Levi Pennington

People

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Levi Pennington Writing to Rev. Karle Kauffman, October 24, 1946

Levi T. Pennington

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El TeePee, Woods,
Cloverdale, Oregon,
October 24, 1946.

Rev. Karle F. Kauffman
Highland Street,
West Milton, Penn.

Dear Mr. Kauffman:--

Your very interesting letter of the 18th. has followed me out here into the coast country, where my wife and I are taking a long delayed vacation, her health not having permitted the trip until now, though we had planned to spend most of the summer here.

I wish I could advise you in the matter of your future formal education with any confidence that my advice would be of any real value to you. I have been out of the active work of education for more than five years, and though I have done no little service during that time for Pacific College, which I served as president for thirty years, I am less in touch with educational institutions that I used to be, and some rather important changes have occurred in the institutions with which I am best acquainted.

Of one thing I am glad indeed, and that is that you recognize the fact that not all education is obtained in the schools. My grandfather was a well educated man, though I suppose all the education he got in the schools was less than some students get in a single year. The man who has an active mind and who will set himself to become educated, and who will then spend years in as much study as he would put in in school, can give himself a far better education than many men secure under the most favorable conditions.

This does not change the fact, however, that institutions which are created for the express purpose of helping a man to become educated can enable a man to progress more rapidly and in some ways more satisfactorily than is possible when a man works alone. The right kind of teacher can guide a student so that he will not be going down some blind alley, where he will have to retrace his steps; can show him the way to distinguish the bad from the good and the good from the best; can recognize the lines on which the student most needs development, and help him to make the adjustments that will result in the sort of all-around man who is most serviceable to humanity and the advancement of the Kingdom of God. The right sort of institution has facilities in the way of libraries, periodicals, residential arrangements, laboratories (material or human), and other conveniences that a man can hardly supply for himself. If one can find the right school, that is the best place to go on with his education, whether he enters a school of college grade at the age of 17 or 27, or 31, the age at which I got into college.

But when it comes to the choice of the proper school, and

were still head of that institution and the man who so recently left the department of Religious Education at Pacific College were there, as he was formerly, I should think that that institution would be an acceptable place for you to go on with your formal education. But both those men are gone, and I know too little about the school now to give any advice. I do know that the same sort of disunity which cost Pacific College the head of its Religious Education department exists in Kansas Yearly Meeting and affects Friends University.

Pendle Hill, at Wallingford, Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia, ought to be a very good place for a man of mature years to go on with his preparation for religious work, but whether it actually is or not I am not prepared to say, for I have never been there much more than long enough to see where the buildings are located. I know they have at times had teachings that have shocked some of the more conservative theologians of our denomination.

I suppose that next to Pacific College Guilford College has been truest to our Quaker principles of pacifism. I was in that community last winter for a week, but it was during the Christmas vacation, and I did not get to see the college at work. I know a number of people on that faculty, and I am sure that I could get much out of a course there, but whether it would meet your needs I do not know.

If a man aims at a theological course looking toward a B.D. degree, for instance, he will need to secure a degree from a college of recognized standing. That is a prerequisite for entrance to most recognized theological seminaries.

I fear I have not given you any advice that will be of any real help to you. Our former pastor at Newberg graduated from Pacific College while he was a student here in connection with his pastoral work. He is now in McCormick Theological Seminary. He is a man considerably older than you are. There are training schools for Christian workers by the dozen, some of which accept students who do not have even a High School education.

You may be sure that I appreciate the kind words you say about things that I have written. I have hoped that after my retirement from the presidency of Pacific College I might have time to do much more writing, and I have done some. Just at present I am working on an "autobiography" of Simon Peter which may never get beyond my hand-written manuscript, which has already passed the 300th. page.

With the earnest hope that you may have divine guidance in the matter of your future education, I am

Sincerely yours,

Levi T. Pennington.