

Levi Pennington

People

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## Levi Pennington Writing to Abijah Weaver, January 7, 1947

Levi T. Pennington

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January 7, 1947.

Abijah J. Weaver,  
Scottia, California.

Dear Friend:--

Not until this evening have I found time to read "The Mountains of the Law" and "The Creation Story." I am returning the latter manuscript, for it was easier to suggest changes in punctuation and spelling on the manuscript itself than to make note of them.

Perhaps I should say first of all that I am no geologist, and not too much of a scientist along any line. You could have put in a score of geological errors of questionable statements and I'd not be able to correct them. Your statement about the surpassing nature of the Grand Canon of the Colorado as a place to see the geological history of the world is probably correct, though the Snake River canon is deeper.

You suggest, though you do not squarely deal with, the problem of the eternal pre-existence of matter. I recall a conversation I once had with Professor Allen D. Hole of Earlham, the teacher of geology there. He said that of the two theories, one that God created the world out of nothing and the other the eternal pre-existence of matter, he found the latter easier to accept. To me one does not have to accept either. So far as I know, the wisest physicists do not yet know whether matter is anything other than energy. I listened once to a fine lecture by one of the half dozen greatest physicists of that day, and when he talked on the structure of the atom, he said that the hydrogen atom, for instance, consists of a nucleus, which has or is one charge of electricity, and the electron, which has or is one charge of electricity of the opposite kind. If, as this man implied was possible and as some philosophers have maintained is true, matter is ultimately force, energy, then it seems to me that we are not driven to accept the idea that matter is eternally pre-existent nor that God made the material universe out of nothing, but that it is all a manifestation of God Himself, the exercise of part of the energy which is of His essential nature.

On page 5 there is a place where it seems to me you ought to make clear the difference between condensation and contraction. As I understand it, condensation is the change from water in its invisible, vaporous form to liquid form, whether that is in the form of tiny drops that make clouds and fog or in greater aggregations that make liquid water as we usually think of it; while contraction is the process of decreasing in volume. Steam condenses into vapor of clouds and fogs, and these combine to make water-drops and later great masses of water. Then this water contracts to about 39 degrees Fahrenheit; then as it grows colder it expands, as you so well describe.

On page 7 you speak of the vapors that enshrouded the earth being affected by cold drafts from outer space. Just

"how come?" as the negro would say. Is not heat a form of motion? And does not a thing get colder as this motion is decreased? And is it not decreased by imparting this motion to something else? Does not the stove get cold by imparting its vibratory motion to the air? And must not these gases get colder by imparting their motion to something else? And to what else, in outer space? "Drafts of cold" -- I can understand drafts of cold air, for that means the movement of air that has less vibratory motion than the warm air in the room, for instance. But just drafts of cold -- is that scientific? Drafts of cold what? Ether? And what is ether? It raises but does not answer the whole question as to how heat -- and light, for that matter -- are transmitted from the sun to the earth.

There are minor matters of spelling and punctuation, neither of which is absolute, and both of which change with the years. I use more semi-colons than most folks do. The dictionary that I have most readily available makes alga the singular and algae the plural.

I was surprised to read that clear air filters out the ultra-violet light and that air beclouded with moisture lets the ultraviolet rays through. I saw Edgar T. Hole terribly sunburned in bright sunshine once; but I also remember that my wife got her worst case of sunburn when the sun did not shine brightly at any time during the day. It's a case where my knowledge is not ample.

I think I sent you one of our Christmas greetings. It seemed pretty grim to me, but the first I wrote was even more grim. It went like this.

An angel came to the earth one day.  
From nation to nation he took his way.  
Hate he saw in the hearts of men,  
Preparations for war again,  
Cold indifference, hearts of stone,  
Suffering millions making moan.

In the street of a bomb-wrecked city  
Jesus met him. Infinite pity  
Touched the face of the Lord of Life,  
Offering peace to a world of strife.  
"Master, 'tis hopeless", the angel said,  
Bowing in sorrow his golden head.  
"Look at thy world, O Lord, and see  
How utterly man has turned from Thee."

Jesus spoke with His eyes aflame.  
"Think of the world into which I came.  
Yet God loved it; for it I died.  
Though I again am crucified  
By all man's sins, yet I do not forget.  
God loved the world, and He loves it yet.

Well, I think I selected the better one for the greeting for Christmas and the new year, though the one I used seemed grim enough.

There is one other thing that I intended to mention in

discussing your manuscript, and that is a theory with which you are doubtless familiar, and one that seeks to meet the facts of evolution without making man the direct descendant of a common ancestor with the <sup>other</sup> primates. This theory recognizes the evolution of various anthropoid apes and that sort of creatures, but with a different translation of that verse which says, "the earth was without form and void" seeks to improve man's ancestry. They translate that passage, "and the earth became waste and void", holding that after all the milleniums of evolution there was some form of cataclysm which made the earth "waste and void", and then in a relatively short space of time as geological time goes, the earth was re-constituted, and man was made, of a different order from the <sup>other</sup> primates, and not even with a common ancestry with them. Your theory of the creation of course does not allow the thought that man could have descended from an ancestor of the apes.

This theory of which I have spoken is used to explain that passage which says that the sons of ~~God~~ looked on the daughters of men -- the sons of God were the descendants of Adam, who was made in the image of God, while the daughters of men were the human-like creatures that were the products of previous millions of years of evolution.

Of course this whole thing is very serious, and perhaps one ought not even to think of a joke in regard to the whole theory of evolution. But I often think of the Irishman who was asked (by ~~x~~ a man who did not know too much about evolutionary theory), "Pat, do you believe in evolution? Do you believe that men are actually descended from monkeys?" Pat replied, "Well, Oi'm neutral. I've seen 'em a-goin' both ways."

Pardon the foolishness. And be assured that I have appreciated your effort to make the story of creation intelligible to folks who may have thought that the bible and science are in hopeless conflict. I am sure that God has not written one thing in the bible and a contradictory thing in the rocks. If both are properly understood, they will agree.

Sincerely your friend,

Levi T. Pennington.