

Levi Pennington

People

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Pennington to George Thomas, January 20, 1948

Levi T. Pennington

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January 20, 1948.

Dear Friend:--

The news of the sad accident which resulted in the death of Eli Wheeler has reached us, and you know, of course, that we all deeply regret it, though we are unable to regret it as you do.

I could tell you to take it philosophically, as one of those things that happen, we know not why, in spite of our very best intentions. I could tell you that if you had not come to the rescue of your friend, the leopard would have killed him. And so one might go on and on, fruitlessly, I suspect, since nothing of that sort would change the facts nor make you regret any less the sad outcome of your attempt to help your friend,

But what I wanted especially to write to you is this -- don't let two men be killed by this accident. Don't let it "get you down." Don't let it destroy your usefulness. Don't let it interfere with your work. Sometimes a thing of this kind ends the useful service of a man who is involved; and if you should permit this to end your service, that would mean that two men were dead instead of one, even if you should live another half century and more as far as physical life is concerned.

I know a physician who more than fifty years ago gave a wrong prescription, and the medicine killed his patient. He quit the medical profession immediately, and never treated another patient -- as a physician he was as dead as his patient. I know a man who was a successful minister, occupying a high place in his denomination, who made one slip and was done for the rest of his life as a minister.

And you see how much worse that was than what happened to you or what happened to your friend. You were trying to help him. No wrong, just what we call misfortune.

There are men who come back after committing a crime. There have been men who lived useful lives after committing murder. You are not going to let an accident, no matter how unfortunate, destroy your usefulness, prevent your service, put you out of a place of leadership in the advancement of the kingdom of God. He will help you, and we'll help with our prayers and good wishes.

With love from both of us,

Sincerely your friend,

Levi T. Pennington.

George Thomas,
Friends Mission,
Kivimba, Kitega, Urundi,
Congo Belge.