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Levi Pennington

People

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2-5-1966

## Levi Pennington To Mr and Mrs Diment, February 5, 1966

Levi T. Pennington  
*George Fox University*

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### Recommended Citation

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February 5, 1966.

Dear Friends:--

No excuse for writing to you and taking up your time to read this letter, except that I want to tell you that I think of you often, and always with love and best wishes.

I've had another letter from Haverford College and another from the University of Oregon, both wanting my correspondence for the past forty or fifty years or longer -- you might think it was an important acquisition they were trying for. I'm sure it will not be so very exciting if either library gets the 25 or 30 bushels of letters, papers and what not.

I think I told you that I had handled the correspondence for 1941, saving more of it than usual, because there were more things happening that year than usual, Pacific College's 50th anniversary, my retirement, Emmett Gulley's inauguration, the honorary degree that we conferred on Herbert Hoover, the 50th anniversary of Stanford University and my days there as the guest of the Hoovers (Rebecca could not go because of an attack of neuritis) and a lot of other things that seemed to have saved themselves for that particular year.

It looks more and more to me as if I would turn this whole mass of correspondence to the University of Oregon library. If I do, they promise to sort it all over, discard only things that they are sure will never be of any use, such as the vast lot of literature sent out by the American Friends Service Committee and other organizations and causes; I'll have the correspondence between me and Rebecca to do with it as I wish -- I have just read half a dozen letters written to me during the month of February of 1905, and we were married on the 28th of that month; it has long been understood that Mary is to have the Hoover correspondence -- they can photostat it if they want to; and my correspondence with Mary is to be kept apart from the rest so that I can go over that and eliminate anything that I think should not be left perhaps to blacken the reputation of somebody after 1999. With Mary 3000 miles away, and with my knowledge of her discretion, I often wrote to her with more freedom and frankness than I would have written or spoken to anybody near here, or to anybody here or elsewhere of whose discretion I had any doubt.

I keep asking the Barclay Press for their estimate on the printing of Rambling Recollections. Maybe I'll have to go down to the office of the head man down there and keep him from any other work until he makes his estimate. Then maybe I can tell whether the book will have to be less than a hundred pages or less than five hundred.

I'm still planning to go out to El TeePee next week, though I may lose my nerve when the time actually comes. I'd like it better if some other man wanted to go out with me for a few days, but though I've talked to some men about such a trip, I get no encouragement.



February 6.

The above date will make you sure that I did not get this letter finished yesterday. And this has been a day of what my younger granddaughter calls "hecticity". First was that special Sunday School <sup>class</sup> that I have been teaching -- I know I have got some new ideas into the heads of some of the folks, but new ideas do not always find a welcome home in some minds; still I hope I may have done some good; and one thing I hope the course of lessons may accomplish is showing them how much better Christ's way of life is than that of Moses, David, Solomon and other old Testament worthies, with their polygamy, vengeance, war, and other things that might be mentioned.

I haven't got the whole course arranged yet; indeed I think I am doing pretty well each Sunday to have that "lesson" in hand and have the theme for the next Sunday ready to announce. The subjects thus far have been:

1. Introduction. A general presentation as to what the Psalms <sup>are</sup> who wrote them, when, and something about their wide variety, etc.
2. God. A study of the ideas about God held by David and others of the Psalm writers.
3. It Pays to Be Good. What the Psalmists thought about goodness and its rewards.
4. It Doesn't Pay to Be Bad. What the Psalmists thought of evil and evil doers, and what are the results of being bad and doing evil.
5. The Duty (and Privilege) of Gratitude. The prevalence of praise in the Psalms. For what should we praise God, and how?
6. Enemies. The prevalence of this theme in the Psalms. What the Psalmists sought for their enemies and God's, and what we should seek for them.

That last was the theme today. And next Sunday I have asked them to study on the idea of "Duty and Privilege" -- maybe this should have preceded Number 5 up there. But this time I want to go more fully into the matter of obligation, doing the square thing, paying your debts, keeping your promises, even when it costs you more than it should cost. When I was a boy I did not see much meaning in the blessing on the man "that swear-eth to his own hurt and changeth not."

Then there will be six more lessons, and I think they will be chosen from this list:

One More Good Man Gone Wrong.  
 The Poetry of the Psalms.  
 God in Nature.  
 Faith Makes the Impossible Possible.  
 Confidence.  
 Progress in Ideals -- From Moses to Christ.

I see I have put down just six, and that would "fill the bill", as they used to say under the consulship of Plancus. I may think of others as time passes that will take the place of



some of these; but not of that last one, whatever title I give it. They used to sing with great enthusiasm, "The old time religion is good enough for me." They meant well, the folks who sang with such vigor; and yet when we consider what went along with some people's "old time religion", that kind of "old time religion" is not good enough for me. David was a man after God's own heart, but he prayed God for vengeance on his enemies -- and he had a whole flock of wives, and that's a lot worse than mere extravagance. In Civil War days and before, many clergymen defended slavery because the bible told how masters should treat their slaves, with no command that slavery be abolished. One man who was bringing back his ship from Africa loaded with slaves, making his wealth out of that diabolical slave trade, wrote in his diary how dear and precious had been one of his seasons of meditation and prayer while helpless and hopeless blacks were dying in the hold -- well, his old time religion is not good enough for me. "God who at sundry times and in divers portions spake in time past unto the Fathers by the prophets hath at the end of these days spoken unto us by His son" --- "having provided some better thing for us."

Just look what I've done. You are not members of that class; why should I inflict all this on you?

Today our Refugee committee united in the desire to sponsor an Algerian Frenchman for entry into America with our guarantee that he will become self-supporting and fit into our scheme of things in this country. That would have settled it until the recent law was passed by congress of which I did not know till last week. This new law was supposed to have been enacted to make the process of entry by a refugee simple, and what they did (I'm told under pressure from the labor unions) was to make it so complex and to put such a time limit on the process that I doubt of the man we want to help will ever see America. It is my effort to move this process along as rapidly as possible that has given the day its "hecticity". But I got all done that I can do today a considerable time ago, and so I am writing to you.

And I'm about done with that. I'm not going to tell you what I had for dinner, nor how late it was before I got the clothes washed that I thought I had washed last Monday, nor how I got some of them dry so that I could wear them today, nor about the call of a University of Oregon man who wants me to attend a U. of O. lunch in McMinnville Tuesday -- I'm just not going to say anythin more than that I am always,

With love your friend,

Mr. and Mrs. Veldon J. Diment,  
1620 East Jackson Boulevard,  
Medford, Oregon.