

Levi Pennington

People

3-4-1927

Interview with Mrs. Raymond S. Holding, March 4, 1927

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Recommended Citation

Pennington, Levi T., "Interview with Mrs. Raymond S. Holding, March 4, 1927" (1927). *Levi Pennington*. 380.

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Interview with Mrs. Raymond S. Holding

April 4, 1927

Mrs. Ida Van Blaricom and Mrs. Amanda M. Woodward, with the concurrence of the rest of the committee, asked Mrs. Pennington and me to accompany them on this interview. The four of us conversed with Mrs. Holding, and during our conversation Robert Holding came in and joined in the conversation.

Mrs. Van Blaricom explained the purpose of our coming, stating that so many reports had been circulated derogatory to Mr. Holding that it seemed to the meeting on ministry and oversight that these reports should be investigated in connection with Mr. Holding's resignation, and the committee had been appointed to investigate the matter and they had come to her since it seemed that these derogatory reports had started from her.

Mrs. Holding declared that these matters were nobody's affairs but those of the Holding family and she did not consider it Christian-like to go about as the committee had done. She stated that she had unfortunately revealed to me some things that she ought not to have told. She accused me of "pumping" her for this information and then of trying to turn her children against their parents by writing to Helen. She denounced me for not going directly to Mr. Holding in regard to the matter and for writing to Helen, and three or four different times said that I had turned traitor to her, to Mr. Holding and to the entire Holding family.

Much of her talk was extremely wild and did not hang together. Half a dozen times she denounced me for writing to Helen, and half a dozen times admitted that she had told me at least half a dozen times to ask Helen about the things she was telling in her interview with me February 2nd. She admitted also that she had told me that if Mr. Holding knew that she came to see me February 2nd he would leave home. Almost in the same breath she would admit that she had told me to ask Helen and not to let Mr. Holding know that she had consulted me, and then denounce me for not going direct to Mr. Holding and for writing to Helen.

She repeatedly declared that their family differences were no concern of anybody but the family, and she declared that she had not told anybody but me of the charges she made against Mr. Holding in connection with the letter she declared had been received from the woman in Nebraska; then almost in the same breath would admit that she had told Mrs. Larson, with the explanation that "she was right there at the time when the letter was received." She did admit, however, that she had more than once threatened to get a divorce from Mr. Holding and that she had made to others the statement that she had documentary evidence that would prove that she was entitled to a divorce.

She declared that Mr. Holding had thought he had friends and found that he did not, and seemed to wish to defend him against his enemies both in the Newberg meeting and in the yearly meeting, at one time say-

ing that she didn't give a continental for the yearly meeting itself.

She declared that she had never accused Mr. Holding of improper relations either with Esther Hodson or with Mrs. Harrison even though both Mrs. Pennington and myself remembered very distinctly that she had done so and that we had declared our belief that there had never been any misconduct on the part of Mr. Holding with either of these women. We reminded her of our efforts to disprove any improper relations and of her reply, "I know him better than you do; and I know that since he is not living with me as his wife he is living in that relation with somebody else." While stoutly maintaining that she had not accused Esther Hodson or Mrs. Harrison, she did admit repeatedly that she had made ~~the~~ statement just quoted.

Again and again she declared, sometimes in a way almost frenzied, that I had turned traitor to Mr. Holding, to herself and to the Holding family.

She did declare that she had not been guilty of anything and that we should get Mr. Holding to acknowledge his wrong; and say that as far as their differences were concerned it had been about six of one and half a dozen of the other; then declared that Mr. Holding had been driven nearly crazy by the under-current of opposition to him; then declared that she had told him that if he did not become more kindly inclined to his family she would leave him; then declared that Mr. Holding had had no real friends that he could trust; then declared that if things kept up she would reveal a lot more than she had ever yet revealed.

In connection with questions regarding the letter from the woman in Nebraska of whom she had told in her interview of February 2nd, she absolutely refused to give the name of this woman or to tell again any of the things that she had told to me. She declared that she would not say one word more about their family affairs, but over and over urged us to go after her husband and get him to acknowledge his wrongs.

Before the interview closed she seemed to be in so different a mood from that which she was in part of the time that a question was finally asked in reply to which she declared that she did not believe that her husband had ever been guilty of any misconduct with women since he came to Oregon.

Both Mrs. Holding and Robert felt decidedly bitter over the investigation which the committee had been making.

The outstanding things in the interview to me were these:

1. She had on February 2nd made definite charges against Mr. Holding for misconduct with two women; she denied having accused these women at all while admitting that she had declared that Mr. Holding was guilty of living in the marital relation with other women since he was not thus living with her, and finally declared that she did not believe he had been guilty of any misconduct with any woman since he came to Newberg.

2. Over and over again she denounced me for writing to Helen even while admitting that she had told me repeatedly to confirm what she

said by asking Helen, and for not going to Mr. Holding even while admitting that she had assured me of Mr. Holding's threat to leave home immediately if she came to me. All the members of the committee tried to impress upon both Mrs. Holding and Robert the fact that we were not trying to make trouble but to help if possible to straighten up a situation that had become extremely difficult and damaging to the church as well as to the reputation of Mr. Holding.