

Levi Pennington

People

---

1940

## Protest and Question

Levi T. Pennington  
*George Fox University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/levi\\_pennington](https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/levi_pennington)

---

### Recommended Citation

Pennington, Levi T., "Protest and Question" (1940). *Levi Pennington*. 378.  
[https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/levi\\_pennington/378](https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/levi_pennington/378)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the People at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Levi Pennington by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact [arolfe@georgefox.edu](mailto:arolfe@georgefox.edu).

## PROTEST AND QUESTION.

~~\*\*\*\*\*~~

I have no desire to create dissention, but I am wondering how far we are going in the direction of coercing the individual conscience, discriminating against conscientious objectors in other fields than that of military service, and dictating to local meetings. It is my conviction that Oregon Yearly Meeting has no more right to dictate in matters of conscience than has the United States government. The action of the yearly meeting in barring the American Friends Service Committee from the use of the house in which we are now meeting requires that I register my protest and raise some questions.

Some of us are members of the American Friends Service Committee as conscientiously as others of us are members of other organizations outside of the yearly meeting. I do not approve of all the things that the American Friends Service Committee has done, and I do not need to tell you that I do not approve of all the things that Oregon Yearly Meeting has done. We had to ask forgiveness of another yearly meeting for one of our actions, and we ought to ask forgiveness for some others.

We do strange things. We hold some of our meetings in the Mormon Church, thus putting ourselves under obligation to that body. When they have a gathering here too big for that small building, and desire the use of this building, we shall have to refuse them the courtesy which they have extended to us, or allow the Mormon Church to use the building which we have denied to the American Friends Service Committee, to promote its work of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, comforting the sick and distressed, visiting those in prison, and other such works which were so highly commended by Jesus Christ. The executive committee desires that all our meetings be advised to use speakers and literature only from "outstanding fundamentalist and evangelistic organizations", and then we endorse the Oregon Temperance League, which would hardly fall in that classification. The Oregon Temperance League can use our building for the promotion of temperance, but the American Friends Service Committee cannot use it for the relief of suffering humanity.

Now to my questions. How far have we gone in this barring of the American Friends Service Committee from this building? Are we required to remove from the bulletin board of the local meeting the poster calling for a choice between the atom bomb and the cross of Jesus Christ? Shall we cease to permit representatives of the American Friends Service Committee to give counsel to conscientious objectors to participation in war, counsel that it would be difficult at times to get from any other source? Shall members of the American Friends Service Committee be barred from preaching or speaking for peace or otherwise giving the vocal service in this house which they believe that God and conscience require? And do not think this is merely an academic question. Memory too clearly recalls the time when a Friends minister was in this area desiring to preach the gospel and was barred from one of our leading churches because in other areas he was doing service for the American Friends Service Committee and the Five Years Meeting. He was not speaking <sup>here</sup> in the interests of those organizations, but preaching the gospel, but he was barred from the pulpit because of his connection with those organizations.

We have gone far -- as I see it much too far -- in the direction of coercion of conscience, dictation to local meetings, and over-riding minorities. Let us seek more Quakerly and more Christian ways than we have sometimes followed. There may be no likelihood that we shall rescind our action, but I have cleared my conscience by my protest. You have no right to coerce my conscience, and you cannot do it.