

**The Licensed Preacher.**

BY "OLD MORTALITY."

My Little Ones—My poor old heart is very sad today, made so by the late eastern papers which inform me that never in the history of the world has there been such a wide-spread interest taken in religious matters as now.

One paper states that Moses is a myth, and that the story of Jonah is a wild-goose narrative not worthy of Baron Munchausen.

A New York divine tells his flock that the Holy Bible is a compilation of dreams, miracles, ghost, witch and vulgar stories quite unfit for a refined person to read.

These things make me sad, for what will the harvest be when all men and women become interested enough to study religious history for the purpose of the information they may derive from it. My little ones, warn your parents against such a step.

During a series of sermons in the Plymouth church at Brooklyn, N. Y., Rev. Lyman Abbott somewhat astonished the ignorant and illiterate of his congregation by affirming that some of the books of the Bible might properly be regarded as mere works of fiction.

Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, would you have died could you have known that such words as these would have been uttered in your dear old pulpit in this the declining years of the 19th century?

Should the few intelligent men that now occupy the pulpit of America conclude to tell all they know about the Jew Bible, what would the harvest be at the birth of the 20th century?

Then, again, suppose all of our 20,000 editors of newspapers and magazines should publish what they know about the Bible and the millions of falsehoods that are hourly told by many sky pilots in order to keep it from being flung into the rubbish-pile along with the thousands of other myths and superstitions of a by-gone time. Should these editors tell the facts in the case, I reiterate, what would the harvest be? Echo answers: Why every one of you would have to vacate your pulpits and earn your bread and salt by the labor of your now over-soft hands. And your Joss houses, churches and temples would soon be transformed into temples of learning and science; that's what the harvest would be.

To cast us 113,000 sky pilots out into this practical and every-day world would be a most humiliating transaction—a fate that few of us could endure, owing to the fact that our business has been not of this earth. It is to be hoped that country editors can be boycotted into silence for a few more years, or until we shall have learned how to

saw wood. Wealthy city editors are independent and outspoken—they cannot be frightened into silence. The poor crossroad editor would starve stone dead if it were not for a soup bone given him now and then by some charitable person—to keep these well in hand is now the duty of the "cloth." But what will the harvest be when these men grow strong and independent enough to tell of the millions of lives that have been sacrificed, and the rivers of blood that have run down and reddened the sea, in order to sustain our now tottering cause?

Even prayer is being assailed by some of these independent city papers. They say prayer is of pagan origin and that there has never been a prayer answered, and perhaps there never will be. Some city ministers have even now become quite ashamed of this religious exercise and do not offer up prayers in their pulpits. How astonishing! What will the harvest be if these things continue?

Others have been telling you that God made this earth 6000 years ago in six days of twenty-four hours each, and on the seventh day, feeling somewhat fatigued (it must have been hard work for him to build this world in so short a time and do the job out of nothing) he sat down and took a rest.

Yes, they have been telling you of these wonderful performances and you have paid them well for so doing; but now along comes an honest geologist who has dug down to the ancient and beautiful city of Nipur that was builded more than 9000 years ago.

My dear congregation, I am sorry for you and your children that you have been forced to accept as facts the many false teachings of my brother sky pilots, for in fact this earth was not created 6000 years ago in the space of six days, but has taken million upon million of years in its slow formation.

Totell you the unvarnished truth is something I delight in, for should I do otherwise you would not come nigh this tabernacle, though you love to be hoodwinked, humbugged, hoodooed, bamboozled, buncoed, brow-beaten, frightened and lied out of your cash, and there are those who intend to go on, and on, lying to you old men, women and children, just so long as they can keep the school teacher and the intelligent and independent editor away from you and you have a copper left in your purse to pay for the innocent little fairy tales, snake, whale, bear and witch stories and other trash that is kept constantly in stock, and ever on tap for your special endarkenment.

But brothers there is a time hastening hitherward when they cannot pull the wool over your eyes, nor will they be able to draw the

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