

## WHAT INSTEAD?

We often feel disposed to say to the persons who desire to do away with the Christian religion, "What are you going to give us?" We are, we trust, rational beings. We stand prepared to give up any system which we hold when we see good reason for doing so. You are going to take away from us religion. Well, what will you give us instead?

We know personally a man who, a few years ago, was a drunkard, down in the gutter. He is now a temperate hard-working man, supporting his family.—What did it? Religion. If you take away his religion, what will you give him in place of it?

Recently in a little prayer-meeting, a sister spoke of the support which she had when she looked on her baby and knew that it was dying. In that hour Christ was near her. You would take away her religion? What will you give her in its place?

We heard, not long ago, a sister in a prayer meeting tell of when she was crossing the ocean. The waves were high; all were in alarm; many dreaded that the ship would go down: the passengers were crying with fear; then, just when the fear was at its height, a woman's voice was heard amid the confusion singing:

"Thou refuge of my weary soul,  
On thee, when sorrows rise,  
On thee, when waves of trouble roll,  
My fainting hope relies."

Shortly there was a hush; men and women ceased their wild cries to listen; their minds were calm.

Then the same voice sung:

"Jesus, lover of my soul,  
Let me to thy bosom fly."

And one and another voice took up the hymn and carried it along.

You would have taken away from these people religion. Well what would you have given them?

We have seen a woman whose life was one of trouble, whose face was worn with care and labor, speak of the joy which she felt from day to day, of her many mercies, of the abounding goodness of God to her. Would she be better off if you should take away her religion?

If you don't take away our religion until you are prepared to give us something better, we suspect that the old religion will last our time out.—*Sel.*

## THE RELIGION OF DON'T KNOW.

The religion of "Don't-know" is a very poor article for any man to keep on hand. Is there a personal God? "I don't know." If there be such a God, what are His attributes and relation to men? "I don't know." Has man a soul distinct from the body that dies? "I don't know." If he has a soul, will that soul survive the event of death and live forever? "I don't know." Is there a heaven and a hell? "I don't know." Is the Bible true? "I don't know." Was there a Jesus Christ who came into this world to save sinners? "I don't know." Did Jesus Christ rise from the dead and ascend into heaven, and does He not exist there as the High Priest of the Christian profession? "I don't know."

The man who thus answers these and similar questions, and thus disposes of them all, would do well to see where he stands. He declares his own ignorance upon the most important questions that can be asked or answered. No others are or can be to him of so much importance; and yet he dismisses them all at sight by simply saying, "I don't know." This is the one saying which he flings at every religious truth, and with which he seeks to relieve himself from its pressure. We more than suspect that he does not want to know. He prefers the religion of "I don't know," rather than that of "I do know." When he comes to die, he will, if he has his reason in that solemn moment, want to know something, or believe something, which contains the solution of what death is and is to be to him. He will find it a difficult task to get out of this world on the naked theory of "I don't know." He is, after all, a man, and he locked up in his nature the wants that are common to men.—*Sel.*

## CONDEMNED—OR FORGIVEN?

Will you take a little time alone perhaps this evening? Take a paper and pencil; and after you have honestly and fairly thought on your own state, and weighed your own condition before the Lord, will you write down one of two words? If you feel that you are not a believer write down this word—"Condemned;" and if you are a believer in Jesus and put your trust in him alone write down the word—"Forgiven," even though you have to write down the word *condemned*.—*Sel.*