

Work for God at Home and Abroad.

THE CHURCH EXTENSION ASSOCIATION.

JOTTINGS FROM OUR JOURNAL.

WE have received many encouraging letters relating to the religious education question, one from a working man in a neighbourhood where the elementary schools have been saved with difficulty from the Secularist party. He says: 'This struggle to save the voluntary schools will entail much labour, but that must not deter us from our object, for no great cause has yet been won without persevering prayer, patience and real hard work, joined to trust in God.'

Good, manly words! and we only wish that all Church folk would realise how much there is to be done in these times in the great cause of religious education. Not a stone should be left unturned in this grand work of securing Christian teaching to the children of the land.

Voluntary schools have many difficulties to contend with, and it is a strong proof of the value which Churchmen attach to the religious instruction of the children of England, that, placed on such an unequal footing with the Board schools, Church schools should have held their own as they have done.

We congratulate ourselves when we contrast this with the state of things in France, but we must look to it that we present a firm front against the secularising tendencies of English imitators of France.

France, as far as the law is concerned, has wholly banished religious teaching from her elementary schools. In Paris there is no teaching of any religious, or even *semi*-religious kind. A large number of the teachers are professed infidels, and do not mention the word God at all in their schools. In consequence of this the French working man is fast losing his hold of Christianity.

An active effort was made by the Atheist party in London so far to influence the election of the London School Board as to secure

secular education in the Board schools. An Atheist is thoroughly consistent when he advocates the secular training of the young, but a Christian who upholds, or does not oppose, such a system is false to his professed convictions.

We of the Church Extension Association have upwards of 8,000 children in our schools, and religious teaching is made part and parcel of the knowledge they are every day assimilating. The work of the Church, to be effective, must begin with the young—it is difficult to reach the adult conscience and intellect. Religious training should be given in early life when ideas are pliant, and impressions once received are never effaced.

Our experience abundantly confirms this. And yet we have often had cause to rejoice in knowing that school lessons have borne good fruit in poor homes. We know parents who have received lasting benefit from religious instruction given in our day schools.

For instance, we heard of Tiny Tim the other day standing solemnly by his mother, looking troubled and shy.

'Well, what is it?' said his mother at last, with a smile. Then Tim took courage. 'Mother, it's Sunday, and we haven't been to church all day, and I expect God won't be pleased with us.'

'He comes home from school,' says his mother, 'full of the Bible stories he has heard there.' He cannot know how much this secondhand teaching is doing for his mother, nor understand why it is that she listens with a softened look on her face as he sings about 'Jesus, tender Shepherd,' or tells her 'the old, old story' in his pretty baby language.

'My Violet always makes me say "Our Father" with her now,' one woman said lately; and another told us she had learnt more about religion from her little girl, a Gordon School child, than she had ever known in her life before. Fathers and mothers, with hearts somewhat hardened by the roughness of life, have learned valuable lessons from