

to water it, and cause it to spring up with abundant increase.

Still another reason is, the work of religious training is deferred too long. "While men slept, an enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat," and we cannot tell at how early a period this deadly sowing begins. Let us see to it, then, that we are first in the field, filling the heart with the good seed of the kingdom, before the enemy with his tares has pre-occupied all the soil.

But the strongest reason of all is to be found, perhaps, in the fact that, as a rule, we altogether underestimate the strength of opposing forces. Let us not overstate the truth. While we hold that every child has been redeemed by Christ, and is, in virtue of that redemption, an heir of the kingdom, yet their natures are not angelic. In the heart of every child of Adam there is a natural proneness to evil. The tares will grow among the wheat in the heart of a child, as well as in the broader field of the world, and it is the twofold design of Christian nurture to repress the growth of the one and encourage the growth of the other.

Still further, we must remember that when a child reaches what we are wont to call the age of accountability, his relation to the kingdom necessarily undergoes a change. He is no longer an unconscious and irresponsible being; he is now responsible and ac-