

October 7.

BERNARD WISBY; THE CHILD AND THE REPUBLIC. THE DAWN OF AMERICAN CHILD NURTURE, CHAPTER AMERICAN CHILD NURTURE. Chapter 2.

I think what this article is trying to say is that in the early 1800s there was trying to emerge a new philosophy on the child and his rearing

The old idea of the child was that he was innately evil. He was born in sin and that the main responsibility of parents was to "break his will" and thus help him by strict religious training to have the spiritual experience necessary to make him one of the elect

The emerging philosophy while not completely eliminating this idea of original sin, nevertheless played it down and eventually attacked the idea altogether, substituting the idea that the child was born in innocence and should be carefully nurtured with love and tenderness into the same responsible citizen that was the previous ideal.

There was a strong feeling here and abroad that society was full of atheism, licentiousness and intemperance, furthermore there was a growing laxness of discipline in the home, that there was an overemphasis of intellect.

These were all seen as causes of the French Revolution and the maladies of the American Republic.

The only way the republic could be saved was by "seizing upon the infant mind and training it up under moral and religious influence."

If unrepentant children were damned (even though no one could tell which ones were damned) then a campaign to teach them and their parents the discipline necessary to transform or save their souls and American Society.

Instead of the Revolution liberalizing things as one would suspect, there was in 1830 what was called "the Protestant Counter Revolution" and the old puritan ways were actually reinforced for a while. the new ideas came up short against these ideals.

However, even puritan parents were increasingly becoming caught up in more materialism and becoming successful in a changing economy, Increasing demands were put on Christian nurture to pay more attention to environment and the claims of the world.

The need for a new basis for Christian nurture seemed confirmed after 1830 by the ceaseless complaints that children were spoiled, corrupted and unorderly.

Author's ideas about this:

Harriet Martineau, English radical writer (but not anti-calvinist) found in both America and England a thread of improper routine to the child's character.

^ "Let us subdue mere nature at the first start, and make her civilized in her beginning,"

2. Fredricka Bremer claimed the American mother showed her love for her children "principally by spoiling them."

The child was wrongly nursed, wretchedly fed, overdressed, too closely supervised while playing, overtaxed intellectually.

"Fashion" made the child into an artificial, spoiled, or excessively grave household pet or live doll. (little adult?) *suggesting simpler clothing, food, & allowing a child free play*
Godey's Lady book (pg 14) published a poem, in which a mother brings her not too talented young daughter to a girl's school, and in six months expects a paragon of virtue and charm to be turned out, in spite of the child's shortcomings "But remember if she's not accomplished, it will certainly be YOUR fault."

The Children's aid society was formed a generation later, to prevent the immorality among poor children from poisoning society when they grew up. (Charles Loring Brace) *Because their depraved natures were not being overcome by proper training.*

The course of the nurture expert was clear: He had to suggest a way to develop the child's will that would do justice to American Ideals of Individualism, while at the same time saving that "freed and expanded will" from indulging in the corruptions that plagued American society.

The Puritan concept (my own words again) was that to save the child from his nature you would have to bring him to a spiritual "conversion", or in other words he would become of the elect.

There were, however, problems with this "conversion".

The methods of conversion had been formulated for adults, but they were easily impressed upon children. The presses of the American Tract Society helped advance the cause of orthodoxy and poured out countless editions of tales for children about the lives of fallen boys and girls whose only hope lay in throwing themselves on God's mercy. *stressed the rewards of those who obeyed*

Examples: Memoir of Henry ~~Obadian~~ *Obadian*
- Early volumes of the "Youth's Companion"

their themes were similar to that of the later Harriet Beecher Stowe who made the character of "Little Eva" famous.

(Some children are too good to live) *They must be taken to a higher sphere (what child would want to be good?)*

Dickens and others used this same theme. Since infant mortality at this time was high, this theme naturally hit a sensitive audience.

But —

If the child became too pious and "converted" he would not be able to cope with the competitive world, *and this was necessary.*

Also, *the* parents "stressing" the darker side of religious experience could do much harm to the sensitive child." This stressing is suggested by perhaps the parents subconscious resentment of the arrival of too many unwanted children., (pg 18)

The new model of child rearing that was beginning to come out was that "you should not brake his will but use it to the utmost *good* on the world."

We cannot fully understand the complex play of moralism and materialism in the American culture well into the 18th century.

In 1831 Dr Thomas Gallaudet published
his book on the religious training of children.
his precepts:

- 1 - early bible readings
 - 2 - strict sabbath observance
- however the matter would teach religion
within child's natural ability to learn
& watch for opportunity to expand the
relation to him,

Margaret Mead
The parent ~~is to~~ let the child should
not try to make child in his own
image, but let child explore his own
abilities.

If parents failed ~~hopefully~~ the
there was always God for the child to
answer to.

affection & tender care would tie the
child to the parent more effectively
than when the "Patriarch" could tie
him to the parent with economic threat
(implied or not) of economic dependence.

A child was afforded a happy
childhood. The result was more
spontaneity and freedom in raising
of children.

use samples in text

The new model of child rearing that was beginning to come out
was that "you should not make this will but use it to the utmost
on the world."
We cannot fully understand the complex play of moralism and
materialism in the American culture well into the 19th century.