



Spare the Child: The Religious Roots of Punishment and the Psychological Impact of Physical Abuse

Philip J. Greven

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He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes. These words provided generations of American Christians with the justification for physically disciplining their children, in ways that range from spankings to brutal beatings. This learned and deeply disturbing work of history examines both the religious roots of corporal punishment in America and its consequences -- in the minds of children, in adults, and in our national tendencies toward authoritarian and apocalyptic thinking. Drawing on sources as old as Cotton Mather and as current as today's headlines, Spare the Child is one of those rare works of scholarship that have the power to change our lives.

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