

新教倫理從現代社會中絕跡了嗎？ 論韋伯思想的現實意涵

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韋伯在《基督新教倫理與資本主義精神》中揭露的新教倫理已於今日消失了嗎？乍看之下，「最後的人」的出現似乎能證實新教倫理的衰退，但其意涵是如此含糊而有待釐清。另一方面，韋伯在清教徒身上所找到的拒絕神化被造物原則，隱含著（而且清教徒自己也領會到）上帝面前眾生平等的命題。以此觀之，韋伯強烈批評「最後的人」的理由不在於這類型的人取代了新教倫理，而是相互抵觸：「最後的人」摧毀人與人之間平等，並打算取消上帝和被造物所訂下的永恆契約。事實上，《新教倫理》的這項命題至今仍具說服力，至少在某些經濟學家的心中是如此。

關鍵字：新教倫理、最後的人、拒絕神化被造物、經濟人、斯密

Did Protestant Ethics Disappear from Modern Society? On the Current Meaning of Weber's Thought

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ABSTRACT

Has the Protestant ethics revealed by Weber in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* disappeared today? At first glance, the appearance of the “last man” seems to confirm the decline of Protestant ethics, but its meaning is very vague and it has yet to be clarified. On the other hand, the principle of rejection of idolatry that Weber found in the Puritans implies (and the Puritans themselves understood) the proposition that all beings are equal before God. From this perspective, the reason Weber strongly criticizes the “last man” is not that this type of person replaced Protestant ethics, but that they are in conflict with each other: the “last man” destroys equality between people and intends to cancel the eternal contract between God and the creature. In fact, this proposition of *Protestant Ethic* is still persuasive, at least in the minds of some economists.

Key Words: Protestant ethic, last man, rejection of idolatry, *homo oeconomicus*, Adam Smith