

Summary of Excerpt from Max Weber's "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism"

Main argument: The spirit of capitalism was born from the spirit of Calvinism.

- Asceticism restricted consumption. Since they believed that wealth is a gift from God and must be spent only for his glory, the Calvinists didn't waste their money on amusements or luxuries.
- Instead, the Calvinists attempted to increase their money. Pursuing money as an end was condemned, but earning money pursuing a "calling" was a sign of God's blessing.
- Although there are other ascetic religions, Calvinism added the conception of the "calling." Success at the calling is the best means of attaining "certainty of grace."
- Limiting consumption and increasing acquisitive activity resulted in the accumulation of capital.

The Calvinist wanted to work in a calling. The result has been a capitalist world where all of us are forced to work. The pursuit of wealth has been stripped of its religious meaning.