

# Luther

Luther had some positive and negative influences on Christian Spirituality.

His positive influences included his promotion of meditation on God's word. For example his work *A Simple Way to Pray*, 1535. This was popular and gave a four fold framework to meditation.

This included *Instruction*, *Thanksgiving*, *Confession* and *Prayer*.

In *instruction* the seeker looks to God for instruction and all his needs.

In *thanksgiving* the seeker remembers all that God has done for him – especially God's great act of redemption. The seeker then goes on to *confess* his sins and acknowledge his weaknesses. Finally the seeker prays for God to renew his faith and keep him strong in obedience.

Another great contribution of Luther was his insistence that believers do not need an intermediate between themselves and God. This meant that ordinary believers could be confident of a closer relationship to God unrestrained from an 'official mediator'. The notion of the 'priesthood of believers' also meant that ordinary Christians had a stronger identity.

Luther brought out some lovely mystical insights, in particular of the mystical union between God and the believer, which is like a man and wife in marriage. Luther explains how the believer is united to God and receives all of God's riches; at the same time Christ takes away all of the believers sin so that the believer is holy in the sight of God.

Luther also promoted the singing of hymns and wrote some brilliant hymns – the most famous of which, based on Psalm 46, is "[A Mighty Fortress is Our God](#)".

Luther's more negative influence on Christian Spirituality is linked to his, and his predecessor's, rejection of all things Catholic. Any work that had strong mystical tones in it was considered Catholic and thus in error.

Another, not so deliberate, influence on Christian Spirituality was the way that Luther used terms like **mystic** in quite different ways to refer to quite different topics. Thus almost removing the more classical idea of mysticism.