

David Andersen

Martin Luther
The Problem of Faith and Reason

Christliche Philosophie heute
Christian Philosophy Today
Quomodo Philosophia Christianorum
Hodie Estimatur
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A Reexamination in Light of the
Epistemological and Christological Issues

Preface by John Warwick Montgomery

Foreword by Paul Helm

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Kontakt: dandersen@compusoftdevelopment.com

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Preface by John Warwick Montgomery

Luther has long been regarded, both by secular philosophers and by misguided believers, as an irrationalist. To take only a few examples: Luther's insistence on the real presence of Christ's body in the Sacrament has been seen as a physical impossibility (in spite of the Einsteinian revolution in physics!). His confidence in the literal facticity of Scripture has been viewed as hopelessly naïve (even though the same view was clearly maintained by Jesus himself!). And Yale historian Jaroslav Pelikan – who, at the end of his career, moved from Lutheranism to mystical Eastern Orthodoxy – titled one of his early works *From Luther to Kierkegaard*, thereby transmuting Luther into a kind of pre-modern existentialist.

Thus the great importance of the present work. David Andersen rightly shows that Luther "places himself well within an empiricist tradition," that for Luther "a love for our own presuppositions is often the greatest hindrance to reaching reasonable conclusions," and that "Luther is utterly convinced that it [the Christian religion] has the empirical support of eyewitnesses concerning the very Word of life" – Christ's resurrection constituting "the foremost proof of his claim to deity and thereby the ground for all Christian discourse."

A careful reading of Dr Andersen's book will surely give the lie to all existentialisings of the Reformer. It will also demonstrate that Luther cannot be classified as one who would today replace insistence on clear thinking with post-modern refusals to allow, even in principle, the establishing of objective truth.

Not without reason did Luther's followers – one thinks of Tycho Brahe and Johannes Kepler, to name only two – give us the scientific perspective which has so profoundly influenced the development of the western Christian world.

Following Luther's insights, as accurately portrayed by Dr Andersen, the reader can identify such endemic contemporary fallacies as that "all religions are saying the same thing" and that "all spiritual roads lead up the mountain to the same religious summit." Dr Andersen shows Luther's continuing ability to point lost worlds – ours as well as that of the 16th century – to the unique and demonstrable claim of Jesus Christ to be the sole path to religious Truth and Life.

John Warwick Montgomery

Ph.D. (Chicago), D.Théol. (Strasbourg, France), LL.D. (Cardiff, Wales); Barrister-at-Law, England and Wales; Professor Emeritus of Law and Humanities, University of Bedfordshire (U.K.); Distinguished Research Professor of Philosophy and Christian Thought, Patrick Henry College, Virginia (U.S.A.)