

## How to Respond to Pietism's Accusations

**1. Dead Orthodoxy has turned faith into assent to the facts (head knowledge only).**

Answer: Knowledge, Assent, and Trust

Response: Pietism has downplayed knowledge, and added zeal.

**2. Lutherans have no zeal to produce works!**

A. Zeal is Irrelevant – zeal doesn't produce good works.

B. Good works are produced by faith.

C. You can have zeal without knowledge (Romans 10:2)

**3. Lutherans don't care about good works.** No, we do.

**4. Lutherans don't preach the law and good works.** No, we do.

But we also preach the gospel to create and strengthen faith which produces good works.

**5. Lutherans teach that good works are optional.**

No, we don't. There aren't some Christians who do good works and some that don't.

Good Works are necessary, but not for justification.

**6. Good works are a sign that faith is real.**

Yes, they are, but we don't trust in those good works.

Outward works of the law are not "good" works. Good works are produced by faith.

**7. "Faith without works is dead."**

Yes, that means that a faith not producing good works is not a real faith at all. The solution to a dead faith is to use law and gospel to work repentance and re-create true faith in Jesus!

When pietism says that "faith without works is dead" they mean that we need to add works and zeal to faith, so it is living.

**8. Good works keep you from falling away.**

No, they don't. The means of grace create, strengthen, and keep us in the true faith.

**9. What about a conversion experience? (e.g. overcoming an inner struggle with sin)?**

Pietism uses rules/processes for man to achieve a salvation/sanctification experience.

(This is called cooperating with prevenient grace or praying for the grace of conversion.)

Lutherans use the means of grace (Word, Baptism, Lord's Supper) where God is working to save us by creating repentance and faith in Christ.

**10. What about piety?**

Christian piety is the devotion and good intentions to use things according to God's order.

Christian piety is when a believer holds to the Word, does his vocation, and loves his neighbor.

Luther says, "If you continue in this faith, the Holy Ghost is there and baptizes you, strengthens and increases your faith, puts a new understanding into your heart, and awakens in you holy and new thoughts and affections, so that you begin to love God and refrain from all wicked actions, and do from your heart what God would have you do, and love your neighbor, and shun anger, hatred, and envy." (St.L. VII: 1862).

Sacramental piety is when a believer regularly makes use of the offered sacraments and trusts in the promise God has given regarding them.

Pietism developed its own list of spiritual practices or "piety": prayers from the heart, active work in missions, lay-led conventicles (small groups), prayer as a means of grace, description of "born again" experience, and ability to distinguish spiritual progress of others.

**11. Don't you Lutherans care about doing things from the heart?**

When we say that a Christian does something from the heart, we mean that they do it freely and willingly, without coercion. We mean they do something out of thankfulness, not because they are being forced to do it by the law, or because someone is watching them.

When pietism says they do something from the heart, they are referring to some inner emotional experience or eagerness, regardless of whether the motivation is law or gospel.

**12. What about prayers from the heart?**

Pietism means *ex corde* (Latin: from the heart) prayers, which are not written down, so that the person really means it.

Simply because a prayer is written down doesn't mean that the prayer is only being recited without understanding. It is not a prayer unless the person is actually talking to and asking God for something. Written prayers teach me to ask for those important things which I didn't know I needed.

**13. What about the priesthood of all believers?**

In the Old Testament, there were certain men set apart to be priests and perform sacrifices. In the New Testament all believers are called priests. Everyone who trusts in Christ is in the priesthood of all believers. Nevertheless, our Lord Jesus also instituted the office of the holy ministry. God calls a man from the priesthood of all believers and places him in the office through the congregation's call and ordination. The pastor is the servant of the Word, who delivers God's gifts to the priesthood. The pastor is the one who preaches, teaches and administers the sacraments. The work of the priesthood is not to do the pastor's job, but to do her own work within her vocation.

1 Peter 2:5, 9, "...you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, **a holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.... 9But you are a chosen generation, **a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light... (See verses 10-17)

Pietism thinks that Luther taught that the priesthood means there is no longer a need for a pastoral office. Each Christian can determine for himself what to believe.

**14. What about systematic definitions?** (Trinity, two natures, homoousias, 3 uses of the law, etc.)

**15. What about attacks against/warning of the false teachings of other denominations?**

**16. What about an overconcern for correct doctrine and practice?**

**17. What about a zeal for missions?**

**18. What about a living faith?**

**19. What about those Christians who are still under the rule of sin?**

**20. What about those Christians who are converted but not quickened?**

Apology IV -- *What Is Justifying Faith?* 48] The adversaries feign that faith is only **a knowledge of the history**, and therefore teach that it can coexist with mortal sin. Hence they say nothing concerning faith, by which Paul so frequently says that men are justified, because those who are accounted righteous before God do not live in mortal sin. **But that faith which justifies is not merely a knowledge of history**, [not merely this, that I know the stories of Christ's birth, suffering, etc. (that even the devils know,)] but it is **to assent to the promise of God**, in which, for Christ's sake, the remission of sins and justification are freely offered. [It is **the certainty or the certain trust in the heart**, when, with my whole heart, I regard the promises of God as certain and true, through which there are offered me, without my merit, the forgiveness of sins, grace, and all salvation, through Christ the Mediator.] And that no one may suppose that it is mere knowledge, we will add further: **it is to wish and to receive the offered promise of the remission of sins and of justification**. [Faith is that my whole heart takes to itself this treasure. It is not my doing, not my presenting or giving, not my work or preparation, but that a heart comforts itself, and is perfectly confident with respect to this, namely, that God makes a present and gift to us, and not we to Him, that He sheds upon us every treasure of grace in Christ.]

Formula of Concord, SD, II -- 12] Therefore the Scriptures deny to **the intellect, heart, and will of the natural man** all aptness, skill, capacity, and ability to think, to understand, to be able to do, to begin, to will, to undertake, to act, to work or to concur in working anything good and right in spiritual things as of himself. 2 Cor. 3, 5: *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God*. Rom. 3, 12: *They are together become unprofitable*. John 8, 37: *My Word hath no place in you*. John 1, 5: *The darkness comprehendeth (or receiveth) it not [the light]*. 1 Cor. 2, 14: *The natural man receiveth not (or, as the Greek word properly signifies, grasps not, comprehends not, accepts not) the things of the Spirit*, that is, he is not capable of spiritual things; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them. 13] **Much less will he truly believe the Gospel, or assent thereto and regard it as truth**. Rom. 8, 7: *The carnal mind, or the mind of the natural man, is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be*. And, in a word, it remains eternally true what the Son of God says, John 15; 5: *Without Me ye can do nothing*. And Paul, Phil. 2, 13: *It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure*. 14] **To all godly Christians who feel and experience in their hearts a small spark or longing for divine grace and eternal salvation this precious passage is very comforting; for they know that God has kindled in their hearts this beginning of true godliness, and that He will further strengthen and help them in their great weakness to persevere in true faith unto the end....**

55] Now, although both, the planting and watering of the preacher, and the running and willing of the hearer, would be in vain, and no conversion would follow it if the power and efficacy of the Holy Ghost were not added thereto, who enlightens and converts the hearts through the Word preached and heard, so that men believe this Word and assent thereto, **still, neither preacher nor hearer is to doubt this grace and efficacy of the Holy Ghost, but should be certain that when the Word of God is preached purely and truly, according to the command and will of God, and men listen attentively and earnestly and meditate upon it, God is certainly present with His grace**, and grants, as has been said, what otherwise man can neither accept nor give from his own powers. 56] For concerning the presence, operation, and gifts of the Holy Ghost **we should not and cannot always judge *ex sensu* [from feeling], as to how and when they are experienced in the heart**; but because they are often covered and occur in great weakness, we should be certain from, and according to, the promise, that the Word of God preached and heard is [truly] an office and work of the Holy Ghost, by which He is certainly efficacious and works in our hearts, 2 Cor. 2, 14ff; 3, 5ff....

67] Therefore there is a great difference between baptized and unbaptized men. For since, according to the doctrine of St. Paul, Gal. 3, 27, *all who have been baptized have put on Christ*, and thus are truly regenerate, **they have now *arbitrium liberatum* (a liberated will)**, that is, as

Christ says, *they have* been made free again, John 8, 36; whence they are able not only to hear the Word, but also to assent to it and accept it, although in great weakness. **68]** For since we receive in this life only the first-fruits of the Spirit, and the new birth is not complete, but only begun in us, the combat and struggle of the flesh against the spirit remains even in the elect and truly regenerate men; **for there is a great difference perceptible among Christians** not only in this, that one is weak and another strong in the spirit, but **each Christian, moreover, experiences in himself that at one time he is joyful in spirit, and at another fearful and alarmed; at one time ardent in love, strong in faith and hope, and at another cold and weak.**

**AC, Article VI: Of New Obedience.** **1]** Also they teach that this *faith is bound to bring forth good fruits*, and that it is necessary to do good works commanded by God, because of God's will, but that we should not rely on those works to merit justification **2]** before God. For remission of sins and justification is apprehended by faith, as also the voice of Christ attests: *When ye shall have done all these things, say: We are unprofitable servants.* Luke 17, 10. The same is also taught by **3]** the Fathers. For Ambrose says: *It is ordained of God that he who believes in Christ is saved, freely receiving remission of sins, without works, by faith alone.*

Ap XII. **28]** In order, therefore, to deliver pious consciences from these labyrinths of the sophists, we have ascribed to repentance [or conversion] **these two parts, namely, contrition and faith.** If any one desires to add **a third, namely, fruits worthy of repentance,** *i.e.*, a change of the entire life and character for the better [good works which shall and must follow conversion], **29]** we will not make any opposition.

**Ap XX Of Good Works -- 89]** The adversaries also add testimonies to their own condemnation, and it is worth while to recite several of them. They quote from 2 Pet. 1, 10: *Give diligence to make your calling sure*, etc. Now you see, reader, that our adversaries have not wasted labor in learning logic, but have the art of inferring from the Scriptures whatever pleases them [whether it is in harmony with the Scriptures or out of harmony; whether it is correctly or incorrectly concluded. For they conclude thus:] "Make your calling sure by good works." Therefore works merit the remission of sins. A very agreeable mode of reasoning, if one would argue thus concerning a person sentenced to capital punishment, whose punishment has been remitted: "The magistrate commands that hereafter you abstain from that which belongs to another. Therefore you have merited the remission of the penalty, because you are now abstaining from what belongs to another." **90]** Thus to argue is to make a cause out of that which is not a cause. **For Peter speaks of works following the remission of sins, and teaches why they should be done, namely, that the calling may be sure, i.e., lest they may fall from their calling if they sin again.** Do good works that you may persevere in your calling, that you [do not fall away again, grow cold and] may not lose the gifts of your calling, which were given you before, and not on account of works that follow, and which now are retained by faith; for faith does not remain in those who lose the Holy Ghost, who reject repentance, just as we have said above (253, 1) that faith exists in repentance.

**91]** They add other testimonies cohering no better. Lastly they say that this opinion was condemned a thousand years before, in the time of Augustine. This also is quite false. For the Church of Christ always held that the remission of sins is obtained freely. Yea, the Pelagians were condemned, who contended that grace is given on account of our works. **92]** Besides, we have above shown sufficiently that **we hold that good works ought necessarily to follow faith.** *For we do not make void the Law*, says Paul, Rom. 3, 31; *yea, we establish the Law*, because when by faith we have received the Holy Ghost, the fulfilling of the Law necessarily follows, by which love, patience, chastity, and other fruits of the Spirit gradually grow.