

January 2025

We begin another new year. But life still continues on. The question arises in the minds of some people as to who are saved and who are not. The question arises for some people wondering why God allows evil to take place, especially in the life of the saints. It would do us well to ponder anew the words of the confessions that speak of such things. How does one answer someone when terrible things occur? How does one reassure another of their salvation in Christ? We will look at this over the next couple of months.

Formula of Concord – Solid Declaration – Article 11 Election.

<sup>4</sup> First, the distinction between the eternal foreknowledge of God and the eternal election of His children to eternal salvation, is carefully to be observed. For *praescientia vel praevisio* (foreknowledge or prevision), that is, that God sees and knows everything before it happens, which is called God's foreknowledge [*prescience*], extends over all creatures, good and bad; namely, that He foresees and foreknows everything that is or will be, that is occurring or will occur, whether it be good or bad, since before God all things, whether they be past or future, are manifest and present. Thus it is written, Matt. 10:29: Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. And Ps. 139:16: Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them. Also Is. 37:28: I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against Me.

<sup>5</sup> The eternal election of God, however, *vel praedestinatio* (or predestination), that is, God's ordination to salvation, does not extend at once over the godly and the wicked, but only over the children of God, who were elected and ordained to eternal life before the foundation of the world was laid, as Paul says, Eph. 1:4. 5: He hath chosen us in Him, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.

<sup>6</sup> The foreknowledge of God (*praescientia*) foresees and foreknows also that which is evil; however, not in such a manner as though it were God's gracious will that it should happen; but all that the perverse, wicked will of the devil and of men wills and desires to undertake and do, God sees and knows before; and His *praescientia*, that is, foreknowledge, observes its order also in wicked acts or works, inasmuch as a limit and measure is fixed by God to the evil which God does not will, how far it should go, and how long it should last, when and how He will hinder and punish it; for all of this God the Lord so overrules that it must redound to the glory of the divine name and to the salvation of His elect, and the godless, on that account, must be put to confusion.

<sup>7</sup> However, the beginning and cause of evil is not God's foreknowledge (for God does not create and effect [or work] evil, neither does He help or promote it); but the wicked, perverse will of the devil and of men [is the cause of evil], as it is written Hos. 13:9: O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thy help. Also: Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness. Ps. 5:4.

More to come in February...