

## **The Bride Preparing for Her Marriage Feast**

The Bride, the beast and the whore, what a cast! Yet, that is what the Almighty God, creator and preserver of heaven and earth sets before us, who live at the end of time. By providing a small, but insightful booklet entitled *The Church in the Last Judgment*, Vonkenburg Study Aids has done a great service to anyone who is able to find a copy and takes the time to read it. The booklet is a speech presented in 1949 by Professor B. Holwerda of the Theological University of Kampen in the Netherlands. It was translated into English by Dr.P.Y De Jong, who was at that time Professor at Calvin Seminary in Grand Rapids.

As Reformed Christians who stand at the beginning of another year we look for a Biblical perspective on our lives. Sometimes we may wonder how our modern times compare to Bible times. How nice it must have been to live in Bible times, when things seemed to really matter. In those days events had meaning. But what about today? Does it make any difference if Mr. Gore or Mr. Bush sits in the White House? Is there significance to the Church if there is peace in the Middle East?

Dear reader, we want to join in with Prof. Holwerda who told that youth meeting in 1949 that we are living in Bible times. He assured his hearers and now his readers that God remains actively at work with His purpose, His plan. It is the same plan that He had Daniel speak about in Old Testament times. It is the plan that He has been busy with throughout the history of the world. This same plan is elaborated on in the Book of Revelation. Let us listen to some parts of Prof. Holwerda's speech in 1949. For they are words that also speak profoundly to us in 2001.

"You will remember, of course, that when the writer of Revelations speaks about the beast he is indicating the world-power, the universal kingdom. This is the attempt to unite all peoples and nations and races into one great federation and under one powerful political structure. This he calls a 'Beast'." Daniel saw four beasts, four manifestations of such power that had already arrived in history. John sees only one beast but it has the characteristics of the four beasts mentioned in Daniel. The imagery is the same. The beast is the manifestation of world-power, the universal kingdom. "If you know your Bible you will be able to glean from its pages what all this means. This totalitarian state and the world power you will find for the first time shortly after the Flood - in Genesis 11....And as you continue reading in the Old Testament, you will notice somewhat later the rise of the Assyrian power which shatters the people of Israel. Without interruption follow the Neo-Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, and the Greco-Macedonian and at last the Roman Empire, this last one known to John by personal experience. Thus the Roman empire of that day was the sixth."

"The Roman world is not succeeded by another...Rather, that kingdom is repeatedly broken up into a large number of great and small nations. This paves the way for the modern period in history...Throughout this period all attempts to resurrect the ancient world power of Babel are unsuccessful. This is tried by Louis XIV and Napoleon and Hitler but to no avail....The struggle for a world-wide empire, which has always inspired the devil and wherein he seeks his strength, seems to be frustrated for good."

“But John warns us: Watch out, lest you be deceived. Look carefully and believe God’s Word. For indeed at the time of the dissolution of the Roman empire the satanic organization of sin seems to have received its death blow without hope of recovery. But that which no one deems possible - in view of the perpetual clashes and conflicting interests, the permanent tensions among all peoples - will finally take place. The compelling urge for unity and federation will triumph over all particularism and national independence and pride. At last this spirit of unification will again embody itself in a world empire. Then, contrary to all expectations, that old monster which throughout the ages has blasphemed God and wrought death and destruction, will miraculously arise. At that time the spirit of lawlessness, which caused both Daniel and John to tremble, will begin anew. At that time the Church once again, even as Israel in the days of our Lord Jesus, will be confronted with the monster of sin which terrorizes the Church and tyrannizes over the world with a sceptre of iron. At that time everyone will worship that Beast in the form of its seventh head, the world government which has recovered itself from its deadly divisiveness through the ages and now reveals its grand victory.”

Prof Holwerda spoke in 1949 and could give clear examples of his time that showed progress toward new world government. The aftermath of the Second World War brought much talk of uniting world powers to prevent such a holocaust from happening again. He mentions the United Nations and similar organizations as steps in that direction. Not long after the Second World War many were concerned about the power of Russia and the possibility of nuclear war. Prof. Holwerda remarked that his generation should worry less about war and more about the impending doom signalled by the appearance of the seventh head of the beast. Today we, who live fifty years later, can add to the signs of the seventh manifestation of world government. Look only at the strong and successful unification efforts in Europe. We can point to the removal of the Iron Curtain. We recognize the emergence of one super power who considers herself an international police force. You can all add your own examples.

But Prof. Holwerda has more to say. “I can understand why John was so shocked by this vision. Yet, I believe that his perplexity actually had a deeper source. He was frightened most of all by that woman seated on the scarlet beast. You will remember that earlier in Revelations John introduced us to a woman clothed with the sun, having the moon under her feet, and adorned with a crown of seven stars on her head. This was the Church bedecked with the glory from above because she was enabled to bring forth the Christ into this world and to become the mother of the holy seed. But now the woman is clothed with the glory which is from below - with purple, scarlet, gold and jewels and pearls. And why is John so frightened by this? The answer is simple. This woman is also the Church, the apostate church who was the bride but became a prostitute... In this woman who has become a whore, that is an apostate church, the spirit of ancient Babel lives on. It saw no opportunity to incorporate itself in a world empire but recognized the opportunity to assume this form within the church. That church is Babylon because it does what the world empires have wanted to do since the beginning: seeking unity without believing in the promise and without concerning herself with God’s demand. While doing this she calls herself church, bedecked with the glory of heaven, even though she is Babylon. She seeks her glory in this present world and sells her soul for the treasures which pass away. Calling herself the wife of God and the bride of Christ, she is actually the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth, the chief prostitute.”

“This is actually the most dreadful of all. Therefore John pauses here so long. When the beast in its sixth head received the deadly wound and loses the opportunity for centuries to establish a world unity and thus a political international power, the church becomes throughout this period an international power and by means of her false unity manifests the image of Babel. Never think lightly about the apostasy of the church. John declares that she rules over the kings of the earth. In her apostasy the church has pursued earthly power and obtained it. Who really are in control among the peoples of the world? The leaders of the apostate church! The church is the chief figure in world politics. All the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her and catered to her. All the inhabitants of the earth are drunk with the wine of her fornication, for all men are intoxicated with a Christian culture which is actually apostate. You know, of course, that Christianity is strong in Europe and America. We speak of Christian Europe and Christian America and proclaim that all of cultural life is Christian. But who had power in Russia in the past? The Czars. Yet over them stood the Greek Catholic church, the prostitute. In Spain Philip II ruled, but the Roman Catholic church was in control. In France there was Louis XIV, but the prostitute really ruled. A century and more ago in the Netherlands William I was king, but the Reformed (state-) church committed fornication with him. Never throughout the centuries has there been a pure worldly political power. The actual power rested with the apostate church, the whore.”

“All wars and revolutions and social injustices and abominations are born within and are fed by the adulterous church. This underscores the significance of the creedal article on the true and false church. This demands the reformation, the return unto the Lord.”

“Do you know what I can never understand? While everyday and everywhere we see with our eyes the devastation with which the false church regales humanity - a devastation which produces universal sighing - hardly anyone takes the confession concerning “true and false church” seriously. If one only speaks nice words about unity and makes sympathetic gestures in the direction of ecumenicity, reaching over every ecclesiastical wall, then a person is praised as a fine fellow. But if one confesses to the truth about Christ’s church, such a person is accused of narrow-minded churchmanship, of absolutism, of fanaticism.”

“But what we can do is to make our decision about the church - whether we will cooperate in the abominations of the whore or whether we with Christ as His called and elect and faithful people will keep covenant with Him and with each other. We can decide whether we will perish in the judgment which will come upon the great Babel or whether with Christ we will triumph over the devil and his kingdom....and when we see the international powers play their political game, don’t throw your newspaper in fury on the table but listen to God addressing you in the specific facts: What now do you believe about the one, holy, catholic Christian church? Will she be bride or whore?”

“Who make history? Not the labourers who press their claims through the big union but the man who quietly keeps God’s laws in relation to his employer. The father who tells his children about the gospel and the mother who puts a Christian stamp on her family, even though everyone in the neighbourhood avoids them as somewhat peculiar. Not the cabinet minister who goes by jet every week to some important conference but the patient who has been confined for years to the same

small bed in the same small room and there clings to the testimony of Christ. Not the man who is very active in the ecumenical movement but the simple church member who in the hour of decision refused to tolerate within the church the slaying of his brethren and unfaithfulness to God's covenant and therefore was not ashamed of the liberation and not inspired by the striving for false unity, even though others called him narrow-minded and refused to continue as his customers. Do you ask about the millions? These you will find following the beast. Are you looking for the hundreds of thousands? They range themselves with the whore. But blessed is the man who remains faithful to God when the whole church denies him, who remains faithful to the brethren when everyone tolerates their slaying, who in word and deed believes in the church even when he has to stand alone. Blessed is the man who is small and bows humbly before God but who also stands up courageously and does not depend on man but takes his place next to the angels and in covenant with them proclaims God's word and in regal fashion keeps God's commandments, knowing 'as God's servant I together with the angels am setting all of history in motion towards the day of great marriage.'"

"For by word and deed he helps to bring that day nearer, on which God will say also to him, 'Blessed art thou, for thou art called to the supper of the marriage of the Lamb.'"

PdB

## **He will crush your head... the fore-knowledge of God**

*By Wayne Pleiter*

Throughout the year - particularly during the holiday seasons - numerous popular movies are released, destined for both the multi-cinema complexes and your local Blockbuster video store. To capture your interest and secure their revenue, Hollywood movie makers often release previews to promote a new movie. Over the past few years, the marketing aspect of movie-previews has developed into quite a science. Research indicates that movie-goers are no longer satisfied with only movie highlights. Instead they want previews to include the pivotal events that form the movie's main story-line. Essentially, movie-goers want to know what a movie is about by watching the movie-preview. The point is, movie-goers will be able to make an informed decision as to which popular movie to watch based on what they know beforehand.

To know beforehand is precisely the way the average dictionary would describe the word 'fore-knowledge.' And it is this exact definition that has caused many Christians to become confused about the theological concept of God's fore-knowledge. Out of ignorance, many Christians believe that God elects a person based on the fore-knowledge of them coming to faith in Christ Jesus. In other words, their action is not based on God's choosing but on His knowledge of the future events in their lives. Like movie-goers, their 'god' needs to see a preview of their lives and their actions to determine how best to respond. This is not the 'god' of the scriptures.

In the previous article, we went into quite some detail regarding the eternal knowledge of God, of which fore-knowledge is an integral and essential component. So why is it necessary for us to expand our discussion to specifically focus on God's fore-knowledge? Quite simply because it is very easy to jump to conclusions as to the application of God's fore-knowledge, particularly as it relates to the doctrine of election or predestination.

***Playing theological leap frog***

For many evangelical Christians, God’s fore-knowledge has come to mean that God foresaw that certain people who would be more flexible in their thinking and therefore more likely to positively respond to the call of the Gospel. Because God knew that they would believe, He decided to act upon their decision to accept ‘Jesus into their lives’ and predestined them to be saved. But this puts the cart before the horse. “False theology makes God’s fore-knowledge of our believing the cause of His election to salvation; whereas, [the scriptures declare that] God’s election is the cause, and our believing in Christ is the effect” (A. Pink, Attributes of God, page 23). By playing theological leap frog many have embraced a false doctrine – one which elevates the actions and choices of man but results in a reactive God who designed His decrees after watching the ‘previews’ of our lives. Instead, let us go back to what God has already taught us in Genesis.

***Fore-knowledge and the Gospel***

The story-line of the first few chapters of Genesis could and has been read like that of a sensational movie script. But this is more than just an entertaining story of Adam and Eve’s fall into sin, it is the revelation of the Gospel – a demonstration of God’s amazing grace to fallen sinners.

Adam had his chance to confess his sins as soon as he became aware of his poor decision to eat the delicious, but forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:6,7). However, instead of confession Adam chose camouflage, covering his shame with fig leaves and hiding himself amongst the trees (v. 7). By his actions Adam attempted to distance himself from his Almighty God. Yet God, as He walked amongst the garden, drew near to our first parents, and asked ‘where are you?’ (v.9). It was the perfect question to ask, and not because God was confused as to where they were. Rather, God graciously gave Adam the opportunity to answer the question perfectly with the humble confession, ‘Lord we are lost.’

When God asks for an explanation of their sinful actions, Adam and Eve - corrupted by the venom of sin - began to deflect their personal responsibilities by shifting the blame, to the ultimate deceiver, the snake.(v.12,13) While Adam is forward enough to blame Eve, and Eve the serpent, our God of justice addressed each of the responsible parties and pronounced upon them His curse. The serpent is accursed as a belly crawler and dust eater. The woman will bear children in pain and continually seek dominion over her husband. And the husband will have to sweat it out working under tough conditions (vs. 14-19).

As dismal and disappointing as the fall of man was, God was not taken by surprise by Adam’s sinful actions. Because of His omniscience God already knew that this sin was going to occur before He proceeded to create the world. But at the same time - if we can call eternity ‘time’ - God also planned the course of our redemption. This is evident when we read what is commonly called the mother promise: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” (v.15) These are more than prophetic words of the antithesis – the struggle between good and evil. These words are evidence of God’s redemptive plan through Christ Jesus. It would be at Golgotha – the place of the skull – where the head of Satan the serpent would be crushed. With His hands and heels nailed to the cross, Jesus Christ would spill his blood and die only to rise again on the third day, thereby breaking the dominion of sin. The promise of the gospel in Christ’s death would also cover Adams

transgressions. By clothing Adam and Eve with animal skins, God provides an apt symbol that blood had to flow in order for them to be covered (v. 21). It is precisely this act of redemption that gives the context and meaning to the theological concept of God's foreknowledge.

### *The Scope of God's Fore-Knowledge*

To further consider the scope and application of God's fore-knowledge, it is critical to understand how this word is used by the Holy Spirit in the scriptures. Only by doing this, we can understand its significance and hopefully eliminate some of the confusion. Starting with the Old Testament, nowhere do we read the phrase 'fore-knowledge'. Instead, throughout the Old Testament the phrase 'to know' is used frequently, and particularly as it pertains to God's personal relationship with His people. Our Covenant God is not an impersonal God and so when the scriptures declare that God 'knows', its usual interpretation goes beyond a mere acknowledgment or recognition of the subject to a deeper meaning that demonstrates a special affection or friendship.

This concept is demonstrated in a conversation between God and Moses, when God says "I am pleased with you and I know you by name." (Ex.33:17) To the prophet Jeremiah, God declared; "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you" (Jer.1:5). Even David understood the personal nature of God's knowledge when he professed; "O LORD, you have searched me and you know me" (Ps.139:1). Many other examples could be cited from Old Testament (e.g. Deut.9:24, Hos.8:24, Amos 3:2), but what all these passages have in common is that 'to know' signified God's covenant love or divine approval. This notion is intensified in the New Testament. Consider John 10:14-15: "I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father." Again, in the second letter to Timothy: "The Lord knows those who are his" (2 Tim.2:19).

There is an important principle found in both the Old and New Testament in reference to God 'knowing'. On careful reflection you will notice that each of these passages do not refer to the knowledge of particular events or actions. Rather the object of God's 'knowing' is always directed to the persons themselves. This same principle applies for the term 'fore-knowledge' for the scriptural references reveal that it is persons that God is to foreknow and not there actions.

The first New Testament text referencing God's eternal foreknowledge is found in Peter's sermon at Pentecost. We read: "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men" (Acts 2:22-23, RSV). Carefully reading this passage in the context of Peter's sermon, you will notice that the focus of Peter's message centres on Christ – the person crucified – and not the act of crucifixion itself.

The second reference to God's fore-knowledge is found in Romans. Often called the Golden Chain of Salvation (c.f. Chosen by God, RC Sproul), it reads: "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified" (Rom.8:29-30, RSV). Of critical importance in this passage is the pronoun that is used. 'It is not what He did foreknow, but whom

He did' (A. Pink, pg. 25). The fore-mentioned texts make the point clear that God's foreknowledge references the people themselves and not their actions.

If the foundation of God's fore-knowledge is not the behaviour of mankind, how does this influence our understanding of election? And what then is the basis for God's fore-knowledge?

### ***The Foundation of God's Fore-knowledge***

To understand the basis of God's fore-knowledge it is helpful to refer back to Acts 2. According to verse 23, Christ was 'delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God.' Here we read that the very grounds of God's foreknowledge are His definite plan, God's eternal decree. This is confirmed when the preceding verse is taken into consideration: "...that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose" (vs. 28). So the very foundation of election must be attributed to God's eternal decree, and not to His fore-knowledge. God foreknows because of His supreme decree, therefore election is not the result of God's fore-knowledge, but rather the cause. As the Reformed preacher so aptly states; 'God foreknows what will be because He has decreed what shall be' (A. Pink, Attributes of God, Pg. 26). This sentiment beautifully echoes the teachings of Holy Scripture as found in Ephesians; "even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will..." (Eph.1:4-5).

### ***A Critical Confession***

Understanding our confession of God's eternal fore-knowledge is not only essential in order to be theologically correct, but also critical to a true profession of God's absolute sovereignty. If our election is simply the Almighty's response to our decisive actions, then our God is not so mighty or powerful at all. If our own choice is the cause of election, then God loses the title of Sovereign Lord. This represents a warped view of God. A view that is unequivocally rejected by our Reformed confessions. As stated in the Canons of Dort; 'election is not based on foreseen faith, the obedience of faith, holiness or any other good quality' (Art 9). It is equally apparent that our election is an act of God's grace, firmly established by His good pleasure (Art.10). Perhaps the most convincing refutation of this erroneous thinking is found in the Canons of Dort's response to Error 5 of Chapter 1 (c.f. Book of Praise, Pg. 542-543). Read it, and you will be totally convinced by the biblical support to the Reformed doctrine of God's foreknowledge. Indeed, the everlasting gift of salvation is ours through faith in Christ Jesus. 'In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

For God's covenant children there is great comfort and assurance to be found in the doctrine of God's fore-knowledge. Unlike a movie-goer needing previews, our gracious God is to be adored as the sovereign script-writer for all of creation, and for His eternal plan of redemption in Jesus Christ. This gives us 'greater reason for daily humbling ourselves before God, for adoring the depth of His mercies, for cleansing ourselves and for fervently loving Him in turn who first so greatly loved us' (Canons of Dort, Art.13). We do well to marvel in the revelation of God's love for His covenant children. "By grace you have been saved through faith: and this is not your own doing, it is a gift of God" (Eph.2:8 RSV). Isn't that the Gospel Truth!

December 9, 2000

**Dear Editors,**

The speech/article by Rev. J. Ludwig: “The Unity of the Church” is another of many pieces found in the pages of Reformed Polemics. Yet, all fail to acknowledge one problem among the respective federations involved in unity discussions.

This one problem is avoided because it prevents the ‘progress’ of federative unity. In order for unity to be achieved under the blessing of Christ – that His prayer also may be answered – the problem that is necessary to be investigated is the disunity within local congregations and the federation itself of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

All the Scriptural passages referred to in Rev. Ludwig’s speech, as well as all others, are applied only to unity between and among the many different Reformed denominations throughout North America, and on a larger scale throughout the entire world.

Although not the first text referred to in Rev. Ludwig’s speech, the most significant one is the words of Christ spoken through John to the Church at Smyrna in Rev. 2:10: “Be faithful, and I will give you the crown of life.”

To whom are these words addressed? To the ‘federation’ of churches in Asia Minor as a whole, or specifically to the Church at Smyrna only? Of course the application is valid for the Church of all times and places, but the point is the local congregation of Smyrna was being addressed and encouraged with these words. Similarly, the other six churches received different words but the message remains the same; to remain faithful in all circumstances, God promises eternal life.

Do these words addressed to the Church at Smyrna exclude the call for unity among brothers and sisters in Christ across the globe? Not at all, but to limit these words to federative unity only, attempts to break down the definition of being faithful.

When God calls us to walk before (Him) and be blameless, this applies to our whole lives as covenant people, not only the activities we participate in that revolve around the day-to-day existence of the Church.

The most used text in most of the articles explaining Church unity is the one of John 17:20,21. The key phrase of Christ’s prayer, “...that they may all be one,” is the one used to point out the importance of Church unity. But is it used exclusively for that purpose only?

Although the words of John 17 show a ‘conclusive’ type of prayer that can be derived from the words of Eph. 4:3: “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” the question that immediately follows: “how eager are we?” The point is not our eagerness, but is there unity of the Spirit? Do we “all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...? Do we all confess Him with like mind to the measure of the status of the fullness of Christ; so that we may no longer be children

tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles”?

The reality is we are tossed to and fro. Many of us differ on many different issues – aside from the issues of federative unity. When there are opposite views on the issues, can opposing views reflect a united confession of Christ? If opposing views both claim a correct interpretation of Christ’s word(s) and faithfulness towards Him; first of all, this attempts to divide Christ. Each view will maintain that Christ says this or that, but the end result makes Christ look like He talks out of both sides of His mouth. But who would even dare to accuse our Saviour of such? I certainly not!

In order to “maintain the bond of peace,” we conclude that it’s better to agree to disagree on certain issues. But that creates a further problem. While only one view can be correct, to agree to disagree leaves the ‘unbelievers’ view alone and does not call for repentance, since the wrong view is in conflict with God’s Word. More problems arise when insurmountable differences disturb the bond of peace and are buried in the sand so that no one knows.

To be in conflict with God’s Word tends to alleviate the fact that conflict is in actual fact the rejection of the Word. One might say, “It’s only one issue, it’s not a problem.” But then to tear down one “block out of the wall of the understanding of Scriptures,” causes the entire ‘wall’ to collapse.

How then are we living stones? If the stones built on the foundation of Christ are missing, how then can we be built into a spiritual house? Instead of being wise men that build a house on a rock, we are foolish men building on the sand.

The rain and floods have come upon us. Are we scrambling to safety to avoid being consumed by these tempests? Or are we being tossed to and fro?

We like to think we are on the Rock, but do we strive to be perfect, as our Father in Heaven is perfect?

Finally, even though Christ does not work with human mathematics, we know that a negative plus a negative either equals another negative or nothing at all. Is it possible to add disunity and disunity, or add disunity and unity together to gain unity?

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love.”

If one of the ‘stitches’ of the joints knitted together is broken the entire garment falls apart.

“And no one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment and a worse tear is made. Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; if it is, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but put new wine in new wineskins, and so both are preserved.”

Do we want a repeat of the Doleantie?

In Christ,

Bill Doekes

Dear Editor.

### **ABOUT THE CASTING OF LOTS**

Permit me to make few remarks about the article on casting lots that appeared in Reformed Polemics of October 28,2000.

No, do not expect that I shall defend what I wrote in With Common Consent, p.347.

Let me try to shed some light.

On the quoted page I was referring to the filling of one vacancy.

When two brothers are nominated and the casting of ballots results in a tie vote, I call it improper to assume that, because it was a tie vote, some brothers might change their mind. We may expect that everyone who casts a vote has prayerfully considered whom to vote for. In my view it conflicts with this if another vote is held to break the tie.

I also consider it improper to let age decide. Age is not necessarily a yardstick by which to judge ability and suitability.

In that case I therefore deem it most proper to cast the lot, after having confessed to the Lord that we could not come to a conclusion. Then we ask Him to appoint one directly.

This “directly” has nothing to do with the interpretation given in the above-mentioned article. It simply means here: “not via a majority of the votes cast.”

As for the “appointed by the Lord,” do we not in every case ask of the brothers who will be ordained and installed whether they “feel in your hearts that God Himself, through His congregation, has called you to these offices” ?

What is the difference between being called via the congregation or, in case the congregation could not come to a decision regarding a duo that was presented by the consistory with the deacons, witness the tie vote between the two brothers, by casting the lot? In both instances, we confess, the calling comes from the Lord.

Making false oppositions contributes in no way to a serious treatment of questions.

W. W. J. VanOene