

Events
in the New-Apostolic church
which led to the formation
of the
Apostolic community

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Letter from the Apostles, Bishops and District Elders of the Düsseldorf Apostle District to Chief-Apostle J. G. Bischoff

Düsseldorf, 6th January 1955

Dearly beloved Chief-Apostle!

Deep anxiety about God's work moves us to submit the following to you:

It is now something over three years since you announced to the people of the Lord the message that the Lord had let you know you would not die and Jesus would come again within your lifetime to take his people unto himself.

You first made this known during the 1951 Christmas service in the parish of Giessen. Some time after that we received the stenotyped report of that service. This was duplicated here and then read out by the District Leaders to all the officials. The congregations were informed of this message and warned to prepare themselves quite seriously for the imminent appearance of Jesus and to behave in such a way that the Lord's coming could be awaited with joy at any hour.

Since then, the proper watchfulness and preparedness of the bride-souls for the day of the wedding with Christ, the bridegroom, has been dealt with in the services more and more intensively so that for a long time now we—the undersigned—have conscientiously sought in every single service to create in those entrusted to us the proper attitude of heart to this great event.

To our deep regret, however, we notice that from the highest places, and thus in all our periodicals too, the focus of the work for the immortal souls is more and more clearly placed not principally on constant readiness to meet the bridegroom, but on the promulgation of the message: "The Chief-Apostle will not die, the Lord is coming in his and our lifetime." And in this we see a difference from what we consider the most important thing with regard to Christ's second coming.

In our conception of the faith it is quite irrelevant to know whether the Lord Jesus is coming within the lifetime of one or another of God's servants or God's children; such knowledge makes nobody worthy joyfully to stand before Jesu's countenance. Rather do we believe that quite independently of any knowledge of a certain time for the appearance of Jesus, on his day the Lord will take all those who have let themselves be decked and prepared by the work of his messengers, who have adopted the spirit of Christ and, believing, have seized upon the Word of Grace, because Grace in the forgiveness of sins is the only righteousness which is valid before God.

We mention that we can very well believe that the Lord Jesus may come within your lifetime, indeed we are firmly convinced that we shall not be kept waiting much longer for Christ's second coming, as we fully recognise in their present fulfilment the various signs which were announced by the Lord as preceding his coming.

But we do not want to fall into the error, made by so many religious communities in the past, of announcing Christ's second coming for a specific time; for the Lord has never committed himself on this.—And even where, within the Apostolic church, such dates have been announced, these have proved to be the fruits of human error.

May we be permitted to draw attention to what you yourself wrote on this subject in the *Wächterstimme* No. 9 of 1st May 1932 in the article "Steiget herauf" ("Rise up"), namely the following:

"But now let us not fall into the error of many spirits in divine services: that of occupying ourselves with when this time will be. Although, as it says in the Acts of the Apostles 1,7, the Lord Jesus said: 'It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power', yet in their presumptuousness many people try to lay down the day and the hour of Christ's second coming. So far, all those who have done this have had to suffer an ignominious disappointment. For the Children of God it is not the main thing to know when the Lord is coming, but rather is it much more valuable that we belong to Christ when he comes, and that we number among those who are permitted to hear the great voice from heaven: 'Rise up!'"

And further, you say in this article:

"It is immaterial whether as firstborn who have passed away or as such who will be transfigured at the second coming of God's Son, we hear the gladsome call: 'Rise up!'"

We can underline your attitude of those days word for word, it corresponds perfectly to our Bible-based creed; for besides the indication given by Jesus in Acts of the Apostles 1,7, according to which it is not for us to know the times or the seasons, but that the Father has reserved this to his own power, according to Mark 13,32 Jesus said about this: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."

Knowledge of the time, day or hour of Jesu's second coming is thus unimportant. With wise purpose the Lord veils such things, so that nobody shall be lulled into certainty until shortly before the event, but he gives the warning to be watchful at all times and to pray.

What is indeed true is that if we knew nothing at all about your message it would nevertheless be just as possible to be watchful and prepared for that great moment; for with all our hearts we had already prepared ourselves for the fulfilment of this, the greatest of Christ's promises long before the message was made known. Since we came to recognise the truth and became Apostolic, it has constantly been the aim and aspiration of our faith to take part in the transfiguration of the firstborn or in the first resurrection and to be permitted to sit with Jesus, the bridegroom of our souls, at the wedding table in heaven. Thus, for all the Children of God who were filled with the same faith and the same longing, the announcement of your message did not make it necessary to change in any way, since in those days, exactly as now, those people were already striving to behave in such a way that they could await the Lord with joy at any hour.

It is well-known that the Apostles of the Apostolic church in England were living in what was really a proper glowing expectation of Jesu's second coming, but that they unfortunately abandoned themselves to human opinion to the effect that it could not possibly prove otherwise than that Jesu's appearance would take place before the death of the last of their number. They thereby placed themselves in the way, obstacles to the further, future working of the spirit of God. As it says in the book "Alte und neue Wege" ("Old and new ways"), on the basis of the prophecies that had been made they awaited the appearance of Christ hour by hour and laboured under the belief that the

Apostles then living (1863) would be sufficient to meet requirements. On the strength of this they would have no new Apostles in their midst and—as it rightly says in “*Alte und neue Wege*”—they thereby barred the door against themselves, and, as is shown by the past and the present, they ran into a dark cul-de-sac.

In his time Apostle Schwarz too received what was supposed to be a divine prophecy that he would live to see the day of the Lord. In the “*Buch für unsere Zeit*” (“*Book for our time*”), written in 1872, it says with reference to Apostle Schwarz: “In 1863, on a prophetic command of the Lord, he was sent to Amsterdam. Shortly before and at the time of his being sent from the congregation of Hamburg, remarkable prophecies and faces occurred in and through many people, such as that he would not have completed his career before the future of the Lord had taken place.” And in this book it also says: “And if the promise made to Apostle F. W. Schwarz, that he was to live to see the day of Christ’s appearance, is really from God, then, taking his age into consideration, the appearance of the Lord may be expected within ten to twenty-five years at the most, and thus in this century.” However, the promises made to Apostle Schwarz, that the day of the Lord would be within his lifetime, have proved to be human error. And if the Apostolic people of Apostle Schwarz’s day had been told: “Whoever does not believe that the Lord Jesus is coming again within the lifetime of Apostle Schwarz will not be included on the day of the Lord”, or if this promise had been taught as “dogma”, or as “irrevocable truth”, or as “the only possibility”, or as “absolutely certain”, then, on the death of Apostle Schwarz in 1895, those Brothers and Sisters would have been disastrously shaken in their faith. But there was no catastrophe because, according to eyewitness accounts of those who had already been sealed before Apostle Schwarz passed away, no particular display was made of this promise made to Apostle Schwarz, indeed, scarcely any mention was ever made of it. In those days they were tolerant enough not to make such things as being accepted or rejected on the day of the Lord dependent on believing or not believing in this promise. At that time the proper view was held: “If the promise, that Apostle Schwarz is to live to see the second coming of Christ, really is from God, *then* it can only be a few years until the coming of the Lord.” This point of view at least left open the possibility that God may have decided otherwise and perhaps Apostle Schwarz really would pass away. But nowhere can we read that those Brothers who did not preach the promise made to Apostle Schwarz were described as unfaithful servants, nor that Sisters who had the slightest doubt about the divine origin of this promise were therefore ranked with the foolish virgins.

We should also like to recall that during a big service at Dinslaken on 22nd June 1947, in which more than 4500 Brethren of the Ruhrort and Hamborn districts took part, you said, among other things: “I am not telling you too much when I mention that we have a number of Brethren, even officials, who have already received the promise from the Lord that they will not die, but be transfigured. And these too are divine promises.”

On the same day you said to us in the smaller circle that District-Elder Illig of Frankfort am Main was one of those who had received such a promise from the Lord.—But District-Elder Illig died on 10. August 1950, which plainly proves the fact that in his case there was no divine promise, but that the dream or the face which caused the District-Elder to believe that Jesus would come within his lifetime had been produced by the heart that so loved Jesus and by its longing for union with him.

We openly confess, because we want to remain honest before you and before our God, that, in accordance with the facts laid down in the Holy Scriptures, that it is not for us to know the hour and the season of the coming of Jesus, but that the Father has reserved

this to his power, we place the principal value on the constant readiness worthily to receive the Lord when he appears and that we consider it irrelevant whether Jesus comes within the lifetime of a particular one of God's servants or God's children. And after the errors that have been committed within and outside the Apostolic Church in the matter of determining the time of Christ's second coming, we consider it at least not impossible that such human error may also occur in the present.

There is no doubt that it is not quite right when for some time now all the Brethren have been told more and more definitely: "The Lord is coming within your lifetime." For if the message proclaimed by you, that the Lord is coming again within your lifetime, really is from the Lord, yet that is by no means the same as saying that the promise also applies to all the Brethren, that the Lord is coming within their lifetime. Since your message was made known, as is shown by our statistics, no fewer Brethren have passed away than did before. And of course one cannot maintain that servants of God and Children of God who have passed on since your message was announced had been less faithful than those who are still alive.

There is in us too the ardent desire that the Lord may soon fulfill our daily prayer: "Lord, come and take us home!" On the day of the Lord we too should prefer to be clothed anew without first being stripped; but, with the old Apostle, we say: "Whether we live or die: we are the Lord's!" Whether, that is, to experience the ecstasy on the day of the Lord we are living or have gone to rest is not the main issue for us; for us, the valuable thing is to belong to Christ and to be accepted by him in Grace.

The situation at present is that it is taught that believing in your message is the most important, indeed the only decisive thing in our religious life. It is taught that the proclamation of your message must be the principal content of all sermons and that officials who do not comply with this, although in holy earnest they pursue a conscientious preparation of their own souls and of the bride-souls entrusted to them, are unfaithful servants, who think in their hearts: "My Lord is not coming for a long time yet." Of ourselves we can only say that such a reproach and such a suspicion do not apply to us, for we simply have no such thoughts in us, as it is our firm conviction that the coming of the Lord is very near and we may expect Jesus at any hour. It is only that we do not assert that Jesus is quite certainly coming within your lifetime and ours.

Some time ago it was said in a service: "Even the thought: But if he does die, what then? is satanic." That, in our opinion, is not correct; for if in serious concern for the future of Christ's work of redemption anybody once entertained such thoughts or even anxiously expressed them to somebody, then such solicitude is really and truly nothing evil and is certainly not opposition to the Chief-Apostle. We are even convinced that among those too who preach your message with great emphasis, there are many who, in a quiet hour of serious reflexion, have at some time thought: "What indeed would happen if, for all that, the Chief-Apostle were to pass on?" Such a thought can, in our opinion, only occur to conscientious people seriously anxious about the salvation of their own souls and of others; whereas such solicitous thoughts probably never arise in those who are lukewarm and slothful, as these are indifferent to everything.

It is extremely grave that the message made known by you must induce more and more vehement criticism of good, pious, God-fearing and faithful Administration-Brothers and cause many of the congregation at services to set themselves up as judges over those Brothers who in their opinion do not preach the message, or not with sufficient emphasis. And when Brethren are urged to reject such Administration-Brothers, then that certainly leads to nothing good.

It has unfortunately already come about that Administration-Brothers and Brethren have caused disturbances and desecrated services with interruptions to the effect that: "We want to hear the message and such things." And elsewhere it has come about that Administration-Brothers have urged the Brethren simply not to appear at a service arranged by the District-Elder because the latter did not preach the Chief-Apostle's message. When such conduct on the part of senior Brothers is recommended and approved, then in our estimation that is revolution encouraged from above. And when the Brethren no longer come to the services to hear what they ought to hear, but to hear what they want to hear, then this leads to mob rule, to anarchy, and then, within the people of God, the situation in Laodicia is literally fulfilled. For such people no longer come to the House of God in order to worship the Lord and in asking to be saved to find strength, reinforcement, revival, admonition, preparation, guidance, consolation, Grace and peace, but in order to observe whether the Administration-Brother serving them works exactly according to plan and also whether or not he pronounces certain sentences. In this there is certainly nothing left of the sublime feeling: God is present! Whereas the Holy Ghost should dwell in God's house, to speak the will of God.

When the Brethren are encouraged to reject those Administration-Brothers who do not preach the message that the Lord is coming in your lifetime and in ours, it follows in consequence that, for the very fear of falling into disfavour, Administration-Brothers allow themselves to be induced to preach this message insistently and even to repeat it several times during the service so as not to be suspected of disbelief. And since at present all the Brothers who do not preach the message are described as unfaithful servants and must fear the loss of their office, there arises much hypocrisy and lip-service in those who, through ambition or human weakness or in fear of losing their office, have gone over to preaching loudly the message about the Lord's coming within your lifetime, even if inwardly they are not entirely convinced of this.

In our district any Administration-Brother may freely and without any hindrance whatsoever preach that the Lord is coming within your lifetime and ours, and we assure you that these Brothers are respected by us in every way and not treated at all disparagingly. We also make sure that this is the case on the part of all the Brothers. And it is true that we do not reproach any Brother if he does not preach the well-known message, as we do not by any means wish to exercise a religious intolerance which leads to all kinds of untruthfulness. We will not even allow any Administration-Brother to express an opinion against the message made known by you.

Thus we hold that differences in conception of the faith in this respect are absolutely no reason for mutual opposition, but rather that the one should respect, and can respect the other in his conscientious religious conviction.

And if the undersigned do not indeed preach that it is quite certain and an irrefutable truth that the Lord is coming within your lifetime and ours, then we certainly do not belong to those servants who say in their hearts: "My Lord is not coming for a long time yet." We believe firmly and confidently in Jesu's coming being very near, indeed we should be more than happy if we could soon experience the day of the Lord together with you; for we consider this as by all means possible.

We know that in many places the assertion is made that we wanted to separate from the Chief-Apostle; but to that we can only state: In the above we have submitted to you in all candour the thoughts in our hearts and our religious views, and it is true that certain differences of opinion compared with what you teach are expressed there; but that is absolutely no reason why there should be any rift between you and us, or even, as the

Devil and otherwise nobody else may well desire, that there should be a separation between you and us. On the contrary we are very anxious to be closely united with you; for we stand firm in love and loyalty to you and to the eternally immutable divine truths. We have only the plea from our hearts to you that in future on the points we have mentioned tolerance and forbearance may prevail in the work of the Lord and that there may be no more horrible discord between brother and brother, sister and sister, for after all, we all want to be preserved on the day of the Lord and that is the only reason why we have all become Apostolic, in order that, as those elected by Grace, we may live to see that so sublime, glorious aim of union with our souls' bridegroom as the crowning of our faith.

Assuring you of our sincere love and devotion,

your brothers in Christ

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|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Peter Kuhlen</i> | <i>Siegfried Demel</i> |
| <i>Ernst Dunkmann</i> | <i>Hermann Schmohl</i> |
| <i>Franz Behrendt</i> | <i>Wilh. Fürstenau</i> |
| <i>Friedrich Schrimper</i> | <i>Herbert Kloß</i> |
| <i>Friedrich Blume</i> | <i>Fritz Schombert</i> |
| <i>Reinh. Petzold</i> | <i>Karl Mehler</i> |
| <i>Hans Heitkamp</i> | <i>Christian Kraemer</i> |
| | <i>Hubert Geuer</i> |

Circular read out in the parishes of the Düsseldorf district on 16th January 1955

Düsseldorf, 12th January 1955

My beloved brothers and sisters!

In recent months all kinds of rumours have been circulating which are apt to cause confusion in our congregations. In many places, unfortunately, ugly arguments have been carried on about the Chief-Apostle's message, that the Lord is coming within his lifetime. From place to place idle talk is spreading in which the Apostles, Bishops and District Elders of our district are exposed to the most terrible suspicions. The consequences of this abominable gossip are evil.

In one parish it has recently occurred that Administration-Brothers simply told the Brethren that the service announced by their District Elder was cancelled, because in their opinion the District Elder had not the right attitude to the Chief-Apostle's message. Last Sunday in the same parish Apostle Dehmel was even prevented from conducting the service. The Brethren, who had been incited, assailed him, some of them in the filthiest manner, they threatened to spit at him, called him a deceiver, a swindler and a murderer of souls, they said he was not an Apostle etc. Indeed, they offered to beat him, and if he had not remained very sensible and calm even worse things would have happened in a holy place. The Brethren there were incited with the untrue assertion that

we Apostles and the other leading Brothers of our district did not support the Chief-Apostle.

In order to clear up any confusion we felt obliged to address a detailed letter to the Chief-Apostle, the content of which was made known to all the Superintendents in our district last Sunday.

Now so that no misrepresentations of this may begin to spread, all the families and all the single people in our district are each receiving a printed copy of our letter to the Chief-Apostle. These copies may be collected from the Superintendent or the appropriate District Priest.

For months conversations about the Chief-Apostle's message have here and there assumed forms which are absolutely abominable, for even if there are differences of opinion on this that is still no reason why anybody should abuse those who think differently from them. We therefore emphatically request that from now on nobody shall reproach any of the others when different attitudes come to the surface; for after all, all the Brothers and Sisters want to reach the approaching aim of our faith. Let us all rather pray for each other, be watchful and ready and sincerely call: "Come, Lord Jesus!"

In the name of the Apostles, Bishops and District Elders of the Düsseldorf Apostle District

Your Peter Kublen

Si tacuisses!

(If you had remained silent)

(Article from "Der Herold" of 15th July 1956)

An article, signed J. H., K., has been published in the New-Apostolic periodical "Jugendfreund" No. 6/1956 and in the Swiss New-Apostolic periodical "Christi Jugend" No. 11/1956. This article contains several fundamental misrepresentations of the facts, so they may not remain uncontradicted.

The reporter is well-known to me, and it is to be regretted that nobody in a responsible position checked the truth or incorrectness of what was written before the article mentioned was published.

Among other things it says in the article that one winter's evening the Superintendent of the New-Apostolic parish at Horrem (for that is who it was) came to the writer and placed on the table a telegram which ran as follows: "With immediate effect I suspend you from your office and at the same time I forbid you to speak in the X. . . District!" To this I declare that it is absolutely untrue that Superintendent Arenz of Horrem received such a telegram from me or from Apostle Dehmel or from Apostle Dunkmann. Such a telegram simply does not exist. But the truth is as follows: I received a letter written by the Superintendent of the parish of Horrem, Priest Arenz, and dated the 6th January 1955, by the way without any greeting at the beginning, and in it, among other things, Brother Arenz wrote: "Since you held your well-known district officials' service at New Year in Düsseldorf, the saying really applies to you: Whoso hath a full heart, his mouth runneth over—love, love, love! The poor Brothers came back entirely disappointed and informed me that after that great officials' service they have now taken

leave of one 'Peter Kuhlen'. Not only that: on 2nd January, on the beloved Chief-Apostle's birthday, the congregations in the Cologne district were showered with nothing but 'love', thus systematically killing the faith of the Children of God in the message and in the beloved Chief-Apostle. Now what do you say about that? With all my Brothers and Sisters I say that you are no longer our Apostle. Nor is there any question of Dehmel and Dunkmann any more . . ."

Priest Arenz had thereby quite clearly broken away from us Apostles and given up any service under our hands. Thereupon, on 7th January 1955, I sent him a registered letter which ran as follows:

"Beloved Brother Simon Arenz! I hereby acknowledge receipt of your letter of 6th of this month in which, among other things, you write: 'With all my Brothers and Sisters I say that you are no longer our Apostle. Nor is there any question of Dehmel and Dunkmann any more.'—As you have thereby quitted your service under our hands, I must hereby inform you that as from today you are no longer Priest nor Superintendent of the parish. You are hereby forbidden to perform any official duty within the New-Apostolic church of North-Rhine-Westphalia in the Düsseldorf Apostle District. I require you to deliver all keys to churches and parish premises and cash books, church books, cash sums and all other objects and papers belonging to the church that are in your possession by 12th January 1955 to the following address: Herrn Christian Kraemer, Köln-Zollstock, Vorgebirgsstrasse 352.

Yours sincerely

Peter Kublen

Priest Arenz's letter to me, by the way, may be perused at my place by anybody who wishes to see it. But nobody will be in a position to produce the telegram with the wording mentioned which Superintendent Arenz is supposed to have received, simply because no such thing exists. Just how, by the way, through our very specially working for co-operation in love and unity in the officials' service of 1st January 1955, faith in the Chief-Apostle should have been systematically killed by us, is still a mystery to me today. It must surely be a forced conclusion.

Then it says in the article in question: "So they proceeded to take our beautiful little church away from us. One day after that Sunday morning (it was Sunday 9th January 1955) there were different locks on the doors and it was impossible for us to enter. But our heavenly Father saw the faith of his children; it was not long before we obtained a large room in which several hundred Brethren could sit. The memorable event of that Sunday morning had spread through all the Districts like wildfire and that is how it came about that on Sundays our large hall was always full of Brethren on whom it was gradually dawning what kind of game the Evil One was up to."

The above assertions of the writer of the article are completely untrue in that admission to the services after that 9th January 1955 was not refused to one single Brother nor to one single Sister of the parish of Horrem, nor even to Priest Arenz. The door stood open to everybody; but Brother Arenz and the Brethren of the parish of Horrem proceeded *of their own accord* to rent a meeting-place and refused *for their own part* to go into the New-Apostolic church at Horrem any more after 9th January 1955. And then, when it says in the report that the large hall which those who had gone away from the congregation had rented was always full on Sundays from then on, then it sounds as if such were the case for a long time. What really happened is that we Apostles of the Rhineland were already excluded from the New-Apostolic church on 23rd January 1955 and those who

had run away from the church after the 9th January actually only met in that rented room on Sunday 16th and on Sunday 23rd January 1955, and that they again went to the services in the New-Apostolic church to which *we Apostles were no longer admitted*.

In the article of the two youth periodicals it says with regard to the Apostles' meeting of 23rd January 1955: "Once again the Chief-Apostle urged those men to perform their task in the way God wanted, but their hearts were hardened, and they did not hear his voice." This too is again a distortion of things, for on that 23rd January 1955 the Chief-Apostle did not say one word to us Apostles of the Rhineland requiring us to continue performing our tasks, but we were simply reproached and told we were no longer tolerable as Apostles in the Company of Apostles and that we had to be relieved of our offices. We were indeed given the option of voluntarily resigning from office, which we did not do since we were not aware of being guilty of anything. Whereupon, we were suspended from office and on the next day we received our excommunication from the New-Apostolic church. But there can be no talk of the slightest effort on the part of the Chief-Apostle to induce us to continue to serve as Apostles. The saying once uttered by Jesus to one Peter: "Strengthen thy brothers!" was not adopted towards us in any way at all by the Chief-Apostle.

In the article, J. H., K., further writes: "In the family evenings he (the Superintendent) slowly but surely instructed the Children of God and showed them the way of the Chief-Apostle. In that light it was for all of us without exception like scales falling from our eyes, and we realised where we were to be led." Is that not to admit quite openly that Priest Arenz systematically worked against us Apostles? And that he did that in a terrible manner is surely more than sufficiently proven by what follows.

On this account, on 13th December 1954 I sent the following registered letter to the Chief-Apostle:

"My dearly beloved Chief-Apostle! Below I give you a report on what has been done in the parish of Horrem, Elder-District Cologne II: on Sunday, 5th December 1954, District-Elder Krämer conducted the morning service on the basis of the text given in the official gazette. He himself writes the following about it:

'Soon after I had begun to speak one Sister stood up and left the church, and then three more Sisters. From the faces pulled by some of the Brethren I noticed they were looking in the direction of Superintendent Arenz. Then my words were interrupted by one Sister calling: 'We want to hear the message of our Chief-Apostle', and two more Sisters left the room, and there were renewed calls of: 'Speak about the message, we don't want to hear anything else.' Then two men went out. Then I broke off my theme and said: 'Brethren, please keep quiet, what is going on here? This is not the spirit of Christ and certainly not the wish of our Chief-Apostle. I am serving here with the bread he has given for today which is familiar to all the officials. Whoever directed you to act in this way is not to be found in the greatness of the service of Jesus.'—After this had restored calm I continued with the service and heard the Superintendent say behind me: 'These Brethren certainly do not find it good.' Then, when I had dealt with the passage where it says that the Chief-Apostle does not condemn anybody and has shown the greatness of Christ's example, I had the Superintendent serve with me. After we had celebrated the Lord's Supper and, many Brethren wept on account of the ugly things that had happened, completed the closing prayer, in which I sincerely begged for Jesus to come, the service was ended with a blessing. Then Superintendent Arenz stood up and said: 'Brethren, the Elder is now here and if he holds with the Chief-Apostle's message he can make a confession before you as to whether when he comes here again for an installation,

he will require the souls to make the new oath, that they believe in the Chief-Apostle's message, that the Lord is coming within his lifetime and ours—now he can tell us, listen! Then I said calmly: 'Simon, the service is over, and you have no right to put such questions to me here.'—Then I turned to the excited congregation and said: 'I regret and I am disturbed by the manner in which I have been received here today. This is not the greatness of the service of our Chief-Apostle, he would certainly not do anything of the sort. What the Superintendent says, that there exists an oath different from the one that has been used so far, is unknown to me. Any new arrangements, official letters, circulars, announcements and reports about his service our Apostle receives from the Chief-Apostle are conscientiously passed on to us by the District-Apostle, and the Brothers are witnesses that they receive these in full for their use.—

Brethren, I noticed this morning that even the pictures of the Apostles in our district had been removed from the vestry, and now, after what I have seen, I may indeed say: They want to separate our Apostles from the beloved Chief-Apostle by hook or by crook, and lies and misrepresentations of a mean kind are only just good enough to achieve this end. Thus, what has happened here had probably been talked over beforehand. I can only give the assurance that I do not leave the path of order laid down by God, that I have not put myself where I am now and that with our Apostles I serve the Chief-Apostle in love and reverence, and, particularly after the ugly experience I have just had, it is now even more my ardent desire that the Lord may really come today and none of us may be lost.'

From Priest Schunk (who even now is still an official of the New-Apostolic church), who accompanied the District-Elder, I received the following account of what happened: 'The District-Elder was conducting the service as prescribed in the official gazette. At least I did not notice any deviation. Then, when he said: "Who is greater, the apprentice or the master?" several of the Brethren stood up and went, as I later found out, into the cellar. About five minutes later, again several of the Brethren left the church hall. Thereupon the Superintendent said: 'Beloved Brethren, remain here and offer no opposition.' Then the District-Elder said: 'I know what is going on here, I have seen that the pictures of our Apostles have been removed from the officials' vestry, they are not wanted any more.' Then he said: 'The text on which the service is based is not from me, but from the Chief-Apostle.' Thereupon I heard a woman's voice call out very loudly: 'We want to follow the Chief-Apostle!' The Elder tried to explain that he served on behalf of and in the spirit of his sender in the Chief-Apostle, that in the many years he had never acted in any other way. Then, from the heating shaft, I heard shouts of: 'We follow the Chief-Apostle, we want to hear what he says.' It was only with great difficulty that the Elder was able to continue with the service. Then he had Priest Arenz help him. When the latter stood at the altar it was as if they had been waiting for this; the gist of what he said was: 'Since 1946 our beloved Chief-Apostle has preached that the Lord Jesus is coming soon, so then: Lord make us worthy to be accepted on the day! And since 1951, that the Lord is coming within his lifetime. Unfortunately not everybody has received and believed this message. In every service, the Chief-Apostle and the Apostles and servants of God faithfully following him say that the Lord is coming within the Chief-Apostle's lifetime, we too believe that, and we follow him. We follow the Chief-Apostle and those who are loyally united with him.'

After the blessing the Superintendent said: 'One moment please, Brethren, I have something to ask the Elder!' Then he asked him: 'Are you willing to ask at investitures whether the persons coming to be invested are able to believe the content of the new

article of faith?' To this the Elder said: 'I know of no new article of faith. If my Apostle instructs me to do that, I shall certainly do it. Besides, this is no way to speak before the congregation.' To that a Deacon called out from the entrance: 'Then you need not come here any more, we want to hear what the Chief-Apostle says and orders.' After seeking refuge in the officials' vestry in order to avoid the many questions of the Brethren, I heard a Priest say to the Elder: 'We can dispense with your visit, we have had enough of the nonsense you carry on behind the altar.' Even a young Deacon accused him of never speaking a word about the message, that he always went round the words and beat about the bush. I was glad to be sitting in the car. Whose fault is it? Abomination and devastation in a holy place.'—

After these sad events I called an officials' meeting last Friday evening for all the Administration-Brothers of the districts Cologne I and Cologne II in order to discuss these things, which are unfortunately spreading like wildfire, and to prevent further damage.

On Thursday evening I went with Bishop Schmohl to the home of Priest Arenz in Köln-Ehrenfeld in order to obtain from him an explanation of the incidents. It turned out essentially that in the service at Horrem things had happened roughly as described in the two accounts above. I reproached Priest Arenz for his abominable behaviour in disturbing a divine service, to which he said that he had not wanted to do this and that even in the service he had told the Brethren to be quiet as it was God's house they were in. And then I asked him how it had come about that the pictures of our Apostles had been removed from the officials' vestry whereas the pictures of Chief-Apostle Niehaus, Apostle Dach and the late District-Evangelist Pankratz had been left there. To this Brother Arenz replied that the Brothers had done that. When I remonstrated with him that the Brothers would not have done that on any account without his consent, he was silent and then he only said: 'It is just that I too have lost confidence in you.' I went on to say to Brother Arenz that I considered it quite out of the question that the Brethren had made the scene on Sunday morning on their own initiative, but that in my opinion they had been prevailed upon to do it. But he would not confess to that. I then went on to say to Brother Arenz that I had already held for some time a report in which a Brother informed me that he had first demanded the strictest secrecy unto death of him and of several others and then spoken to them in the most loathsome manner about us Apostles, the two District-Elders of Cologne and several Brothers. (This Brother said: 'When Brother Arenz behaved so solemnly, I thought he probably wanted to tell us some joke or other, that is why I said yes, but after the terrible things Priest Arenz said I feel it my duty to report this matter.') I reproached him with some of his statements this Brother had reported to me in writing; at this, he tried with might and main to present matters differently. Then, in order to get the whole matter quite clear, I found it necessary to have the Brother who had given me the report to give his own opinion on the various points during the officials' service.

Then, at the officials' service, I first described the events of the service at Horrem as they had been reported to me by Kraemer, Schunk and Arenz, and said perfectly plainly that such a desecration of the divine service will on no account be permitted to recur. When I mentioned that I had the impression and felt quite certain that the Brethren had been instructed to behave as they did during the service, nobody contradicted this.

I then said that, whereas I for my part attached no importance to whether my picture hung in the officials' vestry at Horrem, yet it was most indicative of the spirit prevailing in the circle of Brothers there when the pictures of the Apostles were removed. To my question as to who had taken the pictures from the wall and who had given the instruc-

tion to do this, there was no reply. Then I said: 'Now let somebody have the courage to admit who did that.' Then an Administration-Brother stood up and said quite casually: 'All right then, I did it.' But I could see only too clearly that this was said merely in order to conceal the cowardice of all, I asked him: 'Can you swear before God that you did it?' Then he replied: 'No, I can't do that.' A shudder of dismay went round the circle of Brothers when they learned what had happened at Horrem.

Then I took up some points from the statements made under the seal of secrecy by Brother Arenz to Brother Schmidt of Troisdorf (who is still a Director in the New-Apostolic parish of Troisdorf) and to other Brothers.

I asked: 'Is it true that you (Arenz) said: Our Apostles do not keep to the teaching of the Chief-Apostle, they deceive the Brothers, they are murderers of souls and they kill the first-born?' To which he replied that he had said *if* an Apostle did not keep to the teaching of the Chief-Apostle, then such an Apostle was a murderer of souls, a deceiver etc., but he had not said: Our Apostles! I then asked Brother Schmidt truthfully to give his view on this point. And the latter stated quite definitely that Brother Arenz had spoken in that way about *our* Apostles and not about just any Apostles.

I further asked Brother Arenz: 'Did you say: Apostle Kuhlen is like a snake, clogging everything, dazzling the eyes of the Chief-Apostle, spending a thousand Marks on flowers and decorations to make it look nice; but then they pack the Chief-Apostle into his car and are glad when the old man drives away again. They are scoundrels, and so are the Elder, Evangelist Abels and Brother Göpel. I have also had a talk with Mehler for a couple of hours, there is something wrong with him too, he does not toe the line?'—Brother Arenz evaded this question; no, he had not spoken like that, it had been different etc.—Again I asked Brother Schmidt to put his view on this. And Brother Schmidt most firmly declared that it was as he had reported and he repeated word for word the statements I had quoted to Brother Arenz.

Then I asked Arenz: 'Did you say: And I finished Bishop Otto off, and I am glad I did?' To this Brother Arenz said that it had been District-Elder Mehler and not himself who had said that Arenz was to blame for the Bishop's death. When I asked District-Elder Mehler about this he said he had said that a terrible scene Brother Arenz had made with Bishop Otto was partly to blame for the serious heart trouble Bishop Otto had. (In this connection I myself may be permitted to mention that after a bitter scene Brother Arenz and his wife had with Bishop Otto the latter had his first serious heart attack on the following day and this drove him to his sick-bed and then brought about his death.) To my repeated question to Brother Schmidt whether Brother Arenz had spoken this way or that, he said quite definitely: 'Brother Arenz said: 'And I have finished Bishop Otto off, and I am glad that I have.'

I further asked Brother Arenz: 'Did you say: The Chief-Apostle still lacks suitable forces for making a change. So I need men who support the Chief-Apostle. You must help me. We have loyal Brothers everywhere, in Horrem I have three Priests, in Ehrenfeld also three, in Bonn, Godesberg and Aachen there are also some and many more will join them?' To this Brother Arenz said that he had not said it in this way, while Brother Schmidt asserted that Arenz had quite definitely said such a thing in that way.

I further asked Brother Arenz: 'Did you say that our congregations were not informed of many things that were done, for example that the Lord Jesus had been in person to the Chief-Apostle and had shaken hands with him?' To this again Brother Arenz did not give a clear answer and Brother Schmidt stuck to the statements he had already put into writing.

I further asked Brother Arenz: 'Did you say: I won't have Apostle Dunkmann come to Horrem any more?' To which he replied that he had not said that for he could not deny entry to our churches to any Apostle. Brother Schmidt stated, however, that Brother Arenz really had said he would not have Apostle Dunkmann coming to Horrem any more.—

The whole course of these statements and counter-statements in the confrontation of Arenz and Schmidt was such that anybody must have the impression that—except perhaps for negligible differences—Brother Arenz really made these terrible statements.

Thus, the action taken by the Brethren in the parish of Horrem is more than explicable, for after the way in which Brother Arenz had spread mistrust against the Apostles, such a sowing must bring evil fruit. It is indeed very sad when at present such a brutal lack of consideration manifests itself even towards Apostles, and when in such statements there is a complete lack of any fear of God. But I am above these mean accusations, for I know that I am free of such attitudes.

Unfortunately I must tell you, beloved Chief-Apostle, that I know that Brother Arenz did not speak in that way on his own initiative, but that he has adopted this language from some of whom I would not have expected it. I have also received a report on this; but, so as not to arouse discord, I wish to mention no names. I only wish to make the very urgent request that no Apostle from another Apostle district may trouble himself about things which concern our Apostle district; for, as a matter of principle I do not do such a thing in the affairs of other districts. Rather do I consider that we Apostles do well if when people make any kind of complaint about their Apostle we refer them to the latter and cause them to talk it over with him, but do not take sides ourselves in any way or even make reports or give instructions. Do not misunderstand me, beloved Chief-Apostle, I do not want to reproach anybody, for somebody may have thought he must go to the help of a good Priest who had differences with his perhaps not so good Apostles. But that must not happen if we value good, harmonious relations between the Apostles.

As for the reproach that our congregations are not informed of many occurrences, for example that the Lord Jesus came to the Chief-Apostle in person and gave him his hand, on this point I have told the Brothers that we withhold from the Brothers and congregations nothing that we have been sent or told by the Chief-Apostle for them, that whether it be reports on divine services, visions, dreams or other testimonies, I pass these on conscientiously. However, I do not pass on any kind of tales related and adopted by some Brothers or other in other districts, the truth of which I cannot examine for myself. I only pass on such reports, events, articles of faith, directions, visions, dreams and testimonies, as I receive from the Chief-Apostle for this purpose. And of the way in which the Lord Jesus gave the Chief-Apostle the revelation that the Lord is coming within his lifetime, I could not give any further detail because the Chief-Apostle himself declared that he had no cause to give more detail about this. And I myself have not asked the Chief-Apostle to give more detailed explanations of this. Thus it was true that I had already heard here and there that the Lord Jesus had appeared to the Chief-Apostle and given him his hand, but that I did not know this from the Chief-Apostle and that I had therefore not passed this on so far.

The accusation has been levelled at Apostle Dunkmann that he said at Horrem some time ago that nobody could yet decide here who was wise and who was foolish, that that was reserved for the Lord to decide on his day. Now I have spoken to Apostle Dunkmann about this because he has been accused of thereby teaching something different from the

Chief-Apostle, who has already said who is to be counted among the wise and who among the foolish. Apostle Dunkmann told me that it was absolutely not his intention to say that it was not already possible today to recognise foolish people and wise people by their behaviour; but one who is now foolish can still improve and act wisely again, while another, who at the moment is wise, may be found to be foolish again tomorrow or in the decisive hour of Jesu's coming. He had meant to say: If anyone stand, let him take care that he does not fall, and if anyone is foolish, he should make haste and change his ways. Of course, if somebody wants to interpret something wrongly, then it simply makes everything wrong.

I also mentioned to the Brothers that unfortunately some people repeat and even put into circulation themselves all rumours of ugly things about the Apostles and faithful Brothers that may be spread by anybody. Thus I mentioned at the officials' meeting that one Administration Brother (to you I will say that it was a Deacon from Bonn) had made the assertion to his Superintendent that Apostle Kuhlen falsified reports from the Chief-Apostle and did not pass them on in their original form. I then said publicly at the meeting: Let the Brother concerned, whom I do not now wish to mention by name, have the courage to repeat that and to tell me which sentence or which word of statements of our Chief-Apostle I have altered in a report. Nobody spoke. Such is the lack of conscience of such people, who simply assert something, without any shame, which spreads the greatest mistrust towards the Apostles.—To this, I explained to the Brothers that reports of the Chief-Apostle's services held in other districts are reproduced word for word when they are duplicated in Düsseldorf. Reports of the Chief-Apostle's services held in the Düsseldorf district are sent by me to the Chief-Apostle in the wording taken down by the stenographer to be corrected before being duplicated, and the Chief-Apostle may well alter the order of a sentence and may strike out something when he feels he should, for, after all, that is his right; but the Chief-Apostle's own corrected version of his statements we do not alter in the slightest.—Indeed, I do not need to assure you of that, you know that perfectly well.

In the above, I hope I have given you a clear account of the events at Horrem and of the subsequent officials' meeting I convened.

Beloved Chief-Apostle, do stand by us, for it is our sole desire to proceed to the day of the Lord together with you and for that, mutual support is very necessary. We therefore beg your love and your intercession.

I greet you in love and devotion,

Peter Kuhlen

In response to this extensive report, I received the following lines, dated 17th December 1954, from the Chief-Apostle:

“In the last paragraph on page 4 of your letter of 13th December, you write that it is known to you that Brother Arenz did not speak for himself, but that he had adopted this language from some of whom you would not have expected it. That you hold reports about it, but, in order not to create discord, you wish to mention no names.—My dear Apostle Kuhlen, that is not right. When Apostles interfere without authority in the affairs of another Apostle District, then it is the duty of the Apostle concerned to inform me so that I may be of assistance, no matter in what way. I shall give you an example to show how necessary it is to clear up such matters:

Among other things, Priest Arenz also mentioned the names of Apostle Rockenfelder, then of my son and also of Apostle Hahn. When Apostle Rockenfelder heard of this he

took Priest Arenz to task and the outcome was that Arenz referred to what had been said about my son and about Apostle Rockenfelder and about Apostle Hahn in my reports on services. This led to the conjecture that Arenz was in correspondence with the Apostles named, which, however, is not the case. Of course, if not cleared up, this would be the cause of all kinds of suspicions and misrepresentations. It must also be borne in mind that in the report sent to you facts may have been distorted because we humans see and hear according to the spiritual state we are in. We have the best proof of this in our services. When one asks somebody afterwards what has been said in the service that day, one often hears something that was not preached at all. And it must also be considered whether the reporter in question is an opponent of the person on whom he is reporting. All these things play a part in the writing of a report. Such reporters seek to evaluate a thing from their own point of view and thus afford us much work which would not have been necessary. Nor must we ignore the fact that Satan tries everything in order to create disunity in the circle of Apostles. That is a speciality of the so-called rumour-mongers.

If I had wanted to react to all things of that kind, I should not have needed to do any other kind of work.

As I said when we were last together: If something unfavourable is reported to me, I ask myself: If there is a grain of truth in it for me, then I must improve. But if it is lies then it does not concern me in the slightest. - I have often been obliged to think of the Lord's words: 'Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come' (Matthew 10,23). Similarly, nor shall we be able to eliminate all differences; for this also depends on the sincere wish of the person concerned."

Thus the Chief-Apostle did not take up the essential points of my report at all, and in no way did we receive the support I had asked for.

District-Elder Kraemer had announced that he would come to the service on Wednesday, 5th January 1955 in the parish of Horrem. But the Brethren of the parish were simply sent home by the local Administration-Brothers, so that the District-Elder could not hold the service. Evangelist Polzin of Cologne (who even now is still an Evangelist of the New-Apostolic church), who accompanied District-Elder Kraemer on that evening, wrote me the following report about it on 8th January 1956:

"My beloved Apostle! Below I send you a report on a visit to the parish of Horrem made on 5th January 1955.

On Wednesday, 5th January 1955, I drove with District-Elder Kraemer and Priest Bornemann to the parish of Horrem. Shortly before we reached the church, we met three Sisters, two of whom went on without greeting us, but one Sister came to us. To the Elder's question where she was going, she said, while crying, that the Brothers had sent her home, because the Elder wanted to visit the parish. When we entered the premises, the Elder asked two sub-deacons whether they had sent the Brethren away. One of the two then said, as far as I could understand, that he could not appreciate the legitimacy of this question. Present in the vestry were: Priests Dunkel, Germendorf and Meuther. After an exchange of greetings the Elder asked the same question here too. Priest Meuther said in reply that he had sent his Brethren away because he did not want to have his souls served by a false spirit and because he no longer followed the Elder. The Elder pointed out to him that the souls were entrusted to the Apostle and entrusted to his care on behalf of the Apostle. Then the Superintendent, Priest Arenz, entered the vestry without greeting us. He joined in the conversation and accused the Elder of having had a discussion with Priest Schunk in which statements were made which were incompatible with

the teaching of the Chief-Apostle. As Priest Schunk had confirmed that to him once again, he also regarded it as sufficient grounds for no longer following the Elder. The Elder pointed out that this was a case where on sentence had been snatched out of the context of a discussion and was now to be used to reproach him. But Priest Germendorf then said that while our Apostles, too, outwardly preached what the Chief-Apostle taught, yet they kept a back-door open for themselves, in order to be able to continue preaching if the Chief-Apostle should pass away. They, the Administration-Brothers, of Horrem, would from now on follow only the Chief-Apostle. The Elder drew the attention of the Brothers to their responsibility towards the congregation, to which the Superintendent said with a laugh that the Brethren were of one mind with them. Suddenly, the door was flung open and in stormed Brother Rütten jr. in a towering rage, and he demanded that Priest Arenz should at long last finish and settle accounts with the 'former' Elder Kraemer. With the words: 'Not yet, perhaps later', Priest Arenz pushed him out of the door. Not long after that the Director, Brother Hassner, rushed into the vestry in the same frame of mind. He furiously demanded that Priest Arenz should think of what had been said and of the letter he had received from the Chief-Apostle and should at last finish with those from Cologne. But he too was put out of the room by Priest Arenz. Under these circumstances the Elder decided not to hold the service and said this to those present. As we came out of the vestry we saw that Brothers were standing at all the doors and spread out everywhere and were staring at us with icy expressions. The Elder then said he would like anybody who wanted to give him his hand as a parting gesture, but nobody did so. The Elder asked a Sub-Deacon standing outside the premises whether he too agreed with what was being done among the Brothers of the parish, and the reply was: 'In everything I follow my Superintendent.'

In the above I have tried to give a brief report on the course of events of that evening. I was deeply shocked by what I had seen and heard. I can only describe the spirit which met us there as the spirit which has always tried from the beginning to destroy God's work.

Most sincerely yours,

Otto Polzin

Then came the 9th January 1955 when Apostle Dehmel went to conduct the service at Horrem. About the events which took place in the parish on that Sunday morning District-Elder Mehler wrote the following:

"On Sunday morning, the 9th January 1955, it was my privilege to accompany Apostle Dehmel to Horrem. Apostle Dehmel wanted to hold a service in the parish there. The two Evangelists Abels and Polzin and Priest Bornemann had also been invited.

We arrived shortly before the beginning of the service (9.30 a. m.). The congregation was mostly gathered in the upper hall. A few more Brethren came along singly and they greeted the Apostle and us briefly. There were no Administration Brothers to be seen and—as we later learned—with their Superintendent Arenz they were sitting in the pew practically at the end of the room. I offered to accompany District Elder-Kraemer, who now wanted to go and see the Brethren in the upper hall. District-Elder Kraemer had hardly stepped out of the vestry when he was let fly at by a Brother (Schuhmacher) with the expression: 'What do you want to take as your text today?' District-Elder Kraemer replied: 'You must leave that to us!' To this Brother Schuhmacher said: 'I have an immortal soul; I require to be told such a thing beforehand!' The latter then went upstairs. As we two also entered the room, some of them jumped up from the pews and

drove us out of the room with threats of violence. We returned to our Apostle in the vestry downstairs and briefly reported what had happened.

After a short prayer, Apostle Dehmel then went upstairs with us Brothers. The congregation were standing and singing hymn no. 401: 'O ein glorreich Banner träget jedermann...' ('Oh, a glorious banner is borne by everyone...')—but in a march tempo and in a fighting mood, which could be seen from the faces, and from which anybody could immediately recognise that it was not being performed or sung in the spirit of Christ. Although after the third verse Apostle Dehmel gave the Director to understand that that was enough, the Director, who was at the harmonium, continued to play unconcerned. After Apostle Dehmel had spoken the initial prayer and read out the text from Revelation 22, verse 20, provided for in the official gazette no. 24, of 15th December 1954 for Sunday, 9th January 1955, the Director had the choir sing the hymn: 'Es steht wohl ein Felsen im Zeitenmeer etc.' ('There surely stands a rock in the sea of time'). The last strains of the hymn had not yet died away, and Apostle Dehmel was just about to begin with the sermon, when one Brother (Kimmich) jumped up and placed himself in front of the altar, opposite the Apostle, speaking in verse form about fidelity. At the same time all the other members of the congregation rose and set about leaving the hall. During this, there came threats from individuals to the Apostle and these persons specially distinguished themselves before the altar in threatening attitudes. The Apostle had to suffer abusive names such as: You are a liar, deceiver etc., and he tried again and again to make the Brethren calm down. But it was all no use. When the Apostle even said that an Apostle of Jesus had not been received, the clamour broke out afresh. In particular, one Sister (Germendorff) distinguished herself in even having the effrontery to say: 'You an Apostle? You ought to be spat upon!'—'We want to have nothing more to do with you, we are now only united with the Chief-Apostle. You may preach to empty pews here, for we are holding our services in a hall in Horrem.' Again another: 'This is our house; you have no longer any business here.'

The Apostle and we Brothers behaved calmly. But even such behaviour again irritated others, making them want to throw us out of the house by force, which of course did not happen, as in spite of everything our Apostle still tried to calm the excited tempers through love. It was some time before the last one present had left the house, whereupon we too left the church with the Apostle.

Finally may I add: in the time that I have been Apostolic (34 years) I have never yet experienced such happenings in God's work. One can only feel sorry for the Brethren of the parish of Horrem (even if a great many of them were not present). It is they who have been led astray, whom the Administration-Brothers, with their Superintendent in the lead, have stirred up with seeds of hatred and discord and incited to display such abominable and repulsive behaviour towards one of the Lord's anointed. And what is more, in a holy place! The Lord's words as we have them in Matthew 21, verse 13: 'My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves' apply here in their fullest sense. May our God have mercy on them; for they know not what they do.

Karl Mehler

Anybody who is not biased will be able to see from the above what really happened in the parish of Horrem and what position Arenz, the Superintendent, has assumed. That people are not even ashamed by means of the magazine article officially to glorify the revolutionary behaviour of the congregation and the desecration of a House of God

and in that article to praise the undermining work of a Superintendent against his Apostle, all this throws a characteristic light upon the present situation in the leadership of the New-Apostolic church.

Peter Kublen

Letter to the Chief-Apostle

17th January 1955

Dear beloved Chief-Apostle!

Early on Saturday I received your letter of 13th of this month, in which, among other things, you write: "I do not agree to the dismissal from office of Brothers Arenz, Haering and others as you did not observe what is laid down concerning dismissal in the 'General House-rules for officials and members of the New-Apostolic Church'. I therefore require you immediately to cancel the dismissal of the Brothers and to restore the former situation."

In reply to this may I mention that for my part I have not dismissed from office a single one of the Brothers who have become refractory in recent months. I have not even dismissed those who have insulted us most vilely. Nor have I dismissed Brother Arenz and Brother Haering together with the 21 Brothers who added their signatures to his letter to me. May I ask you to refer back once again to the copies I submitted to you of the letters from Brother Arenz and from Brother Haering and 21 other Brothers who signed Haering's letter, and to read them carefully; you will then see that these Brothers quitted their service under Apostles Dehmel and Dunkmann and myself. I merely accepted this renunciation of service from those Brothers, who naturally lost office by their refusal to serve. That should be perfectly clear from the wording of the letters you have received.

But when you ask me immediately to confirm the Brothers in their old offices, I have to inform you that I received your letter early on Saturday, I then wanted to discuss it with Apostles Dehmel and Dunkmann on Sunday (yesterday), but already on Saturday evening I learned that at an officials' meeting at Hagen Apostle Schmidt had confirmed Brothers Arenz and Haering in their former offices on the strength of a power of authority you had given him, without your waiting for any action on my part nor even to hear what I had to say about it. So I can say nothing more about the affair. I do not know what to make of such a manner.

And when, in your letter of 13th January, you write that you have given Apostle Walter Schmidt the task of taking over the spiritual care of the Brothers and Sisters who no longer want to remain in the care of myself and my fellow-Apostles, then that is a step which neither I nor my colleagues can grasp, indeed, we feel it is a slap in the face. It is quite certain that in each and every Apostle-district there are Administration-Brothers and Brethren too who do not share the opinions of their Apostle in everything. Is it to be the case in future that for every group of people who are dissatisfied an Apostle of whom they approve will be sent to them? And then, when there are six different groups who do not share the views of their Apostle for six different reasons, do these six groups then receive six different Apostles or has it so far always been the case that all are urged

to follow the Apostle appointed for them? What will it lead to if such methods are applied? There will certainly be chaos.

We sent you a letter setting forth our religious conviction in every respect and a week ago on Sunday we read it out to all our Superintendents. We had to give the Brothers an account of the various events which have recently given cause for all kinds of anxiety in order finally to put a stop to this ruinous harassing, as such revolutionary Brothers have not hesitated to attack us everywhere by the most abominable means. That there was system and thorough organisation behind the action of the Brothers concerned was only too obvious to us. So, in order to prevent new distortions and slanders, we then decided to make the content of our letter to you available to all the Brethren of our district and last Friday evening we gave these letters to the parish Superintendents to be handed out.

On Saturday evening—I did not return home from my children until late—I received a telegram and I also learned afterwards that Dunkmann and Dehmel, and the Bishops and District-Elders of our district had also received telegrams, in which we were required by you not to distribute these letters to the Brethren, as otherwise you would be compelled to take reprisals. We should probably have granted your request if in the meantime we had not already learned that all kinds of steps had already been taken against us, namely that already in the course of the week Apostle Schmidt had invited all possible Brothers who counted as “dissatisfied with us” to come to an officials’ meeting called at Hagen expressly for this purpose. At this officials’ meeting Apostle Schmidt then announced that in future he would be caring for all those who were “dissatisfied” on your behalf. (Which is, by the way, very questionable work.) Yes, at that officials’ meeting Apostle Schmidt said that it was true that I was still head of the district, but that the formalities necessary to change the situation would be settled in about four weeks, etc. From reports we had from participants in this officials’ meeting of malcontents we could see quite clearly what was planned against us; and then we faced the question whether quite simply to let ourselves be treacherously destroyed as villains or to bring to the knowledge of the Brethren our letter to you, which may be regarded as a small, modest defence of our attitude. We then came to the decision that we must surely have the right to be permitted to justify ourselves at least a little in this way and we did not cancel the distribution of the letters.

Is it perhaps for that reason that we are now condemned?

Many of the Brothers who were present at Hagen are busily going from one to another and saying that we have broken away from the Chief-Apostle, and this is having disastrous consequences which those who caused all this must answer for.

With the following example I will show you how slanderous rumours spread. At the officials’ meeting on 1st January 1955 in Düsseldorf, among other things, I said: “I do not know whether the Lord Jesus is coming before the end of this year, as nobody knows the day or the hour of his coming. What we should most prefer is if we were to go with the Chief-Apostle to meet the Lord before this year is over.”—Only a few days later, however, it was repeated by many that at that service I had said: „Whether the Lord Jesus comes again in 5 or 100 or 1000 years is all the same to me.” Such distortions are unfortunately much more easily believed than are our explanations of the reality, no matter how thorough they are. We have simply become powerless against such wagging of tongues.

Beloved Chief-Apostle, what ever will all this lead to, what ever will all this lead to?

At the moment I know nothing I can do, other than to pray and leave everything to the

Lord, for he knows that neither I nor my colleagues have ever thought of separating from you.

I do not know what else to say.

With sincere regards,

Yours,

Peter Kublen

Some comments on the Chief-Apostle's circular of 18. 1. 1955

The Chief-Apostle has sent a letter, dated 18th January 1955, to many Administration-Brothers and Brethren of the Düsseldorf district which deals with the letter the Apostles, Bishops and District-Elders of our Apostle-District sent to him. It also contains remarks from several Apostles concerning that letter we sent to the Chief-Apostle.

Among other things, the Chief-Apostle writes that our letter was written behind his back. That is something I do not understand, for, after all, I think none of the letters written to him by Brothers and Brethren are composed in his presence. But we did deliver our letter properly to the Chief-Apostle.

When the Chief-Apostle then writes that he had not seen our letter before it was made known to the members of the congregations, I must mention that that letter was sent to the Chief-Apostle by registered post on 7th January 1955, so that it must surely have been delivered in Frankfurt/M. on 8th January 1955, and that the Chief-Apostle acknowledged receipt of that letter in his letter of 13th January 1955. But the same letter was not distributed to the Administration-Brothers until 14th January 1955 nor to the Brethren until 16th January 1955.

Already on 12th January 1955 a letter was sent from the office of the Chief-Apostle to many Administration-Brothers of our district asking the Brothers and Sisters who no longer wanted to remain under the hand of Apostle Kuhlen and his fellow-Apostles to approach Apostle Schmidt for the future care of their souls. And already at the beginning of last week, on behalf of the Chief-Apostle, Apostle Schmidt invited several Administration-Brothers of our district to an officials' meeting on Saturday, the 15th January 1955, and at that meeting he made various announcements about the measures being prepared with regard to our Apostle-District and he issued various instructions.—

I will not take up other details of the letter; I will only say something about what Apostle Higelin writes. Apostle Higelin writes: "My consternation is due to the fact that at the last Apostles' meeting in Frankfurt Apostle Kuhlen gave us, District Apostle Dauber and myself, the firm assurance that he was completely innocent of the talks reported by Otto Güttinger and his assistants in their meetings. Their statements run as follows: It is known in all certainty that Kuhlen and his district will be the next to come to them and share their opinion about the Chief-Apostle's message.—Apostle Kuhlen was quite shocked at this and in exasperation he described it as a base lie. He said to us: Beloved Brothers, I used to be very good friends with the Apostles of Switzerland, and rightly so, too; we were Brothers, but now that they are acting in this way it is all over and I have nothing more to do with them. I stand by the Chief-Apostle and the message and you can tell that to everybody who spreads such lies or to those who hear about it and

ask you where I stand, that is my attitude to the Chief-Apostle.—He gave us the firm assurance that he stood by the message, for this was the point at issue.“—

As I read these lines, however, I was speechless at such untruths. When Apostles Dauber and Higelin told me that in the Saarland people were saying Apostle Kuhlen would soon be going over to them with his district, I made the following reply: “I have always been a good friend of Otto Güttinger; but since the break I have neither exchanged a word with him, nor written a line to him. I know what I have to do.” And to this very day I have not had any contact with Otto Güttinger, whether in person, by telephone or in writing, since the time of that break. And I have not made any statement whatsoever to Apostles Dauber and Higelin to show what I think about the case of Otto Güttinger. And furthermore, I did not assure them that I stood by the Chief-Apostle’s message: I explained quite clearly that I preached that Christ’s second coming was imminent, that I conscientiously tried to prepare my own soul and the souls entrusted to my care to be ready for that day and that I firmly believed that the Lord might come at any hour.—But as for believing that the Lord would come within the Chief-Apostle’s lifetime, I did not say a word about that, as I have never yet said such a thing to anybody. May this serve to make the situation clearer.

Düsseldorf, 21st January 1955

Peter Kuhlen

Recollection of the 23rd January 1955

(An article from “Der Herold” of 15th January 1956)

The Chief-Apostle issued the following invitation, dated 18th January 1955:

Convocation to an Apostles’ meeting

I hereby invite the Apostles to an Apostles’ meeting to be held on Sunday 23rd January 1955 at 2 p.m. in the Conference Room of the New-Apostolic parish of Frankfurt/M.-West, Sophienstraße 50.

Agenda: Discussion of the situation in the Düsseldorf Apostle-District. I hereby also invite the Bishops and District-Elders of the Düsseldorf Apostle-District to take part in this Apostles’ meeting. I should like all the Brothers invited to be at Sophienstrasse 48, Frankfurt a. M., at midday on Sunday 23rd January 1955. All participants can then have lunch here.

With sincere regards,

J. G. Bischoff

When we Brothers of the Düsseldorf Apostle-District received this letter it was clear to all of us that the atmosphere awaiting us at the Apostles’ meeting in Frankfurt a. M. would not be very pleasant; for, after various experiences in the last few days, we had to be prepared for it to be quite bitter.

On 12th January 1955, for instance, the following duplicated letter was sent from Frankfurt a. M. to numerous Administration-Brothers of the Düsseldorf Apostle-District:

Dear Friend,

Your letter has been received.—The Chief-Apostle has directed me to inform you that for the future care of your soul you are requested to turn to Apostle Walter Schmidt. The latter has been instructed by the Chief-Apostle to serve the Brothers and Brethren who no longer want to remain under the hand of Apostle Kuhlen and his colleagues.—Apostle Schmidt's address is:

Herrn Walter Schmidt, (21b) Rummenohl (Ennepe-Ruhr-Kreis)
Haus Roland, telephone Dahl 231.

With sincere regards,
The secretariat:

P. Weine

This letter, sent on behalf of the Chief-Apostle, and which, by the way, also reached very many Administration-Brothers of the Düsseldorf district who had not written to Frankfurt a. M. at all, revealed perfectly clearly that in Frankfurt a. M. the removal from office of the Apostles of the Rhineland was a foregone conclusion. Such an order from the Chief-Apostle, whereby Administration-Brothers and Brethren of one Apostle-District were simply placed under an Apostle who was not responsible for that district, without the competent Apostle's first being given even the slightest opportunity to say something for his own part about any complaints that had been made about him, clashed so violently with all Apostolic order and all sense of justice that, when these letters were shown to us, we were appalled and dismayed.

Then, as early as 15th January 1955, Apostle Walter Schmidt invited numerous Administration-Brothers of the Düsseldorf-District to an officials' meeting at Hagen in which, on behalf of the Chief-Apostle, he confirmed in their former offices and again endowed with their old functions a number of Administration-Brothers who had resigned on the grounds that they no longer wanted to serve under Apostles Kuhlen, Dehmel and Dunkmann because the latter did not stand by the Chief-Apostle's "message".—It has probably never happened before that Administration-Brothers who have tendered their resignations to their Apostle have been confirmed in their offices again by an Apostle of another district although those Brothers still live in the district and in a parish of the Apostle under whom they have refused to continue performing their official duties. What indeed would Apostle Walter Schmidt say if some Administration-Brothers in his district were to tell him categorically that they rejected him as their Apostle and that they would no longer serve under him, and if then, without his knowledge and without having talked it over with him, Apostle Weinmann of the Hamburg district, for instance, were to confirm those Brothers again in their former offices? Would Apostle Schmidt not rightly begin to have his doubts about his fellow-Apostle Weinmann? And would he not despair of the Chief-Apostle, who had ordered an Apostle to act in such an unbrotherly and incorrect way towards him? I should not like any of the Apostles who are perhaps sitting in judgement over us today to experience such a thing.

At the officials' meeting of 15th January 1955 Apostle Walter Schmidt also announced that it was true that Kuhlen was at the time still head of the Düsseldorf Apostle-District and counted as such with the government of Northrhine-Westphalia, but that the formalities necessary to change this state of affairs would be settled in about four weeks.—Was not the plan to remove Kuhlen and his closest colleagues thereby quite openly announced? Of course those present at that officials' meeting at Hagen were told to keep

silence about what was said there. Nevertheless, from some who were actually there at the time we have received precise oral and written accounts of what happened at that meeting.—And when, late in the afternoon of 15th January 1955, we learned of all that had happened at that officials' meeting, it was as clear as day to us that we had fallen completely out of favour in Frankfurt and that our removal was now only a matter of form, and that we could expect it in the next few days.

On the evening of 15th January 1955 we received a telegram saying: "I seriously warn you against distributing your letter to the members, as this would compel me to take reprisals.

Regards, *J. G. Bischoff*"

That letter from the Apostles, Bishops and District-Elders of the Düsseldorf Apostle-District to the Chief-Apostle, which they sought to prevent us from distributing to the Brethren of the Düsseldorf district by threatening to take action without saying what action, contained nothing, simply nothing at all that encroached upon the authority of the Chief-Apostle or that could be interpreted as a revolt against him. Any unbiased reader of that letter will agree that it is composed with full respect for the Chief-Apostle. Why then were we not permitted to distribute that letter among our Brethren, although the assurance was quite positively contained in it that we were most anxious to remain united with the Chief-Apostle and to stand by him in love and faithfulness? In it we had only put forward the request that from now on there should be tolerance and forbearance towards those who for reasons of conscience did not want to preach the Chief-Apostle's message, that he would not die and that the Lord would come again during his lifetime, and that in future there should not be a bitter feud between Brother and Brother on this account. Even though in that letter of 6th January 1955 to the Chief-Apostle there is nothing that ought not to be read by everyone who is Apostolic, we should have desisted from handing it out to the Brethren of the Düsseldorf district if, at the moment of receiving the Chief-Apostle's telegram, we had not realised without a shadow of doubt that we were to be ousted by force and that we were certainly only forbidden to distribute the letter so that we should be left without any opportunity to justify ourselves. So then we really could not do anything other than make the letter known to our Brethren so that they might be informed about the situation as it really was and not fall victim to all kinds of evil rumours circulated about us. When we distributed the letter in spite of the Chief-Apostle's telegram, it was done in despair over everything that had been done to us from Frankfurt in order to oust us.

On 17th January 1955 Brother Werner Döpke of Duisdorf bei Bonn, Hintere Aue 7, sent to numerous members of the New-Apostolic congregation in Bonn a letter in which he stated that Apostles Kuhlen, Dehmel and Dunkmann and all the Bishops and District-Elders of the Düsseldorf Apostle-District had been relieved of their offices with immediate effect; he had been told this by Apostle Friedrich Bischoff—son of the Chief-Apostle—and by Bishop Weine—secretary to the Chief-Apostle—by telephone from Frankfurt. The letter continues with the following words: "Until we have further notice from our beloved Chief-Apostle, Apostle Schmidt of Dortmund-Hagen has taken over the Düsseldorf Apostle-District. The Chief-Apostle has instructed that our former Superintendents and all who side with Mr. Peter Kuhlen are not to conduct any more of our services. As from Sunday they have no right to do so."

Thus that Brother Döpke had been given information from Frankfurt about what was

already regarded in Frankfurt as an accomplished fact with a clarity that left nothing to be desired.

A few days before 23rd January 1955 most of the New-Apostolic families of the Düsseldorf district (all the subscribers to the periodical "Unsere Familie") received from the Chief-Apostle a printed circular, dated 18th January 1955, with extracts from letters written by several Apostles giving their observations on the letter of 6th January 1955 from the Apostles, Bishops and District-Elders of the Düsseldorf district which the Chief-Apostle had sent to the Apostles on 11th January 1955 asking for their comments.—Many of the Apostles' comments on our letter of 6th January 1955 were so abusive, devoid of any impartiality or courtesy, not to mention showing any sense of Apostolic brotherliness, that it was evident that the purpose of that circular was to make all the Administration-Brothers and Brethren of the Düsseldorf district regard us as evil-doers and then separate from us.

And then we were invited to Frankfurt on 23rd January 1955 for a "discussion"!

After all this there was hardly any doubt for us but that the "discussion" in Frankfurt was no more than a formality and had only been called for the sake of appearances. As we travelled on the fast train to Frankfurt a. M. on the morning of 23rd January 1955 we had only very little hope left that there might be just a little readiness to seek agreement. In view of what had happened we feared that we should be handled mercilessly, because—in our view of the situation—that had long been planned by certain people, and that at this "discussion" it was intended to throw us out.

Now let us turn to an extract from the report of a District-Elder who took part in the "discussion" at the Apostles' meeting. He wrote:

"That Sunday came. A solemn, earnest expression, together with the dark signs of sleepless nights, marked the faces of our Apostles, indeed, of every one of the men of the Düsseldorf district, as we travelled on the fast train to Frankfurt a. M. After we had had lunch in the waiting-room at Frankfurt we made our way with mixed feelings to the church building, Sophienstrasse 50. We Brothers from the Düsseldorf district were the first to arrive there and we took our seats in the conference room. I was in the church in Frankfurt for the first time in my life; but when I saw the manner in which Apostles I know greeted our Apostles, I sensed nothing good in a holy place. In the conference room Apostles Kuhlen, Dehmel and Dunkmann and the Bishops and District-Elders of the Düsseldorf district had been shown to their places at a table which all the other Apostles had to pass, but . . . some Apostles gave our Apostles an embarrassed and awkward shake of the hand, while other Apostles walked past our Apostles without greeting them, or only nodded to them. One of them even went past our Apostles with his face turned away from them. The Chief-Apostle, his son, Apostle Friedrich Bischoff, and his secretary, Bishop Weine, took their seats at a table placed across the head of the first. The other Apostles sat at several tables, all apart from our Apostles. With the strict segregation of our Apostles and those accompanying them from the other Apostles and with the growing strangeness in the atmosphere, I could not help feeling: this does not look like a "discussion", it looks much more like a "court".

The Chief-Apostle opened the meeting at 2 p. m. with a prayer. Then he greeted those present and read out a written account of what had occurred in the Düsseldorf Apostle-District, which his son had taken from a folder. But alas! What we heard was a complete misrepresentation of the facts. One accusation after another against Apostle Kuhlen and his colleagues. Among other things it said: "Gross disobedience towards the Chief-Apostle, deliberately undermining his teaching, antagonistic action towards the promise

that had been made, everywhere the "message" had been received joyfully, excepting only in the Düsseldorf-Apostle-District; Kuhlen and his colleagues had thereby caused trouble and confusion in the district and had split it up . . ."

We felt something sinister about these accusations, for the things we had experienced were a complete contradiction of the reproaches being made here.

Then the Bishops and District-Elders were requested to leave the conference room. We were led across the yard into the administration office, where, in spite of the daylight—it was 2.15 p.m.—the shutters were closed and the electric light was burning. I personally had to struggle with the bitter feeling that here I was not regarded as a District-Elder and minister of the New-Apostolic church, but that with my Brothers I was a "prisoner on remand" against whom grave charges had been brought. But was it a question of me? Was it a question of us? No, Christ's teaching was at stake. In our silent struggle in prayer we were all one.

At 2.30 p.m. our Apostles were led to us in the offices and they sat down, earnest and silent. No word was spoken, but much was cried out to God in silent prayer.

At 3.25 p.m., after an agonising wait, somebody came and took our Apostles over there. What did this mean? What would happen to them?

After barely 10 minutes Apostle Rockenfelder opened the door and behind him there stood, pale and deadly earnest, our Apostles already in their hats and coats. What had happened?

"The Chief-Apostle has asked me to show the Brothers in", said Apostle Rockenfelder, and we crossed the yard to take our seats again in the conference room. Then the Chief-Apostle came to our table and said he wanted to address a few words to us by way of "orientation" in this serious matter before we came to a final decision. He spoke about the choice of Apostle Kuhlen as the Chief-Apostle's successor and gave a distorted account of the events concerning this question. And anyway—what had the question of a successor or the office of assistant Chief-Apostle to do with the "message", for the sake of which our Apostles and we had been accused?

The Chief-Apostle then assured us that he loved us all and that the Lord Jesus had granted him the revelation that he would come again within his lifetime, that this "message" was joyfully received and believed everywhere except in the Düsseldorf Apostle-District.—Now he had placed the Düsseldorf district under the direction of Apostle Walter Schmidt, and he urged us to co-operate with him. He would also advise us not to close the door behind us and then to think of him too, the old Chief-Apostle.

With sweet-sounding words the Chief-Apostle—our Chief-Apostle—wanted to prejudice us against our Apostles. That killed the respect I had had for the Chief-Apostle, for nothing had come of the "discussion" that had been announced; the Chief-Apostle did not speak one single word of love, the other Apostles did not speak a single word, we were not asked one single thing nor were we allowed to speak one single word.

The Chief-Apostle then returned to the head table. There was a deathly silence in the room when he said: "Well, what now?" Apostle Friedrich Bischoff answered: "The resolution!" Then the Chief-Apostle said: "Apostle Hahn can read it." Apostle Hahn stood up and asked: "Which, beloved Chief-Apostle, the first or the last?" The Chief-Apostle replied: "The last!"

"How strange", I thought, "have they various resolutions there then?" From his folder Apostle Friedrich Bischoff gave Apostle Hahn the papers and the latter read out the resolution of the Apostles' meeting in a loud, harsh voice:

"Apostle Kuhlen is removed from the office of Chairman of the 'Land' management

committee of the New-Apostolic church of Northrhine-Westphalia.—Apostle Kuhlen is dismissed from the office of District-Apostle and Apostles Dehmel and Dunkmann are dismissed from the office of Apostle, which means their membership of the body of Apostles is cancelled.—Apostles Kuhlen, Dehmel and Dunkmann are excommunicated from the New-Apostolic church.—The Bishops and District-Elders of the Düsseldorf Apostle-District are suspended from office. With the consent of the Chief-Apostle, District-Apostle Schmidt may decide on the possibility of using them again.”

Each of those words struck my mind like a blow from a cudgel on one who is defenceless and is begging for help. Was this the “*seat of mercy*” of Christ? No, here was a “*seat of judgement*”.

Now the Chief-Apostle spoke again: “You have heard what has been decided. If I said before that you could, in the end, continue to work under Apostle Schmidt, I will again urge you: give it a try with Apostle Schmidt, you will definitely come to know a different Apostle Schmidt from the one you know now.”

I thought: “What sort of methods are these? Are there such terrible things here?”

We twelve Brothers of the Düsseldorf Apostle-District stood up; we had never felt nearer to our Apostles than we did then with them outside, waiting for us, but there—we did not belong there any more. We went, one after the other, to the Chief-Apostle, shook his hand as a parting gesture and left the “discussion” of the situation in the Düsseldorf Apostle-District.

Shocked to the depths of our souls by the spectacle we had experienced, at about 4 p.m. we stepped out into the street, where our Apostles were waiting for us. As I went to Apostle Kuhlen, I said: “That was terrible!” To his question: “What else happened, then, while you were there?” I replied that it was inconceivable that our Apostles had been removed from office and excommunicated from the New-Apostolic church. “What?” said Apostle Kuhlen, “we know nothing about that. It was suggested to us that we might ‘voluntarily’ resign from office.” Apostles Dehmel and Dunkmann confirmed that there had been no talk of excommunication. When had that been decided then? Had that resolution perhaps already existed before the Apostles’ meeting, and had they merely waited to see whether our Apostles would follow their suggestion and “*voluntarily*” resign from office? For the resolution cannot have been taken in the time between our Apostles’ leaving the conference and our being re-admitted to the meeting, as there had not been even one minute between the two.

Not until we were on the way to the station did we learn from our Apostles what had taken place after we had been ushered out of the Apostles’ meeting. Apostle Kuhlen had spoken briefly, replying to the accusations brought by the Chief-Apostle, and he handed round his written statement to all the Apostles. After Apostle Kuhlen had made his statement, in which he specially pointed out that the Chief-Apostle had unfortunately hardly sent letters from people making accusations against the Apostles to the latter so that they could examine them and justify themselves, but that instead he had given his support by letter to those accusers, the Chief-Apostle then said: “Well, well, so I am to blame then. That reminds me of once when somebody was bitten by a dog and sued the owner of the dog for damages. Some time later he was asked by a friend how the case had been decided at court. And the man who had been bitten by the dog said he had lost the case; in court it had been made to look as if he, the plaintiff, had bitten the dog.” Our Apostles were shocked that in this earnest situation the Chief-Apostle could tell so completely inappropriate a story. And several other *Apostles* laughed or grinned at it. Then, as has already been said, at 2.30 p.m. our Apostles were obliged to leave the con-

ference room. When, at 3.25 p.m., they were again called back into the room, Apostle Hahn read out the resolution of the company of Apostles: Through their fundamental disagreement on the teaching of the faith and flagrant disobedience towards the Chief-Apostle they had caused disastrous confusion in the Düsseldorf Apostle-District. The official position of Apostles Kuhlen, Dehmel and Dunkmann in the circle of Apostles had become intolerable and it was impossible for them to remain in office. Apostles Kuhlen, Dehmel and Dunkmann were recommended to resign "voluntarily" and they were asked to give their decision on this.

In the face of this outrageous suggestion, that they should voluntarily resign from office without even feeling guilty in the slightest and in the knowledge that they had not offended against the duties of their office, there could be no other decision for our Apostles but to reject it. So Apostle Kuhlen said: "I have nothing more to say about that." Apostles Dehmel and Dunkmann said the same too, and all three left the room where a discussion was supposed to take place, but where there was no talk whatsoever of common discussion or mutual exchange.

The fact is that the Chief-Apostle did not try with one single sentence to bring about any agreement with our Apostles, that he did not make one single suggestion to help find a settlement, that he did not make the slightest effort to build a bridge from heart to heart, that he gave no indication whatsoever that he was prepared to continue to work together with our Apostles. On the contrary: all that the Chief-Apostle offered our Apostles was blame. And if, later, word was passed round by holders of high offices that the Chief-Apostle had stood weeping before our Apostles to beg them to follow him, our Apostles quite decidedly deny that; for, in the presence of our Apostles, the Chief-Apostle neither shed one tear nor even offered his hand in the least possible gesture towards working together with our Apostles.

Now we knew what had taken place in our absence. It was becoming increasingly clear what a frivolous game had been played. We continued our report, telling our Apostles of the suspending of the Bishops and District-Elders, of the Chief-Apostle's assertion that he had loved Apostle Kuhlen very much, and, in contradiction to this, of his disgraceful suggestion to us that we should turn on our Apostles from behind, of his invitation to continue our service under Apostle Schmidt, and of his encouraging us to teach what has never been for us a divine "message".

We had tasted the fruit of that "message" and the love of the "messenger". Truly it had nothing in common with Jesu's message: "Love the Lord thy God above all things and thy neighbour as thyself." And thus we came to our unanimous, determined resolution, which we wrote down in the station waiting-room at Frankfurt a. M.: "We hereby unanimously declare that we remain, as ever, true to our Apostles Kuhlen, Dehmel and Dunkmann and to the pure teaching of Christ preached by these Apostles. We refuse to serve under Apostle Walter Schmidt."

That letter was immediately sent to the Chief-Apostle. With our Apostles, we all felt we had been treated coldly and unlovingly, unjustly and unmercifully condemned, relentlessly banished, outlawed and outcast.

But we also feel something else, something glorious:

We were firmly united in brotherly love!

Knowing that God does not abandon any of his servants who are prepared under all circumstances to stand by H I M and the eternal Gospel of his beloved Son, we made our way home.

That was the letter from the District-Elder.

I should just like to add a little:

In the minutes of the Apostles' meeting of 23rd January 1955, which we set eyes upon at the beginning of March 1955, it says: "Apostle Hahn made application to remove District-Apostle Kuhlen from the office of Chairman of the 'Land' management committee of the New-Apostolic church of Northrhine-Westphalia and to dismiss from office the three Apostles Kuhlen, Dehmel and Dunkmann and to excommunicate them from the New-Apostolic church. This application was unanimously accepted by the assembled Apostles."

It says in the minutes that Apostle Hahn put this motion after Apostle Kuhlen made the statement: "I have nothing more to say about that. Good-bye!", and Apostles Dehmel and Dunkmann had joined him and left the meeting. There is, however, something very peculiar about this, for immediately after the three Apostles Kuhlen, Dehmel and Dunkmann had left the conference, the Bishops and District-Elders were called in, which means that there was no interval at all during which such a motion could have been put and carried. Does that not give cause to suppose that this resolution was only formulated in that way in the minutes, but that it had already been drawn up beforehand? That would also explain the question asked during the conference as to which resolution Apostle Hahn was to read out to the Bishops and District-Elders, the first or the last. An attempt was also made from Frankfurt to keep the expulsion of the three Apostles from the New-Apostolic church secret as long as ever possible, and many Apostles would not admit to this unloving and intolerant expulsion until we had shown, to all who wanted to see, photostat copies of the written excommunication sent from Frankfurt on 23rd January 1955 and received by us on 24th January 1955.

In the minutes of the Apostles' meeting of 23rd January 1955 it also says: "As early as 1943 Kuhlen influenced the Apostles to think his way and constantly strove to isolate the Chief-Apostle from the other Apostles. In recent months he and the Apostles, Bishops and District-Elders appointed to help him have sought to sever the hearts of the Brethren from the Chief-Apostle."

I must simply state that these assertions are terrible untruths for which there is no proof at all. Where have I ever attempted to isolate one of the Apostles from the Chief-Apostle? All you Apostles, on your honour: When and where am I supposed to have done it?

In recent months numerous statements I have made, in services or in articles I have written, in which I have constantly declared myself absolutely loyal and positive towards the Chief-Apostle, have been circulated from New-Apostolic sources. I put the question: Do not all these statements of mine prove precisely the opposite of the allegation contained in the minutes of the Apostles' meeting?

Again I ask: Is there anywhere in the report of a service, in an article or letters I have written, even on single sentence to be found in which I said anything against the Chief-Apostle before the 23rd January 1955? To whom have I ever spoken anything but good of the Chief-Apostle?

And are we, my fellow-Apostles and I, nevertheless rejected on such an untrue accusation? Are we really banished from the New-Apostolic church?

That my colleagues and I had tried, months before the 23rd January 1955, to turn the hearts of the Brethren away from the Chief-Apostle is also a fiction; for I can give every assurance that, in spite of the violent attacks we had to suffer from those who reproached us for not preaching the message, that the Chief-Apostle would not die, I did not advise even one single Brother or one Sister to separate from the Chief-Apostle. There is no member of the New-Apostolic church to whom I would have even hinted at such a

thought before the 23rd January 1955. Not even to my closest friends and colleagues have I disclosed such thoughts. Any search for a witness who could honestly testify to anything different will be in vain.

Thus I must declare, sadly, but quite clearly: Those who have not shrunk from using gross untruths in defence of a resolution of such consequence as the one made at the Apostles' meeting of 23rd January 1955 must answer for their actions before God and their consciences. Where people resort to such methods in order to get rid of Brothers in Christ, the spirit of Jesus Christ, the spirit of truth and love has been driven away. However, we can do nothing other than honour the truth and remain in the pure Apostolic teaching, in the sincere community of those who declare themselves for the Lord's message of love, in the mutual breaking of bread and mutual service and in earnest prayer to be preserved on the narrow way which leads to everlasting life.

Peter Kublen

Memorandum for the members of the "Apostolic Community" and for their friends

Beloved Brethren!

You have since heard what took place at the Apostles' meeting in Frankfurt a. M. on 23rd January 1955.

The Apostles, Bishops and District-Elders of the Düsseldorf Apostle-District were there accused of departing from the teaching of the Chief-Apostle on fundamental points of faith and of having worked against him on these lines and of having been disobedient to him.

In reply to this I spoke briefly in the name of my fellow-Brothers as follows:

"Since, for a really thorough orientation on the origins and development of conditions leading to the present situation in our district, it would be necessary to give a detailed description of the causes that lie behind it all, and since this would take many hours, we mention only a few of the things that have some bearing on this matter:

For a long time there have been an increasing number of cases of Administration-Brothers in particular sending written complaints about us to the Chief-Apostle. The chief point made by the writers of those letters was that we had not preached the message which had been preached for some years by the Chief-Apostle, that the Lord Jesus would come again within the Chief-Apostle's lifetime, but that we only—as ever—work for the Lord's coming, which is possible at any hour, and towards constant readiness for him to appear. Let it also be said that these accusing letters have never been sent to us for us to comment on at all and that we have not been sent the Chief-Apostle's replies for our information either.

In many of the Chief-Apostle's replies to those accusers which we have seen the latter were informed that they no longer needed to follow any official who did not preach the message mentioned. And as we did not do that in the manner desired by the writers of those letters, they made a show of the Chief-Apostle's letters and spread mistrust and antagonism towards us everywhere.

Then, recently—incited by suitable articles in the periodicals of the New-Apostolic Church and backed up by the owners of the Chief-Apostle's letters—Brothers and Brethren in more and more parishes have proceeded to tell us that they reject us, that they will no

longer follow us, because we do not firmly commit ourselves to the Chief-Apostle's message. This led to a very bad situation which gradually became so terrible that virtually at the same time—and out of the blue, so to speak—it was demanded of us that we should preach the message of Christ's second coming within the Chief-Apostle's lifetime or resign.

In an anguish of conscience we then sent that letter to the Chief-Apostle which contains the reasons why we cannot bring ourselves to agree to preach such a message. That letter was written on 6th January 1955, sent to the Chief-Apostle on 7th January 1955, read out to all the parish Superintendents on 9th January 1955, handed round to all the Administration-Brothers on 14th January 1955 and distributed to the members of the congregation of our district on 16th January 1955.

On 16th January 1955 a letter was also read out in the parishes giving an account of certain occurrences within some parishes.

Then, on 13th January 1955, the Chief-Apostle wrote a letter to the effect that Brothers Arenz, Haering and others, who no longer held office, were to be confirmed in their offices again and that Apostle Schmidt would take over the spiritual care of those Brothers and Brethren who no longer wanted to remain under us.

Then, on the evening of 15th January 1955 we received a telegram from the Chief-Apostle in which he seriously warned us not to distribute our letter (dated 6th January 1955 and addressed to the Chief-Apostle) to the members of the congregation and in which he threatened us with possible reprisals. Our attitude to the Chief-Apostle's letter of 13th January 1955 and our reasons for distributing the letters to the members of the congregation in spite of the telegram warning us not to, are set out in a letter of 17th January 1955 to the Chief-Apostle.

Once again we emphasise that the distribution of the letter in question to the members of the congregation was an act of desperate self-defence on our part since when we received the telegram drastic measures were already being taken against us and we could see no other possible way to justify our position on this point of faith.

Finally we declare that we feel we are not to blame for the present situation of extreme tension among Administration-Brothers and Brethren of our district; for we have done nothing other than keep, in our doctrinal preaching, to the articles of faith of the New-Apostolic Church and to the teaching of Christ, which is valid for ever, without detracting from it or adding to it."

After this brief defence we were requested to go into another room for a time, and there we had to wait about an hour until first we Apostles were called in to receive the verdict. Acting as secretary for that meeting, Apostle Hahn then read out to us the resolution of the Chief-Apostle and of the company of Apostles according to which, on account of fundamental disagreement about the faith as taught by the Chief-Apostle, and for gross disobedience of his directions, we had become intolerable as Apostles and members of the company of Apostles and we should have to be dismissed from office. The company of Apostles advised us to resign from office of our own accord.

We were not able to follow this advice from the company of Apostles, as we are not aware of being guilty of anything.

After we had left, it was then decided that we Apostles were dismissed from office and excommunicated from the New-Apostolic Church.

The Bishops and District-Elders of our district were informed that they were suspended from office for the time being on the understanding that they might possibly be able to continue to serve in office under the direction of Apostle Walter Schmidt.

Even before we travelled home, the Bishops and District-Elders wrote a registered letter to the Chief-Apostle in the station waiting-room at Frankfurt a. M. saying that, as ever, they stood by Apostles Kuhlen, Dehmel and Dunkmann and by the pure teaching of Christ they preached and that they refused to serve under Apostle Walter Schmidt. Then, on Monday 24th January 1955, we came together in Düsseldorf in order to discuss the situation then obtaining and what was necessary for the future. There we adopted the unanimous resolution that, true to our divine mission, we should continue to work for Jesus and those who are his.

Our gathering was at the same time the inaugural meeting of the "Apostolic Community" with its headquarters in Düsseldorf. In this truly "Apostolic Community" we Apostles will act as ambassadors in Christ's stead and with all those servants in the house of God who do not want to falter nor to budge an inch from the eternally unalterable foundations of our faith as embodied in the Holy Scriptures we shall work for the honour of God, for the glorification of the name of Jesus, for quickening works of love in the spirit of Christ for all who labour and are heavy-laden, and for an earnest preparation for the approaching day of union with our souls' bridegroom, Jesus, our Lord.

Now, however, anxious questions arise in many hearts: whether anybody may still act as an Apostle when he has been removed from office by the Chief-Apostle, whether separation from the Chief-Apostle does not mean death, whether the Chief-Apostle does not have the final, decisive word with regard to the teaching, etc. etc.

Just a few comments on this: The bitter struggle in those souls who now have to face a most difficult decision in their hearts has been very largely caused by the fact that within the New-Apostolic Church, for many years, the original teaching of Christ, the pure Apostolic teaching according to the Gospels of the Holy Scriptures, has been slowly but surely turned into a Chief-Apostle's teaching. In this the aberration has gone so far that recently we have met with the reproach from many Brothers and Brethren that we preach Jesu's teaching instead of Chief-Apostle teaching. However, we take these reproofs as recognition for the fact that we have not departed from the foundation once laid, which is Christ!

Many people have scarcely noticed how, in the New-Apostolic church, the influence of the Apostles has become less and less and in its place a "one-man system" has been purposefully built up, which affords the Chief-Apostle a position of power which no longer corresponds to the task once given to one Peter by his Lord. The Chief-Apostle has practically been put in the place of Jesus, he has been raised to be something similar to God, something which is absolutely contrary to the Bible and which means that to some extent the Chief-Apostle is counted infallible and even the slightest doubt in his word and in his teaching is supposed to lead to everlasting death.

That even the Chief-Apostle has described himself for a long time now as the Head of the Body of Christ is a fundamental error, as is made clear by the following Bible passages.

"*Christ* is the head of the church: and *he* is the saviour of the body" (Ephesians 5,23).

"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even *Christ*" (Ephesians 4,15)!

"And *he* is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence" (Colossians 1,18).

When the Chief-Apostle further maintains that he is the vine and the Apostles are the branches, this is in flat contradiction to the words of Jesus: "*I* am the true vine" (John 15,1), and "*I* am the vine, ye are the branches" (John 15,5). In these words *all* Apostles, including Peter, were described as branches abiding in him, the vine.

If it is taught in the New-Apostolic Church today that as Chief-Apostle among the Apostles of the early church Peter held the same office as does the Chief-Apostle now, then it must be said that in his time Peter never felt himself authorized to send out Apostles and to dismiss Apostles; for that was not part of his duties. Apostles are envoys of Jesus and not envoys of the Chief-Apostle, which may be seen quite clearly from numerous passages in the Scriptures. Let a few of them be mentioned:

“God hath set some in the church, first Apostles, . . .” (L Cor. 12,28).

“And he gave some, Apostles . . .” (Ephesians 4,11).

“These twelve Jesus sent forth” (Matth. 10,5).

“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves” (Matth. 10,16).

Nowhere in the Holy Scriptures can we read: “I send forth one Chief-Apostle, and he will then send forth Apostles.”

Paul, the great Apostle to the nations, whose position as an Apostle of Christ is surely not questioned by any believing Christian, said of himself in this connection: “Paul, an apostle (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)” (Galatians 1,1). This great Apostle of our Lord and Saviour did not receive the office of Apostle from the hand of Peter and he even vigorously resisted and contradicted Peter, who several times deviated from Jesus’s teaching, but Peter would still not have removed Paul from the office of Apostle; for Peter had neither the power nor the authority to do that.

If, in the New-Apostolic church, comparisons are so readily made between the office and influence of the Chief-Apostle and Peter’s mission from Christ, then the following must be set against that:

Peter was never a Chief-Apostle wielding absolute rule, claiming exclusive rights to teach, to command and to decide in all matters concerning the Church of Christ in the sense of the New-Apostolic idea of today, rather was he, among his fellow-Apostles, the “Primus inter pares”, i. e. the first among equals!

Jesus said to his disciples: “for one is your Master, even *Christ*; and all ye are brethren” (Matth. 23,8).

Jesus once made it the duty of the Apostle Peter to “*strengthen thy brethren*” (Luke 22,32), that is to say: to be a help to his fellow-Apostles in times of weakness, to be at their side in times of trouble and distress, to work among them so as to unite them and to promote the sense of brotherhood; but it was never Peter’s task to dismiss one of his fellow-Apostles from the office of Apostle nor to excommunicate him from the Church.

But what is it like at present in the New-Apostolic Church? Has not the Chief-Apostle there obtained a papal autocracy? Indeed, more than that?

To illustrate this point let us take an example from the most recent history of the Roman Catholic Church. Some time ago the Pope of Rome declared the bodily ascension of Mary a dogma. Previously, it is true, within the Roman Catholic Church, Mary’s ascension was considered probable and was held to be true by faith; but until then there was no doctrine that Mary’s ascension was a matter of absolute certainty. The Pope then submitted his proposal to declare Mary’s ascension a dogma to all the Cardinals in the whole world, asking for their opinions. And in all freedom of conscience the Cardinals informed the Pope of their religious views. Judging from newspaper reports, a majority of the Cardinals declared themselves in favour of this dogma, but, on the other hand, a very large percentage of them raised objections, indeed some of them came out very decidedly against it. On the basis of the majority view of the Cardinals the Pope then raised the ascension of Mary to a dogma of the Roman Catholic Church. However, I do not think

anybody has ever yet read that any one of the Cardinals who in all frankness made their objections and their contradictory views known to the Pope has, on account of such candid confessions, been deprived of his office as Cardinal. And of the hundreds of thousands of priests of the Roman Catholic Church not a single one has been removed from office for not preaching this new dogma and for passing over it in silence instead.

In the New-Apostolic Church, however, the following has come about. It was Christmas 1951 when—*without first having put it to his fellow-Apostles and without even asking them for their views on the matter*—the Chief-Apostle preached in the church at Giessen the new message that the Lord Jesus would come again within his lifetime and that he himself would not die. Not until several weeks after that message had been proclaimed to the Brethren of the parish of Giessen did the Apostles receive the typewritten report of the statements made by the Chief-Apostle at Giessen, and then as “printed papers” without any covering letter and without any indication of what was supposed to be done with it. Then, the one Apostle published this service report in his district immediately, another somewhat later, and yet another very much later.

This message of the Chief-Apostle’s, about which the Chief-Apostle said at several large services that he saw no occasion to give any further details, was from then on preached with increasing insistence, held up in the New-Apostolic periodicals as the most important thing in our religious life and one’s belief in this message, or one’s disbelief, was said to determine whether one would be accepted or rejected when Christ appeared.

The Chief-Apostle’s message, that he will not die, has meanwhile become the Alpha and the Omega of New-Apostolic preaching. Numerous Administration-Brothers have been removed from office for not teaching the Chief-Apostle’s message. Even Apostles have collapsed physically and mentally because their consciences were placed under tremendous pressure and because they were reproached for not having proclaimed the Chief-Apostle’s message, or not emphatically enough, or not until very much later. And now the latest is that from the highest authorities in the New-Apostolic Church it is taught and written most acrimoniously that the members of the congregations ought no longer to follow any Apostle or official who does not preach the message in question. One Apostle recently even went so far as to say in his sermon: “Anyone who will not preach this message ought to clear out from behind the altar!” Other Apostles mercilessly teach that only those will find Grace who believe in the Chief-Apostle’s message.

Has not the New-Apostolic Church thus become more intolerant than any other church? And is the Chief-Apostle, in his actions, not more absolutist and more popish than the Pope?

In the absolution, after the Lord’s Prayer has been said by the congregation, many Apostles of the New-Apostolic Church say: “On behalf of the Chief-Apostle your sins are forgiven you.”

And such Apostles also perform the ceremony of sealing “on behalf of the Chief-Apostle”. Is this in order? Are true Apostles servants of the Chief-Apostle? Or is it true, as Paul wrote, that: “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (II Cor. 5,20).

It is misleading when the Chief-Apostle is described as *the* teacher, whose teaching must be followed by all other Apostles; for Jesus said to *all* Apostles: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matth. 28,19-20). Jesus

did not address his order to go forth and teach to only *one* Apostle: he quite clearly spoke in the plural to *all* his Apostles.

To all Apostles Christ said: "Ye are the light of the world" (Matth. 5,14), according to which the light of knowledge is not alone in one Apostle.

Paul wrote of the ministration of the spirit (II Cor. 3,8) and meant the glory given to *all* Apostles and the power to bestow the Holy Ghost.

In Luke 10,16 it still says: "He that heareth you heareth me", which is addressed to all Apostles and it follows from this that the Lord does not speak only through one Apostle. Nor is it true that only the Chief-Apostle has received from the Lord the power to join and to put asunder, for in Matthew 18,18 it quite clearly says: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." That was said by Jesus to all his Apostles.

Similarly, the power to forgive sins was not given only to *one* ambassador of Jesus, the great Redeemer from sin; we only have to read John 20,23: "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." Thus all Apostles of Jesus Christ bear the office of Grace and are equipped to bestow the absolution from sins and to administer Christ's redeeming act of love.

Not only one Apostle has been charged by Jesus, the soul's bridegroom, with the task of preparing the bridal community for the wedding with Christ in heaven, for the same thing was already the work of the Apostles of the Early Church, as Paul wrote: "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (II Cor. 11,2).

How very much, in the New-Apostolic Church, they have gradually departed from the clear line laid down in the Bible, and how thoroughly the absolutely indefensible attitude has come to prevail, that "the Chief-Apostle is always right", so that any human error is considered impossible in the Chief-Apostle, whereas not the slightest trace of anything similar is claimed in the Holy Scriptures for any Apostle of the Early Church.

Innumerable people in the New-Apostolic Church are not capable of making a clear-headed religious decision any more, since they regard it as a sin to entertain even the slightest doubt about the truth of anything the Chief-Apostle has said. That is the result of the doctrine that one must simply believe, without thinking. This tenet, which one of the Apostles addressed to many friends as a New Year's greeting last year, "Have no thoughts, have no opinions, only believe!", is so apt to induce the conscience to doze off. There are many Administration-Brothers who say they are quite untroubled about teaching the message of Christ's second coming within the Chief-Apostle's lifetime, because their Apostle has removed the burden of responsibility from them.

In this way people in the New-Apostolic Church have made it very easy for themselves and they forget that each person is for his own part responsible for what he does and that nobody can avoid making the decision for or against the truth.

Why is it not permitted to ask further details of the manner in which Jesus is supposed to have revealed to the Chief-Apostle that the Lord was coming within his lifetime and that he would not die? Why is a thorough examination of this message, with regard to its divine origin, not permitted? How is this prohibition of serious checking to be reconciled with the words of the Holy Scriptures: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5,21), or: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God" (1 John 4,1).

Did not the Apostle Paul teach the church with the words: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto

you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1,8)! And did he not thereby give warning and expressly call for the examination of any message, even if it is preached by an angel?

Besides, how would any logically-thinking person feel about it if a merchant offered an article and praised it to the skies, but then, when the prospective customer asked to be permitted to take a closer look at the article, replied: "You just have to believe me when I say the article is good, I cannot permit any checking?" Or, if somebody gave an account of an experience and, in reply to his listeners, asking for more details, he said: "I see no occasion to give further details about this", then such behaviour would give rise to doubts about the truth of the account.

Really, nothing that is truly good and genuine need fear a thorough investigation.

In the New-Apostolic Church—unlike what used to be the case—*blind* obedience is required, and serious reflection as to whether things will indeed happen as the Chief-Apostle teaches is branded as unbelief. Among the members of the New-Apostolic Church this has led to untold fear of losing eternal life for not absolutely believing in the Chief-Apostle's message. Then each lulls himself into a sense of security with the thought: "If I simply believe everything the Chief-Apostle says, then I shall attain the promised goal of our faith."

Now is that really true? Does union with Christ in glory call for nothing more than the belief that the Lord Jesus is coming again within the Chief-Apostle's lifetime? Must not everyone who is conscientious fight his own way through for himself to see clearly what is pleasing unto God and what unto men?

According to the doctrine now prevailing in the New-Apostolic Church, Apostle Schwarz, the great pioneer of the New-Apostolic Church, would certainly have been an arch-heretic; for as a then Bishop of the Apostolic Church under the English Apostles this clear-sighted man of God recognised the actions of the Apostles placed over him as being contrary to God's will and, in direct opposition to the English Apostles' persistent clinging to their opinion that there was no need to call new Apostles any more, he represented a view which is certainly acknowledged today by all members of the New-Apostolic Church, namely that the office of Apostle should remain and if one bearer of that office were to die, then another, called by God, should take over his office.

When, in spite of the human attitude and the error of the English Apostles, the Lord called new men through the mouth of a prophet, to hold office as Apostles and to continue his work of redemption, the English Apostles refused to recognise these men chosen by Jesus as Apostles. Arch-Bishop Rothe of Berlin, under whom Bishop Schwarz was placed at that time, required Bishop Schwarz and Prophet Geyer to declare that the calling of Rosochasky to be an Apostle was the work of the Devil. To this, Bishop Schwarz replied: "We shall never declare this deed the work of the Devil; for we do not want to commit a sin against the Holy Ghost."

Then Bishop Schwarz and Prophet Geyer were required to appear before Apostle Woodhouse in the vestry. Neither of them was asked about anything. Woodhouse read out to them their dismissal from office, and then he had finished with them.

In terms of the New-Apostolic ideas of today, Bishop Schwarz's action and the attitude he firmly and decidedly represented would have been in flat contradiction to the religious views of the Apostles of those days and gross disobedience towards Apostle Woodhouse. According to the opinion today held by the Chief-Apostle and by most of the Apostles of the New-Apostolic Church his dismissal would have been absolutely right.

Was Bishop Schwarz's action really wrong? Was his refusal to declare God's deed to be the work of the Devil really disobedience? Not at all! Schwarz acted after he had pro-

foundly searched his conscience and seen clearly the will of God. The future has proved he acted rightly, whereas the work of the English Apostles dwindled and, because of their rigid attitude, confused by the belief in infallibility, it proceeded towards its certain end.

Later, however, a Bishop who had been dismissed by his Apostle both on account of fundamental differences in their views on the faith and for gross disobedience was called to be an Apostle of the Lord and indeed made an extremely great contribution towards the salvation of the work of Christ in the latter days. According to the attitude now taken in the New-Apostolic Church, it is quite out of the question that a man who so behaves towards the Chief-Apostle and the Apostles as did Schwarz towards the Chief-Apostle and the Apostles as did Schwarz towards the English Apostles could ever be an instrument in God's hand.

Now with regard to the Chief-Apostle's message that he will not die and that Jesus will come again within his lifetime, we Apostles of the Rhineland have dared to stand for a religious view fundamentally different from that of the Chief-Apostle, and we have furthermore refused to keep this our religious conviction from the souls entrusted to our care. The reply to our attitude, arrived at through serious searching of our consciences, was that we were removed from office and excluded from the New-Apostolic Church.

Has such a step on the part of the Chief-Apostle and the Apostles of the New-Apostolic Church any validity before God? Never! Just as the Almighty showed himself in support of Bishop Schwarz's actions and caused him to become a special, chosen tool, the Lord of his work will pour out his blessing upon us in abundance, that we may continue to work in the now newly-formed "Apostolic Community". We shall preach, pure and unfalsified, the Gospel of Christ, the glad tidings of his redeeming act of sacrifice and love, and the glorious promise of his coming again to take us unto himself, and, as bearers of the office of reconciliation, we shall be found in the effectiveness of the Grace which makes sinners blessed. Those that labour and are heavily laden will find new life in the "Apostolic Community" through the spirit of consolation, we shall reject nobody, by virtue of our mission, given to us by Jesus, not by men, we shall be a help to all who knock, who beg and seek salvation.

The path we must now tread will be very narrow; for we have been robbed of all earthly things, our churches have been taken from us, we no longer possess beautiful organs or harmoniums, our earthly wealth has gone; but, as the ones who are poor, we shall make many rich and we are certain that in the "Apostolic Community", with the disappearance of a magnificent outer façade, such as the New-Apostolic Church has, the wealth of true brotherly love, harmonious community with each other, sincere community of prayer and faith in and adherence to the pure teaching of Jesus and the Apostles will again allow us to be very joyful and happy.

And if now, through unmerciful intolerance, Apostles Dehmel, Dunkmann and I have been cast out of the New-Apostolic Church, and if we are now no longer considered by many whom we have loved as Brothers and Sisters to be Apostles of the Lord, then, with the Apostle Paul, we say: "If for others I am not an Apostle, yet I am your Apostle." And now: Forwards in Jesu's name! Christ's work must not stand idle! And if at present the storm is raging about the ship of our faith, then let me recall the words Chief-Apostle Niehaus said to me on my wedding-day thirty-three years ago:

"In wind and weather God is your Saviour!"

These words apply to all who are prepared to defy wind and wave and in faith and trust

to look upon him who can command all winds and who want with us to navigate in joyous hope towards our glorious home in heaven.
In unity with Apostles Dehmel and Dunkmann and all our colleagues, proved through joy and sorrow, striving with us for the beautiful work of Christ I greet you with the greeting of peace and of love as your Brother in the Lord.

Düsseldorf, 29th January 1955.

Peter Kublen

Reflections

on the message of Chief-Apostle J. G. Bischoff: "I shall not die, the Lord Jesus is coming again within my lifetime"

In the article "Steiget herauf" ("Rise up") in the „Wächterstimme“ No. 9 of 1st May 1932 the Chief-Apostle wrote the following:

"But now let us not fall into the error of many spirits in divine services: that of occupying ourselves with when this time will be. Although, as it says in the Acts of the Apostles 1,7, the Lord Jesus said: 'It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power', yet in their presumptuousness many people try to lay down the day and the hour of Christ's second coming. So far, all those who have done this have had to suffer an ignominious disappointment. For the Children of God it is not the main thing to know when the Lord is coming, but rather is it much more valuable that we belong to Christ when he comes, and that we number among those who are permitted to hear the great voice from heaven: 'Rise up!'"

Why has the Chief-Apostle not abided by this view of the faith, which is the only right one according to the Holy Scriptures? Is not an ignominious disappointment, to use his own words, necessarily in store where a strictly defined time is announced for Christ's second coming?

The Chief-Apostle very soon abandoned the point of view he had taken in May 1932, and already in the years when Apostle Landgraf was working in Frankfurt-1933 to 1936—the Chief-Apostle often regarded visions and dreams, announcing that the Lord was coming at a certain time, as coming from God and he related them. Shortly after the death of Priest Hoffmann (the brother of the Chief-Apostle's present wife) in Frankfurt, for instance, the Chief-Apostle reported to Apostle Landgraf that his son Fritz had dreamed that Priest Hoffmann, who had passed away a few days before, had been to him and had said that the Lord Jesus would come the following Christmas.

The Chief-Apostle accepted this as being sure to come about. But then Apostle Landgraf objected that one surely ought never to quote dates for Jesu's coming, for that was contrary to Jesu's words to the effect that nobody, not even the Son of God, knew the time or the hour. So one could not regard any dream that said anything different from what the Lord had given as coming from God. Thereupon, the Chief-Apostle desisted from any further circulation of this dream.

In an article dating from 1939 the Chief-Apostle puts the question: "When will the Lord come?" And the answer runs: "When the work of redemption has advanced so far that the situation described in Luke 17,34-26, which in Jesu's words will precede his coming, really is present in his work of redemption, then the second coming of the Lord may be expected. *The situation described there is really present today (1939!). So the time has come!*"

Had the time of Jesu's second coming really arrived in 1939? Are there not many conditions quoted in the Holy Scriptures as being present before Christ's appearance which did not come about until after 1939?

On 22nd June 1947, at a big service in Dinslaken, in which more than 4500 Brethren of the Ruhrort and Hamborn Districts took part, the Chief-Apostle said the following: "I am not telling you too much when I mention that we have several Brethren, even officials, who have already received the promise from the Lord that they will not die, but be transfigured. And these too are divine promises."

In a small circle on the same day the Chief-Apostle said that District-Elder Illig of Frankfurt on Main was one of those who had received such a promise.—But District-Elder Illig died on 10. August 1950, which makes it clear that in his case it was not a divine promise, but that the dream or vision that caused District-Elder Illig to believe that Jesus would come within his lifetime had been produced by a heart which loved Jesus and by its yearning for union with him.

And a very strange thing about this is that in 1954 the Chief-Apostle declared in many places that he was at the time the only person on earth to whom the Lord had promised that he would not die, whereas in 1947 he had said that the Lord had made such a promise to several Brethren and Administration-Brothers. What is right then? What he said in 1947? Or what he has been saying recently? Or what?

In the official gazette of 1st May 1949 there is an article containing a report on a service conducted by the Chief-Apostle. There, among other things, the Chief-Apostle said: "Many hold the view that before the coming of the Lord there must be the falling away of which Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2,3. *But these words refer exclusively to those days and have already been literally fulfilled.*" And the Chief-Apostle went on to preach: "Therefore we have not to expect any falling away in the restored Apostolic Church as a sign to herald Christ's second coming." Ans he further said: "Thus it is very important, in preparing for the coming of the Lord, not to wait for such signs any more, as on the one hand Jesus did not announce them for his second coming, and on the other hand they were already fulfilled long ago."

It is curious that in 1949 the Chief-Apostle maintained that before the coming of the Lord a great falling away was not to be expected any more, rather was everything already fulfilled in this respect, whereas now, several years later that is, there is again very eager talk to the effect that the great falling away is now in progress.

In the official gazette of 1st November 1949, under the title "Utmost readiness", we can read: "Our Chief-Apostle recently spoke the words: 'I expect the Lord any day.' This means the divine promises concerning the coming of the Lord Jesus *have been completely fulfilled.*

What? Had these promises been completely fulfilled by 1949? Why then did the Lord Jesus still not come in 1949?

In the summer of 1950, when the Apostles were staying in Holland with the Chief-Apostle to serve the local congregations, the Chief-Apostle told the Swiss Apostles E. and O. Güttinger and R. Schneider on 18th June 1950 in their hotel room at Eindhoven that he had received a divine revelation *that he would not die.*

In the second half of November 1950 the "Unsere Familie" calendar for 1951, published by Friedrich Bischoff, was sent out to the Apostles. In that calendar there was an article by secretary Meyer-Geweke in which, among other things, it said: "He—the Chief-Apostle—is firmly convinced that the Lord will not delay much longer and that he will fetch his people home to the House of the Father within the Chief-Apostle's lifetime,

and this is the surer because—in his own words—the Lord has not yet shown him anybody to continue God's work on earth after him.”

Then, on 25th November 1950, I and Apostle Dehmel together went to see the Chief-Apostle. For this talk with the Chief-Apostle, District-Elder Weine was also present. In the course of the conversation the Chief-Apostle said: “I told the Swiss Apostles some time ago, and I shall repeat it now to you: ‘*I shall not die!*’ At this, the Swiss Apostles just gaped; but I know what I am saying and I shall stick to it. I know very well it is saying a lot, ‘*I shall not die!*’, but I shall never say it in any other way; for if I ever put it differently, that would be a departure from the teaching. Christ's second coming is imminent and anybody who does not teach that is on a false footing.”

On that day I announced my resignation from the office of Assistant Chief-Apostle and appointed successor to the Chief-Apostle. When, after the talk with the Chief-Apostle, with Apostle Dehmel and District-Elder Weine I reached the office of the church, Sofienstrasse 48, there to formulate my letter of resignation, I was immediately told by Shepherd Weiler that the Chief-Apostle had just telephoned and left the message for me that I should insert in my letter that I was resigning because I had come to recognise that the Chief-Apostle would accomplish the creation.—Thereupon I said: “I will not do that, for I am not convinced of that.”

Thus as early as 18th June 1950 the Chief-Apostle had told the Swiss Apostles with complete certainty that he had received a divine revelation according to which he would not die, and he repeated this most emphatically to us on 25th November 1950. But it was not until Christmas 1951 that the Chief-Apostle announced this publicly, in the church at Giessen. Later, however, it was always said that the Chief-Apostle had informed God's people of the message, that he would not die but would accomplish God's work, immediately he had received it from the Lord.

When, then, did the Chief-Apostle receive this message from the Lord? Had he already received it long before 1950, or only in 1950, or at Christmas 1951? Or what is all this about?

During a service in the Gartenstrasse church in Karlsruhe on 4th February 1951 the Chief-Apostle said, among other things, the following: “And if the Lord will have *me* accomplish his work—and *he does want me to*—then I am convinced he will keep me alive until the time comes.”

Thus the Chief-Apostle stresses that God wants to keep him alive until the time comes and to accomplish the work through him. If the Chief-Apostle spoke with such certainty about the will of the Lord, then he could surely only do that if the Lord had already revealed to him by then that that would be the case.

Now although to the Swiss Apostles on 18th June 1950 and to us on 25th November 1950 the Chief-Apostle said with such positive certainty that he would not die and that the Lord would come within his lifetime, and although in Karlsruhe on 4th February 1951 he claimed that it was the will of God that he (the Chief-Apostle) should accomplish the Lord's work and should remain alive until the time came, at an officials' meeting in Stuttgart on 18th February 1951, to which some of the wives of the Administration-Brothers were invited, he very much toned down what he had said to the Swiss Apostles and to us and the statements he had made in Karlsruhe; for there he said the following:

“My beloved Brothers and Sisters, I should like to say a brief word about this: Nobody knows the day or the hour. In Mark 13,32 we read that Jesus said even he did not know it. This means that any discussion about it is quite superfluous. We simply do not know the day or the hour. But because we do not know that I, at least for my own part, have kept

to the words of Jesus when he said: "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Matth 24,42). Here, the Lord is no longer speaking of days, but of one hour.

Now in various places there is all sorts of talk about what a lot of things I am supposed to have said on this subject. Do not let yourselves be influenced by such idle talk. I await the Lord daily! I have made that known often enough during services and in my writings and every Apostolic Child of God has the right to believe it. Furthermore, I believe that he Lord Jesus is coming within my lifetime. But I have not said that he *must* come within that time, only *I believe* that he is coming within my lifetime. I believe this, not on the strength of a dream, for instance, or for any other reason, but in this too his word alone is final for me. And why should we not believe that the Lord is coming within our lifetime? After all, he said: "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21,28). Surely we may be permitted to believe what Jesus said. What should we base our faith on otherwise? That is why I have shown you today, in these two short sentences, what my personal religious position is, so that you know. So I have not said that the Lord *must* come within my lifetime, but that *I believe* he is coming within this time."

Thus here the Chief-Apostle said absolutely nothing about the Lord's having given him a divine revelation according to which he would not die but accomplish the work, on the contrary he even denied such a thing by saying that his conviction that the Lord would come again within his lifetime was based on his recognition of the signs of the times, but that it was *on no account based on a dream or any other cause*. Are these two not contradictory?

And then came the 1951 Christmas service at Giessen, that service conducted by the Chief-Apostle, which has been spoken of so excessively in the New-Apostolic Church in recent years as the day when the Chief-Apostle's message was announced, saying that he would not die, and that Jesus would accomplish his work through him. Now let us quote below some of the statements made by the Chief-Apostle at that service:

"The day and the hour when the Lord will come is something we cannot know. *But I personally am convinced that the preparation of the royal priesthood will take place at a time when I am still here and that the work for the Kingdom of God in the Lord's vineyard will achieve its end in me.*"

"Now for this there is not very much more time left, for in general when such an advanced age is reached one does expect that the end will finally come. Thus the year 1951 is now drawing towards its end, and so is the preparation of the royal priesthood. And that period which Jesus described as the eleventh hour is also approaching its end. *And as I have already said, all this will be fulfilled at a time when I am still here on earth*. Of course I do not know whether there are many who have ears to hear, *but it is simply a fact*; for I cannot produce something from up my sleeve, and my human spirit and my human reason are incapable of proclaiming such a thing. *For me it is certain that, as I have said, the time of the preparation of the royal priesthood will be accomplished under my hand and that the work for the Kingdom of God in the Lord's vineyard will also reach its end when I do*. This is a message which sounds rather different from an allusion to the fact that Jesus was once born, that he lived, taught, was crucified, died, rose again and ascended into heaven."

"*But if the Spirit of the Lord inspires something in me, I shall not suppress it, but pass it on.*"

"*I am the last, there will be no other after me. It is in God's purpose so, it has been so determined, and the Lord will confirm it so!*"

"*It is for me personally a source of great joy and satisfaction gradually to have reached the point where the Spirit of the Lord is able to speak in such clear terms.*"

“We are not to reckon in days, weeks, months or years, but, as Jesus said: ‘Ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.’”

“Today’s words may seem new to many people, but they are merely a continuation of the work that has been done so far.”

“To those who hear them these words could sound almost presumptuous, that such things were spoken. I myself first had to come to believe what the Spirit of the Lord had inspired in me. And if the Spirit of the Lord were to say today: ‘The Lord Jesus is coming on such and such a day, even though the hour were not stated, then I should be obliged to believe that just as much as I have believed the rest of what has been revealed by him. Thus, in this respect the saying is fulfilled that he who speaks must first believe that the word he utters is the word of the Lord.’”

“We are convinced that the Lord is coming, and within our lifetime, while we are still here, to take his own unto himself.”

At the same 1951 Christmas service Apostle Rockenfeller said, among other things: *“I remember an hour when I was a boy of 10 and my father took me with him for a walk. He sat down on a bench and took me between his knees and said: ‘Look, boy, our Apostle (today Chief-Apostle Bischoff) will one day become our Chief-Apostle. That was in 1914. And if he is Chief-Apostle, then it is he who will accomplish God’s work. I said: ‘Father, how do you know, who has told you?’ His answer was: ‘The Lord has revealed it to me.’—And, because in me reason reigned with the thought ‘How did the Spirit of the Lord reveal that to your father?’, in the following days and weeks I was a living witness of the fact that through visions and various indications the Spirit of the Lord reveals things which no human mind can know. And so this faith has grown in me, and I have only recently told the Chief-Apostle of these experiences. He knew nothing of them at the time, he had no idea.”* *“It is my absolutely firm conviction that God and Jesus will crown the faith of his servant with the glorious appearance of the Son of God and will thereby crown the words of him who is the greatest, after Jesus, the earth has ever borne.”*

At the same service, Apostle Friedrich Bischoff said, among other things: *“The People of God cannot be expected to bear a long time of waiting and watching any more.”—*

Now what is one to make of the diverse statements made by the Chief-Apostle and Apostles Rockenfeller and Friedrich Bischoff during that questionable Christmas service? Are not numerous sentences of the sermon there quite different from what is now said about it by the Chief-Apostle? For afterwards the Chief-Apostle said innumerable times: *“The Lord has let me know that I shall not die and that he is coming within my lifetime.”* And then, later, he repeatedly said that the Lord himself had appeared to him and brought him that message. And the Chief-Apostle has several times declared that he sees no occasion to give any further details about the procedure by which the divine revelation occurred. And yet elsewhere the Chief-Apostle has said that that revelation was so wonderful that he could not find words to describe it all.

Which, then, of these contradictory statements made by the Chief-Apostle can be right? During that 1951 Christmas service the Chief-Apostle only said that he was *personally convinced* that it would so happen. There was at that time no mention of Jesus’s appearing and announcing it to him.

It is also striking that during the 1951 Christmas service the Chief-Apostle said the Spirit of the Lord had inspired all this (presumably in his thoughts), but the Chief-Apostle said nothing about any announcement made to that effect by the Lord.

It must appear most curious when the Chief-Apostle said at that Christmas service that it was a source of pleasure and satisfaction for him *gradually* to have reached the point where he was able to speak in such a way. For if the Lord had appeared to the Chief-

Apostle in person and told him that he would not die and that he would accomplish God's work, then the Chief-Apostle ought to have said so immediately, just as he himself said that he did not want to suppress anything that had been inspired in him by the Lord. But if such a message "*only gradually*" matured, what about the personal announcement by Jesus?

It must be found particularly perplexing, however, by anyone who thinks seriously when, with respect to the message that he would not die and that he would accomplish the royal priesthood and the work for the Kingdom of God, the Chief-Apostle himself said: "*I myself first had to come to believe what the Spirit of God had inspired.*" For it is beyond any doubt that if the Lord Jesus had appeared to the Chief-Apostle in person to tell him that he would not die and that he would accomplish the work of God, then all that would count as indisputable from that moment in the eyes of the Chief-Apostle and there would be no need first to struggle through to this belief. Certainly the affair looks quite different if it was all first inspired among the Chief-Apostle's thoughts and he then had to struggle through to the belief that the thoughts he had on this subject were divine revelations.

And it must seem more than curious that Apostle Rockenfelder claims to have known at the early age of ten that Chief-Apostle J. G. Bischoff, as he was to become, would accomplish the work, and that he did not impart his knowledge to the Chief-Apostle until shortly before Christmas 1951, and that until then the latter had no inkling of any of it. Did this information Apostle Rockenfelder gave to the Chief-Apostle turn something the latter had believed into a divine revelation?

How remarkable, too, that at the tender age of ten Apostle Rockenfelder had such a struggle with his reason when his father spoke to him of *his* divine revelation. Did he, as a ten-year-old, reflect so profoundly on the coming of Jesus within the lifetime of the subsequent Chief-Apostle Bischoff?

And when at the 1951 Christmas service Apostle Friedrich Bischoff said: "The People of God cannot be expected to bear a long time of waiting and watching any more", it is almost like an ultimatum to the Lord, according to which Jesus must appear without fail because there are some who do not want to wait any longer for the Lord's coming. Is it not for God himself to decide what further to impose on or demand of those who belong to him and to decide when to send his Son to bring home those who are his?

Thus at the 1951 Christmas service the Chief-Apostle did not speak of a divine revelation he had been given, rather what he said there was only that he personally was *convinced*, that it was *certain for him*, that the Spirit of the Lord had inspired in him that he would not die and that Jesus would come again within his lifetime, that it had *gradually* come to the point where it was possible to speak in such a way and that this was merely a continuation of the work done so far and that he *himself* had *first had to come to believe* it.

However, as early as 30 th December 1951, during the service at Heidelberg, the Chief-Apostle spoke of all this as revealed to him by God. He said: "I myself have the firm conviction and the unalterable faith that the Lord will come for his bride within my lifetime; whether that is believed or not does not matter. This statement is not presumptuousness; for I know that I am just as much a mortal being as anybody else is; but what the Lord has *revealed* to me nobody can take out of my heart.

During a service at Ulm on 16th March 1952 the Chief-Apostle said: "Thus I proceeded from one realisation to the next, and so on until today I am positively convinced that the Lord is coming to take us home within my lifetime and yours."—And he further said there: "And if I have said I believe that the Lord is coming within my lifetime, then this conviction is not a product of my mind, but a revelation on the part of the Lord Jesus

when he let me know that he had chosen me to lead his bride to meet him. This conviction of mine is thus based on what the Lord Jesus personally revealed to me. You may be sure my mind tried to make itself felt. First of all my mind confronted me with my advanced age. But the mind did not consider that the Lord Jesus may come tomorrow. My mind said: "It cannot be done as quickly as that, and if you really do die after all, what then? Belief in the revelation given to me by the Lord won the day."

Thus, although at Ulm the Chief-Apostle said the Lord Jesus had revealed it all to him in person, his mind raised the objection: "If you really do die after all, what then?" Later, the Chief-Apostle told other people, who had no personal revelation about the matter, but had to depend entirely on what the Chief-Apostle had said, that even the thought 'But if he dies, after all?' was diabolical.

During a service at Tübingen on 13th April 1952 the Chief-Apostle said: "I am personally convinced that the Son of God is coming within my lifetime and that I shall lead the bride to meet him. I am not saying that because perhaps it was laid in the cradle at my birth as a covering letter, but because the Lord has revealed it to me. Whether few or many believe it is their business; I am not budging a finger's breadth from it. If anybody can grasp it, let him grasp it, if anybody cannot grasp it, let him leave it. It is up to each individual to decide for himself."

At that time, then, the Chief-Apostle was at least still tolerant enough to say it was up to each individual to decide what attitude he would take to it; later, however, whether or not one believed in the message proclaimed by the Chief-Apostle was said to decide whether one was accepted or not on the day of the Lord.

On 11th May 1952 at Köln-Ehrenfeld the Chief-Apostle said: "I am convinced that the Lord Jesus is coming within my lifetime and I say that to the Devil's face and I say it to anyone who wants to know it or to hear it, because I have grounds for this statement, not human grounds or opinions, but the place of revelation and his Word are in this case too the basis of my belief and my assertion."—"I know and am convinced that these words, which I have uttered not only here, but elsewhere too, have sometimes encountered vigorous resistance. For one thing my age is referred to. Is it so bad when one is 81 years old, can one then do nothing more?"—"And I shall not go before I have completed the task the Lord has given me. And when I go, those who have believed my words will go with me, they will not be left behind."—"The thought: But if he dies, what then? Better wait and see, first wait and then judge! I have no order to die from God."—"Today it is not merely a question of myself, but of the entire bride of the Lord, and I am looking forward to the hour when the Lord will come and take us unto himself, and then those people who are today undecided will just have to watch and think: But if it doesn't turn out like that? Do not think about it, it will not happen as they think."

At that service in Cologne the Chief-Apostle said one could well wait and see, only to say, a little later in the same service, that those as yet undecided would then have to remain out in the cold, so to speak.

It is impossible to quote all the many similar statements the Chief-Apostle has made during services. For a time there was even a certain tolerance in the sense that it was simply left to each individual to decide his own attitude to the Chief-Apostle's message and that one could compel no one to believe.

But then, gradually, the Chief-Apostle taught that people were disloyal or bad servants if they did not preach his message about the coming of the Lord within his lifetime, and he described as foolish virgins those who did not believe his message that he would not die.

On 15th December 1953, for example, during a service in Dortmund, the Chief-Apostle

spoke about grounds on which, on the day of the Lord, the one will be accepted and the other not. On this he said: "Now at Christmas two years ago the message came that the Lord is coming again within my lifetime, and it was a question of whether this message was believed or not. The work was continued as before both for those who will be accepted and for those who will not be accepted. Now what is the reason that one will be accepted and the other not? The work proceeds the same for each. Souls are invited, the Brothers visit the souls, services are held, everything just as before, only with one difference; one servant, to speak in the singular, believes the message and continues to work for the souls as before in this belief, while the next also works as before, but does not believe in the message he has received. So the one does his work in the belief, and the other does his work as before, it is true, but without believing in the message he has received, that the Lord is coming within my lifetime. *That is the difference, that is the reason, why the one will be accepted and the other left behind.*"

Where does it say in the Holy Scriptures that whether or not one believes that the Chief-Apostle will accomplish the work of God determines whether one is accepted or left behind on the day of the Lord?

And then came the 1st January 1954, on which day the Chief-Apostle conducted a service in Wiesbaden, taking as his text the words of Psalm 118,13-18. There, among other things, it says: "The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death." In the course of the service the Chief-Apostle said that he had been Apostolic for over 56 years and had read very much in the Holy Scriptures, but that he could not recall ever having read the passage that had been read out.—To this I may be permitted to mention that Psalm 118 is one of the most well-known and has been used in numerous services of the New-Apostolic church, particularly the verses mentioned above, and that there have sometimes been articles on it in New-Apostolic periodicals. But in the service at Wiesbaden the Chief-Apostle said that this passage from the Psalms had remained hidden until it became necessary to draw attention to the content of these words. And then he referred the words of Psalm 118 to himself and said in this connection: "I have been given the promise by the Lord that I shall not die, but proclaim the will of God! Here it says expressly: "He hath not given me over unto death!"—"Has there ever been anybody on earth to whom these words applied?"—"That can only come about where the Lord himself has made the promise that the person concerned will not die. So it follows that the passages quoted are no more and no less than a prophecy for *that* time when the content of these words has appeared in bodily form."—"There are today about 2,500 million people on the earth. There will not be another among all these who has been informed by the Son of God that the latter is coming within his lifetime."—"For the Son of God, to whom the Father has given all power, to let a human being know that he is coming within his lifetime, has happened for the first time so far in the whole history of the Kingdom of God and in the work of redemption of the Son of God; it will not be repeated a second time."—"If the Psalmist wrote such words, then there must sometime appear a person in whom what has been said is fulfilled."—"But this must be confirmed by the Lord himself in that he himself informs the person concerned, of whom the Psalmist wrote those words, that he need not die."

This raises the question: "Are not those words of the Psalmist to be interpreted quite differently?"

In Neumünster on 11th July 1954 the Chief-Apostle spoke about the final step necessary

for one to be accepted on the day of the Lord. He said: "Anyone who is not in the ark on the day of the Lord is simply outside and must take the consequences of his action. So the *final step* must be taken. And what does it consist of? The Lord has let us know that he is coming within my lifetime, and therefore within your lifetime. And if you cannot muster so much faith, if you do not take this step, then you are left outside. There is simply no other possibility but this. This is the gate we must pass through. It has been so laid down by the Lord and arranged by him, and anyone who believes or thinks himself unable to risk this step, unable to believe all this, simply must, hard as it is, reckon with the consequences involved." At that service, belief in the message, described as the ultimate step, was called the *decisive* step.

Where, then, in the Holy Scriptures does it say that those must remain outside on the day of the Lord who do not believe that the Lord will come within the lifetime of Chief-Apostle J. G. Bischoff, and that this is the only possible way to gain admission to the Kingdom of Glory?

During a service at Kirchheim-Teck on 18th July 1954 the Chief-Apostle again spoke at great length about "the final step" and said: "What has happened to those Districts where the District-Superintendent did not keep very strictly to my words? They have been mown down and eliminated by the triumphal advance of Christ. The Lord does not joke, anyone who resists him is mown down by him."—And the Chief-Apostle further reported: "A few months ago a Bishop asked his District-Apostle: 'Now what about the Chief-Apostle's message, how are we to pass it on to the Brethren?' and the District-Apostle in question said: 'Oh, you don't have to take it like that, you must say: "The Chief-Apostle believes it, but it is nothing for us!" Then he asked the Apostle who is appointed to assist the District-Apostle. He said: "I don't give a fig for the old man's words."—But both have been disposed of by the triumphal advance of Christ.

Can it really be that the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of him who said: "The Son of Man is come to seek to make blessed what is lost", would deliberately mow anybody down? I consider that out of the question. It may perhaps happen even to a careful driver that, conditions and circumstances and human inadequacy cause him to knock down one of his fellow-men without intending to do so and that the latter lose his life; but if somebody did that consciously and on purpose, he would be a criminal. And Jesus, who taught us to love even our enemies, can never be so brutal as to knock somebody down deliberately—he always tries to help. Intolerance towards those Apostles and Administration-Brothers who did not preach the message of the Chief-Apostle, that the latter would not die and that he would accomplish the work, grew more and more and such men were publicly attacked with increasing severity.

On 20th June 1954 numerous Apostles were with the Chief-Apostle in Berlin where, in the morning, before an audience of about 10,000 participants and a further 15,000 or so linked by post radio, he said there were people in God's work who were afraid and determined that his message, that the Lord was coming within his lifetime, should not spread into their Districts. Later, if after all the Chief-Apostle really did die, these people wanted to be able to say: "There, you see, and we never preached that the Chief-Apostle would not die", and so they want to be the ones who were right. But even if they want to build walls round their domains, the Spirit of Christ will get through.—That is roughly what the Chief-Apostle said, and he said it in such a manner that several times there was loud laughter among his listeners. What is remarkable, however, is that in the report that appeared in "Unsere Familie" No. 15/1954 this part of the Chief-Apostle's speech was completely omitted. One wonders why.

At a service on 12th September 1954 in Stuttgart Apostle Dauber said: "With the proclamation of the Chief-Apostle's message, the preparation of the royal priesthood entered its final stage, and there are only two possibilities left: either one believes it one hundred per cent and professes this belief, or one is unbelieving and is left outside. There is no question of anything else here. Nor can anybody today say any more: 'I shall remain neutral', for there is no more neutrality, nor waiting to see what happens in this matter. Nor can anybody say any longer: 'I have nothing to say about this affair - wait and see - if he dies' - One cannot even hide behind the words 'I am saying nothing' any more, for he who says nothing has already spoken. One thing is certain: without belief in and one hundred per cent committal to this message, nobody can become Apostolic any more, nor can anybody remain Apostolic any longer."

So intolerance was carried so far that anybody who did not believe one hundred per cent in the Chief-Apostle's message and profess this belief could not become Apostolic, indeed, anybody who had already been Apostolic for a long time could no longer remain Apostolic if he did not believe the Chief-Apostle's message and profess it.

In the afternoon of 12th September 1954 in Stuttgart there was an Apostles' meeting. Two items on the agenda were given by the Chief-Apostle as:

Item 8: I shall not appoint any further Bishop or Apostle

who does not believe that the Lord is coming within my, that is within our, lifetime. I also beg the Apostles to install no further Brother in office where this belief is not really present.

Item 9: Further, the souls coming for holy sealing must first confirm, by saying "yes", that they believe in this message.

At the Apostles' meeting, the Chief-Apostle's comments on this were that in 1953 it had happened in one District that a married couple had had themselves sealed on condition that they did not need to believe in the Chief-Apostle's message, that the Lord is coming within his lifetime. He did not want such a thing to occur again and considered it necessary for all souls coming to be sealed to be obliged to confirm beforehand by saying "yes", that they believed in his message. Similarly, he would in future appoint no Apostle or Bishop who did not publicly declare that he believed in the second coming of Christ within the Chief-Apostle's lifetime.

I then asked to speak, and what I said was roughly as follows: "Is it not going too far to demand such extensive faith of those who come for holy sealing, and who therefore have as yet little understanding? After all, we do not expect anybody coming to be sealed already to have progressed as far as one who has belonged to the church for years. For if somebody serves the Lord with all his soul, then he goes to two services on Sunday, attends yet another evening service during the week, probably takes part in the choir practice on another evening, perhaps also plays a part in mission work on the other evenings in the week and besides all this offers the tenth part of his income as a sacrifice. But we have never yet made a condition of sealing that as from that moment the person should attend services twice on Sundays and yet again during the week, that he should immediately become a member of the choir and also help with the work in the Lord's vineyard and then give his tithe too. We have indeed put all these things to the souls gradually, but then we have shown patience towards each. After all, not even somebody who has been New-Apostolic for decades is perfect, indeed not even one of our number (the circle of Apostles) is perfect in everything, we all have need of Grace. So in my opinion one cannot demand of somebody who has only known about us for

six months or a year that he should accept the imposition of such a condition at his sealing. Besides, the Chief-Apostle's message is not an article of faith, and it is surely enough to take the oath of those coming to be sealed that they want to keep to our articles of faith, deny the Devil and the world, and to give themselves to the Lord, to accommodate themselves to the emulation of the Apostles and Brothers and have themselves prepared for the day of the Lord. We have been content with that in the past."

After I had said that, roughly, there was a storm of indignation. Apostles Dauber, Higelin, Startz, Walter Schmidt, Streckeisen, Hahn and Friedrich Bischoff contradicted me vehemently and said that in view of the level of understanding today it was absolutely necessary to require belief in the Chief-Apostle's message before bestowing the holy seal. Just as it used to be necessary for anybody who wanted to come for sealing to believe in the mission of Apostles and in the forgiveness of sins by the Apostles, so today belief in the divine revelation of the Chief-Apostle's message is indispensable to be able to receive the sealing.

I retorted that of young souls only just beginning in the faith and in the understanding one really could not demand more than of those who have already been Apostolic for many years, for there were thousands who had already belonged to the work for many years and who still had to struggle over belief in the Chief-Apostle's message. If we then wanted to be consistent, we should have to exclude such long-standing Brethren from the church, which, surely, nobody could seriously contemplate.

To this several of the Apostles then said that we had much work, unfortunately, with the "old ones" as regards belief in the Chief-Apostle's message and that unfortunately we could do nothing about it, but that we did not need to be so foolish as to bring newcomers into our ranks who only made work for us later. One could protect oneself from this work by not admitting to the church in the first place any "newcomers" who did not believe in the Chief-Apostle's message.

Apostle Friedrich Bischoff said: "For us (in the Mainz District) it is a matter of course that all those who come to be sealed believe in the Chief-Apostle's message." I replied: "You cannot see into anybody's heart, so you do not know whether this belief is really there in all the hearts." Apostle Hahn said: "When we became Apostolic, we too had to believe in the divine mission of the Apostles and in the forgiveness of sins by them. So one can require today that those who come to be sealed believe the most important thing there is today, the Chief-Apostle's message."

And yet Apostle Hahn was sealed as a child at the age of two weeks and could not believe at all at that time.

Then the Chief-Apostle said: "Certainly, the message is not an article of faith."

He went on to say: "My policy has so far been that I have not compelled any of the Administration-Brothers to proclaim the message, but on the other hand any Administration-Brother who is convinced of the truth of this message may joyfully proclaim it in our District. I have considered it right, if any of the Administration-Brothers still had some kind of difficulty in believing in the message, that he should keep quiet about it."

Then Apostle Walter Schmidt reproached me: "You are obliged to encourage the Brothers to proclaim the message, for otherwise you arouse disbelief in people's hearts."

I replied: "Belief in the imminent second coming of Christ is as much alive among us as everywhere else in God's work; but I cannot and will not compel any Administration-Brother to proclaim the message, that the Lord is coming again within the lifetime of the Chief-Apostle, because under such compulsion there is a danger that the Brothers may preach it out of fear, as a formality, or for the sake of appearances. But I will not have

hypocrites behind the altar on any account, and I do not want to see any Administration-Brother behind the altar who is like a gramophone, only repeating without thought or feeling what has been dictated to him. I consider it important that every thing our Administration-Brothers say at the altar should be spoken out of profound conviction in their hearts.”

Then the Chief-Apostle wanted to proceed to the next item on the agenda; but Apostle Walter Schmidt then said: “But I consider it most necessary to set on record the point that those coming to be sealed first declare that they believe in the message.”

The Chief-Apostle ignored this and wanted to proceed. Then Apostle Friedrich Bischoff pointed out to the Chief-Apostle that Apostle Walter Schmidt wanted to say something more. Apostle Walter Schmidt then brought up again his demand about setting on record the obligation in question; but the Chief-Apostle pushed on to discuss the further items on the agenda.

Again several of the Apostles made themselves heard also asking to have it put on record that those coming for sealing had first to profess their belief in the Chief-Apostle’s message by saying “yes”. But the Chief-Apostle would not take up the point any more and Bishop Weine then said that no record should be made at all, as it was already too late for that anyway. He suggested that the Chief-Apostle should in form the Apostles of his thoughts on this in the form of a letter from Frankfurt after his return.

Thus no resolution was taken on these two items on the agenda. Before the Apostle’s meeting, Apostles Dehmel, Dunkmann and myself had agreed that we could and would on no account place ourselves under such an obligation. On the Saturday evening before the Apostles’ meeting several Apostles exchanged thoughts with each other on this subject, and I know very well that some of them took the same attitude as I expressed in the meeting, only they did not ask leave to speak about it.

After the Apostles’ meeting in Stuttgart, Apostle Dehmel and I spoke about the matter again with Apostle Startz, and in that conversation I told him he should not think, perhaps, that I did not believe in the imminent second coming of Christ. I told him how I came to God’s work as a sixteen-year-old youth and how, in those days, I was already very troubled that the Lord Jesus might possibly come before had received the act of sealing; and how, since that time, I had always been anxious to be ready for the coming of the Lord at any hour, as I have always lived in the belief that the coming of the Lord may be any day.—Later, Apostle Startz repeated this conversation here and there in a distorted form, saying that I had assured him that I firmly believed in the Chief-Apostle’s message.—What is true is that I clearly told him that I believed just as much as he did in the coming of Jesus being possible any day, and that I earnestly sought to be prepared for it.

The Chief-Apostle wrote to me personally on 17 th September 1954: “Item 9 of the agenda was only entered for discussion.”

Then, in the subsequent services of sealing, Apostles Dehmel and Dunkmann and I carried out the sealing as it always had been, without imposing on the souls coming to be sealed the obligation to believe in the Chief-Apostle’s message.

Other Apostles placed this demand most emphatically before the sealing. Yet others, when questioning those coming to be sealed, put this demand somewhat indirectly and asked: “Do you believe that the Lord Jesus *may* come within the Chief-Apostle’s lifetime?”

Thus, increasing pressure was put on the Apostles to preach the message of the Chief-Apostle’s not dying and of the coming of Christ within his lifetime, to require of their

subordinate Administration-Brothers that they do the same, and to make the sealing of seeking souls dependent on a profession of belief in this message.

On 12th November 1954 Apostles Dehmel and Dunkmann and I were with the Chief-Apostle to discuss a certain matter. When talk on that subject had come to an end, the Chief-Apostle went on to say (in the presence of Bishop Weine), that he had recently been with Apostle Volz in Kirchheim-Teck for several weeks and that during this time in the South of Germany he had worked very hard. The Württemberg District had been facing collapse, and he had asked Apostle Schall: "Do you want to look on while your large District goes to rack and ruin?" In Heilbronn there had been an officials' meeting, and Apostle Jaggi had appeared to conduct it. But the local Bishop had denied Apostle Jaggi admission to the officials' meeting. And then Apostle Jaggi went back home. For that, of course, the Apostle could have immediately suspended the Bishop from office, but that did not happen. During the time he spent in his flat, Apostle Volz had worked out a new plan of organisation by which the Württemberg District was to be served, for the Apostles working there had had to take care of quite unequal territories and numbers of souls. So Apostle Volz worked out a new organisation, and this plan had been laid before Apostle Schall and Apostle Schall had given his consent to it. Then he (the Chief-Apostle) had appointed District-Elder Thomas to be an Apostle, and that Apostle Jaggi was now serving mainly in the parishes of greater Stuttgart. He had said in Heilbronn that he wanted to draw a line under the past and to forgive everything that had been done in wrong the past. Apostle Schall then declared that he was very grateful for this etc.

The Chief-Apostle then went on to say: "But Apostle Schall was to blame for everything; because in answer to Brothers who had asked him what he had to say about the Chief-Apostle's message, he had said: "Take care, take care, the Chief-Apostle is an old man." (Just when Apostle Schall said this or is supposed to have said it, the Chief-Apostle did not mention.)

Now there is something more to be said about the above case: From accurately informed sources I have been told that the Bishop from Heilbronn used to be on the best of terms with Apostles Schall and Jaggi, and that these three men preached the Chief-Apostle's message, it is true, but in the opinion of many Administration-Brothers they did not do it with the necessary emphasis and their teaching was much too lax. Then, those District officials in particular who were placed under the Bishop approached him with the demand that he should support them and renounce the lax manner of Apostles Schall and Jaggi, otherwise they would reject him. When the Bishop then found himself faced with a fairly united front of his District officials, he had only two alternatives: either to lose these District officials, or to continue to support Apostles Schall and Jaggi. Then the Bishop preferred to tell Apostle Jaggi he wanted to speak to his Administration-Brothers alone and that he could not admit him to the meeting of the District officials. At that meeting the Bishop declared himself in support of the attitude of his fellow-Brothers, Apostle Jaggi went home sadly. Shortly after, one of the Administration-Brothers, who until then had been under the direction of the Bishop, was appointed to the office of Apostle and put in charge of a good part of Apostle Jaggi's former work, while Apostle Jaggi was allotted greater Stuttgart as his area.

In the same manner as in Heilbronn but in a much sharper manner and to a considerably greater extent, more and more Administration-Brothers in the Düsseldorf District approached the District-Superintendants and Apostles in the last months of 1954 with the categorical demand that they should preach the Chief-Apostle's message, that at

receiving and sealing services they should make those who were to be received or sealed confess that they believed in the Chief-Apostle's message, otherwise they said they would no longer follow them, they would reject them etc. In this these Administration-Brothers were greatly supported by letters from the Chief-Apostle according to which no one need continue to follow an Apostle or official who did not believe in his message and did not proclaim it. Many of these Brothers visited the Chief-Apostle personally and there they were strengthened in their attitude towards their Apostles and District-Supervisors. Then gradually there were more and more such scenes that in services there were calls of: "We want to hear the Chief-Apostle's message etc." It came to such a pass with such fanatical Administration-Brothers and Brethren that they left God's house whenever an Apostle or District-Supervisor appeared. Such Administration-Brothers simply told the Brethren the service was cancelled when a District-Supervisor came, all on the grounds that the latter did not preach the Chief-Apostle's message and they would therefore have nothing more to do with them. In many places the Apostles and District-Supervisors were subjected to vile abuse, and people demanded of them in a domineering manner that they should preach what they wanted to hear without fail, namely the Chief-Apostle's message about his not dying and about the accomplishing of the work by his hand. And this situation, which had become indefensible, was finally the reason why we Apostles, Bishops and District-Elders of our District turned to the Chief-Apostle in search of help. However, we found no help from the Chief-Apostle, indeed we were disciplined by being dismissed from office and excluded from the church.—And all that on account of a message which is very questionable and can scarcely stand in the light of the Holy Scriptures.

Now a few more special points which must be described as gross errors, arising from the Chief-Apostle's message.

At a service in Dortmund on 1st June 1952 the Chief-Apostle taught: "Satan too knows what is in the Bible, and so he knows what is planned in God's purpose for our time. Formerly he always used to influence leading persons to spread the belief among the people, which they did, that: The Lord is coming! But he knew quite precisely that it was not true.—In earlier times he used to say: He is coming! because he knew he was not coming."

In this connection one must ask: Since when has Satan helped to draw the attention of the souls to the imminent coming of the Lord? It has always been the Devil's way to say: The Lord is not coming for a long time yet. It was not Satan, but Jesus who has warned from the early Christian days: "Watch therefore: for ye know not the time or the hour when your Lord doth come. I come as a thief in the night." It has always been the Spirit of Jesus Christ which has said: "I am coming soon! Be ready! But the Evil One has never preached such readiness."

In Frankfurt on 8th June 1952 the Chief-Apostle preached: "Even at the turn of the millenium Satan planted the thought in the leading men: "The Lord is coming, only believe it! And he did not come. Satan knew that Jesus was not coming. About 1830 he influenced the bearers of the Spirit of Christ for decades: Firmly believe, the Lord is coming in your time; for you are the last. The Apostles trod this path of error and taught the people that the Lord would come in their time."

If the Chief-Apostle preached: Satan knew that Jesus was not coming, is not the question justified: Does the Devil know then when Jesus is coming, when the Lord said that the Son of God himself did not know?

And then: If the Chief-Apostle said Satan had influenced the English Apostles to teach

that the Lord was coming in their time and that they were the last Apostles, and that the English Apostles had therefore trodden this path of error and had taught the people that the Lord was coming in their time, one must ask, in all seriousness: Does it go entirely unnoticed that the Chief-Apostle is reproaching the English Apostles for just what he himself is doing today? If the Chief-Apostle teaches that the English Apostles, in teaching that the Lord was coming in their time, had trodden a path of error, what then is one to think of the absolutely identical teaching of the Chief-Apostle in our days? Let it be seen from the following how the message of the Chief-Apostle, that he would not die and that Jesus would come again within his lifetime, has even given rise to arrogant presumptuousness: On 2nd April 1953, the day of the funeral of the departed Apostle Eschmann, the Apostles present were seated at the lunch-table together in Zürich. Apostle Volz was seated opposite me. During the conversation over the meal Apostle Volz said that the Chief-Apostle had told him and his wife: "Many will die, probably, before the coming of the Lord; but you two will not die." Apostle Volz did not tell this as a joke, but in all seriousness and in the firm belief that according to that he and his wife would not die.

Even if the Chief-Apostle may have enjoyed generous hospitality in the house of the Volz family, nevertheless he is by no means entitled to promise his good hosts that they would not die; for the Almighty is and remains alone the lord of life and death.

In recent years, in connection with the Chief-Apostle's message, assertions have been made which are devoid of any foundation. Thus, in Augsburg on 18th April 1954, the Chief-Apostle said:

"50 years ago and even earlier God's people already believed in the Son of God and in his promises, but they were still far from believing that the fulfilment of his promise would take place in those days."—"Since Christmas 1951 we have known that we may expect the coming of the Lord at any hour."

Now it is really not true that 50 years ago faithful Children of God were far from believing that Jesus could have come at that time. The fact is that then too all those who loved the soul's bridegroom Jesus daily awaited his coming. There are plenty of witnesses so that among us in the present. Or have loving bride-souls been waiting for the wedding with the souls' bridegroom Jesus only since Christmas 1951? Surely nobody would say that seriously.

In Bielefeld on 16th May 1954 the Chief-Apostle said: "For us, the word 'die' has been struck from the book of our life by the Most-High."

Have fewer New-Apostolic people been dying since Christmas 1951 than did before? And does not the warning of the old man of God still hold good: "Lord, teach us to consider that we must die, so that we may become wise?" Even if all whom the Lord accepts of those who are still alive on his day experience transfiguration and do not taste death, still no man knows who will still be alive up to that day and so no man can say that for him the word "die" has been eliminated by the Most-High.

During a service in Stuttgart on 12th September 1954 the Chief-Apostle said roughly the following: "I am well aware that if I were to die—which will not be the case—then God's work would be destroyed", and then: "If I really did pass away, which will not happen, then that would be the end of the work of redemption." In the report on this service duplicated later it says, but considerably watered down: "The Son of God knows quite precisely what would then occur, if it were possible that I might be taken away beforehand. He knows perfectly well that that would be the end of his work of redemption."

And when the Chief-Apostle himself says that if he really did die, that would be the end

of the New-Apostolic Church, can anyone hold it against us that, in the monstrous anxiety that the message about the Chief-Apostle's not dying may be human error, we have not taught such a message nor compelled anybody to preach it.

During a service in Dortmund on 26th September 1954 the Chief-Apostle said: "That the Lord Jesus is coming soon has long been written in the Holy Scriptures; by the signs of the times we have seen which times we are living in, but no exact limit has been drawn; and if the dear Lord had not come to meet us through the promise of his Son, that he is coming within my, or rather our lifetime, then we would have moved with the same mind year after year as in past years or decades, there would have been no change of any kind in us in this respect."

Was it then not possible for anybody who, before the Chief-Apostle's message was proclaimed, already believed with all his heart that the Lord Jesus may come at any hour, to have a change of heart to become properly worthy in Christ's sense? And have not all those who, before the Chief-Apostle's message was proclaimed, passed into eternity as believing Christians of the Early Church or of the Latter-Day Church, laid down the old order and put on the Spirit of Christ?

Finally, a few more things that the Chief-Apostle said during a service in Frankfurt a. M.-East on 5th December 1954: "A few decades ago I once said at a service: 'I shall bring to the goal anyone who stays at my hand.' And there was one of the Brothers who said: 'Well, how can anyone say such a thing. After all the Chief-Apostle is a mortal man too.' To that I can only say: '*That used to be true.*' Today he is no longer a mortal being. Not one of the Children of God will pass through the transfiguration without me."

Whether the Chief-Apostle is a mortal being rests with God. The future will show whether we have done wrong in not teaching that the Chief-Apostle will not die, and in keeping to the old fundamental truths of the Holy Scriptures, and in teaching that we want to be prepared for union with Christ at any hour, but that not even the Son of God knows when he will come again, for the Father has reserved this unto himself.

Düsseldorf, the 8th March 1955

Peter Kublen

What is truth ?

(Article in "Der Herold" of 1st July 1955)

For several days I have had here a letter which the Chief-Apostle wrote on 1st February 1955 to a Brother of the Düsseldorf District. There, among other things, it says:

"Probably not much will be said about how Kuhlen simply dismissed a number of Administration-Brothers from office because they believed in and spoke about the promise given to me by the Lord, that he is coming within my lifetime."

The truth is: not one single Administration-Brother has been dismissed his office by me for believing or speaking about the message proclaimed by the Chief-Apostle, that the Lord will come again within his lifetime.

The truth is: I have never, not even in the slightest, reproached anybody when he taught this message, and not even the most fanatical supporter and preacher of this disputed message of the Chief-Apostle can claim to have been rebuked by me for preaching on the subject, not to mention being dismissed from office.

The truth is: Out of the conviction that the Chief-Apostle's message is contradictory to

the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, I myself have never preached it, but have always worked only for the second coming of Christ, possible at any hour, and towards being prepared for it, but at the same time I have been tolerant in every way towards all Administration-Brothers who have proclaimed the Chief-Apostle's message.

The truth is: At the beginning of January 1955 a number of Administration-Brothers who had been incited against their Apostles resigned from office *of their own accord* on the grounds that *we* Apostles (Dehmel, Dunkmann, Kuhlen) did not believe and did not preach the Chief-Apostle's message. The truth is: the Chief-Apostle knows all this very well.

Why does the Chief-Apostle nevertheless spread the tale that Kuhlen has dismissed a number of Administration-Brothers from office because they believed and talked about his message? Do they want to gloss over the dreadfully hard intolerance shown towards us with the absolutely untrue statement that we had been intolerant? Then let them know:

Truth remains nevertheless Truth!

Peter Kuhlen

The flourishing, fruit-bearing branch!

In Isaiah 4,2-3, we read: "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.—And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem."

There is no talk here of a large, powerful trunk, but of a *branch*, and it is described as beautiful and glorious. Recently we have often been most unlovingly described as an "apostate branch", which would wither as a result of its separation from the trunk. But our Apostles and the holders of office and the brethren united with them are by no means an "apostate branch", for they have separated themselves neither from the Lord nor from the Lord's church. But the Chief-Apostle as indeed rejected a considerable number of Apostles and by excluding them from the New-Apostolic Church he has severed them from it. Thus we are a "branch which was chopped off" by a hard hand, one which was fruitful when still on the old trunk, but which, on being cut off from the latter, did not lose the power to take root afresh and to grow, so as to produce fruits of the Holy Ghost once again. Nature teaches us that healthy branches, separated from the trunk of a tree, can, by being planted in the soil, take root in their turn and themselves become fruitful trees. Very often the old trunk has long died away when the once weak scion from it has developed to the full and affords rich blessings.

Do not the Holy Scriptures give us reports of the same thing from the history of the Kingdom of God? In Isaiah 11,1 it says with reference to Jesus: "And there shall come forth a *rod* out of the stem of Jesse, and a *branch* shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." From the entirely decayed stem of Jesse and the almost extinct line of David there sprang the *shoot* which was Jesus. The powerful stem of Israel no longer had any strength or any sap in it. Dry forms, ceremonies, laws and pride in the past were what remained of a once fruitful life. The most influential scribes and Pharisees of Israel rejected Jesus, turned him away, had Him crucified and abused Him, the innocent one, as a blasphemer. But, from the

young branch of Jesus Christ there came fruits which were exquisite. Affability and friendliness, patience and forbearance, refreshment and consolation, sympathy and intercession, love and peace, grace and forgiveness could be tasted by sinners in enjoying the benefit of the words, the being and the deeds of Jesus. Such fruits were no longer to be found in the old tribe of the Jews, and its leader offered only unbearable selfrighteousness, arrogance, condemnation and damnation.

The old, once so fruitful stem of the Israelite people had become rotten, without the leaders of the people becoming conscious of this. What help was it to those who belonged to the old stem to look down to the young branch in Christ with contempt, disdain and deprecation! What use was it for the scribes and Pharisees to point to the glorious past and the still present superficial greatness of Israel and to pride themselves on the leaders of the tribe, Moses, Abraham and other former bearers of blessing! They had rejected Christ, and that was to be their ruin.

On the branch out of the stem of Jesse, the Son of God, the Apostles of the early church grew up. How wonderfully the young Christian world developed into a powerful tree under their blessed work! Abuses, threats, tortures, hardships, persecutions, prison and death could not impede the powerful development of the branch which was at first so insignificant. Divine life pulsated in this young growth more strongly than it had ever done in the old tribe. The multitude of the first Christians were one heart and one soul, and they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. The pure sap of the spirit of Christ caused the noblest virtues to mature. Jesu's commandment: "Love the Lord thy God above all things, and thy neighbour as thyself!" was the visible fruit of the faith of the congregations. What is more: enemies and tormentors were forgiven and sincere prayers were offered for them. That was the outstanding fruit of Christ's spirit.

In all the storm and weather the young congregation of the Lord had formed deep roots and had been founded in the fear of God and an earnest life of prayer. Abuse from many sides served to preserve humility in their hearts, and their weakness in the face of earthly powers drove them again and again to their knees to beg for strength from above.—But later, the persecutions ceased, hardship and poverty became less, prosperity set in, the congregation of the despised became a State-recognised and assisted church, those who had once been cast out acquired a great reputation in the world. From the former insignificant servants of Christ came superior church dignitaries, instead of caves and catacombes there were splendid churches and cathedrals to serve as meeting-places, and from the weariness of bearing the cross there had grown so tremendous an earthly power that worldly emperors, kings and princes subordinated themselves to the rule of the Pope from Rome. When, purely superficially considered, the enormous strength of the tree of the "only true church" appeared to be at its greatest, the reformer Martin Luther disclosed the rottenness which was really present in the church and particularly in its leaders. The man under whose sceptre the great ones of the world bowed, and who called himself "Representative of Christ", certainly did not let himself be told by the little monk Luther that it was high time to return to the pure teaching and to the true being of Christ. That prince of the church must surely have considered it beneath his dignity to let himself be warned by an insignificant, simple monk that it was necessary to call a halt to the process of decay in the church. Luther and the few other reformers of his time were proscribed and mercilessly expelled from the church. They were called apostates, heretics and diabolical seducers, low hatred was preached against them, they were threatened with bitterest damnation for all eternity, they were sorely persecuted and people did not even

shrink from setting up stakes at which to burn those heroes who had the courage of their convictions. Luther himself was in such trouble with the intolerant persecutors that he had to take cover at the Wartburg near Eisenach (from 4th May 1521 to 1st March 1522). During this time, as there was silence about Luther, those who held power in the church and who had performed the task of cutting off a Fruitful branch from the tree of the church may have thought in triumph that Luther, who had become a source of annoyance to them, would probably never show any signs of life again. But in that silence and loneliness the translation of the Bible into our language (German) flourished. And in this the young shoot of the Reformation had brought forth a fruit which was to be a blessing without equal.

The young branch of the evangelical community was a thorn in the side for the old stem of the church, and it was the not very pious wish of the old heads of the church that this young branch should not only wither, but be delivered over to eternal hell-fire. But still the Lord remained true to the living faith of those who knew no fear before men, but a deep fear of God indeed. The fruit of faith, the courage of confession, the joy in working for Jesus, the suffering for Christ's sake and preaching the clear doctrines of Christ achieved by the young community of evangelical Christians are well known. Though these intrepid guardians of the most holy goods might disparagingly be called "Protestants" in order to brand them as opponents and disobedients, still the power of men and the devil could not prevent the growth of the delightful branch.

The reformatory movement gave believers freedom in Christ, release from superstition, renunciation of the deification of humans and the cult of the saints, and, instead of dead forms, a life of living faith and prayer.—Gradually the evangelical community of Christians became large in numbers, influential in the world and rich in earthly possessions. Finally what was left in the evangelical church of the 19th century of all its former power! A lack of interest in the whole of church life had taken possession of the vast majority of the members of the church. In their "liberal" attitudes, a large number of its clergymen doubted many of the deeds of God and Jesus to which witness is borne in the Holy Scriptures.

Then, in the thirties of last century, the young branch of the Catholic-Apostolic community grew in England and Scotland. Jesus again sent Apostles to prepare His people for the day of His second coming. In the young community the Lord revealed Himself so wonderfully through the work of the Holy Ghost that the diverse gifts showed a fullness and a readiness to receive the bridegroom of the soul, Jesus, which were exemplary. The heroes of the faith, who opened their hearts to the spirit of Christ and everywhere proclaimed with joy what God has done, again had to endure expulsion from their hereditary mother church and were treated like apostates.

Yet the new shoot developed comparatively quickly and grew rapidly in many lands of the earth. Rich and devoted leaders and members of the Catholic-Apostolic community helped it very soon to attain great prosperity, and magnificent churches and cathedrals still bear witness to their wealth today. The quick successes achieved by the young community through the blessing of God unfortunately also called forth in its leading men a certain highhandedness. When, on the death of several Apostles, the Holy Ghost was pressing for the selection and appointment of new messengers to represent Christ, they debarred the still surviving Apostles from this call. Basing their argument on human dreams and visions, they held firm to the mistaken opinion that no more Apostles of Jesus would be necessary after them, as Jesu's work of salvation would come to its completion with the last of them. But the divine life would not be held back by such an

inflexible attitude, which would not accept any form of correction. Bishop Schwartz of Hamburg told his Apostle Woodhouse quite candidly that, as he understood it, it was God's will to bring His work of mercy to completion through Apostles. When he opposed the order to declare the appointment of a further Apostle the work of the devil, he was relieved of his office by his Apostle and expelled from the Catholic-Apostolic Church which had now grown so strong. At first, only about one hundred souls clung to the young branch of Schwartz and Preuss, and those who remained with the old stem, from which the shoot, at first so weak, had sprung, looked down on this small group very disparagingly indeed. The little band of Christians of the "Apostolic Mission", firm in their faith, had to suffer the bitterest hatred and persecution on the part of their fellows of the old stem. Only very slowly did the young branch of the "New Order" grow. Furthermore, Apostle Preuss passed away as early as 1878, and Apostle Schwartz in 1895, whereas the English Apostle Woodhouse did not die until 1901, and then as a 96-year-old. At the time of Apostle Schwartz's passing away there were as yet only a few thousand members in the congregations of the "Apostolic Mission", and, in view of Apostle Schwartz's death and Apostle Woodhouse's continuing to grow old, how well may many a one who still confessed the "Old Order" have been strengthened in the erroneous belief that in expelling Schwartz and Preuss Apostle Woodhouse had performed a deed for God, and that the work of the two men, "chopped off" from the old stem, was human work! In this way the Almighty often gives powerful errors to those caught up in human opinions. Schwartz and Preuss did not experience on earth the great rise of the "New Order"; they passed away in faith and with hope. Later, when it was called "New-Apostolic Church", the latter underwent an undreamt-of growth so that at the end of last year it numbered about half a million members. Meanwhile, people in the New-Apostolic Church have become very proud of this large number. Unfortunately, with the increasing recognition, from outside, assistance from the State, and with increasing riches of a material kind, many marvellous things about the community are disappearing. Unfortunately, haughtiness, self-complacency, belief in infallibility, superstition, deification of humans and all kinds of ungodly things have grown up in the church, and there, meanwhile, the name of Jesus is mentioned with less reverence than is the name of a servant of the Lord. In exceedingly important things the ever-valid word of Jesus has been falsified by human interpretation, and human dreams and faces, indeed, even statements made by spiritualists and soothsayers from the world are taken as a basis to prove that Jesus will certainly come again within the lifetime of the Chief-Apostle. Even a number of Apostles who hold fast to the old biblical truths and cannot recognise that the belief that the Chief-Apostle will not die and Jesus will accomplish His work through him is the determining factor in whether they shall take part in the first resurrection and in the wedding with the bridegroom of the soul, have been expelled from the New-Apostolic Church by the Chief-Apostle and the council of Apostles. In his refusal to listen to reason and in the hardness of his heart, the Chief-Apostle has let himself be induced to "chop off" from the stem with which they had until then been united, Apostles who want to obey their consciences more than human commands. This branch, not "fallen away" but "cut off", has, in the heat of the struggle together with God, once again formed, deep roots in the Apostles and the many thousands of souls united with them. The sap of the spirit of Christ flows through this plant very powerfully, and splendid fruits of God are growing on it. It may be exceedingly painful for us, yet history does teach that when a healthy, chopped-off branch from an ageing stem has begun to grow, it has always been the same as it is for

us at present: we are abused most of all by those whom we have loved and still love. From men who ought to have a great deal of the spirit of Christ in them we encounter such hatred as we had never thought possible. They are not ashamed to call us traitors, apostates, disloyal, Judases and even devils.—In all this that is bitter, however, there is also something good, for a young branch planted in the ground flourishes least well in blazing sunshine, but grows best in rain and in the darkness of night. Jesu's words from the sermon on the Mount serve to comfort us: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." Did not just the same happen to Jesus as to us? Let us read Isaiah 53,2-5, where it says: "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."

If then Jesus, who was without sin, had to suffer such contempt and humiliation, let us, who as sinners indeed live by the Grace of Christ, also bear it when today those who themselves came from a "chopped-off" branch, yet in the meantime have become proud and powerful, abuse the growing, flourishing and fruit-bearing branch. Afflictions and sorrows lead the soul to God. And abuses preserve the heart in humbleness. When Christ grows in us, then all that is valued by men is perfectly free to shrink and pass away. The pleasure of the Lord rests upon those who fear Him and serve Him. With His blessing it will grow to the honour of His name.

Peter Kublen

On the passing away of Chief-Apostle J. G. Bischoff

In the brochure "Reflections on the message of Chief-Apostle J. G. Bischoff: 'I shall not die, the Lord is coming again within my lifetime'"⁴, published by us in March 1955, the closing sentence ran: "The future will show whether we have done wrong in not teaching that the Chief-Apostle will not die, and in abiding by the old fundamental truths and teaching that we are to be prepared for union with Christ at any hour, but that not even the Son knows the time of his coming, for the Fathers has reserved this to be within his power alone."

Now the Chief-Apostle died on 6th July 1960 and that must have made it clear to every lover of truth that the message in question, which has called forth such struggles for the faith and such affliction, was by no means from God: "For the word of the Lord is right; and all his works are done in truth" (Psalm 33,4). This message has thus proved without any doubt to be error, to be untruth and an influence of the devil.

In those days, when we were unlovingly expelled because we declared ourselves for the unchanging truths of the Gospel of Christ and placed the Lord's word above human words, we comforted ourselves with the fact that the almighty reigns and said:

The last word will be spoken by God!

And now God has spoken! But before our eyes there is the dreadful devastation in holy places and the fact that numerous people of simple faith have now been so shaken in

their believing trust that many of them will hardly find their way to a new and *proper* faith any more. Who does not then think of Jesu's words: "Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18,8.)

Do the leading men of the New-Apostolic Church not worry about the responsibility which weighs on the shoulders of those who have caused such disappointment in believing people?

Frankfurt a. M., 7th July 1960

Beloved Brothers and Sisters at home and abroad!

We, the undersigned Apostles, who have assembled together today in Frankfort a. M., have to perform the exceedingly painful task of informing you of what is for all of us the incomprehensible and unexpected passing away of our Chief-Apostle. He departed this life in the hands of the doctor attending him, a brother in the faith, in the evening hours of 6th July 1960 at Karlsruhe, where he had hoped to achieve a complete recovery through hospital treatment.

We all believed and hoped out of conviction that as in the promise given to the Chief-Apostle the Lord would take his people unto himself within the Chief-Apostle's lifetime. This was also the unshakable belief of the Chief-Apostle and he professed it to those around him unto the last hour of his earthly life. Neither he nor we nor any of the Brothers and Sisters truly loyal to him have ever doubted that the Lord would fulfill the promise he had given him in due course. We are therefore faced with the inscrutable decision of our God and wonder why he has changed his will. The Chief-Apostle, who brought the Lord's work of redemption to the highest point of perfection and thereby bound the children of God in an unshakable faith in his word, cannot have been mistaken, for he always made the Lord's word the guiding principle of his actions. Consequently he never told us anything other than what he had previously received into his spirit from the Lord.

His exemplary life in the faith, his most modest manner of living, his pure character and his complete, selfless devotion enabled him to pass on the noblest virtues of Christ Jesus to all the souls entrusted to his care. He was therefore found worthy by the Lord to undertake the work of his highest servant. His extremely rich experience and the great treasure of his divine knowledge have, thanks to the Grace of God, helped the work of redemption to achieve a fruitful development. And all the Apostles who were called under his leadership to be privileged to work as his colleagues were fertilised by the spirit of Christ which dwelled in him, to the blessing of all those who are named with the name of the Lord.

If, by taking away the Chief-Apostle, the Lord has left us faced with a riddle, then he will also give us his answer to it in his own good time.

Just as before, the Apostles see it as their lofty task to preserve and cultivate the legacy of the Chief-Apostle, his belief in the early coming of the Lord, just as if he were still among us; for it is and it remains the Lord's concern, and he will see it through to the end. If we were to give up this thought, then we would simultaneously give up our belief in the day of the first resurrection. But that has been precisely the content of our belief up to this very hour.

The undersigned Apostles consciously face the fact our opponents and enemies think that through the death of the Chief-Apostle they have grounds for ascertaining that the work of redemption is the work of human beings.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters, let nobody lose his faith in this hour and make room for the

doubting spirit. Any who did would make the words of Matthew 25, verse 8 apply to themselves: "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out." The Lord will not abandon us; for if he did, what would become of the fulfilment of the many indications in the Revelation of St. John concerning the completion of the bridal company. We therefore beg you in this earnest hour to be loyal and stand together as you have in the past and to give the opponents of the work of God no grounds for questioning our faith. May it serve to reassure you to know that beyond the Chief-Apostle's grave too, all the Apostles testify to their complete oneness in accordance with the will of Jesus, and that without interruption they will continue to work in this spirit for the Perfection of the bride-souls. We therefore exhort you: "Honour the memory of the Chief-Apostle by continuing to follow him faithfully. Our love and confidence in him has not suffered any damage through his passing away. The Lord has made provision so that all the children of God shall again have a leader. One of the last sayings of our Chief-Apostle, addressed to us, was: "To find his flock the Lord will go to the shepherds!" May that be our motto on the last part of our journey.

On the morning of the 10th July the undersigned Apostles are gathered together for a solemn service in Frankfort am Main. At the service Apostle Walter Schmidt assumes the office of Chief-Apostle and thus the leadership of all New-Apostolic churches.

He was unanimously elected to this office by the Apostles' meeting of 7th July 1960 in Frankfort am Main.

In reverent memory of the Chief-Apostle we greet you in the spirit of the love of Christ Jesus.

Walter Schmidt
H. J. Schall
Karl Hinemann
J. J. Schmeider
E. Schütz F. Kuhn
H. J. J. J. Hinrichs
E. H. H. H. H.
~~H. J. J. J. J.~~

J. R. Krenner
Kewitas Quartas
Joseph Volz J. Bell.
W. Zimmermann W. Jaggi
Guy Thomas J. Zimmermann
Max Gurtner A. Tamm
E. Zimmermann
H. Schneider, of Ferman Oes.
Hellen Krausman Carl Glinowitz
J. Rosenfelder.

(A photostat copy of the letter which was read out during the service on 10th July 1960 in the New-Apostolic churches)

Unfortunately it must be stated that even now these men do not yet honestly confess before God and their congregations that they were in error and preached things that were untrue. Instead of an admission of guilt, new excuses are meant to help them over the catastrophe. In the letter, which 27 New-Apostolic Apostles signed and caused to be read out at the services on 10th July 1960, it is ascertained that the promise (which has not been fulfilled) was given to the Chief-Apostle *by the Lord*, that the Chief-Apostle had *not* been mistaken (although this error must clearly be proven), but that *God* has changed his will. (Although it is evident that God keeps his word).

Is it not terribly sad that there is a desire to gloss over a proven untruth by means of a new untruth? Is it not dreadful that there is a desire, as it were, to pass on to God the responsibility for what has happened?

With the hazardous ascertainment that God has changed his plan, the New-Apostolic Apostles directly contradict what they have preached in past years. They thereby even belie words uttered by the late Chief-Apostle. Here are a few examples of this:

In the "Wächterstimme" of 1st September 1955, under the heading: Valuable Sayings of the Chief-Apostle, it says: "God has made his plan of salvation, *and he will carry it out*. We act wisely when we faithfully accept the revelation of the Lord and adjust our lives according to it."

During a service at Reutlingen-West on 10th October 1954 the Chief-Apostle said: "On 21st September I had been working as Chief-Apostle in the work of God for twenty-four years. *We really cannot believe that God would make such a mistake as to make a promise to his people, a promise which would never be fulfilled.*"

During the same service Apostle Hahn said: "To him (the Chief-Apostle) the Lord has made the revelation that the Lord is coming within his lifetime. He has passed on this revelation to us in full. *We know that that is the Lord's word and that consequently we may build on what the Chief-Apostle has told us; for these words stand more firm than anything else that we know on this earth.*"

At the officials' service held on 5th September 1954 in Düsseldorf the Chief-Apostle said: "When we make a promise to a person, we may make it honestly and with good intentions; but circumstances can arise by which we are prevented from keeping our promise. *But, with the Lord, there is no such thing, for him it is out of the question.*"

During the service held in Stuttgart on 12th September 1954 the Chief-Apostle said: "How could the Son of God make such a promise and let me know that he is coming within my lifetime, *if he knew I should die before the promise was fulfilled? Please think that over.*" During the same service the Chief-Apostle said: "If we believe in what the Holy Ghost has revealed in the past and believe what the Spirit of the Lord communicates to us in the present, *then what he has foretold may, no, not may, nor will, but must be fulfilled in the future.*"

In the "Wächterstimme" of 15th October 1955 it says: "The light of the message of our Chief-Apostle is also capable of penetrating and dispelling the deepest darkness, and thus this precious revelation of the Lord, that he is coming within the Chief-Apostle's lifetime, comforts us more than Satan can trouble us. Let us faithfully hold fast onto *this last prophecy of the Lord's will* and let us direct all our actions towards achieving the state of the firstborn."

And a new Chief-Apostle was elected in great haste. Even before the material remains of the Chief-Apostle were lowered into the grave, they proceeded to hold this election. Had they so very soon forgotten what the deceased had said? And that by holding this election they directly contradicted themselves and the Chief-Apostle who had once been presented as the greatest prophet of all times?

To illustrate this point let us recall the following: During the 1951 Christmas service the Chief-Apostle said: "I am the last, after me there will be no other. That is how it is in God's resolution, that is how it is laid down, *and that is how the Lord will confirm it.*"

During a service conducted by the Chief-Apostle at Reutlingen-West on 10th October 1954, Apostle Hahn said: "He (the Chief-Apostle) later taught us: I am the last Chief-Apostle, there will be no other after me! Anybody who had ears to hear could recognise what our Chief-Apostle meant by that."

In the "Wächterstimme" of 1st June 1956 it says on page 87: "If Jesus of Nazareth had failed, then there would be no Grace and no redemption. The eyes of the faithful recognise a unique and unprecedented parallel: at the beginning of the time of Grace there

stood one man—Jesus of Nazareth—at the end of it stands his servant, whose task it is to lead the bride home . . . *he cannot be replaced by any other.*”

In “Christi Jugend” of 15th March 1956, on page 46, it says: “In him (the Chief-Apostle) we face the Lord, who is here and is at work among us. It might be said: Yes, but one must distinguish the person from the office!—But that does not apply here . . . *after him there will be no other who could support what he said by referring to the fact that he had an order from the Son of God.*”

Let these few quotations suffice, a great number of similar ones could be added.

To prove that Chief-Apostle Bischoff would not die, innumerable fantastic dreams and stories were circulated by the Chief-Apostle.—But there are again dreams in circulation which announced some time before the death of the Chief-Apostle that the latter really would die. Thus in the first services after the Chief-Apostle’s death it was officially stated by many of the New-Apostolic Apostles that some time before, Apostle Startz had received such a dream from a sister, but that he had thrown it into the waste-paper basket because he had firmly believed in the message that the Chief-Apostle would not die. Now it was confirmed that that dream had been a true one. So, *according to requirements*, they hold dreams at the ready which announce just what is needed as being a divine revelation. But what untruthfulness lies in such behaviour!

We human beings can err and do wrong; but when then the damaging consequences become evident, we must beat our breasts and repent if we are to be helped. Then, the way to put things right is remorsefully to do penance and to ask God for mercy. But when somebody stubbornly insists that he has not done anything wrong, then he cannot be granted forgiveness either.

The managing director of a big works does not compromise his dignity at all in asking a worker to forgive him, if he has wronged the latter. Rather does he go up in the estimation of all the people in the firm.

But why do the leading men of the New-Apostolic Church not make up their minds in the face of their own conscience to confess to the shattered brethren in the faith the mistakes they have made and humbly to beg the Lord for mercy for having proclaimed a teaching which was contradictory to Jesu’s Word and for all the harm they thereby caused?

Is it not time earnestly to enquire why all this has happened, indeed had to happen? The history of the Kingdom of God teaches us that arrogance and idolisation of human beings have often been the cause of God’s withdrawing his hand from a people and their leaders.

Far be it from us to offend; but simply in order to effect understanding as far as possible, let a few things be quoted here which were certainly not in the spirit of Christ, since through the exaggerated Chief-Apostle cult the glory of Christ was impaired.

In New-Apostolic periodicals for whose content the Chief-Apostle, as publisher, is responsible, the Chief-Apostle has been described as the greatest man of the present time (“Der gute Hirte”, 1953, page 74), represented as the greatest person on this earth (“Jugendfreund”, 1954, page 51).

During the Christmas service at Giessen, Apostle Rockenfelder named the Chief-Apostle “—after Christ—the greatest the earth has ever borne.” The Chief-Apostle listened to that without contradicting it and himself had the report on that service sent out to all parts of the world.

In the almanac “Unsere Familie”, 1956, page 60, Apostle Schiwy named the Chief-Apostle: “the exponent of divine majesty”.

In the "Wächterstimme", 1955, it says on page 31 about the Chief-Apostle: "He proclaims the abolition of the natural laws for those who believe in his words, that they need not taste an earthly death, and promises them eternal life in accordance with the divine will."

In the "Wächterstimme" of 15th October 1955 Apostle Startz wrote: "Without Chief-Apostle Bischoff there is no first resurrection, no entry into the wedding-hall and no dwelling in the kingdom of glory!" What arrogance and presumptuousness!

According to "Unsere Familie", No. 23, 1955, page 623, the Chief-Apostle said in Kassel: "We can appear before God and assert that we are particularly good and perfect people."

And in the almanac "Unsere Familie" for 1956, one Apostle writes that the Chief-Apostle told him in a letter: "I have overcome everything that I cannot continue with in eternity." To this one of our brothers wrote: "Anybody who speaks and teaches like that is not seeking mercy any more. But anybody who no longer needs to take refuge beneath the cross of Christ—as we have had to learn, the hard way—can himself no longer exercise mercy."

In reply to the enquiries of many as to whether the New-Apostolic Apostles have now approached us, the Apostles who are at present excluded from the assembly of Apostles, in order to work together again on a fresh basis, let it also be noted here that not one of these men has made contact with us, but that rather during a service in Frankfurt a. M. on Sunday 10th July 1960 Walter Schmidt, the head of the New-Apostolic church, newly elected immediately on the death of the Chief-Apostle, said they would not discuss anything with their opponents (that is what they so very hatefully call us). The late Chief-Apostle had set up a wall of silence around himself against such people, and he would do the same; he would not load any unproductive work onto his desk.—And on that 10th July 1960 once again a new action was started against us and it was announced that on Wednesday 13th July 1960 most of the European Apostles would hold "services" in the largest New-Apostolic churches of the Rhineland.—At these "services" a good part of the work consisted in warning the faithful who had been deceived not to have any discussion with us and in urging them to close their doors to us.—Thus once again the decision has been made to adopt an un-Christian and unbrotherly attitude of intolerance towards those who have done nothing other than to follow their consciences and to obey God more than men. When one takes refuge behind untruthful excuses, instead of confessing to the truth, the blessing of God ceases. If what has now happened is not taken as a visitation of God for atonement, then God will again speak clearly in his own good time!

God grant, however, that all honest and upright people may succeed in finding their way through all the confusion, disbelief and superstition to the truth and to true faith in God and Christ and his Word.

Peter Kublen

A word to the members of the New-Apostolic Church

Chief-Apostle J. G. Bischoff dead!

In recent days this news has caused a dreadful shock in the New-Apostolic congregations. Crippling despair has seized all those who had been faithfully devoted to the message proclaimed for years in the New-Apostolic Church that the Chief-Apostle would not die and that Jesus would come again within his lifetime. Now you have suffered a disappointment which could hardly have been more bitter. For a long time it has been

preached more and more insistently to you that belief in the message of the Chief-Apostle is an indispensable condition if you want to be accepted on the day of Christ's appearance. You were taught that this belief was the last step necessary in order to be able to enter the wedding-hall with Christ. You were told with great emphasis that Chief-Apostle Bischoff would lead the bridal congregation to the Lord, and the Chief-Apostle preached threateningly that without him nobody would live to see the day of the first resurrection. Alarmingly he said that whoever did not believe the message that he would not die would have to remain outside on the day of the Lord. Servants in the House of the Lord who did not preach the Chief-Apostle's message were called bad servants. Apostles of the Lord and other servants of Jesus who did not teach the Chief-Apostle's message, which was contradictory to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, were treated in an exceptionally hateful manner by the brethren incited to this.

Men who followed the voice of their conscience and in anxious care for the future of the Lord's people drew the Chief-Apostle's attention to the contrast between the teachings he has proclaimed in recent years and what he formerly taught concerning the time of Christ's second coming and who pointed out the dangers thus threatening the Church were intolerantly and unlovingly excluded from the New-Apostolic Church. In the ensuing period the messengers of Jesus who unshakably held fast to the pure Gospel of Christ, and all the truth-loving brethren who had banded together under the leadership of these men of God, were abused and slandered from New-Apostolic quarters. The Chief-Apostle and many other leading men of the New-Apostolic church described them as Judases, traitors, apostates and deserters. Eternal torments of hell of the worst kind were prophesied for them. The Chief-Apostle went so far as to declare that they would be an abomination unto all flesh. Those who did nothing other than proclaim the pure teaching of Christ according to the Bible and the Apostolic confession of faith were, on the completely un-Christian instruction of the Chief-Apostle, no longer to be loved by any New-Apostolic member. For them, as the Chief-Apostle taught, one should not even pray any more. What a descent from the Christian spirit to abysmal hatred!

In the highest places in the New-Apostolic church they were aware that the writings published by us contained such an abundance of truths that these could not be refuted by the Chief-Apostle, nor by anybody else, and that is why they had recourse to the most abominable methods in order to deter the members of the New-Apostolic church from reading such texts. Nevertheless, the truth will force its way through over all the deplorable happenings which have brought so unspeakably much distress to many thousands of souls.

Now it has come about, as the Chief-Apostle himself said during the service in Stuttgart on 12th September 1954: "I know that if I were to die—which will not be the case—then the work would be destroyed." In deep distress we now face the fact that the Chief-Apostle's dogma, which in recent years had become the main content of New-Apostolic preaching and for the sake of which many conscientious Brothers and Sisters were obliged to suffer the most bitter things, will bring about the ruin of the New-Apostolic Church.

But, very regrettable though it is that the once so flourishing New-Apostolic Church should suffer such a collapse, yet, after the developments in teaching, leadership and methods in the New-Apostolic Church in recent years, it was possible to foresee what has now come about: the collapse of a building which had in many respects become rotten. In this we can even recognise the ruling hand of God, which had to withdraw its blessing from people who had caused so much distress in his name.

Now let none of you repeat the words we have heard so often in recent years: "If the Chief-Apostle really dies, then Jesus has lied", for it has always been a terrible blunder to speak like that of Jesus, from whose mouth no word of untruth has ever come, and it must surely now be clear to everybody that the Chief-Apostle's message was not of divine origin and was thus disastrous error or even terrible untruth. And let none say any more, as has been said to us so many times: "If the Chief-Apostle dies, then I shall not believe in anything else at all, then I shall not go to church any more, then I shall go out into the world and follow my own inclinations etc.; for even if the Chief-Apostle and many leading men of the New-Apostolic Church have gone astray and have deviated from the will and the spirit of Christ in what they have said and what they have done, one still cannot throw overboard one's belief in God and in his Son. One cannot make use of the failure of leading men of the church as the fig-leaf in order to turn one's back on him who has always loved us. Then, rather, as a consequence of this may one come to the decision to follow those men who, as proper watchers on Sion's walls, already foresaw and heralded the catastrophe which has now come about and who were then, as dutiful warners and admonishers, excluded from the New-Apostolic Church by their fellow-Brothers who had been roused from their false sense of security.

The history of the Kingdom of God of all times teaches that when the Lord's servants departed from God's ways and diminished God's honour and the idolisation of human beings was practised, the Lord then equipped other men to carry out his will and to be pointers for seeking souls, to show the way to everlasting life. Thus we can now recognise perfectly clearly that our exclusion from the New-Apostolic Church, which we felt was so bitter at the time, has been turned to good purpose by the wisdom of God and thus for all honest and upright people the new way has been prepared along which true worshippers will find the salvation of their souls.

In the Apostolic community we have remained true to the task we were given by the one who sent us. We have kept to the Word of the Holy Scriptures and to the unchanging teaching of Christ. In the love of Jesus Christ, which always remains the same, we extend our hands to you and say to you: "Come, officials and Brothers and Sisters, join with us and strive with us for Jesus. Set yourselves with us in the service of the Lord. Struggle together with us to go through the narrow gate. Walk with us on the narrow path of self-denial, of suffering scorn and derision for Christ's sake. Then, with God's help and the Grace of our Saviour, we shall together attain the aim we long for."

We heartily welcome you, beloved Brothers and Sisters in the Lord, to a new union in the first love.

The Apostles, officials and Brethren of the Association of Apostolic Christians at home and abroad.

