APOSTLES, PROPHETS, TEACHERS

Concerning the Early History of the Office of the Ministry

The Early Church knows of three offices which cannot ever be transmitted by men, but to which God alone calls -- and that im-mediately (without intervening means): the offices of Apostle, of Prophet and of Teacher. This fact brings us to the very heart and central nature of this "Triad of Offices." about which there has been so much discussion since the discovery of the Didache and Harnack's 1884 edition of it (Cf. esp. A. Harnack, Mission und Ausbreitung^4 (1924) I S 332-77; the one hundredth anniversary of Rudolf Sohm's birthday in 1941 and the jubilee of his "Kirchenrecht" prompt thankful remembrance of what the great teacher of church-law contributed to our question.). It is misleading to distinguish these three offices from other offices by designating them as "pneumatic" or "charismatic." For every office in the very Early Church was charismatic in so far as its functioning presupposes the possession of a charisma, just as the gifts of grace of "helpers" and "administrators" (1 Cor 12,28) are part of the congregational offices of deacons and "rulers" (proistamenoi; Rom. 12,7f). And every incumbent of an office is pneumatic, as is every member of the Church (.e.g. Gal 6,1). After all, the Church as the "Israel according to the Spirit" is the true People of God of the End-Time in which the prophecy Joel 3,1ff about the pouring out of the Spirit of God on all flesh has been fulfilled. The fact that the majority of offices, that all congregational offices are transmitted through men does not in any way abrogate their pneumatic-charismatic character. For it is an Early-Church idea, and not only the view of later generations (Epigonen), that the same Spirit "Who blows where He will" is given by the laying on of human hands. Thus the offices in a congregation, those that lead as well as those which serve, are always transmitted by men. The congregation determines who should receive the πρωτοκαθεδρία (precedence) in the Service and wherewith be taken up into the rank of Presbyter. The congregation chooses and ordains its bishops and deacons (Did. 15,1), or it certifies their election where the election itself is the prerogative of the incumbents of the offices in the congregation (1 Clem. 44,3). Also an individual can, under certain circumstances, possess the authority to transmit an office, as the Pastoral Epistles show (1 Tim 5,22; cf 2 Time 1,6). But it is only in the case of the office of an Apostle, of a Prophet, or of a Teacher that such a thing as transmission by men does not exist. That is not contradicted by Barnabas and Saul's being commissioned to mission work, that is, to Apostolic activity, by the laying on of hands of the Prophets in Antioch (Acts 12,2f); for this commissioning takes place in response to a direct divine revelation, in response to a command of the Spirit. God calls to the office of Apostle, Prophet and Teacher directly, without mediation of men. The congregation, of course, certainly has the right and duty of inspecting the claims to such calling. It must examine whether the Apostle who visits them is a true Apostle of Christ or a deceiver, whether the Prophet is a true or a false Prophet, whether the Teacher is a teacher of the truth or a False Teacher, one who is called by God or one who has made himself teacher (Herm. sim. IX, 22,2 cf the warning James 3,1). It can happen that the acts of calling into a congregational office on the basis of a charisma and the recognition of a charismatic calling into one of the three offices may look externally very much alike. But the basic difference remains, and it is fundamental.

In one other point the unique position of the triad is clear. All other offices of the Church are congregational offices, whereas Apostles, Prophets and Teachers belong to the Church in general. Presbyters, "rulers", Hegumenoi, bishops, deacons are local offices. Polycarp is bishop of Smyrna. When he comes to Rome, he is honored as such. He may even be honored by being allowed, as a guest, to lead in the celebration of the Eucharist.

But he does that then at the bidding of the local bishop. The exercise of the functions of his own proper office is limited to his congregation or diocese. An Apostle, on the other hand, exercises his functions everywhere. Indeed, it is part of the nature of his office that it can not be excercised in one place. But Prophets and Teachers also belong to the entire Church. Even if they no longer are traveling --traveling Prophets and Teachers have long since been known to us-- or if they exercise their office only at one place and lead the congregation at that place --as very often was the case-- the authority which they possess as Prophets or Teachers extends beyond the reach of the local congregation. A Prophet is a Prophet and can exercise the functions of his office wherever he goes. "What the Spirit saith unto the churches", what it says through the Prophets, may, in the first instance, like the message of the Apocalypse, be intended for a specific congregation, but it has authority in all of Christendom. And in axactly the same way the office of a Teacher and what he teaches is authoritative in the entire Church.

2.

Easy as it is to differentiate this triad of offices from all other offices of the church, so difficult is it to draw a sharp and clear line within the triad between the office of Apostle, of Prophet, and of Teacher. Already the term "~~bishop~~" is incapable of perfectly clear definition, as is shown by the noteworthy fact that even among the Apostles of the New Testament themselves there was no unanimity on what an Apostle really is. If the definition of Acts 1,21f holds true (according to which only he can belong to the college of apostles who was not only a "witness of the resurrection," but also an eye-witness of Jesus' entire activity, then neither Paul nor James, the brother of the Lord, were Apostles. After all, Paul had to fight hard for the recognition of his Apostolate, and he acquired this recognition with the Twelve and James, but never with the strict Judaists. Acts itself calls Barnabas and Paul Apostles, and Paul extends the term so far that it includes not only James (Gal 1,19) but also men like Andronicus and Junias (Rom. 16,7). Also the formulaic expression "all apostles" (1 Cor 15,7) points to a wide concept of Apostle. The linguistic usage of the Didache, which designates all missionaries as Apostles, seems to be known to Paul. How closely the office of an Apostle is connected with that of a Prophet and Teacher is shown not only by the formulaic combination of Apostles and Prophets (e.g. Eph 2,20; 3,5; Rev 18,20), Prophets and Teachers (Acts 13,1; Did. 13,12; 15,1.2), Apostles and Teachers (Herm. sim. IX 15,4; 16,5), Apostles, Prophets and Teachers (1 Cor 12,28; cf Didache 11), but also the occasional interchange of titles. Didache 11,5f says of a wandering Apostle that he stays only a day or two. "If, however, he stays three days, he is a false Prophet." The best example for the inextricable intertwining of the three offices is the report concerning the Prophets and Teachers at Antioch: Barnabas, Simon Niger, Lucius, Manaen and Saul, in which case the manner of expression only slightly intimates that the first three were Prophets, the other two Teachers (Thus Hernack and others; on the question cf H.H. Wendt, Apostelgeschichte[9] (1913) p. 200f). When the Spirit sends forth Barnabas and Saul from their number for Mission Work, that is not stated expressis verbis but that is clear from the entire facts of the case that then a Prophet and a Teacher became Apostles. Before Paul entered the office of Apostlex to which he was called in his Damascus-hour, he was Teacher in Antioch. Thus we see the three offices not only touch ~~xxx~~ one another; they interpenetrate one another and can unite in one person. But that is only possible, if they are closely related in content.

3.

What is their content? What is the task of an Apostle, of a Prophet, of a Teacher? They are to speak the Word of God. They have, each in his way, the task of λαλεῖν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ Acts 4,29.31 & elsewhere often; Hebr. 13,7). This is especially the task of the Apostolic office. Apostles

are those whom Jesus Christ has sent out, to continue the preaching of the Gospel: "And as ye go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" (Matt.10,7). Even as the Father sent Him, the Original-Apostle, so He sends forth His Apostles. Naturally the preaching concerning the dawning of God's kingdom includes also the witness concerning Him as the Christ to come. It is since His resurrection also at the same time the blessed message about the New Aeon which began with the resurrection of the first-born from the dead. This is why it is part of the nature of an Apostle to be a "witness of the Resurrection." In saying this we are at the same time saying that the office of an Apostle is limited to one single generation. There can always be Prophets and Teachers, but Apostles could exist only in this one generation which experiences the death and resurrection of Jesus. Only a very small number of men in this generation are Apostles, are "the witnesses chosen before of God, even us who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead (Acts 10,41)." Thus the Apostles are preachers of the Word in a special sense. They proclaim "that what we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life (1 John 1,1). The preaching of the Apostles is the witness concerning the incarnate Word of God which is based on eye-witness.

If this is the task of the Apostolic office, then it is immediately clear why it stands first in the triad. For the order of sequence (Apostles, Prophets, Teachers) means not a juxtaposition that is haphazard or that follows out of logical reasons (so K.H. Rengstorf in Kittel, II 161,13ff), but a genuine order of rank, as is clear above all from Eph. 2,20, where we hear concerning the Church that it is "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone." Of the two offices that form the foundation of the Church the office of Apostle stands in first place. For the witness unto the Incarnate Word outstrips everything that a Prophet ever proclaimed or could proclaim. It is the fulfillment of all Prophecy, not only of Old Testament Prophecy. For also the Prophecy that exists under the New Coveneant, the Church's Prophecy, can never proclaim anything higher than what was already included in the miracle of the Incarnation. At the same time, however, it becomes clear at this point that the Apostolic and Prophetic proclamations are never to be separated from one andother; and it becomes also clear why this is the case. They belong together indissolubly, just as prophecy and fulfilment, as the preached word and The Word-Made-Flesh. Without the Prophets there would be no Apostles.

4.

If someone raises the question as to the task of Prophets in the Early Church, the answer must be: Prophecy in the Church has no other task than prophecy in general. A Prophet is God's mouthpiece, the means through which God speaks His word to men (Recall the graphic manner in which Prophecy's nature is spoken of in the command of God to Moses to use Aaron as his mouthpiece, Ex 4,15f "thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth... he shall be to thee instead of a mouth and thou shalt be to him instead of God" cf. 7,1 "See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.") Even though the content of Prophetic message in the New Testament changed over against what it was in the Old Covenant in so far that meanwhile He had come to Whom, it is said, Acts 10,43, all the prophets witness, the central nature (Wesen) of prophecy has not changed. Also in the Church a Prophet is a human being, through whom God speaks His Word, and that indeed, to specific men in a specific hour. This holds true not only for Agabos whose appearance reminds one most of all of the Old Testament prophets, but it holds true, above all, for all the Prophets of the Church, for Judé and Silas in Jerusalem (Acts 15,32), for Barnabas, Simon Niger and Lucius in Antioch, for the nameless Prophets who traveled with Agabos from Jerusalem to Antioch, whom we find in the Pauline congregations and in the church of the Didache, and it holds true for all genuine Prophets who were later acknowledged as such in the Church, such as the four daughters

of Philip, Ammia and Quadratus (Euseb. h.e. V 17,3). As always in the history of prophecy the danger existed also here that the Prophet might falsify the word that was given to him, that he might listen more to the voice of his own heart than to the voice of God, that he might exchange his own dreams for the divine revelation (Jer 23,25ff) and thus become a False Prophet. As in Israel, so also in the Church there were more false than true Prophets. The greatest danger that threatened Christian prophecy was that the Spirit-Revelation that proceeded through the Prophet in the present time claimed precedence over the Christ-Revelation which had come to pass in the past. In the Montanist movement the ancient church's prophetic movement actually succumbed to this danger. Then the word was forgotten through which the Paraclete's message is indissolubly bound to , and at the same time subordinated to the Gospel about the Incarnate Word: "He shall glorify Me, for He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you "(John 16,14f). The binding of prophecy to the Christ-Revelation which happened once in history, this humble subordination of prophecy underneath the Apostolic message is what distinguishes New Testament Prophecy from Old Testament prophecy. The pre-Christian prophet looks to the coming aeon and proclaims the Christ to come. The Christian Prophet, like the Church, lives between the aeons. He waits for the end of the old aeon on Judgment Day, and knows that the new aeon has already dawned with the resurrection of Christ. He also proclaims the parousia of the Lord, but the parousia of the Lord Who already has come in lowliness. The changed conditions of the Prophet changed also his message. And yet Prophecy remains what it was: God's present-day word to men, spoken by the Holy Ghost through men here and now.

What did the proclamation of the old Christian Prophets look like when we look at its details? It was as manifold as the prophecy of the Old Testament: predictions of famine, of terrible catastrophes (Acts 21, 10f), of the anxieties of the End-Time, of Final Judgment, of the Glory of the Coming Kingdom; adresses to individuals, to congregations, to entire Christendom; admonitions; condemnation, comfort of the Gospel. The Apocalypse gives a vivid, graphic picture of the colorful diversity of the Prophetic message. This proclamation can be done in ecstasy, but that is not necessary. The assertion of Miltiades, which is catalogues with a smile by researchers in the field of the Psychology of Religion and of a rather romantic History of Religions, to the effect that a Prophet dare not speak in ecstasy (Euseb. h.ex. V, 17,1) expresses in a paradoxical manner a correct theological understanding. Behind it stands a Biblical sobriety with which Paul once countered the dangers of Enthusiasm in Corinth, "The spirits of the Prophets are subject to the Prophets" (1 Cor. 14, 32). With this basic principle the Church has always countered the Enthusiasmus which, like Montanus, looked upon a prophet as a mechanical (willenlos) lyre which is made to resound by the Spirit as by a plectron. In fact, it means not any ossification of life, no cooling off of the glorious piety of the Early Church, no later-generation (epigonenhaft) quenching of the Spirit, when the Church combats Enthusiasmus, which, according to Luther's profound statement, adheres to Adam and his children from the beginning to the end of the world and is the source, power and force of all heresy (Smalc Art III, VIII, 5; Trig p 495). On the contrary, the Church would no longer be the Church, if it wished to run out on this fight which also the great men of God in the Bible like Jeremiah and Paul fought. It all depends on whether the battle is fought correctly, ie. with the Word of God, and in the correct understanding of what the Holy Ghost is and what He works. It has often been noticed that in the case of Paul Prophecy was evidently something very sober. The Prophets who appear, acc-

ording to 1 Cor. 14, in the Early Christian Service and who according to Acts 13,1ff and Did. 10,7; 15,1f together with the Teachers lead the Service, are actually nothing but preachers and leaders in prayer (Vorbeter). They proclaim the Word of God, no[t] matter whether the word which is received it is for the time being in an inspiration or whether it is received without consciousness of special inspiration. The Prophets of the Ancient Church were given what Luther called the oral word (das muendliche Wort). And the claim of New Testament Prophecy to be genuine Prophecy is nothing but the claim which, according to Luther, the preacher of God's word, if he has preached aright, can raise along with Paul and all Apostles and Prophets: "Haec dixit Dominus; this God Himself said. And again. In this sermon I was an Apostle and Prophet of Jesus Christ." (WA 51,517,9ff). Thus the office of Prophet which according to Biblical and Early-Church views (Eph 4,11ff; Miltiades in Eus. h.e. V,17,4) is supposed to remain in the Church until Christ's coming again is basically nothing but "the office of preaching or the oral word" in which God's Word today goes forth to men through human mouths. This oral preaching can, as to content, be prediction, threatening, admonition, comfort of forgiveness or something else. It can be captivating and highly persuasive or very simple and unadorned. What makes it Prophecy is the Holy Ghost alone Who is removed from all human perception and not recognized in earthly- human structures (Tatbestand), Who speaks through them nevertheless. (Here we have a different understanding of Prophecy than that of the History of Religion --Gunkel, Duhm-- which does not recognize the difference between the Holy Spirit and spirit as such, and can not therefore distinguish what is fundamental to the nature of Prophecy: the difference between Genuine and False Prophets. "We are not in a position to repeat this judgment," says Gunkel, RGG[1] IV, Sp.1873) concerning Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's calling the prophets-of-salvation "lying prophets.").

Alongside the office of preaching the Prophets of the Early Church exercised the office of being leaders in prayer (Vorbeter). They speak the liturgical prayers to which the congregation responds with its Amen (1 Cor 14,16). The Eucharistic prayers of the Didache are, so to say, Christendom's oldest known Agenda, given to the congregations in case they have no Prophets. The Prophets themselves were not bound to any prayer-formulae: "You should let Prophets, however, give thanks as much as they wish"(10,7). Thus the preliminary step to the Church's prayers-from-the-agenda was the free prayer of the Prophets. If one recalls that according to the New Testament true prayer is a function of the Holy Ghost in men (Rom. 8,15.26), then one understands why the Prophets already in the oldest congregations, e.g. in Antioch, were given the task, besides the proclamation of the Word, of leadership in the congregation's praying, and therewith in the Eucharist. Even today we perceive an echo of the Earliest Church's Prophecy in the mighty, gripping language of the Ancient Church's liturgies.

5.

Much more difficult than the demarkation of Prophecy from Apostalate is the distinction between the offices of Prophet and Teacher. In fact, the literal meaning of the sentence concerning Prophets and Teachers in Antioch makes one ask the question whether a strict distinction between these two offices is at all possible. The terminology Paul uses (1 Cor 12,28; cf. Rom. 12,7; and Eph 4,11) and which the Didache uses, however, shows that we are dealing with not two different names for the same office, but actually with two separate, if also related offices. What then was the task of a Teacher? "Teaching" cannot just mean the instruction of the catachumens. Acts 13,1f and Didache 15 rather show that the Teachers worked along also in the Service and therefore preached before the Congregation. Wherein did their preaching differ from that of the Prophets? Both preached God's Word. Both do it in the power of the Holy Ghost. One cannot also say that a

Prophet's proclamation was more ecstatic while a Teacher's was more sober and academically didactic. For Enthusiasmx and exstasy were not, as we have seen, part of the nature of the Ancient Church's Prophecy. If there ever was a writer of Christian Antiquity who wrote in a boring and pedantic manner it was the much-read Roman prophet Hermas. Thus the juxtaposition and reciprocal relation of these two offices remains a riddle that is as yet unsolved. We find them both, side by side, in pre-Pauline times in Antioch, while the office of Teaching is not attested to in Jerusalem. That the title "Teacher" should have arisen in the Church is scarcely conceivable (in the Jewish-Christian congregations it is utterly inconceivable) since, according to Matt 23,8, Jesus forbade His disciples the use of the title "Rabbi" : "For one is your Master, even Christ and all ye are brethren." This passage sounds almost like a polemic against the newly rising office of Teacher that was claiming authority in Christendom. The substitution of καθηγητής for διδάσκαλος in the most important MSS of the East and West shows that the Ancient Church already was aware of the contradiction that existed between Matt 23,8 (cf v 10) and the institution of the office of Teacher. The origin of this office can be explained only by a supposition. And we will have to look for its origin at the same place where we meet it for the first time, in Antioch. The congregation from which the name of Christian and the dsignation of the new faith as χριστιανισμός (Ignatius, Magn 10,1.3; Rom 3,3; Philad 6,1), in which the concept of the Catholic Church (Ignatius, Smyrn 8,2) was coined, and which gave Christendom the monarchical episcopate, would then be the home of the office of Christian Teachers. In that case, however, the next supposition does not lie far away: that it was established at a time when the Logion Matth 23,8 was still unknown in Antioch, and that it was established on the model of the Hellenistic Synagogue. There the Scripture-expert (Schriftgelehrte), just as in Palestinian Jewry, claimed precedence πρωτοκαθεδρία in the Service (cf Matth 23,6 and parall.) and thus also leadership of the congregation. We indeed know how the Hellenistic church also otherwise took over the constitutional and cult forms of the Hellenistic synagogue without any compunctions. In this way it is also to be explained that the Scripture-expert Paul in Antioch takes a leading position in the congregation before he begins his Apostolic activity.

If, however, the origin of the office of Teacher is to be understood in this way, then it immediately becomes clear what the basic task of a Teacher was: the Interpretation of the Holy Scripture. The entire New Testament bears witness to the fact that the interpretation of the Septuagint, the bringing of Scriptural proof for the Messiahship of Jesus (in the manner in which the Scripture-expert Paul carried it on after his conversion, at first in the synagogues of Damascus --Acts 9,20.22) was one of the most important tasks of the growing church. For this task the office of Spirit-filled Teachers was needed. For the Church knew from the beginning that only the Holy Ghost can teach the correct understanding of the Scripture. But the interpretation of the Septuagint was not only a necessity for theological apologists and for missionary instructions, but belongs also, in the Service. In congregations of Gentile-Christians which consisted in part, of people who had up to that time visited the synagogues as "God-fearing men" this interpretation took the place of the synagogual interpretation of Scripture. If the early Christian Teachers are the successors of the teachers of the Hellenistic synagogues-- indeed if, like Paul, they to an extent received their education in this synagogue and had served in this synagogue, then we understand the fact that in the ancient Christian writings that go back to such Teachers the connection with Jewish interpretation of the Scripture is extraordinarily great. No matter how far the example of the synagogue extended its effect, in any case it is the explanation of the Scripture, the interpretaion of the written Word of God which was the unique, essential task of this office.

In so far then as the interpretation of Scripture coincides with oral preaching, the function of Prophet and of Teacher coincide; and in so far as both are not to be separated from the Apostolic proclamation of Christ, they are connected with the office of an Apostle. Thus all three offices are to be understood in their individuality and in their indissoluble intertwinedness. All three are "service of the Word " (Dienst am Wort); all three want to "speak the Word of God." But each of the three has to do with a specific form of the divine word: with the Word-Made-Flesh, with the Word which today speaks through human mouths, with the written Word. An Apostle bears witness to the Incarnation of the Word. By the mouth of a Prophet God speaks today. A Teacher interprets the written Word of the Bible. In so far, however, as the three froms of the Word of God are forms of the One Word, the three offices of Apostle, Prophet and Teacher are one. They are the roots from which the one office of the Church, the office of the preaching of the Gospel, has grown.

6.

Concerning this process let us now speak a word in closing. The three offices belong to the earliest age of the Church and have disappeared (either entirely or in their ancient form) together with the disappearance of that early age. When the name of Apostle was definitely limited to the eye-witnesses of the life of Jesus who were called by the Lord or witnesses of the resurrection, and taken away from the wandering preachers and replaced in their case with the name of Evangelist (Eph 4,11), the office of an Apostle was limited to one single historical generation, and its fundamental meaning for the Church was definitively settled. Its task of bearing witness to the Incarnate Word had to be taken over by other offices, even this new witnessship could not have the direct immediacy of the Apostolic kerygma in the sense of 1 Cor 15,5ff; John 1,14; and 1 John 1,1 and had to lean on the tradition of the preaching of the Apostle's that was now becoming Holy Scripture. However, together with the office of Apostle, the offices of Prophets and Teachers also began to disappear. The Didache already knows of congregations in which these offices were lost. In their place then bishops and deacons were to come: "For their ministry to you is identical with that of the Prophets and Teachers." (15,1). Such incumbents of the offices in its midst the congregation can elect, whereas it can only pray for Prophets and Teachers to come from God's hands. It is entirely wrong and only the end-result of an unevangelical, romantic way of looking at history when people see in the gradual recession of the old charismatically endowed people a recession of the Spirit. If certain charismata of the Early Age were lost, that does not mean that the Church was abandoned by the Holy Spirit. We have just seen how little the departure of Enthusiasm meant a quenching of the Spirit. Perhaps there was never a decision more wholesome for the future of the Church, indeed more necessary for its continual existence than the rejection of Montanist Prophecy. It was as little a quenching of the Spirit as was Luther's battle against the enthusiasts (Schwaermer). We know how difficult the making of the decision against Montanism was for the church. Irenaeus at first did not sanction it, and Tertullian finally saw in it the great apostasy of the church. This decision sealed the fate of the independent office of Prophet, but it did not, however, push aside, out of the church, Prophecy as such. The task of the old Prophets was taken over not only in name, but also in deed, by the other offices of the ministry; and something similar happened in the case of the office of Teachers. This office, which is at all times threatened by the deep sins of pride and vanity, fell as an independent office as a sacrifice to the gnostic crisis --the Gnostics wanted to be Teachers, and must have found their foremost adherents among the Teachers-- and survived only where the church offered room for a mild gnosis, as in Alexandria. There is no more characteristic example of the two sides of the Ancient

Church's Teaching-activity than the figure of Origen, the greatest teacher the Ancient Church produced. In his great life's work as text-critic and exegete he represents against the original task of the church-Teacher: the interpretation of the written Word of God. In his philosophy-of-religion and dogmatics he embodies the great danger of this office:the way into Gnosis and apostasy from the simple word of the Bible. For that reason the integration of the office of Teacher into the life of the congregation and the transmission of the office of Teacher to the bishops dare not be adjudged simply as the expression of hierachical striving for power and as paternalistic clerical-domination of theology. Certainly such unwholesome motives played their part in the removal of the old charistmatic activity of Teaching. But they were not the decisive motives. In so far as this teaching-activity was quelled --it never died out completely; in fact, it experienced a rebirth since the Middle Ages, also as an institution, in the ecclesiastical-theological doctorate-- its tasks were also taken over by the other offices of the Church.

The office to which the functions of the Apostles, Prophets and Teachers was transmitted in the second century was the episcopal office, at first in the form of the collegiate episcopate, as we find it already in the first third of the century in Rome, Corinth and Philippi, then in its monarchical form, as it was already then existing in Syria and Asia Minor. The taking over of the office of Teacher by the bishop appears to have been based above all on their position as leaders of the church. The old Roman list of succession which Irenaeus already understood as a list of monarchical bishops, can hardly have been anything else originally than a list of outstanding members of the college of bishops of which each one in his generation was at the same time considered an outstanding Teacher, as was the case with Clement at the end of the first century. For the idea of succession had already taken deep root among Jewish teachers, and Gnostic teachers also made use of it. Polycarp is called "the Teacher of Asia" by the heathen mob in Smyrna (Mart. 12,2). His own congregation called him "Apostolic and Prophetic Teacher" (16,2; cf 19,1). When the office of bishop was thus designated, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ there was elevated and terminated ("aufgehoben") in that office (an office which originally seems to have been a simple office of administration, and of external oversight at the Eucharist) the Early-Church offices of Apostles, Prophets and Teachers. And with this development the ministerium docendi evangelii et porrigendi sacramenta had made its appearance in the church for the first time in its essential unity --in the office of the bishop.

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