



1-1-1951

# An Objective Study of II Peter

Maurice E. Beery

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.butler.edu/grtheses>



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Beery, Maurice E., "An Objective Study of II Peter" (1951). *Graduate Thesis Collection*. 426.  
<http://digitalcommons.butler.edu/grtheses/426>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Scholarship at Digital Commons @ Butler University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Thesis Collection by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Butler University. For more information, please contact [fgaede@butler.edu](mailto:fgaede@butler.edu).

(This certification-sheet is to be bound with the thesis. The major professor should have it filled out at the oral examination.)

Name of candidate :

Maurice E. Beery

Oral examination :

Date February 14, 1952

Committee:

S. Marion Smith, Chairman

A. C. Watter

David C. Miller

.....

.....

Thesis title:

An Objective Study of St. Peter

.....

.....

Thesis approved in final form:

Date Feb. 14, 1952

Major Professor S. Marion Smith

(Please return this certification-sheet, along with two copies of the thesis and the candidate's record, to the Graduate Office, Room 105, Jordan Hall. The third copy of the thesis should be returned to the candidate immediately after the oral examination.)

Date 2-14-52

To the Director of Graduate Studies:

I have examined the thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's Degree in Butler University by

Francis E. Burg and have the following comments to make concerning it:

*It is satisfactory provided certain corrections are made.*

Title of Thesis An Abolition Study  
of II Peter

Signed David C. Bellitt

Date Feb. 14, 1952

To the Director of Graduate Studies:

I have examined the thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's Degree in Butler University by

Maurice Eugene Beery and have the following comments to make concerning it:

The candidate has put in a commendable amount of reading, has noted the differing viewpoints of the many authors, and has now assembled the material to my satisfaction.

Title of Thesis An Objective Study of II Peter

---

---

Signed A C Watter

Date 2-14-52

To the Director of Graduate Studies:

I have examined the thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's Degree in Butler University by

Maurice E. Peery and have the following comments to make concerning it:

*This thesis is acceptable when a few minor corrections are made.*

Title of Thesis An Objective Study of St. Peter

Signed S. Marion Smith

AN OBJECTIVE STUDY OF II PETER

by

Maurice E. Beery

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

Division of Graduate Instruction  
Butler University  
Indianapolis  
1951

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Date
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	iii
I. DATE . . . . .	1
II. AUTHORSHIP . . . . .	11
III. TO WHOM WRITTEN . . . . .	22
IV. JUDE AND II PETER . . . . .	28
V. I PETER AND II PETER . . . . .	33
VI. THE FAITH . . . . .	40
VII. FALSE TEACHERS . . . . .	48
VIII. PAROUSIA . . . . .	56
CONCLUSION . . . . .	60
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	61

## INTRODUCTION

II Peter has been a very controversial epistle. To use the term, 'has been', takes us as far back as the second century, for we discover that the early church fathers were sceptical of its value and authenticity and some have claimed that it came near not being a part of the New Testament canon. We do know that it was one of the last if not the last to be canonized. Its slow acceptance by the early church has made scholars question it in more detail than if it has been readily accepted.

Though the writer of the epistle claims to be the Apostle Peter, he has not convinced all of the scholars that his claim is true. The German scholar, Zahn, will agree with his claim, but more recent scholars such as Moffatt, Goodspeed and Scott cannot feel the epistle to be authentic. The external evidence, as to its date, places it later than the time of the apostles, and the internal evidence, which is more convincing, substantiates the fact of its later date, possibly in the second century. In holding to its early date, some scholars such as Zahn and Spitta have had to surrender the authenticity of I Peter.

It seems that upon about every point of interest in the epistle, there is disagreement. The epistle is reputed



to have been written to the Christians in Asia Minor, to Jewish Christians in Palestine and to Christians in general.

There exists a close relationship between the epistle of Jude and II Peter. The question which we face is, which used which? Was Jude incorporated into the middle of the second epistle or was the second chapter of II Peter used by Jude?

Some scholars have placed the writing of II Peter before I Peter which adds a curious slant. Most who claim Petrine authorship place it shortly afterwards, while those who claim it pseudonymous, place it nearly a century later.

The main purpose of the writer seems to be his desire to warn his readers that their scepticism about the second coming is causing moral lethargy and no good can come of it. He urges them to hold to the faith even though false teachers may come among them. The Lord, by his not coming, is only revealing his patience and long suffering.

You will note that the study is not a commentary but rather an introduction to the problems that have arisen concerning this epistle. We have endeavored to use the best authorities we could find who voiced their opinions, gained through much study, in regards to their views.

A word of appreciation is due Prof. S. Marion Smith who has been very patient and helpful in his suggestions.

## CHAPTER I

### DATE

The exact date at which our author wrote II Peter is very difficult if not impossible to determine. Several dates have been suggested, but no one has proved to the satisfaction of all scholars that any certain date is absolutely correct. The dates given vary from A. D. 60 to A. D. 175. In between these two dates, there is a suggestion that possibly it was written during the first quarter of the second century.

The group of scholars who are favorable to the date of its composition as being around A. D. 60 are such men as Bigg, Zahn, Weiss, Spitta, Dods and Lenski. Bigg is of the opinion that if we "compare II Peter impartially with the rest of the New Testament, it will be easier to place it in the first century than in the second. Since it makes no allusion to persecutions or to the fall of Jerusalem the possibility is that it was written before A. D. 70."<sup>1</sup>

To place the writing of II Peter around A. D. 60, would indicate that these men feel that the Apostle Peter is the author. When the author states in 1: 14, "knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle," it is felt that the Apostle Peter is stating that he is an aged man.

---

<sup>1</sup>Charles Bigg, The Epistles of St. Peter & St. Jude (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), p. 244.

Other arguments which are given to prove that the epistle was written around A. D. 60 are: many letters of Paul are already in existence; the feeling of disappointment that Christ has not returned and many of the first generation Christians are dying.<sup>2</sup>

Spitta holds the view that the Apostle Peter wrote the Epistle late in his life to Jewish Christians to whom both he and Paul had written letters which have not been preserved.<sup>3</sup>

Zahn gives us the information that the Apostle Peter was beheaded in Rome A. D. 64 and then states,

Taking everything into consideration, and assuming that II Peter is genuine, we may date it somewhere between 60 and 63.<sup>4</sup>

Weiss and Kuhl are not quite so specific as some who place the writing of the epistle between A. D. 60 and A. D. 63. They make the assertion that it might have been written anywhere between A. D. 60 and A. D. 70. Kuhl does feel that since it is silent on the fall of Jerusalem, it must have been written before A. D. 70. Peter seems to feel quite responsible to his readers though Paul may have written to them. If that be so, it would indicate that this came at a point after the death of Paul.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup>F. H. Chase, Dictionary of the Bible, James Hastings, Ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), Vol. III, p. 798.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Theodor Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament Vol. II, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), p. 210 ff.

<sup>5</sup>Chase, op. cit.

Lenski, a modern scholar, agrees that the date is around A. D. 60.

The knowledge regarding Paul's letters, which is ascribed to Peter's readers, advances the time of composition, say to somewhere in the neighborhood of the year 60.<sup>6</sup>

Dods is of the opinion that if the first epistle was written shortly before Peter's death, the second must have been written near the same time. This places the writing of both around A. D. 60.<sup>7</sup>

There are a few scholars that place the writing of the epistle around A. D. 100 or a little later, say, the first quarter of the second century. Mayor thinks the epistle may have been written during the last decade of the first century. In 3: 4, we have the skeptical argument against the promised coming of the Lord before the passing away of the first generation of Christians. "Since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were." Mayor asks, "Could this argument have been used, if Peter himself and John and the other evangelists were still living?"<sup>8</sup>

Fowler says that II Peter probably belongs to the earlier years of the second century.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude, (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1938), p. 244.

<sup>7</sup>Marcus Dods, An Introduction to the New Testament (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1901), p. 208.

<sup>8</sup>Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1907), p. 126.

<sup>9</sup>Harry T. Fowler, The History and Literature of the New Testament (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1934), p. 428.

Wand makes the assertion that II Peter is later than all the Petrine writings and must have been written at least as early as the first quarter of the second century.<sup>10</sup>

By far, the larger number of scholars place the date of II Peter in the second century and near the middle of the century. By placing the date of the epistle at the beginning of the century or near the middle of the century, we must assign its authorship to someone other than the Apostle Peter.

There is a considerable amount of external evidence which would lead one to believe that the epistle was written in the second century. It seems that early Christian literature places it in the second century. Origen in the third century is one of the first to mention it and he is apparently in doubt as to its authenticity. Clement of Alexandria does not mention it though there may be some possible echoes of its language and thought in his writings. If he knew it and commented on it, it must have been written by A. D. 175-180. There are a few doubtful echoes also in the epistle of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons (177), and in Justin Martyr's Dialogue (c. 155). If Justin Martyr had knowledge of it, it cannot be dated later than A. D. 150.<sup>11</sup>

There were several pieces of literature written in

---

<sup>10</sup>J. W. C. Wand, The General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude, (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1934), p. 143.

<sup>11</sup>A. H. McNeile, An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), p. 236.

the first and second century to which the name of Peter was attached. Sanday has suggested that possibly the same author wrote the Apocalypse of Peter and the second epistle of Peter. Whether that be true or not, one was likely dependent upon the other and the supposition is that the apocalyptic work was dependent upon the epistle. There is the possibility that they may have been composed by two different authors of the same school of thought and at about the same time.

Foakes-Jackson says,

Probably it (II Peter) first appeared in company with the so-called Apocalypse of Peter, a second century work with which it has many points of resemblance.<sup>12</sup>

Another bit of external evidence as to the date of its writing is its supposed connection with the Antiquities of Josephus of A. D. 93. It is claimed that there are a number of coincidences of language and style in the two writings.

Though the connection with the Antiquities may be doubtful, the one with Jude is unmistakable. Those who wish to hold to the Petrine authorship of II Peter, try to make II Peter earlier than Jude. This is rather difficult to do for the following reasons:

Passages in Jude which are simple and straightforward are elaborated in II Peter.

If the writer of Jude was the borrower, why did he make such full use of a single passage of II Peter, ignoring the Christian appeal in the rest of the epistle? That a single passage in II Peter bearing on the heretics should have been based on practically the whole of Jude

---

<sup>12</sup>F. J. Foakes-Jackson & B. T. Smith, A Brief Biblical History (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1923), p. 225.

is quite natural.

The sentence in Jude about Michael disputing with the devil (v. 9) appears in II Peter 2: 11 in a vague form which requires the other passage to explain it.

In Jude (v. 13), the 'blackness of darkness' is reserved for the wandering stars, a natural and suitable conception; in II Peter 2: 17, the picture is much less suitable, the 'blackness of darkness' being reserved for the heretics who are likened to wells and mists.

If Jude (v. 10) is compared with II Peter 2: 12, it will be seen that Chase is justified in saying: All the expressions in Jude have something corresponding to them in II Peter, and it is almost impossible to conceive that the ill compacted and artificial sentence of the latter should have been the original of the terse, orderly, and natural sentences of the former.<sup>13</sup>

The date of Jude enters into the picture, for Jude was not likely written in the first century. Enslin says, "Jude cannot antedate A. D. 100 and probably is to be dated several decades later."<sup>14</sup>

Scholars are quite certain that the epistle belongs to a period when libertine Gnosticism was a heresy. This type of false teaching is just beginning to appear toward the close of the first century. Not until a generation or more later do these trouble-makers seem to have attained the prominence given them in II Peter.<sup>15</sup>

The time of the epistle's writing is considered uncer-

<sup>13</sup> McNeille, op. cit., p. 237.

<sup>14</sup> Morton Scott Enslin, Christian Beginnings (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1938), p. 341.

<sup>15</sup> E. F. Scott, The Gospel and Its Tributaries (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930), p. 201.

tain because the latter itself does not give us any clear dates. Some feel that the allusion to Paul's epistles puts it in the second century. Moffatt says that,

Paul's epistles are apparently viewed as the subject of varied interpretations and even of serious misunderstandings. Furthermore, they are ranked on a level with the other scriptures, i. e., the Old Testament primarily; and evidently a collection of them is presupposed for the reference of 3: 15 can hardly be confined to Romans or Ephesians or Thessalonians or Galatians much less Hebrews or some Pauline letter no longer extant. This allusion to a collection of Pauline epistles is therefore an anachronism which forms an indubitable watermark of the second century.<sup>16</sup>

After giving us several indications of the late date of the epistle Enslin says, "Perhaps most impressive of all is the matter - of - fact reference to the letters of Paul."<sup>17</sup>

Even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to understand, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.<sup>18</sup>

Scott makes the suggestion that when the 'fathers' is referred to as in 3: 4, the author is referring to the founders of the church. The author thus confesses that he belongs to a later generation.<sup>19</sup>

Enslin follows the same line when he says,

<sup>16</sup> James Moffatt, An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), p. 363-364.

<sup>17</sup> Enslin, op. cit., p. 341.

<sup>18</sup> II Peter 3: 15, 16.

<sup>19</sup> E. F. Scott, The Gospel and Its Tributaries, op. cit., p. 228.



By his quotation of his opponents' word, 'from the day that the fathers fell asleep,' he reveals that the first generation has long since passed. Again, the mention of the 'holy prophets.....the Lord.....and the apostles,' the great source of authority for Christian truth and practice in the second and third century church, points in the same direction.<sup>20</sup>

The apostles and early Christians entertained a hope of Christ's early appearance, but this is not expressed by the author of II Peter. Instead, he speaks of the day of God or of the Lord 3: 10, 12, which he considers as near. Davidson says;

This unapostolic idea shows a late time, excludes the millennium of the Apocalypse, and involves the abandonment of expectations connected with the destruction of Jerusalem. The conception and phraseology belong to the second century.<sup>21</sup>

There are many evidences that II Peter is the latest book in the New Testament. Clogg lists several, two of which have already been mentioned.

First generation Christians had died. The reference to the Apostle's death might imply that the author knew the Fourth Gospel. The way in which the author has incorporated Jude in his work clearly makes it later than that epistle, and that again puts it in the second century. It remained almost unknown till the fourth century.<sup>22</sup>

Julicher gives an interesting note on the lateness of the epistle.

The idea expressed in 1: 4, that we should become par-

<sup>20</sup> Enslin, op. cit., p. 341.

<sup>21</sup> Samuel Davidson, Introduction to the Study of the New Testament, (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., Vol. II, 1882), p. 457.

<sup>22</sup> F. B. Clogg, An Introduction to the New Testament (London: University of London Press, Ltd., 1949), p. 172, 173.

takers of the divine nature and escape from corruption, bears such obvious marks of a theological system influenced by Hellenistic ideas, that we can only ascribe the epistle to an ecclesiastical theologian of very late date.<sup>23</sup>

Another interesting note given by Julicher is this,

The assiduity with which the Pseudo- Peter here carries out the fiction is an evidence of the fact that II Peter was composed in a later period of pseudonymous ecclesiastical literature than were the epistles of Jude, James, and I Peter.<sup>24</sup>

Moffatt gives us a list of men who believed that II Peter was written around A. D. 150: such men as Hilgenfeld, Bleek, Mangold, Renan, S. Davidson, Haltzmann, von Soden, Jacoby and Bruckner. A few who believed that around A. D. 130 was the date are Ramsay, Simcox, and Strachan. A later date is suggested by Semler, Keim, Sabatier, Pfleiderer and Harnack.<sup>25</sup>

Several scholars of more recent date such as Barnett, Foakes-Jackson, Moffatt, Chase, Goodspeed, Clogg, Julicher, Case, Scott and Peake suggest the epistle was written around A. D. 150. Barnett says,

The considerable body of Christian literature with which II Peter shows acquaintance and the historical situation implicit in the allusion it contains point rather clearly to a date around the middle of the second century.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Adolf Julicher, An Introduction to the New Testament (Tr. Janet P. Ward, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), p. 240.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 240.

<sup>25</sup> Moffatt, An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, op. cit., p. 367.

<sup>26</sup> Albert E. Barnett, The New Testament Its Making and Meaning (New York, Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1946), p. 270.

Scott is of the opinion that "its true date cannot be fixed with any certainty, but it may be assigned to some time about A. D. 150."<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Scott, op. cit., p. 228.

## CHAPTER II

### AUTHORSHIP

It is impossible to speak with any certainty as to either the date or the authorship of this letter. From the beginning, there have been doubts as to its genuineness and canonicity, and these are represented today in the differing judgments of critics equally able and sincere.

Two men who greatly influenced the formation of the New Testament canon were Athanasius and Augustine. They placed II Peter in the canon without mentioning the fact that it had been a disputed book. In 397 when the Council of Carthage met, it was placed in the canon. Jerome was of the opinion that II Peter was authentic, for he wrote,

He (Peter) wrote two epistles, which are called catholic; the second of which is denied by very many because of the difference in style between it and the first epistle.<sup>1</sup>

By the middle of the third century, Origen is holding the view that the Apostle Peter is the author of II Peter. However, he recognizes the fact that it is a debatable issue. Origen states,

Peter left one acknowledged epistle; let there be also a second, for it is disputed.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> S. A. Cartledge, A Conservative Introduction to the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1941), p. 169.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Another of the early fathers was a certain Firmilian, who in a letter to Cyprian wrote,

.....the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul,.....who in their letters condemned the heretics.<sup>3</sup>

According to the writer of II Peter, I Peter is a Petrine writing.

This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.<sup>4</sup>

The traditional view is that both I Peter and II Peter were written by the Apostle Peter. Some scholars hold the view that I Peter is authentic but not II Peter. Others reverse the view and say that II Peter is authentic but not I Peter.

The epistle itself explicitly and insisently claims to have been written by Peter the Apostle, who makes a number of autobiographical references. He claims to be an apostle of Jesus Christ. "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ."<sup>5</sup> He announces that his death is imminent and that the Lord has revealed that fact to him. "Since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me."<sup>6</sup> He suggests that he has paid a visit or visits to his readers. "For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty."<sup>7</sup> "That you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandments of the Lord and Saviour through your

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> II Peter 3: 1.

<sup>5</sup> II Peter 1: 1.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1: 14.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 1: 16.

apostles."<sup>8</sup> He gives his personal reminiscences of the transfiguration. 1: 16 - 1: 18. ".....but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty."<sup>9</sup> He claims acquaintance with St. Paul. "So that our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him."<sup>10</sup> He claims to have written another epistle. "This is now the second letter that I have written to you."<sup>11</sup>

To the casual reader, these references are quite convincing that the Apostle is actually the author. Bigg feels that the Apostle Peter wrote the epistle and states what he believes to be the facts.

II Peter is older than Jude.

II Peter belongs to the same school of ecclesiastical thought as I Peter.

II Peter contains no word, idea or fact which does not belong to the apostolic age. Traces of the second century are absent at those points where they might have been confidently expected to occur.

The style differs from that of I Peter in some respects, but in others, notably in verbal iteration and in the discreet use of Apocrypha, resembles it.<sup>12</sup>

The scholar who favors the Petrine authorship for this epistle will try to minimize the differences between the two.

They may say that II Peter reflects the rugged diction of the apostle himself, while I Peter was freely composed by an amanuensis, Silvanus, under Peter's supervision. These scholars point out certain similarities between the two epistles: both manifest a fondness for the plural of abstract nouns, and there is noticeable in each the habit of presenting both the negative and positive aspect of a

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 3: 2.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 1: 16.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 3: 15.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 3: 1.

<sup>12</sup> Bigg, op. cit., p. 242.

thought. These men furthermore interpret the doubts entertained in the Early Church concerning the authorship of II Peter as evidence of the strictness which was maintained in refusing to admit as canonical any writing that was not definitely apostolic.<sup>13</sup>

Zahn surrenders I Peter to Silvanus and holds that the Apostle Peter wrote II Peter.

So long as men started with the assumption that I Peter is a document actually composed by the apostle and that II Peter purports to be intended for a circle of readers similar to that addressed in I Peter, then the great diversity of the two epistles in thought and language could not but be strong evidence against the genuineness of II Peter. But this evidence is destroyed, since both the above-mentioned assumptions have been shown to be erroneous. It is obviously intelligible that Peter, in a letter addressed to the Gentile Churches of Asia Minor, which Silvanus wrote by his commission and in his name, would speak in a way different from that in which he speaks in a letter of his own composition addressed to Churches of Jewish Christians, who owed their Christianity to him and his associates.<sup>14</sup>

Though several of the early Church Fathers held the view that II Peter was authentic, there were some who doubted it. Eusebius placed all seven of the catholic epistles in his New Testament because they were being read in many churches. He says only one of the Petrine epistles is recognized "as genuine and acknowledged by the elders of olden time."<sup>15</sup> He was of the opinion that II Peter was not canonical even though it was studied with other canonical books. He places II Peter with James, Jude, and II & III John as "disputed, nevertheless

---

<sup>13</sup>B. B. Warfield, The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible, edited by John D. Davis, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1944), p. 474.

<sup>14</sup>Chase, op. cit., p. 813.

<sup>15</sup>Barnett, op. cit., p. 267.

familiar to the majority."<sup>16</sup> He declares, "that of all the writings under the name of Peter he recognizes only one epistle as genuine, i. e., I Peter."<sup>17</sup>

Irenaeus also doubts the authenticity of II Peter. He says on one occasion, "Peter says in his epistle."<sup>18</sup> He is no doubt inferring that Peter wrote only one epistle. Two other Church Fathers were Tertullian and Cyprian who seem to have no acquaintance with the epistle.

In the writing of Clement of Alexandria, there are no quotations from II Peter and nothing to indicate that he was acquainted with the epistle, except in his "Outlines" he gave "concise explanations of all the canonical Scriptures," including such "disputed" writings as "Jude and the remaining Catholic Epistles, and the Epistle of Barnabas, and the Apocalypse known as Peter's."<sup>19</sup>

Another view which was held by some is that the Apostle Peter wrote both of the Epistles but that different amanuenses were employed. Jerome, who was an early Church Father seemed to be satisfied with this answer. Moffatt says that,

The discrepancies of language and thought are too well marked to allow of both homilies coming from the same author.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Barnett, op. cit., p. 268.

<sup>17</sup> James Moffatt, The General Epistles (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., 1928), p. 175.

<sup>18</sup> Barnett, op. cit., p. 268.      <sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Moffatt, The General Epistles, op. cit., p. 174.



The doubts about the authorship which were so widely entertained in the early Church revived again at the time of the Reformation. A large number of scholars have definitely set aside the ascription of the epistle to Peter. Erasmus (1516) in his studies came to the conclusion "that Paul could not have written Hebrews, nor Peter II Peter, and that it was John the Elder, not the apostle, that wrote II and III John."<sup>21</sup>

John Calvin was not certain of the author.

But since it is not quite evident as to the author, I shall allow myself the liberty of using the word Peter or Apostle indiscriminately.<sup>22</sup>

Peter is attributed with having written more letters than just the two epistles. Probably the Apocalypse of Peter is the best known of the other writings attributed to him. This Apocalypse is questioned less as to authenticity than is II Peter. Why II Peter was so slowly recognized, is difficult to explain considering the fact that it is attributed to so popular a man as the Apostle Peter.

E. A. Abbott has argued for dependence upon Josephus which would negative Petrine authorship. The resemblances must be admitted, but we cannot build with any confidence upon them.<sup>23</sup>

To determine the authenticity of this epistle we are thrown almost entirely on the internal evidence. The difficulties in fairly estimating this evidence are unquestionably con-

---

<sup>21</sup> Edgar J. Goodspeed, The Formation of the New Testament (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926), p. 150.

<sup>22</sup> Cartledge, op. cit., p. 173.

<sup>23</sup> Arthur S. Peake, A Critical Introduction to the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912).

siderable. No New Testament writing makes more definite Apostolic claims for itself than II Peter, and no other is so lacking in the attestation of mention, quotation, or echo, throughout the second century. This epistle is one example of pseudepigraphic material that we know the New Testament contains. It was the established custom of the period to publish one's views under the name of some venerated but departed hero of the faith. Barnett feels that the author of II Peter thus uses the name of the Apostle.

Like other writers of pseudepigraphic works of the second century the author used Peter's name to commend his message because he felt Peter would so have expressed himself had he faced these problems which were confronting the church.<sup>24</sup>

Moffatt feels that Peter's name was also used for prestige.

The author's object was to controvert the dangerous teachers of his age, and he does so by appealing to the prestige of Peter as the representative of the primitive, orthodox faith.<sup>25</sup>

Wand says,

On every ground, whether of internal or external evidence, we are forced to conclude that our epistle was not written by the Apostle Peter. It probably belongs to the Egypt of the first quarter of the second century, and was written to circumvent the Christian Gnosticism that was soon developed into a specific system by Basilides. The document thus provides us with the one clear example of pseudepigraphic material that we have in the N. T.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Barnett, op. cit., p. 269.

<sup>25</sup>Moffatt, General Epistles, op. cit., p. 174.

<sup>26</sup>Wand, op. cit., p. 143, 144.

Apparently the using of another man's name was not uncommon or thought unethical.

The literary device was recognized in those days. It was a development of a method which allowed an historian to compose speeches for characters in his narrative, and an author evidently felt no scruples about adopting this literary device in order to win a hearing for counsels which he felt to be both timely and inspired.<sup>27</sup>

No one seems to know the name of the real author for,

The real author of any such work had to keep himself altogether out of sight, and its entry upon circulation had to be surrounded with a certain mystery, in order that the strangeness of its appearance at a more or less considerable interval after the putative author's death might be concealed.<sup>28</sup>

There is some doubt as to whether or not this document would ever have found a place in the sacred canon had it not been attributed to the Apostle Peter. Even though his name was attached it came near not being canonized. "No New Testament writing won so limited and hesitating a recognition."<sup>29</sup>

The writer seems to be over-anxious to identify himself with the Apostle Peter. His over anxiety has the tendency of creating suspicion. Instead of bringing in incidental memories of the life of Jesus, he makes a point of bringing in the story of the transfiguration and the prophecy of his death. To maintain the front that the author is writing in the first century, he is careful in verse 2: 1 and 3: 17 to speak prophetically concerning the false teachers of the second century. In 3: 15

<sup>27</sup> Moffatt, General Epistles, op. cit., p. 174.

<sup>28</sup> Moffatt, An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, op. cit., p. 369.

<sup>29</sup> Moffatt, General Epistles, op. cit., p. 175.

he places himself along side of Paul because the name of Peter and Paul were common to the first century Christians. The first verse of chapter three tells us that Peter had already written one epistle. Julicher says,

This writer, in short, constructs his fiction methodically: he is anxious from the first about the success of his enterprise; but this only shows that the public had already learned not to accept indiscriminately all that was offered to it under an Apostolic title, and that mere correctness of contents was no longer considered sufficient.<sup>30</sup>

Though the author has tried in many ways to convince his readers that he is the Apostle Peter, he is certainly not the Peter we know. "He is not the bluff fisherman of Galilee, nor the Spirit-possessed preacher of Acts, nor the courageous theologian of the first epistle," as someone has said.

It is not likely that during the lifetime of Peter the hope of the Second Coming should have given place to scepticism. Peake reminds us that the suspicions created by the lateness of the external evidence and the dubiousness with which it is expressed were confirmed by the internal evidence. The epistle brings before us a time when through long delay the hope of the Second Coming had grown faint. There were mockers saying,

Where is the promise of his coming? For, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.<sup>31</sup>

It hardly seems possible that during Peter's lifetime,

<sup>30</sup> Julicher, op. cit., p. 240, 241.

<sup>31</sup> II Peter 3: 4.

people were speaking in such a mocking way. If he were one of the Fathers about whom the writer had written, it would of course be impossible for him to receive credit for it.<sup>32</sup>

If the author of II Peter was the Apostle, it is strange that he does not reproduce much of his Master's teaching. There certainly would be something out of all our Lord's teachings that would have a bearing upon what this author was saying. A direct quotation from Christ would have strengthened the author's position. Only one of the sayings of the Lord as found in Matt. 12: 45 is found in this Epistle and that is in 2: 20. Peter experienced some high moments with his Master, but no reference in the Epistle is made to the Passion, the Resurrection, and the Exaltation. "It is only natural to suppose that the author knew nothing of these events as experience and thus the reason for their absence."<sup>33</sup>

Chase says,

The silence as to the Resurrection is the crucial point. The Apostles were essentially witnesses to the Resurrection. The Resurrection was the final proof of the Divine mission of the Lord, the foundation of the Christian faith. But in this epistle, when the writer (1: 16) has occasion to appeal to the guarantee of the truth of his teaching as to 'the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ', the Resurrection is ignored, and the Apostolic witness to Christ is made to rest on the Transfiguration.<sup>34</sup>

Other points which cause doubt as to the authenticity of II Peter are the facts that none of Peter's companions are

<sup>32</sup> Peake, op. cit., p. 98, 99.

<sup>33</sup> Chase, op. cit., p. 810.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 812.

mentioned and no personal greetings or messages are forthcoming. A cloud surrounds the identity of the author and the people to whom he writes and the place from which he writes.

There is a great deal of evidence against the authenticity of II Peter. Though the epistle tenaciously claims to be a writing of the Apostle Peter, the evidence, internal and external against it cannot be denied. Davidson says,

The only conclusion, it is believed which is in accordance with the evidence, external and internal, is that II Peter is not the work of the Apostle, but is a document which must be assigned to the second century.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Davidson, Introduction to the Study of the New Testament, op. cit., p. 459

## CHAPTER III

### TO WHOM WRITTEN

II Peter was written to some church, or group of churches, or to Christians in general. Some scholars hold that the people to whom it was written were the Jewish Christians of Palestine; others say that the recipients were Christians of Asia Minor and lastly some hold that it was written to no particular group but to Christians in general.

Spitta says, "St. Peter wrote the Epistle late in his life to Jewish Christians, to whom both Paul and he had addressed letters which have not been preserved."<sup>1</sup> Zahn takes the same general line as Spitta, but is somewhat more precise and circumstantial in his reconstruction of the history. He believes that Peter has stood for a long time in an official relation to the persons receiving this letter, which relation he feels himself under obligation to maintain until his death through instructions by letter, and after his death through a treatise designed especially for them. Peter may have been a missionary to this group of people. There are others, according to Zahn, that ministered to them and they were Jewish Christians in Palestine.

The letter is a hortatory writing of Peter's to a large

---

<sup>1</sup>Chase, op. cit., p. 798.

group of churches, who owed their Christianity to the preaching of Peter and other men from among the twelve apostles and the personal disciples of Jesus. From this it follows that the readers were, for the most part, if not altogether, Jewish Christians, and that they are to be sought in Palestine and the regions adjoining.<sup>2</sup>

When Zahn speaks of the "regions adjoining," he is quite specific that he does not mean the territory north and north-west of Antioch. Peter is supposed to have done most of his preaching in Palestine. At the close of his life, he did journey to Rome but the larger part of his ministry was to the Jewish Christians of Palestine. Another suggestion is that the lost letter of Paul's as found in 3: 15, may have been directed along with II Peter to the churches in Ptolemais, Tyre, and Damascus.<sup>3</sup>

Some who are convinced that Peter is the author have him writing either to the Christians of Palestine or the Christians of Asia Minor. Chase, in a further view, says,

St. Peter addressed the epistle to churches, mainly Jewish, in Palestine and in the adjacent districts, but not north and northwest of the Syrian Antioch.<sup>4</sup>

Asia Minor has been listed as a possible destination for this second epistle of Peter. Fowler says,

The writer seems to be addressing the same Christians as those to whom I Peter was directed, so that this epistle, like I and II Timothy and possibly Jude also, was designed for the Christians of Western Asia Minor.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Zahn, op. cit., p. 208.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 209.

<sup>4</sup>Chase, op. cit., p. 798.

<sup>5</sup>Fowler, op. cit., p. 428.



The original readers of the epistle are hard to determine. Very many agree that the second epistle was written to the same people as the first. Also, it is thought that the Apostle Paul had written a previous letter to these people. Peter may have been among them and preached to them, thus making his letter more appreciated by them. Davidson says as to these original readers,

We are to look for the original readers in Asia Minor, where the churches were undoubtedly composed both of Gentiles and Jews, but of the former in larger proportions.<sup>6</sup>

Asia Minor, as the destination of II Peter, holds the attention of Bigg. He will not concede that it might have been written to the church at large. Referring to the inhabitants of Asia Minor, he says, "If not to them then we do not know to whom they were written."<sup>7</sup>

Several scholars are agreed that II Peter is addressed to Greek-speaking communities acquainted with the Pauline Epistles and with I Peter. Some say the communities have been evangelized by Peter, while others say that they have been evangelized by a group of apostles which did not include Peter. It seems that these people were troubled by false teachers similar to those referred to in the letter in the Apocalypse to the seven churches in Asia Minor. Bennett is of the opinion

---

<sup>6</sup> Samuel Davidson, An Introduction to the New Testament (London: Longmans & Sons, Vol. III, 1851), p. 396.

<sup>7</sup> Bigg, op. cit., p. 238.

that II Peter was probably circulated in Asia Minor.<sup>8</sup>

Lenski is one who believes the recipients of the letter possess one of Paul's letters and are also acquainted with several others. These people are Gentile Christians so Lenski thinks. His argument revolves around the fact, so he thinks, that we know enough of Paul's history to know that he never wrote to a group of Jewish Christians. If these people are the same to whom Peter and Paul wrote we must conclude they must have been Gentile Christians.<sup>9</sup>

In II Peter I:1, we read, "to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." It is difficult to believe that this verse was addressed to Christians in any specific place. Goodspeed puts it emphatically when he states, "The epistle is an encyclical, addressed to Christians generally."<sup>10</sup>

Those who believe that Peter personally ministered to those to whom the letter is addressed, have, of course, a group of churches in mind. Others, scholars who cannot accept the Petrine authorship or the localizing of the letter, believe it to be a pastoral letter for Christendom in general.

Barnett says,

<sup>8</sup> W. H. Bennett, (Ed.) Henry Frowde The General Epistles (The New Century Bible, New York) p. 68.

<sup>9</sup> Lenski, op. cit., p. 243.

<sup>10</sup> Edgar J. Goodspeed, A History of Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), p. 350.

There are no indications in the epistle that the author had a local church or a particular group of churches in mind. Nor did a relationship of genuinely personal acquaintance exist between author and readers. Moffatt describes as simply "literary drapery" statements that appear to presuppose such acquaintance, as 1: 12, 16; 3: 1, 2, 8, 14 and 17. Heretical trends such as the epistle condemned, affected the church generally and were not confined to any given locality. The writer's message was intended for Christendom in its entirety.<sup>11</sup>

There are some who believe that I Peter is also general in its destination. Strachan says,

The epistle is written to a wide class of Christian readers who are not recent converts 1: 12. I Peter also is general in its destination. II Peter may well be addressed to the same localities as I Peter, although to a later generation of Christians, under different circumstances.<sup>12</sup>

There are so many views about who received the epistle, that the reader is left a bit confused. A modern scholar gives his view as follows,

In the strictest sense of the term, II Peter is a catholic epistle, addressed to Christendom in general; it may be defined as a homily thrown into epistolary guise, or a pastoral letter of warning and appeal.<sup>13</sup>

Moffatt disagrees with Strachan when he says,

Unlike I Peter, it is directed to no church or group of churches; the references in 1: 12 and 3: 1 belong to the literary drapery of the writing, and there is an entire absence of any personal relation between the writer and the church or churches.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Barnett, op. cit., p. 269, 270.

<sup>12</sup> R. H. Strachan, The Expositor's Greek Testament Ed. by W. Robertson Nicoll Vol. V., (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, (n.d.) p. 114, 115.

<sup>13</sup> Moffatt, An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, op. cit., p. 368

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

Moffatt also disagrees with Lenski who believes the recipients of II Peter were Gentile Christians. Moffatt says,

No evidence points to Gentile much less to Jewish Christians as the audience specially in the writer's mind.<sup>15</sup>

The larger majority of recent scholars are of the opinion that it is a general epistle "written with the special aim of reviving the old confidence in the visible and immediate return of Christ."<sup>16</sup> The feeling was widespread that, since Christ had not come, he would not come and this notion was not confined to one church or group of churches. Case states,

Although this document is cast in the form of a letter, it is not addressed to any particular congregation. The danger which it seeks to check is not confined to one or two churches, but is felt by the writer to be more widespread. Hence, he addresses himself generally to all who have espoused the precious faith of Christendom. We cannot now determine the specific congregations that he had in mind.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> E. F. Scott, The Literature of the New Testament (New York: Columbus University Press, 1932), p. 228.

<sup>17</sup> Case, The Abingdon Bible Commentary, (New York, Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1929), pp. 1345-1346.

## CHAPTER IV

### RELATION TO JUDE

The Epistle of II Peter and the Epistle of Jude are commonly studied together. There is much similarity between the two epistles. Some scholars feel that the greater part of Jude is actually reproduced in II Peter, while others feel that II Peter is reproduced in Jude.

Though there is a disagreement as to which is earlier in date, there is a general agreement that one borrowed from the other. In II Peter 2: 1-3:4, we have the passage which corresponds to the Epistle of Jude. Zahn is one of the scholars who favors the priority of the Epistle of II Peter and he feels that the Epistle of Jude is addressed to the same Jewish Christian Churches as II Peter. He says,

If Peter, who died in the year 64, toward the end of his life predicted to the same Christian Churches to which Jude is addressed, that teachers of an immoral type of Christianity, and persons with whom he had become acquainted outside their circle, who scoffed at the promise of the parousia, would appear among them; and if Jude believed, subsequent to the fall of Jerusalem, that this prediction was fulfilled in the creeping in of dangerous men, whose theory and practice were alike vicious, in whom were to be discerned the essential features of the prophetic description of II Peter, - he could say that this had been written concerning them long ago, and that their coming had been foretold to the readers by the lips of apostles. Assuming the year 75 as the approximate date for the composition of Jude, - since a date much later is made possible by the little we know of the author's life history, - a period of from ten to fifteen years had elapsed since Peter had written II Peter to the same

churches.<sup>1</sup>

Zahn is of the firm opinion that Jude knew and prized II Peter as an apostolic writing and made it the basis of parts of his letter. He thinks of the style of II Peter as being obscure and clumsy while Jude is clearer and better. His thought is that Jude has improved upon the style of II Peter. Zahn continues by saying,

If II Peter is genuine, it clearly cannot be dependent upon Jude; for, in the first place, Jude did not write until after the year 70, i. e. after Peter's death; and, in the second place, in representing as a prediction, the appearance among the readers of false teachers, the writer of II Peter would necessarily have indicated clearly the difference between the historical presentation in his source and his own prophetic representation.<sup>2</sup>

There may be a question about which epistle came first but both epistles are a denunciation of the errors and corruptions which had arisen among those to whom the epistles were addressed. Stevens is of the belief that II Peter is a paraphrase of Jude and not a mere reproduction. Also he brings out the idea that there is no logical structure to either one of the epistles.<sup>3</sup>

The Epistle of Jude and II Peter 2-3:4 have so much in common that it is quite safe to say that one copied from the other. Peake says, "In the judgment of most scholars,

<sup>1</sup> Zahn, op. cit., p. 255.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 265-266.

<sup>3</sup> G. B. Stevens, The Theology of the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), p. 312.

Jude is the original from which II Peter borrowed."<sup>4</sup> Goodspeed makes a similar statement when he says, "A generation after Jude's vigorous letter was written, it was taken over almost word for word into what we know as II Peter."<sup>5</sup> Peake argues that if II Peter were the earlier, why did Jude only use the section on the false teachers? When you place the two epistles side by side, it is much easier to see why II Peter should have used Jude than Jude using II Peter.<sup>6</sup>

Julicher is another scholar who believes that II Peter is dependent upon Jude. He says,

Chapter 2 is a complete reproduction of Jude 3-18. The fact that Jude in verse 18 mentions as an Apostolic prophecy words which might be identified with II Peter 3: 3, might seem to favour the priority of the latter; but in reality this is only brought forward in Jude as a prophecy universally known.<sup>7</sup>

Julicher is quite convinced of the priority of Jude and says,

The fact seems to me to weigh heavily against the priority of II Peter, that while Jude openly speaks of the heretics as of an existing danger, the author of II Peter tried to maintain the fiction that he is merely prophesying future events, but betrays the unreality of his attitude by constantly slipping back from the future of vv. 2: 1 f., into the present and even into the past tenses.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>Peake, op. cit., p. 96.

<sup>5</sup>Edgar J. Goodspeed, A History of Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), p. 349.

<sup>6</sup>Peake, op. cit., p. 96.

<sup>7</sup>Julicher, op. cit., p. 237.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

There is some significance in the fact that II Peter uses the future tense in speaking of false teachers while Jude uses the present tense. Jude regards the false teachers as having already arrived, while II Peter regards their appearance in the future as a sign of the near approach of Christ. Wand doubts that II Peter can maintain the future tense. He says,

But in point of fact, II Peter does not consistently maintain the future tense in speaking of the false teachers. It is quite likely that he had adopted a role of prophecy which he cannot sustain.<sup>9</sup>

The following are a list of arguments in favor of the priority of Jude as Wand lists them.

If Jude republished a large section of a Petrine letter with the sole purpose of bringing to remembrance the teaching of the Apostle, it is at least odd that he does not mention St. Peter by name.

There is a general lack of probability about the theory that a late writer would abbreviate an earlier. The general tendency would be to expansion.

Jude is much the fresher writing, it is less reflective, more urgent, more spontaneous. Jude rushes straight into his controversy, while II Peter has a long introduction.

The really conclusive argument is that where both writers have a reference to apocalyptic literature, it is Jude who evidently has direct knowledge, while II Peter only half realizes the point of the quotation. Thus Jude in v. 9, shows that he knows the story of Michael's contest with Satan, whereas II Peter 2: 11 in apparent ignorance of it speaks vaguely of 'angels', and blurs the point of the 'railing at dignities.' Similarly, the 'great swelling words' of Jude 16 are probably a direct quotation from Assumption of Moses 7: 9, while II Peter 2: 18 gives in 'great swelling words of vanity' an unnecessary expansion. It is evident that Jude would not have gotten back to the

<sup>9</sup>Wand, op. cit., p. 132.



original from II Peter.<sup>10</sup>

Both epistles were dealing with heresy which seemed to be having quite a following. This was disturbing to both writers. In writing of II Peter, Scott says,

In a broad sense, the motive of the Epistle is doubtless the same as that of the companion Epistle of Jude. The danger from heresy had become still graver than when Jude wrote, and his warnings are repeated with a new emphasis.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>11</sup> Scott, The Literature of the New Testament, op. cit., p. 227.

## CHAPTER V

### RELATION TO I PETER

Of the two epistles attributed to the Apostle Peter, the first is the larger. There seems to be a great deal of difference in the two epistles. They differ in style, vocabulary, use of the Old Testament and in doctrine. The greatest difference will be found in the style. Chase has this to say about the difference,

It must be said briefly that the two documents are in complete contrast in reference to literary style.<sup>1</sup>

The difference in style is quite marked so that Davidson speaks of the style of the first epistle as "being fresh, lively, periodic; that of the latter as being flat, cold heavy."<sup>2</sup> Chase makes another remark about the style and says that,

The style of I Peter is simple and natural, without a trace of self-conscious effort. The style of II Peter is rhetorical and laboured, marked by a love for striking and startling expressions.<sup>3</sup>

Moffatt also thinks of II Peter as being more laboured and difficult to understand when compared with I Peter. At times, the thought is difficult to follow. Moffatt says about this,

---

<sup>1</sup>Chase, op. cit., p. 813.

<sup>2</sup>Davidson, An Introduction to the New Testament, Vol. III op. cit., p. 432.

<sup>3</sup>Chase, op. cit., p. 813.

II Peter is more periodic and ambitious than I Peter, but its linguistic and stylistic efforts only reveal by their cumbrous obscurity a decided inferiority of conception, which marks it off from I Peter. Neither style nor matter can be called simple. It is not altogether without eloquence, but the eloquence is elaborate and often artificial, as in the octave of virtues 1: 5-8. In many passages the thought is too subtle to be easily followed.<sup>4</sup>

Most scholars are agreed that the style and language are different. They may not be agreed that the authors are different, and so, they try to explain it by saying that different amanuenses were used. Lake says on this issue,

The style and language differ greatly from that of I Peter; this argument may, however, fairly be met by the suggestion that it is improbable that he wrote Greek with ease, and that he may have used a variety of amanuenses.<sup>5</sup>

Speaking of authorship, Brook is one who cannot see how the two epistles can be written by the same author. He argues that,

The style, language and tone of the two epistles are so widely different that, making all allowance for difference in subject matter and of circumstances of composition, identity of authorship seems impossible.<sup>6</sup>

Moffatt also holds the view that identity of authorship cannot be maintained. He adds the view that the second

---

<sup>4</sup> Moffatt, An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, op. cit., p. 364.

<sup>5</sup> Kirsopp Lake, An Introduction to the New Testament (New York: Harper & Bros., 1937), p. 295.

<sup>6</sup> R. Brook, A Commentary on the Bible, Edited by A. S. Peake, (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1912), p. 913.

epistle is quite dependent upon the first epistle. For him the difference in style is an argument against identical authorship. He says that,

Early in the church, the differences of style between II Peter and I Peter led many to suspect that the former was not written by the author of the latter. The differences of style and diction are exactly those which denote an individual writer, who is composing his work with I Peter, if not with the Petrine speeches in Acts, before his mind.<sup>7</sup>

In another book Moffatt states his views a little more strongly. Different amanuenses do not settle the problem for him. He asserts,

The Greek style is totally unlike that of First Peter; so is the tone of the manifesto. And the differences of language cannot be explained by the supposition that Peter used two different amanuenses or dictated the two letters roughly to different secretaries. Second Peter stands by itself in its florid, Hellenistic vein. The discrepancies of language and thought are too well-marked to allow of both homilies coming from the same author. The author of Second Peter has First Peter before him, as well as the tract of Judas; but he writes with much less ease and lucidity.<sup>8</sup>

Wand is also quite strong in his assertion that the two epistles are different. He states that,

The two epistles indeed show a contrast at nearly every point. The polished style of the first is replaced by the artificial piece of rhetoric which is the second. Even Silvanus, says McNeile somewhat sardonically, could not have made I Peter out of this. The thought is equally different. I Peter is the epistle of hope; II Peter is the epistle of knowledge.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Moffatt, An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, op. cit., p. 364.

<sup>8</sup> Moffatt, The General Epistles, op. cit., p. 174.

<sup>9</sup> Wand, op. cit., p. 143.

The similarities between the two epistles are few in number. The form and substance are one place where the greatest dissimilarity is shown. Julicher says of the point in question,

That the two epistles have some points in common, goes without saying, when we consider the acquaintance of the one with the other, but nevertheless they are as far removed from one another both in form and substance as, say, Hebrews from Galatians.<sup>10</sup>

As to style Julicher writes,

The style of II Peter, which is quite different in vocabulary from the First Epistle, is marked by a certain turgidity which offers the strongest contrast to the fluency of I Peter; the writer tries to write elegantly, but is in reality very far from faultless in the construction of his sentences.<sup>11</sup>

Bigg, who favors the authenticity of the second epistle, is keen to discover the likenesses and to minimize the differences. He feels that one place in which the two epistles agree is in the matter of verbal repetition. He says,

The habit of verbal repetition is quite as strongly marked in the First Epistle as in the Second. This is a matter of high importance. It forms a striking link between the two Epistles.<sup>12</sup>

Other scholars have criticized the author of the second epistle because of his grandiose style but Bigg is prone to uphold him and feel that his weak points have been exaggerated. He states that,

<sup>10</sup> Julicher, op. cit., p. 236.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 237.

<sup>12</sup> Bigg, op. cit., p. 227.

There is a certain dignity in the style of I Peter, which under stress of excitement, might easily become grandiose, and even a little incoherent. Both these traits may be discerned in II Peter, though they have been absurdly exaggerated.<sup>13</sup>

Mayor says,

There can be no doubt that the style of I Peter is, on the whole, clearer and simpler than that of II Peter, but there is not that chasm between them which some would try to make out. As regards grammatical similarity, he sums up the results of a most learned discussion as follows: As to the use of the article, they resemble one another more than they resemble any other book of the New Testament. Both use the genitive absolute correctly. There is no great difference in their use of the cases or of the verbs, except that I Peter freely employs the articular infinitive, which is not found in II Peter. The accusative with the infinitive is found in both. The accumulation of prepositions is also common to both.<sup>14</sup>

A difference in style is not something that has been noticed by recent scholars alone. Some of the Church Fathers noticed it while others, if they noticed it, said nothing about it.

Jerome noticed a diversity of style between the two Epistles, but it does not appear that Eusebius, Origen, or Clement had raised this objection.<sup>15</sup>

Davidson has listed several differences in diction and style which are of significance. The following are four of the group which he lists.

(a) The epistle is distinguished by a poverty of language, which is shown in drawling and tedious repetitions. Thus the preposition 'by' with the genitive occurs three times in 1: 3, 4. The word 'destruction' is three times in 2: 7, 8.

---

<sup>13</sup>Bigg, op. cit., p. 229.

<sup>14</sup>Strachan, op. cit., p. 107.

<sup>15</sup>Bigg, op. cit., p. 229.

(b) Different words are employed to denote the second coming. The second epistle has *παρουσία* while the first has *ἀποκάλυψις*.

(c) The Christian religion is differently designated. In the first we find 'hope', 'grace', 'the truth', and 'the gospel of God'. The second has, 'the way of truth', 'the way of righteousness' and 'the commandment of the apostles.'

(d) The epistles differ in citing from the Old Testament, of which the first makes much more use than the second.<sup>16</sup>

As has been mentioned, the second epistle makes very little use of the Old Testament. Very few Old Testament expressions are used and it is not formally quoted. The author of I Peter is more familiar with the Old Testament and uses it more often. One author states,

I Peter sometimes refers to the Old Testament as when he speaks of Noah and Sarah, repeatedly quotes it, and constantly uses words and phrases which easily remind the reader of their biblical origin. On the other hand, though II Peter often refers to the Old Testament, appealing to it for the instances of judgment and the method of creation, he can hardly be said to quote it, and his allusions are not so numerous.<sup>17</sup>

The contrast in devotional thought and feeling between the two epistles is worthy of note. The writer of II Peter only mentions one crisis out of the life of Christ, which is the transfiguration. Prayer is not mentioned. No mention is made of the resurrection to which the apostles were essentially witnesses. These things were mentioned in the first epistle as though they were an essential part of the Christian message.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Davidson, Introduction to the Study of the New Testament, op. cit., p. 459, 460, 461.

<sup>17</sup> Bigg, op. cit., p. 229.

<sup>18</sup> Strachan, op. cit., p.108.

The difference in style between the two epistles may be great but the difference in doctrinal teaching appears even greater. Chase says,

There is a richness of devout thought, a vital apprehension of the great facts and truths which are characteristic of Christianity, in I Peter, for which we search in vain in II Peter. The thought of Christ's sufferings, considered as the supreme example and as redeeming acts dealing with all the needs of men, the thought of Christ raised and exalted by the Father, the thought of the present personal relation of Christians to Christ's work and to Christ himself, dominate the one Epistle; they are passed over in the second.<sup>19</sup>

Wand mentions some differences in content which will add to the chasm which already exists.

While II Peter is concerned with what, for want of a better word, we have called deification, with the ladder of virtues, and with the blazing end of this world-order, I Peter is filled with thoughts of baptism, of the true Israel, of the need for faithful and hopeful endurance. While I Peter emphasizes the Passion, the Descent into Hell, the Resurrection, and the Ascension, the points on which II Peter lays emphasis are the Transfiguration and the Parousia.<sup>20</sup>

In I Peter when the time of "the end" is mentioned, it is regarded as very near. In the second epistle, the delay is attributed to the long suffering of God. The author may be voicing his own hope in the first epistle, while in the second, the author seems to be answering the jibes of those who mock the fact of the second coming of Christ.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Chase, op. cit., p. 813.

<sup>20</sup> Wand, op. cit., p. 143.

<sup>21</sup> Chase, op. cit., p. 813.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE FAITH

The exhortation to hold fast to the faith received is begun by a reference to Simon Peter, the reputed author. A better reading of the name Simon would be Simeon, the original Hebrew form of the name. Simeon is used of Peter only in Acts 15: 14, and its use here may be intentional. M. R. James says,

The presence of the name Simeon in this passage is one of the few features which make for the genuineness of the epistle. It does not occur in the spurious Petrine writings, and may be a true reminiscence of a habit of the apostle.<sup>1</sup>

Some think that this form of the name is here used to emphasize the Hebrew character of the writer, and also of those who received the letter. This is built on a rather slim basis, for neither the first nor the second epistle makes any distinction between Jew and Gentile.

The use of the two epithets "servant" and "apostle" serve to heighten the impressiveness of the address. The combination of "servant" and "apostle" only occur in two other places, Rom. 1: 1 and Titus 1: 1. "The term 'servant' is here employed to put the writer on the same level with his readers."<sup>2</sup> "In Judaism, the term "apostle" was used to designate an official deputation from one church or community to another.

---

<sup>1</sup>Wand, op. cit., p. 146.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

This meaning was apparently taken over by the primitive Christian Church and the word was applied to missionaries sent out officially."<sup>3</sup>

The word "apostle" emphasizes the importance of the author. He was a representative sent out by Jesus Christ. "Faith" in the introduction seems to mean an attitude of mind. This attitude of mind is not something they have deserved but it has been given as a favor of God.<sup>4</sup>

This common faith is something which all men can possess because Jews and Gentiles are on a common ground of equality made so by Jesus Christ. The author is desirous that his readers may have a greater knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. The knowledge which he speaks of is a practical, religious knowledge. This knowledge involves a fellowship with God. The challenge of a possible fellowship with God is one of the things that make Christian endeavor worthwhile.<sup>5</sup>

Righteousness and knowledge indicate two essential aspects of the new religion. It owes its origin to a course of procedure on the part of God and Christ by which forgiveness and reinstatement in the divine favor have been made possible for mankind. Also the religious life of the redeemed man is distinguished by experience of continuous growth in the comprehension and fellowship of both God and Christ. One thus has an especially intimate knowledge of things divine, and may expect to possess an ever-increasing measure of God's favor and truth.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup>Ward, op. cit., p. 216.      <sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 146  
<sup>5</sup>Stevens, op. cit., p. 319.      <sup>6</sup>Case, op. cit., p. 1347.

The knowledge spoken of here is an inward knowledge of Christ and this inward knowledge accounts for the growth of the Church. "Here the theme of the homily is laid down," says Moffatt. He goes on to say,

As the meaning of Christ is realized by Christians they enter more and more into what God's grace means, i. e., His Free favour and forgiving power; also, they experience more and more of His peace, i. e., the bliss and security realized by Christ in the lives of believers. The knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ is everything.<sup>7</sup>

The divine nature of which the author speaks is one gained by those who have a true knowledge of God and Christ. This divine nature will enable them to live a truly godly life. It is a gift which they have not deserved but it has come as a divine favor from heaven. Past sins no longer condemn the individual who receives the divine nature. He thus escapes from the things of life which are corrupting and rises to a higher plane of living where the lusts of the flesh no longer hold sway over him. In the second century the idea was prevalent that anyone who received baptism and had partaken of the body and blood of Christ shared also in his divine nature.<sup>8</sup>

To share in the divine nature meant also that you have an obligation to pass it on. Moffatt says of vv. 3 and 4,

These words played a large part in bringing John Wesley through his spiritual crisis in 1730. About five o'clock on the morning of May 24th, he opened his Bible at the words, 'There are given to us exceeding great and precious

---

<sup>7</sup> Moffatt, The General Epistles, op. cit., p. 177.

<sup>8</sup> Case, op. cit., p. 1347.

promises, even that ye should be partakers of the divine nature'; that day relief came to him, and (on June 4th) he notes in his diary: 'All these days I scarce remember to have opened the New Testament, but upon some great and precious promise. And I saw, more than ever, that the gospel is in truth but one great promise, from the beginning of it to the end.'<sup>9</sup>

When God has done His part then it is up to us to do our part. He has given us power to do our part, but if we fail, then our God given powers become atrophied from lack of use. The possession of the divine nature lays an obligation upon the Christian that he shall grow in every true virtue. Just to escape from a life of sin was not sufficient. That is really only the beginning of the abundant life. In vv. 5-7 there are listed some virtues which are demanded on our part. Faith seems to be the ground of all Christian virtues. "Virtue may mean generally 'moral excellence' or more particularly 'moral energy'".<sup>10</sup> Knowledge is again spoken of in v. 5.

In Gnostic thought knowledge was an esoteric tradition, the possession of which itself brought salvation. In v. 3 it is personal relation to God or Christ. Here it seems to be that practical wisdom which is displayed in an understanding of God's demands. For the acquisition<sup>11</sup> of such knowledge moral energy is abundantly necessary.

Another virtue mentioned is temperance or self-control. The Christian because of his knowledge should have the power to keep all unwholesome desires under control. Patience or

---

<sup>9</sup> Moffatt, The General Epistles, op. cit., p. 178, 179.

<sup>10</sup> Wand, op. cit., p. 154.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

literally endurance "is the virtue that keeps a man steadfast in the confident expectation of the dawning of a better day."<sup>12</sup> This was something the Christian needed particularly at this time. Godliness may mean having a right attitude towards God.

This keeps the continent and steadfast man from the danger of becoming hard and proud. He must eschew self-confidence and have confidence in God.<sup>13</sup>

Brotherly kindness was very necessary in the early days of Christianity. Christianity was trying to get a foothold in a pagan environment and this was difficult especially when Christianity stood in the way of wrong practices. The pagan world took note of the brotherly kindness that existed among Christians. This brotherly kindness came as a result of a common relation to God.<sup>14</sup>

These virtues which have been given are of such value that if they are cultivated the individual will come to a true knowledge of Christ. A greater knowledge of Christ seems to be the goal of Christian endeavor. Such knowledge will fortify the Christian against invasion of error.<sup>15</sup>

Every man should desire a greater knowledge of Christ. If he does not then he is nearsighted. He has forgotten the old sins for which he has been forgiven. To make your calling and election sure "you must secure your place in this

<sup>12</sup>Wand, op. cit., p. 154.      <sup>13</sup>Ibid.,

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Lenski, op. cit., p. 276.

generation (to which you were admitted at Baptism) by living the life appropriate to God's children."<sup>16</sup> If you run your race successfully your entrance into God's kingdom will be something greater than you can ever imagine. "Jesus began His teaching by speaking of the Kingdom as future, but after His own recognition as the Messiah by St. Peter at Caesarea Philippi He seems to have spoken of it as in some sense already present."<sup>17</sup>

The author is quite concerned about his readers. He wants to remind them constantly of the truths as found in vv. 3-11 even though they know them. They are stronger because they know these things and so he wants them to become established. If they become stable Christians they no doubt will be given greater knowledge. The author feels it his duty to pass on a true tradition especially in view of the fact that he feels his days here are very short. He has said that "knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly, even as our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me" in 1: 14. "If the author is not St. Peter, the reference is probably to the well-known prophecy of Peter's crucifixion in John 21: 18, 19."<sup>18</sup> The author hopes that after his death his readers will be able to remember the things they already know and that he has written to them. When he speaks of giving diligence some think that he was intending to write more letters

---

<sup>16</sup>Wand, op. cit., p. 155.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 156.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 157.

but his sudden death ended all that.<sup>19</sup>

Pagan religions were based upon myths but the author of II Peter is trying to tell his readers that Christianity did not rest upon mythical fabrications but depended upon historical facts of which he himself had been a part. He mentions the transfiguration and God's attestation to His Son. The transfiguration was also a guarantee of the Second Coming of Christ. The errorists had been saying that the Second Coming was only a fable but the author says that he witnessed the transfiguration and the Second Coming would also be a fact in the near future.

False teachers were trying to discredit the teachings of the prophets of the Old Testament. The author is trying to show that prophecy is not something human but something divine. It is not something which man can manufacture but something which the Holy Spirit brings. Moffatt says,

Prophecy never come by human impulse, by any conscious cleverness on the part of an individual, but it was when carried away by the Holy Spirit that the holy men of God spoke, i. e., the prophets."<sup>20</sup>

The author of II Peter feels that the possibility of misapplying the O. T. prophecies is a grave danger. Any interpretation to be valid cannot ignore the Holy Spirit. The prevalent idea of inspiration in that day had been voiced by Philo who,

---

<sup>19</sup> Lenski, op. cit., p. 288.

<sup>20</sup> Moffatt, The General Epistles, op. cit., p. 189.

.....explains that the state of inspiration is an ecstasy, in which the human faculty of reason is replaced by the divine spirit; the true prophet is rapt into a frenzy in which the Spirit uses his unconsciousness to predict and reveal the future.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup>Moffatt, The General Epistles, op. cit., p. 190.



## CHAPTER VII

### FALSE TEACHERS

The passage which begins with chapter 2 and goes on to 3: 3 is closely parallel to Jude 4-18. There are so many parallelisms in these two passages that we must conclude that one was derived from the other. A discussion of this is found in chapter IV.

The whole of chapter two is a vigorous attack upon false teachers who had arisen in the Christian Church. The writer sees in the false prophets of ancient times the prototype of the present false teachers. "These present false teachers may have included Judaizing teachers on the one hand and Gnosticizing teachers on the other."<sup>1</sup> The heresies which these false teachers subtly spread affected both faith and morals. One writer says about these false teachers,

The writer of II Peter is writing against false teachers who are vicious, greedy and insubordinate characters. Men who scoff at the idea of the Second Coming are giving a sign of the latter days. The special burden of II Peter is to renew the belief in the Second Coming for there were many scoffers who did not believe in it.<sup>2</sup>

One of the main things the author was disturbed about was the fact that this heresy seemed to lead to an immoral life.

---

<sup>1</sup>E. H. Plumptre, General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude, The Cambridge Bible, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926), p. 177.

<sup>2</sup>Moffatt, An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, op. cit., p. 362.

Battenhouse says, "The main attack is on the heresy that leads, through disbelief, to an immoral life."<sup>3</sup>

Both the authors of Jude and II Peter were deeply troubled by the trend towards immorality and they attack it fiercely. They do so not only by condemning all licentiousness but also by reaffirming the church's belief in the final judgment. As Christianity had spread to Gentile lands, it had brought into its circle of membership individuals whose ethical ideals were rather different from those held by its earlier converts. The moral life of the Greek and Roman was quite low as compared to the Jewish. When Paul writes to the Corinthians, he speaks of their low standards such as would be held by fornicators, idolators, adulterers, thieves etc., and then says in I Corinthians 6: 11, "and such were some of you." Even after their conversion, they were slow to conform to the ethical standards of the new religion.<sup>4</sup>

These false teachers were not outsiders, but members of the churches. They seemed to be scattered among several churches.

They affirmed that, as persons who possessed the Spirit and who had superior knowledge of the way of salvation, they were free from the legalistic restraints that had characterized Judaism. For them salvation was an affair of mental comprehension and not a matter of morality.<sup>5</sup>

If these false teachers had had any knowledge of Christ,

<sup>3</sup> Henry Martin Battenhouse, *New Testament History and Literature* (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1937, p. 371

<sup>4</sup> Case, op. cit., p. 1345.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

their present state contradicted anything they ever knew. The author speaks of their last days as being worse than the first. Really their situation would have been improved if they had never known the truth than to have known it and then returned. One writer lists some of the vices which characterized these falsifiers of the truth.

The vices that most characterized these false teachers were their impurity, their self-assertion, their railing, their wanton and luxurious living, their coveteousness, reproducing in all these points, the Character of Balaam.<sup>6</sup>

Moffatt says of the writer's purpose,

The writer gives us a strongly worded epistle against unworthy antinomian teachers, who were propagating a view of Christianity which, under a cloak of liberalism, seemed to him to produce moral indifferentism in the lives of its adherents.<sup>7</sup>

Writing about the false teachers, Barnett has this to say,

The epistle is in effect a manifesto of orthodoxy directed against heretical teachers who had abandoned the message of the founders of Christianity. The specific indictments drawn against the false teachers are their ridicule of the expectation of the Parousia and their misinterpretation of the Pauline doctrine of freedom to sanction antinomianism.<sup>8</sup>

The object that Jude and the author of II Peter had in mind are somewhat different. Jude writes against the false teaching while the author of II Peter tries to encourage the faith of the Christians in the face of the fact that false teachers are denying the Second Coming because of its delay.

<sup>6</sup> Plumptre, op. cit., p. 82.

<sup>7</sup> Moffatt, The General Epistles, op. cit., p. 173.

<sup>8</sup> Barnett, op. cit., p. 272.

These mockers say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" The writer tries to controvert the teaching of these false teachers by appealing to the prestige of St. Peter. By using the name of one of the original 12 disciples, he hopes to help in holding the churches steady.

The question will arise as to who these false teachers were. It is rather difficult to definitely identify them. Harnack holds the view that they may have been a Gnostic sect called Nicolaitans. This sect was well known in Asia Minor. It had originated in a compromise with Greek thought. It was also an attempt to adapt the Christian teachings to the current philosophy of that day and make it more acceptable to the intellectual mind. The moral standards of the Nicolaitans were not very high. Their ethical standards are described in the following manner,

- A. They speak evil of the way of truth.
- B. Make merchandise of their followers.
- C. Are fleshly and lustful.
- D. Practice a vulgar hedonism.
- E. Defile the love-feasts by their presence.
- F. Deceive the hope of their followers, like waterless fountains.
- G. They are Christians in name, steal into the Church without disclosing their impious views.
- H. They are boastful and irreverent.<sup>9</sup>

Bigg also thinks they may have been Nicolaitans, for

---

<sup>9</sup> Strachan, op. cit., p. 118.

he says,

Nicolaitans existed in the seven churches at the date of the Apocalypse, and our epistle may have been called forth by the first outbreak of that heresy.<sup>10</sup>

There were other forms of Gnosticism than the Nicolaitans. There were the Archantics, Phibionites, Kainites, and Severians. There is the possibility that the false teachers may have been members of any of these sects. Schenkel, Mangold, Volter, and Holtzmann think that they were Carpocratians which was just another antinomian sect.<sup>11</sup>

Davidson is of the opinion that they cannot be the Carpocratians. He says,

They were not the Carpocratians, as Grotius thought,<sup>12</sup> because they did not spring up till the second century.

He refutes another idea by saying,

Neither were they Christians who had arisen from the sect of the Sadducees, as Bertholdt believed, for there is no point of contact between Sadduceeism and Christianity.<sup>13</sup>

As was stated, it is difficult to identify the false teachers in the churches. Goodspeed has another group to suggest. He says that,

While Jude and II Peter are vague in their picture of the particular heresies they attack, they seem to reflect the Marcosians, the followers of Marcus of Asia whose movement is described in Irenaeus Refutation 1: 13-17 and in Hippolytus Refutation 6: 34-50. The picture of the immorality, greed, speculations, allegories, and magical practices of the Marcosians makes it probable that that was the sect immediately before the minds of Jude and the

---

<sup>10</sup> Bigg, op. cit., p. 245.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 239.

<sup>12</sup> Davidson, An Introduction to the New Testament, op. cit., p. 398.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

writer of II Peter.<sup>14</sup>

Though the false teachers cannot be identified as to name, they can be according to purpose. The author of II Peter is writing at a time when Christians are seriously doubting the Second Coming of Jesus. A hundred years had passed since his ministry on earth. So much had been said about his again returning to the earth that many had expected it to be at least during the second if not the first century. The author of II Peter realizes that some people were losing faith in the Second Coming and so he takes the Epistle of Jude and throws it at these deniers. He says that there were false prophets of old and there will be false prophets in the future. Moffatt says that,

The mention of the Old Testament prophets, reminds the writer that there were false prophets as well, and this leads him to denounce in round terms the false teachers of his own day as vicious, greedy and insubordinate characters who will share the doom of their prototypes, viz. the fallen angels, the contemporaries of Noah, and the men of Sodom and Gomorrhah.<sup>15</sup>

Wand gives his idea of the purpose in the following words,

The purpose of the writer is to stir up his readers to the highest standard of Christian living and to the avoidance of subversive teaching. He protests against the corruption of Christian standards by false teachers.<sup>16</sup>

Old Testament history had both true and false prophets. Our writer is saying that many will be seduced from the way of

---

<sup>14</sup>Edgar J. Goodspeed, New Chapters in New Testament Study (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1937), p. 354.

<sup>15</sup>Moffatt, An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, op. cit., p. 359.

<sup>16</sup>Wand, op. cit., p. 135.

truth by the false prophets of the future. The false prophets will have no scruples as to using Christianity to further their inglorious ends. God is not asleep. Judgment will come to the ungodly. He did not spare the sinning angels, nor the world at the time of Noah nor Sodom and Gomorrha. These false prophets were evidently an immoral group that had gotten into the Church. They seemed to love unrighteousness rather than righteousness. A problem which is a bit difficult to explain is that the author speaks of the false prophets at one time as about to come 2: 1; 3: 3. At another place, he speaks of them as already present and active as in 2: 11, 12. The explanation which Strachan gives is that the author "throws off his prophetic mask" when he speaks in the present tense and describes what he knew was actually happening.

According to Strachan,

II Peter gives us in general a picture of the prevalence of Antinomian heresy, which has as its results the corruption of morals, and a certain materialistic tendency which led to disbelief in the Person of Christ, and a denial of the ethical nature of God.<sup>17</sup>

The Early Church became quite vehement in its denunciation of the Gnostic errors. The outcome of the teaching of the false prophets was an immoral life even though the prophets themselves may have lived a blameless life. The Early Church was not too far removed from its old ways and the Christian teachers felt that any moral compromises must be vigorously denounced. "Nothing else," says Ramsay,

---

<sup>17</sup> Strachan, op. cit., p. 116.

could have saved the infant Church from melting away into one of those vague and ineffective schools of philosophic ethics.....An easy going Christianity could never have survived; it could not have conquered and trained the world; only the most convinced, resolute, almost bigoted adherence to the most uncompromising interpretations of its own principles could have gained the Christians the courage and self-reliance that were needed.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Strachan, op. cit., p. 119, 120



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PAROUSIA

An imminent Parousia was part of the faith of all Christians in the early days. It is probable that the Judaic Christians expected it at any moment, while the Hellenists thought that the gospel must first be preached to the Gentiles (Matt. 24: 14). The delay of the Second Coming of Jesus is the theme of the letter. Jesus had promised in Mark 13: 30, "Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things (the Second Coming of the Son of Man with the angels) be done." As time passed and the Second Coming was not forthcoming, the Christians began to doubt the validity of the teaching.

According to Barnett,

The disbelief in the Parousia was due to the passage of time and the impact of Gnostic teaching which created skepticism about the historical foundations of Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

The return of Christ had been a vital part of the faith of the primitive church but now it was on the wane partly because of the Gnostic teaching and partly because of the long delay. Scott says that,

The Epistle seems to be written with the special aim of reviving the old confidence in the visible and immedi-

---

<sup>1</sup>Barnett, op. cit., p. 274.

ate return of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

The Gnostic teaching had set forth the idea that there would be no Second Coming. The present order of society would continue as it was. Prof. Burkitt thinks that this denial was the prime factor in the rise of the Gnostic systems. Speaking of Gnosticism, he says,

What is commonly known as Gnosticism was a gallant effort to reformulate Christianity in terms of the current astronomy and philosophy of the day, with the Last Judgment and the Messianic Kingdom on earth left out. (Church and Gnosis - p. 146).<sup>3</sup>

With the wane of the Second Coming, there came a lowering of moral standards. McClure says of this,

There is no doubt that at the time this document was written, the eager expectation of the Second Coming was on the wane, and primitive people with primitive instincts to restrain, tended to relax and become decadent.<sup>4</sup>

Many people began to think that if Jesus was not coming at once, he was not coming at all. His coming had been a restraining force but now that he had not come, they began to relax along moral lines. They argued that if there was to be no Parousia, there would be no Judgment and if no Judgment, they could do as they pleased. The author of II Peter comes along and says that the day of God will come and there will be a Judgment.

Battenhouse says that the author makes his,

Main attack on the heresy that leads, through disbelief, to an immoral life.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup>Scott, The Literature of the New Testament, op.cit., p. 228.

<sup>3</sup>Wand, op. cit., p. 142.

<sup>4</sup>Haven McClure, The Contents of the New Testament (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1921), p. 184.

<sup>5</sup>Battenhouse op. cit. p. 371

The author in speaking of the Second Coming said that it had been announced by the prophets, that it had been preached by Jesus, and had been reaffirmed by the apostles. Since it was so well predicted, it would be foolish for anyone to deny it. There were those going about saying,

Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.<sup>6</sup>

To this question which was evidently being asked by many who felt that a hundred years was long enough to wait, the writer says that they must recognize the fact that God does not count time as men do. With him a thousand years might be as one day. If they are imagining that the end of the world is far off, they are only being deceived. God is patient and longsuffering and this elapse of time only reveals that patience of God.<sup>7</sup>

Barnett gives us a concise statement on the purpose for the reviving of the teaching concerning the Parousia. He says,

The concern of II Peter for a revival of the confidence of earlier generations in the Second Coming was essentially a concern for the reaffirmation of the validity of the traditional as against the heretical understanding of the content of the Christian message.<sup>8</sup>

Adventism was a part of the faith of the Early Church.

<sup>6</sup> II Peter 3: 4.

<sup>7</sup> Case, op. cit., p. 1349.

<sup>8</sup> Barnett, op. cit., p. 272.

Heresy was creeping into the Church and affecting its progress and growth. One place for attack had been the hope of the Second Coming. Again Barnett says,

A realistic expectation of the return of Jesus had been a vital phase of the earliest faith. For the author of II Peter, it typified that faith. Accordingly a revival of the faith of earlier days would involve the resuscitation of adventist expectancy. Primary concern, however, is for orthodox Christian teaching, of which adventism was a traditional symbol.<sup>9</sup>

According to McNeile, "the writer's main object was not warning against heretics, but insistence on the coming of the end as a reason for living a good Christian life."<sup>10</sup> The moral standards were lowered because faith in the Parousia was weakened. The author feels that the adventist expectancy is a symbol of the real Christian faith and to regain their faith in it will help them to live a good Christian life.

---

<sup>9</sup> Barnett, op. cit., p. 273.

<sup>10</sup> McNeile, op. cit., p. 233 .

## CONCLUSION

To say that this has been a controversial epistle is putting it mildly. So few facts are known about it that, unto this day, scholars are not in perfect agreement. Men of equal consecration and scholarship cannot see eye to eye on its authenticity, date, to whom written, etc. We have endeavored to bring out the fact of its late acceptance but also the fact that in spite of that, some scholars hold it authentic. I have not found a scholar who has spoken in a dogmatic manner about any of the issues involved. However, the more recent scholars seem to favor the pseudonymous character of the epistle and the later date of its authorship.

Regardless of who the author may have been, he had the definite purpose in mind of encouraging Christians not to lose faith because of the passage of time and the failure of Christ to appear. Though false teachers appeared among them, they were to remember that God is not slack in his judgment. These false teachers were merely an indication of the near return of Christ.

The epistle had enough value to be accepted by the Church and canonized. It has come down to us with less value than most of the New Testament writings, but none the less, it remains as a timely warning.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### BOOKS

- Allen, W. C. & Grensted, L. W. Introduction to Books of the New Testament Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1929.
- Bacon, B. W. An Introduction to the New Testament New York: The Macmillan Co., 1927.
- Barnett, Albert E. The New Testament Its Making and Meaning New York, Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1946.
- Bennett, W. H. (edited) Henry Frowde The General Epistles The New Century Bible, New York.
- Bigg, Charles The Epistles of St. Peter & St. Jude New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901.
- Brook, R. A Commentary on the Bible Edited by A. S. Peake, New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1912.
- Cartledge, S. A. A Conservative Introduction to the New Testament Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1941.
- Case, Eiselen, Lewis, Downey (ed.) The Abingdon Bible Commentary New York, Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1929.
- Chase, F. H., Hastings, James (ed.) Dictionary of the Bible New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, Vol. III, 1901.
- Clogg, F. B. An Introduction to the New Testament London: University of London Press, Ltd., 1949.
- Davidson, Samuel Introduction to the Study of the New Testament London: Longmans, Green, & Co., Vol. II, 1882.
- \_\_\_\_\_ . An Introduction to the New Testament London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, Vol. III, 1851.
- Dibelius, Martin A Fresh Approach to the New Testament and Early Christian Literature New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936.
- Dods, Marcus An Introduction to the New Testament London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909.

- Enslin, Morton Scott Christian Beginnings New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1938.
- Foakes - Jackson, F. J. & Smith, B. T. A Brief Biblical History New York: George H. Doran Co., (n.d.)
- Fowler, Henry T. The History and Literature of the New Testament New York: The Macmillan Co., 1934.
- Goodspeed, Edgar J. The Formation of the New Testament Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926.
- \_\_\_\_\_. A History of Early Christian Literature Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942.
- \_\_\_\_\_. An Introduction to the New Testament Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937.
- \_\_\_\_\_. New Chapters in New Testament Study New York: The Macmillan Co., 1937.
- Julicher, Adolf An Introduction to the New Testament Tr. Janet P. Ward, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904.
- Lake, Kirsopp An Introduction to the New Testament New York: Harper & Bros., 1937.
- Lenski, R. C. H. The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1938.
- Mayor, Joseph B. The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter New York: The Macmillan Co., 1907.
- McClure, Haven The Contents of the New Testament New York: The Macmillan Co., 1921.
- McNeile, A. H. An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927.
- Moffatt, James An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The General Epistles New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., 1928.
- Peake, Arthur S. A Critical Introduction to the New Testament New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912.
- Plumptre, E. H. General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude, The Cambridge Bible, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926.

- Scott, E. F. The Gospel and Its Tributaries New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930.
- \_\_\_\_\_ . The Varieties of New Testament Religion New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943.
- \_\_\_\_\_ . The Literature of the New Testament New York: Columbia University Press, 1932.
- Stevens, G. B. The Theology of the New Testament New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919.
- Strachan, R. H. The Expositor's Greek Testament Ed. by W. Robertson Nicoll Vol. V. New York: Hodder & Stoughton, (n.d.)
- Wand, J. W. C. The General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1934.
- Warfield, B. B. The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible, edited by John D. Davis, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1944.
- Zahn, Theodor Introduction to the New Testament Vol. II, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909.