THE FALSE TEACHERS OF 2 PT
AS PSEUDO-PROPHETS

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Very little has been done through the years for a closer investigation of the probably youngest NT writing, the pseudepigraphic testament of the Apostle Peter, commonly called the Second Epistle of St. Peter 1). Yet this fictitious letter 2) contains quite a few interesting and remarkable ideas and reflections, unique in the primitive Christian literature, as e.g. the statement about participation in divine nature (i 4), the use of the story about the transfiguration (i 16 f.) with possible allusions to mystery terminology 3), the stress on the need for a more-than-human interpretation of prophecy, in itself inspired by the Holy Spirit (i 20 f.) and the single clearly reflected confrontation with the delay of the Parousia within the NT (iii 4-13). Especially, even in the commentaries, 2 Pt ii has been neglected by scholars 4). The Uppsala dissertation of Tord FORNBERG on 2 Pt 5) fills a gap—or, at least, starts to fill it. To my knowledge he is the first scholar who has tried to work on a synoptic comparison between Jude and 2 Pt ii along the line of redaction criticism, assuming and proving by his work, to a very high degree of probability, the priority of Jude and the direct literary dependence of 2 Pt on Jude 6). It is surprising that nothing

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2) For distinctions in the letter genre see e.g. P. VIEHLAUSER, Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur (1975) 58-70, esp. 60 ff.

3) See e.g. FORNBERG 52 f., 123—with reservations concerning μωιπάξευν above all.

4) For the last 20 years I have only found two papers (listed in FORNBERG’s bibliography, one by PEARSON and another by SKEHAN) on problems in 2 Pt ii, not a single monograph.

5) See n. 1 supra!

serious has been done before in this field, so much more hypothetical work has been done in the redaction history of the Synoptic Gospels (and John, too!), in which the priority of Mk and the existence of Q is not nearly so ascertained—to say the least—as the relation between Jude and 2 Pt ii 7). Admittedly the fierce attack on the adversaries, with a rather strange terminology and imagery in these chapters, does not belong to the most obviously edifying and theologically important sections of the NT. But the comparative study of the two pericopes must be of methodological importance.

Forbberg has done a good job to open up a discussion on the redaction of the material of Jude in 2 Pt. Unfortunately his book is too much determined by the aim of establishing an image of “an early church in a pluralistic society” and by the question of Hellenism as distinguished from Judaism 8). So the question of the identity of the adversaries is treated in a somewhat superficial way 9). This is a pity, since at least two thirds of the letter consist of open polemic against the adversaries, and there is much reason to suspect that most of the rest of the letter is guided by the polemical intention too 10).

Now the possibility to study the redaction of the material of Jude in 2 Pt ought to provide us with an opportunity to ask the question whether the adversaries of 2 Pt seem to belong to the same group as those of Jude and thus to advance towards the identification of these adversaries in a way which is more or less unique in the early Christian literature. I am not at this point able to commit myself to a deeper enquiry along this line, but I would like to make an observation at one point, which might contribute to a more thorough investigation of the question of the identity of the adversaries in 2 Pt and to further use of the method of redaction criticism in the exegesis of this writing. This concerns the conspicuous interest in prophecy and prophets in 2 Pt as compared with Jude.

The word group προφητής κτλ. appears only once in Jude, in the quotation from Enoch in v. 14, a quotation which for some reason

8) See e.g. 57 ff., 66 ff., 74, 85, 86-89, 91, 97-101, ch. 6.
9) Really only sections 4.2.1, 5.3 and 6.7.3 are devoted to this central question.
10) Open polemic in ch. 2-3, probable polemic in i 9, 16, 20 f.—e.g.