

## **Preface To The Second Epistle Of Saint Peter (1546 and 1522)**

This Epistle is written against those who think that Christian faith can be without works. Therefore he exhorts them to test themselves by good works and become sure of their faith, — as one knows trees by their fruit.

Then he begins to praise the Gospel, as compared with doctrines of men, saying that men ought to hear only it, and no doctrines of men; for, as he says, “No prophecy ever came by the will of man.”

Therefore, in chapter 2, he warns against the false teachers who are to come, who go about with their works, and thereby deny Christ. He threatens these men severely, with three terrible illustrations, and paints them so clearly, with their avarice, pride, audacity, fornication and hypocrisy, that one must plainly see he means the clergy of today, who have swallowed the whole world in their avarice, and lead a free, fleshly, worldly life.

In chapter 3, he shows that the Last Day will come soon and though in the eyes of men it may seem a thousand years, yet in the eyes of God it is as one day. He describes what will happen at the Last Day, how everything shall be consumed with fire. He prophesies also that, at that time, people will be scornful, and think nothing of faith, like the Epicureans.

Briefly, chapter 1 shows what the Church should be like at the time of the pure Gospel; chapter 2 shows how it was to be in the time of the pope and the doctrines of men: chapter 3 shows how, afterwards, people will despise both the Gospel and all doctrine, and believe nothing, and that is now in full swing, until Christ comes.