

freely in its fullest possible extent. For if I, or any other man should choose this day to renounce every article of the Christian Creed, we have a civil right to do so, and no human power has any just authority to punish us for so doing. For we believe that *to God alone* man is responsible for his religious opinions; and that we will have to account to him for our faith as well as for our moral conduct. With the conviction of this awful accountability then before you, my Catholic friends, take the Holy-Bible, and read and peruse its sacred pages for your instruction and edification; and whilst others, who read it, acknowledging no other guide than the *ignis fatuus* of their own private judgment, are liable, at all times, to pervert its meaning, and thereby *wrest it to their own perdition*; may you divine from it evidence to confirm and consolidate your faith; encouragement to cheer and enervate your hope; and precepts of fraternal charity, with every inducement to observe them. In fine let these words of Isaiah make you sensible how incompetent man is to sit in judgment on the sublime truths of divine revelation: *My thoughts, says the Lord, are not as your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways; for as the heavens are exalted above the earth, even so are my ways exalted above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts.* Cap. 55. v. 8-9.

I will here subjoin for the information of the reader, a few extracts from the most ancient of the Fathers, as bearing upon the doctrine of Private Judgment:

He, who reading the Gospel, applies it to his own interpretation, not understanding it as the Lord spoke it, he is truly a false Prophet, uttering words from his own mind Heretics always apply their own fables to the Gospels and the writings of the Apostles, expounding