

## Earliest Corruptions of Christianity

§ 1. — THE Blessed founder of Christianity chose to make his advent among the lowly and the despised. This was agreeable to the spirit of that Holy Religion which he came to establish. There was a time when a multitude of his followers, astonished and convinced by the omnipotence displayed in his wondrous miracles, were disposed to “take him by force to make him a king” but so far from encouraging their design, the inspired historian tells us “that he departed again, into a mountain himself alone.” (John vi., 15.) In reply to the inquiries of the Roman governor, he uttered those memorable words, “MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD,” and his whole conduct from the manger to the cross, and from the cross to the mount of ascension, was in strict accordance with this characteristic maxim of genuine Christianity.

§ 2. — In selecting those whom he would send forth as the apostles of his faith, he went, not to the mansions of the great or to the palaces of kings, but to the humble walks of life, and chose from the poor of this world, those who, in prosecuting their mission, were destined, like their divine master, to be despised and rejected of men. In performing the work which their Lord had given them to do, the lowly but zealous fisherman of Galilee, and the courageous tent-maker of Tarsus, with their faithful fellow-laborers, despising all earthly honors and worldly aggrandizement, were content to lay every laurel at the foot of Christ’s cross, and to “count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, their Lord,” for whom they had “suffered the loss of all things.” (Philippians, iii., 8.)

§ 3. — A few centuries afterward, we find the professed successor of Peter the fisherman, dwelling in a magnificent palace, attended by troops of soldiers ready to avenge the slightest insult offered to his dignity, surrounded by all the ensigns of worldly greatness, with more than regal splendor, proudly claiming to be the sovereign ruler of the universal church, the Vicegerent of God upon earth, whose decision is infallible and whose will is law. The contrast between these two pictures of Primitive Christianity in the first century, and Papal Christianity in the seventh or eighth, is so amazing, that we are irresistibly led to the inquiry, can they be the same? If one is a faithful picture of Christianity, can it be possible that the other is worthy of the name?

(The History of Romanism: From the Earliest Corruptions of Christianity to the Present Time, by John Dowling, New York: Edward Walker, 1853, 25-26)