

endeavoured to execute, with implicit obedience, the injunctions contained in my text. With their tongue they proclaimed, in their lives they exemplified, the whole doctrine of Christ: the labours of the preacher were uniformly seconded by the virtuous zeal of the community, and prospered by the blessing of the Lord. Of *later* times it may justly be said, that *one* description of Christians has disfigured the Gospel by the admixture of groundless traditions, or accommodation to the corruptions of the world; that *another* has been culpably remiss in the propagation of a pure Faith: and that in *both*, the zeal of the preacher, who was faithful to his charge, has been counteracted in various degrees, by the relaxation of morals, and decay of piety, in the great body of Christians; and the work of conversion has been proportionably imperfect and slow. In the glories of the *former* period, we discern the immediate presence of Christ with his disciples, and the adequate fulfilment of his promise. In the afflicting reverses of the *latter*, degeneracy of practice, corruption of faith, and languor of zeal, have been found to obstruct, by their natural tendencies, the gracious designs of Heaven.

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