

lives in a galley chained to oars, under hard-hearted masters, while their young children are placed out for education, and taught principles so contrary to the consciences of the parents, that by dissenting from them, they have hazarded their liberty, lives, and all that was dear to them of the things of this world?

There have been in time past severe persecutions under the English government, and many sincere-hearted people have suffered death for the testimony of a good conscience, whose faithfulness in their day hath ministered encouragement to others, and been a blessing to many who have succeeded them; thus from age to age, the darkness being more and more removed, a channel at length, through the tender mercies of God, hath been opened for the exercise of the pure gift of the gospel ministry, without interruption from outward power, a work, the like of which is rare, and unknown in many parts of the world.

As these things are often fresh in my mind, and this great work of God going on in the earth has been open before me, that liberty of conscience with which we are favoured, hath appeared not as a light matter.

A trust is committed to us, a great and weighty trust, to which our diligent attention is necessary: wherever the active members of this visible gathered church use themselves to that which is contrary to the purity of our principles, it appears to be a breach of this trust, and one step back toward the wilderness,