

This cause of tribulation is in our day happily removed ; but other sources have arisen, which occasion deep grief of heart to the true people of God, and perhaps obstruct the progress of religion even more than persecution itself, so that it sometimes seems as if the horrors of persecution need to be renewed in order to press Christians into a compact body. If the sword were again unsheathed against Christian churches, perhaps the necessity of presenting a united front against the powers of darkness would be more apparent.

In addition to what has now been said, the private history of Christians in all ages seems to be a fulfilment of the language, "In the world," &c. The great mass of true believers have been poor in this world's goods and lightly esteemed, while adversity has often lowered upon them ; and their means have been so slender, their charges so numerous, their afflictions so complicated, that they have been, as it were, driven to the necessity of living by faith : so that we may view the text as a prophetic announcement of what has since occurred, and of what will continue to occur in years to come.

We may consider it also, secondly,

#### AS AN ALLOTMENT.

It was foreseen that such would be the case, because it was predetermined that it should be so. It is a part of the Divine plan that Christ's disciples should have tribulation in this world.

I do not mean for one instant that God has appointed them or others to commit the sins which occasion a great part of their sufferings. Sin is contrary to His nature, contrary to his law, contrary to his earnest expostulations ; and as it is morally impossible that God should be the author of Sin, so it is a most blasphemous assault upon his character to impute it to him. But what I mean is, that God has determined to subject his people in this life to the discipline of suffering. He who fixes the bounds of their habitations

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