

It is a matter of a painful kind, and by some regarded as a portent ;---it is truly enough a sign which, in the religious tendencies and movements of the age, may well excite alarm even in people not given to periodical panic.

We neither sink nor infringe upon the dignity befitting the highest court of our Church, and the delicacy we should ever manifest in allusion to individuals, especially to one belonging to another branch of the Church of our fathers, and eminent for his literary talents and philanthropy, when we plainly say, what every one knows we mean, that we refer to Dr. Norman McLeod and his extraordinary speech on the Sabbath in the Presbytery of Glasgow.

It is but an act of simple justice to declare that the anti-scriptural and dangerous character of the now celebrated speech has been exaggerated in most quarters ; and it is certainly to be deplored that zeal for God's ordinance, or a bad temper, or such a mingling of both as is unhappily rather common, has led many to misrepresent some statements made by Dr. McLeod, and to ignore others which go far to qualify the expressions deservedly found fault with.

It is wrong to go beyond the truth in the accusation of any man ; and it is equally wrong and ineffably mean to hide or refuse to notice truth which disproves part of the allegation, and must modify our judgment if we are just.

It is suicidal on the part of advocates of the divine origin and sacredness of the Sabbath to denounce a man " whose name is a household word wherever our language is spoken or read, and wherever it is known, suggests not only the genial writer, but also the faithful minister, the unwearied promoter of the cause of the Gospel at home and abroad,"--to couple his name with those of Renan and Colenso, as has been done,--and to represent him as denying the divine authority of the Sabbath, and bent on its abrogation. And it is sinning against God and man, against candor and honor to persist in such accusations when the reputed offender solemnly and repeatedly denies the truth of the charge, when he declares, in answer to his accusers, that he does love the Lord's day, and that he holds it to be a Divine institution, and of perpetual obligation.

Dr. McLeod's blameworthy words, which are strange and startling enough, and need no seasoning of bitter herbs or other spicery, are these.---

" My opinion is that the whole of that Commandment (the Fourth) and that the whole Decalogue is abrogated."

" I say the Decalogue was buried in the grave with Jesus Christ when he rose from the Dead."

But then, he has added in explanation and in abatement of the conclusion to which such expressions would unavoidably conduct us, other statements of which we quote again the ipsissima verba :---

" I do value the Lord's day, and I do believe it to be a divine institution ; not a Church institution, but a divine institution."

" I believe the Sabbath to be divine.....that the Lord's day exists on the authority of the Lord and His apostles, and is connected with the Fourth Commandment, though it is not on the Fourth Commandment that it rests."

" I may be wrong, but it is my belief that if you base this day upon the Decalogue which I think has been abrogated, and upon the Fourth Commandment, and especially does the Apostle Paul tell us we are not to judge any man regarding the Sabbath, if you base this day upon that,