

can be dealt with, only as *tolerated associations*. The law does not recognise "spiritual sentences." But this is not all. The Free Church is not only reduced to the dimensions of a mere tolerated copartnery, liable to be corrected by the Law Courts, whenever by breach of contract or any other illegal proceeding, it violates the law of the land, but the Free Church has given up, by her own pleadings, *all status as a collective body*. Her counsel plead, in open Court, that the Free Church could not be called in any Court, that she has, as such, no legal *locus standi*, neither by Kirk Session, Presbytery, Synod or General Assembly, and on that ground, McMillan was forced to proceed against her office-bearers and authorities as individuals. If, then, she cannot plead by representatives in defence of an action laid against her as a corporate body, she evidently cannot pursue as an association. Not only, therefore, has the Free Church abdicated her lofty spiritual rank, but she also has abandoned her position as a collective association, and lowered herself to the rank of a congeries of individuals, that cannot collectively either sue or be sued before any Civil Court. That is to say, the Free Church has no position or standing in the eye of the law of the land, either as a Church or as a corporation. She is reduced to the shadow of a shade, and has, by her pleadings of counsel, put herself in a worse position, than we at the first supposed could be possible for any voluntary association to be placed in. We cannot hazard an opinion what would be the course, supposing McMillan still persisted in keeping possession of the Free-Manse property of Cardross, the Free Church would pursue. In what capacity would she address the Civil Court, wherein the question of possession was to be adjudicated, since she has abandoned her position as an association? It is now clear that the Manse property of Cardross does not belong to any select number of individual members and office-bearers of the Free Church, for her Counsel proclaimed in Court that she could not be represented even by her General Assembly. Though this point is not likely to be tried, but, were it to be tested in a Civil Court, it might place the Free Church in an awkward position in her now new character.

On the whole, we think that the Free Church have little reason to boast as the winner in the Cardross Case. She has gained a victory because she was powerful in her "sinews of war" for a long legal campaign; and McMillan is Nil, not, by any means, because his claims in Court were groundless; quite the reverse. The Free Church can no longer make capital of the spiritual nature of their ecclesiastical Courts and sentences, as they have been winners of their case by the abandonment of that lofty position, and submitting the procedure and sentences of their Courts to the ordinary Courts of Law. In short, they have made a ghost of their Church

by pleading that the Free Church in Scotland has no corporate or associate existence as a collective unity; and, as such, cannot therefore either sue or be sued in the Civil Courts by any representatives, for it does not acknowledge that she has any representatives. Intelligent Voluntaries of other denominations will be loath to accept this last conclusion as applicable to them. Though many Voluntaries sympathised with the Free Church in the early stages of the Cardross Case, they did so at the expense of their own principles. Consistent Voluntaries do not wish to be recognized by law in any capacity than as tolerated copartners associated for lawful purposes. We are sure they would not, even if they could, extrude themselves from the jurisdiction of the Courts of the Civil Law. So long as they act in accordance with the law of the land—so long as, in their individual and collective capacities, they maintain their contracts and deal fairly by each other, there can be no question of legal interference with them. It is only when they claim to assume functions which involve civil injustice, and pursue a course injurious to the civil interests of any of their office-bearers or members, that there is room for an appeal to the Civil Courts. We are fully persuaded that the really intelligent Voluntaries of Scotland and of other lands, even of Nova Scotia, would regret to see any change in this state of matters, and would have strong objections to follow the example of the Free Church in abandoning her associate and corporate character when she is forced face to face with the Law Courts of the land.

Musquodboit, February, 1864.

Angels.

PERHAPS there is not a more glorious fact, to the mind of a Christian, than that angels are continually surrounding him. On every hand, at all times and seasons, sleeping and waking, they are constantly his attendants. In his battle against the world, the flesh and the devil, his guardian angels co-operate with him. They fan the mouldering flame of courage and resolution. They urge him on to deeds of valour in the good cause. Appointed by the Almighty to execute his demands, they fly with the speed of lightning to achieve his designs. What a glorious truth! How fraught with delight to the persevering Christian soul!—that amid his trials and temptations, not alone is man's Heavenly Father the witness, but "thousands of angels" fired with zeal for the extension of their Master's kingdom.

If, on the one hand, it is a source of delight to the Christian, it is, on the other, a source of dismay and trepidation to the worker of iniquity. Must his every action, guilty as it is, be noted? Must his devilish machinations be reported to the ears of his Judge by an