

5. A sentence may simply pass in Court, or if it be thought expedient to publish it, it shall be published only in the Church or Churches which have been offended.

CHAPTER V.

Provisions pertaining to process against a Minister.

1. As the honour and success of the gospel depend, in a great measure, on the character of its Ministers, it is the duty of the Presbytery carefully and impartially to watch over the personal and professional conduct of all its members. But as no Minister ought, on account of his office, to be screened from the hand of justice, nor his offences to be slightly censured, so neither ought scandalous charges to be received against him on slight grounds.

2. It is the duty of all Christians to be very cautious in taking up an ill report of any man, but especially of a Minister of the gospel; therefore if any man know a Minister to be guilty of a private fault, he should warn him in private. But if the guilty person persist in his fault, or it becomes public, he who knows it should apply to some other Minister of the Presbytery for his advice.

3. If a Minister is supposed to have committed an offence at a distance from home, which is not likely to become known to his own Presbytery, it shall be the duty of the Presbytery, within whose bounds the offence is alleged to have been committed, to send notice to the Presbytery of which he is a member of the offence charged, and the grounds for believing the truth of the charge; and the Presbytery, on receiving such notice, shall, if they think it necessary, proceed against him, as in a case of *fama*.

4. If a Minister, accused of an offence, shall refuse to attend the Presbytery after being twice duly cited to appear and answer the accusation, he may be immediately suspended from his office; and if, after another citation, he shall refuse to attend, he shall be deposed as contumacious.

5. If, upon trial, a Minister shall be found guilty, he shall be admonished, rebuked, suspended from the functions of the ministry, deposed, with or without deprivation of Church privileges, or excommunicated, as the Court shall deem fit.

6. Heresy and schism may be of such a nature as to infer deposition: but errors should be carefully considered whether they strike at the vitals of religion, and are industriously spread, or whether they arise from the weakness of the human understanding and are not likely to do much injury. In the latter case, the Presbytery should use prudent measures to remove the offence.

7. A Minister deposed for scandalous conduct shall not be reposed, even on evidence of the deepest sorrow for his sin, until after some time of eminent and exemplary, humble and edifying conversation, to heal the wound made by his scandal; and until public sentiment is strongly in favour of his restoration, and then only by the Presbytery which deposed him, or by the higher Court.

8. Deposition involves the separation of the pastoral tie, and the congregation shall be forthwith declared vacant. In suspension, the Presbytery shall decide whether such separation shall take place or not.

CHAPTER VI.

Of cases without process.

1. When an individual commits an offence in the presence of the Court, or when he voluntarily confesses his guilt, it is competent to the