

A Committee was appointed, which presented the following report :—"The Committee appointed by the General Assembly to confer with Mr. Brownlow North report, that they have, as instructed, met with him, and heard from him a clear and detailed account of his views on the great essential truths of salvation, as well as a narrative of the way in which he was led to engage at first in evangelistic work, and of the steps of his subsequent progress therein. The Committee have great pleasure in reporting to the General Assembly their entire satisfaction with Mr. North's statements on both heads, and their persuasion that he has been, in a remarkable way, conducted into his present course by the hand of God, as well as that he has been much countenanced in his work. They therefore earnestly recommend to the General Assembly to welcome Mr. North as a friend of the Saviour, whom He has eminently qualified for addressing his fellow-sinners on the things which belong to their everlasting peace, and through whom, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, much spiritual benefit may be expected to come on the flocks whose ministers may invite him to preach to them the word of the great salvation."

After some remarks by members, the Moderator said :—"Mr. North, I have great pleasure and heartfelt satisfaction in announcing to you that I have been called, by the unanimous decision of this House, to welcome you as a servant of Jesus Christ who has received unusual gifts for preaching the glad tidings of great joy, and whose work in this department the Lord has greatly honoured. The General Assembly has come to this decision, I believe, on full knowledge, and on great consideration. I concur heartily in the grounds on which this judgment has been adopted. It is proper, in the way of explanation, for me to say that I have adopted the resolution of declining to take any active part in promoting cases of deviation from our ordinary rules in regard to the licensing of probationers. I think that a prudent step in my circumstances, and I have resolved to act upon it as a general prudential resolution. But although I thought it prudent in my circumstances to adopt such a resolution, it did not arise in the least from any jealousy as to the perfect warrantableness and expediency of occasional deviations from our ordinary arrangements. I have had a strong and growing conviction that the Church ought to make provision for occasionally deviating from her ordinary arrangements. I never could see the warrantableness of any Church of Christ, however deeply impressed with its importance in ordinary circumstances, venturing to lay down as a resolution that she would not see, and would not recognise gifts for preaching or for the ministry, except in men who had gone through the whole of the ordinary curriculum. No Church has a right to lay down that rule. This Church has not laid down that rule, and I trust never will. The Church must lay herself open to consider exceptional cases, mark God's hand, and make a fair use and application of what he has been doing. Everybody admits this in theory, and I have sometimes thought there was too much of unwillingness to apply it; and I must say I have been of late very desirous to see two or three very good cases of exception of that kind—not only because I would like to see the Church practically recognising the principles to which I have referred, but for this additional reason, that I have a strong impression that in the actual position of the Church we shall find considerable difficulty in keeping up a high standard in regard to the mass of our students, unless we have an open way for occasional exceptions. I believe if we leave such an opening, it will be of far more importance in enabling us to maintain a high standard and full compliance with our strict regulations in regard to nineteen-twentieths of our students, than by attempting to carry out the same rule to the whole twenty-twentieths, and thereby running the risk of lowering the standard of the whole body, and losing besides, the benefit of the exceptions. I have great pleasure in saying that, although I have not heard Mr. North preaching, yet I am thoroughly satisfied, on the testimony of most competent judges, that the Lord has given him great gifts for this work. And I cannot but regard the very strong feelings called forth by Mr. North's preaching in the hearts of many of our best men—of the men most desirous to promote the work of the holy ministry among us—I cannot but regard, further, that very cordial and almost unani-