

SUSTENTATION OF THE MINISTRY.

Although the Returns which were given in to the Synod's Committee on this subject, and which were laid by them before the Synod, were far from being complete; enough was brought out to show the imminent danger to which the Church is exposed in this direction, and the necessity of adopting energetic measures to have this danger averted. The urgency of the evil that requires to be dealt with will be at once seen when it is stated that amongst the cases brought out in these returns are such as the following: A minister settled in a charge from which he had the promise of £103, per annum, is paid with £72 one year, and with £40 the following year. Another minister was settled in a charge from which he had the promise of £150 per annum; but the payments have been so irregularly made that in the course of a few years the arrears have accumulated to about £300. One minister, settled over a flock of about 1000 souls, with the promise of an annual stipend of £150 a year, received about £30 in the year ending Nov. 1850, and about £56, in the year ending Nov. 1851. Another minister, with a still larger flock, instead of the promised £150 a year, received in 1850, £20, and in 1851, £30. Is it not time that the Church should be dealt with, earnestly and faithfully, about its duty with respect to the Sustentation of the Ministry?

There has been an unwillingness to grapple with this difficulty. Some may be inclined to think that this public announcement of such cases must be disheartening to the friends of the Free Church, and may cause her enemies to rejoice as if it indicated its speedy extinction; while others may think that it might have been more prudent to endeavour to meet the evil by private dealing with individual cases. On various grounds we venture, notwithstanding, to think that it is high time that the matter should be thus publicly pressed upon the notice of the Church. In the first place, the evil prevails too extensively to be with safety any longer slurred over as it has hitherto been. The Christian Church, in its various denominations throughout the Provinces of British North America, requires to be called to contemplate the danger to which it is exposed, and to feel its obligation to endeavour, in the due use of means, to have the danger averted. Secondly, astounding as the cases refer-

ed to may appear, we do not regard them in that discouraging aspect which at first sight they might seem to present. There may, no doubt, be found with some much indifference about religion, and the enjoyment of its ordinances. Others, far from indifferent, may be without the means of accomplishing their desires in behalf of those who may administer to them its ordinances. Very much of this seeming neglect, however, appears to be owing greatly to the want of right method on the part of those who have the direct management of these affairs, and to the ignorance on the part of the great body of the people that there has been such neglect shown towards those who are labouring to build them up in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation. Delicacy and silence on the part of the sufferers have been regarded as evidence that there was nothing to complain of. In the third place, we are persuaded that the directing of public attention to the evil is necessary, in order that the meetings of Presbyteries with the different congregations may be useful for the object intended. There are some men who try to keep themselves in comfortable alliance with worldliness in their own hearts by being very abhorrent of it in the case of others, and especially in the case of ministers. When an attempt may be made to deal with their conscience as to their duty in reference to the support of the ordinances through which they are to look for nourishment to their own souls, they may be profane enough, even in solemn address to God, to pray, "Deliver us from the men who look to the money." It is to be hoped, for the honour of the Christian profession, that there are not many men capable of this. Such men, however, are sometimes to be met with; and should any of them appear at these Presbytery meetings, the Presbytery, no doubt, will be faithful in rebuking the vile hypocrisy, and in directing the attention of the individual to the worldliness in his own heart which, in the circumstances, could dictate such a prayer. There may be found also more pleasant occupation in dealing with others, whose remissness may have been from oversight, and who may be deeply grieved to learn how much their failure in fulfilling the obligations into which they had entered with respect to temporal things, may have been distracting the minds, and paralyzing the efforts, of those who were watching for their souls as those who must give an account. No doubt,