

WINTER SUPPLY IN OUR MISSION FIELDS.

To the Editors of the JOURNAL.

SIRS :—The question of winter supply is presenting itself in serious form to the public opinion of our Church. It was discussed at length by the General Assembly at its last meeting, and the difficulty of finding a satisfactory solution was very generally admitted. The sudden retirement of so many workers within the walls of our Colleges at the end of summer deprives a number of thriving stations of Gospel Ordinances ; and on the return of spring the work has to be taken up anew. In one respect, the prominent attention given to this question is a gratifying proof of the good work done by us during the summer. It is an official acknowledgment of the value of our services in the field while yet undergraduates in Theology.

But the means suggested as a remedy hardly commend themselves to a Student. The scheme of a summer session in one or more of our Colleges is not one which bears promise upon the face of it. Students will prefer the winter season for College work ; summer is the season best adapted for mission work, and least adapted for abstract study. Students also whose whole anxiety is to graduate (?) in Theology would combine the summer and winter sessions, and thus leave College a year earlier than at present. Even the best friends of this class will acknowledge that this would not be an unmixed blessing.

The regulation calling upon all graduates to spend six months after graduation in the mission cannot further to any great extent the solution of the question. However profitable it may prove to the graduates it will offer no relief to the vacant stations. These six months will occur during the summer when there is no famine of preachers. It leaves the question of winter supply almost as it was before.

But, were students permitted to spend the second or third year of their theological course in the field, the difficulty would in a great measure be met. A large proportion of the theological students in our several colleges would no doubt elect to spend a winter in the field, in view of the special experience which a winter's work would furnish. This would not need to interfere with their literary standing. They could be subjected to searching examinations in the spring as usual. A little *feathering* might, if necessary, be included in the scheme. To this the objection will be made that our graduates sometimes leave College with but a scant knowledge of Theology. The course should be lengthened rather than shortened. This scheme, however, does not ask for a shortening of the course. It would merely extend to any student the choice of spending one of his sessions in the College or the field. He need not be given to understand that he is in this way going to