

Sunday profanation, dancing, gambling, theatres, or other worldly conformity. They groan when a discourse closes without these things being unsparingly denounced. They grumble about variegated altar cloths, stained glass windows, flowers, cushioned pews, crosses, banners, surpliced choirs, bawings, genuflections and ritualism. They see a worldly mindedness and temporizing spirit in the minister which compels them to groan. In the summer the minister's absence for vacation is a staple cause of "groaning." If he loved souls as he ought, would he be willing to be absent from his flock, and spending

"groaning." If he loved souls as he ought, would be willing to be absent from his flock, and spending his days in idleness and perhaps croquet. The services should be more attractive. One groaner suggests striking, and amazing sermons, full of anecdotes, another bright music. Another thinks the clergyman altogether too doctrinal, another gives it as his opinion that the man is stiff and awkward in the pulpit, and do not like his voice—that he was never out for a clergyman, and has mistook his calling. Another thinks he ought to gesticulate more. Some grumble because he flings his arms about and nods his head so much. If he is a single man a host of young ladies in his congregation are his warmest friends. They embroider for him slippers and manufacture his dressing gowns, until, to their surprise, he comes home one day bringing with him a young wife from a distant city. Then attention is diverted from the "parson" and fixed upon his help-meet. One of the groaners complains that she is too gay and frivolous, not suited for a minister's wife. Another that she is too extravagant, too expensive things all over the house; she is too dressy, she ought to dress more plainly and set a good example; some of the congregation think there is too much company at the parsonage; others not enough. All claim a good share of visits from both inmates of the parsonage. How would these groaners and grumblers like being picked to pieces the way they dissect the minister and his family with their tongues. How easy it is to criticize the parsonage while the grumblers live as they please in their own homes without being found fault with. Then these people groan over the members of the Church. They remember faults committed years ago. No single tergiversation from right do they forget. Some people can hardly enter the sanctuary but their presence elicits a groan. The whole estate of the Church, its lack of spirituality, its formalism, and ceremonies, are causes of perpetual groaning. To remedy this complaining these groaners and grumblers must have the "wit of geese," which picks up the kernels and leaves the chaff.

Nov. 22nd, 1888.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Passage to be read.—St. Luke iii. 1-18.

The Jews were always looking for the coming of Messiah. They were now under foreign governors. Pontius Pilate was now Governor of Judea. Surely now, the people thought, Messiah will come and deliver us. A rumour suddenly comes to Jerusalem that a strange man has appeared in the wilderness of Judea, dressed in the garb of the prophets of old, and living on the rough fare of a Nazarite, proclaiming that "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Let us ask, what he came to do? how he did it? what was the result?

1. *What was John the Baptist's Mission?*—Look at the Angel's words to his father (St. Luke 1. 18-17). Look at his own words (St. John i. 28). Look at the prophecies to which the Angel and he referred, (Is. xl. 3, 4; Mal. iii. 1; iv. 5, 6). There were no railroads or turnpike roads in those days. When a king travelled men went before to prepare the way. This is just like what St. John had to do. He was a pioneer, a forerunner. To prepare men's hearts for the coming of the Messiah. Their hearts were hard (proud and selfish)—crooked (deceitful).

II. How did he fulfil his mission?—(1) Let us go with the crowd from Jerusalem—over Olivet—by the steep, wild rocky way “down from Jerusalem to Jericho,” into the hot Jordan Valley—to the river bank. There we find all classes of people. In the midst stands St. John the Baptist. Hear what he is saying (St. Matt. xii. 2).

(2) St. John tells them of their sins, and they are convinced, so they come confessing their sins, asking how they shall amend their lives, St. John tells them (St. Luke iii. 10-14).

(a) That they are ready to give up their sins, and receive the King with "humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient hearts;"

(4) Some turn away offended, (St. Luke vii. 30)-
Why? (v. 8). They thought themselves worthy, be-

CHURCH FUNDS V. SPASMODIC GIVING.

SIR,—Many of your readers are aware that two or three years ago the Mission Fund of our Diocese (Toronto) was getting so seriously behind hand, the energetic efforts were made to bring it into a more healthy condition: these efforts were successful in measure, and the amount of the overdrawn balance was very considerably reduced, and there was prospect that better times were coming; but as frequently has before happened a re-action is taking place, and our revenue for Mission Purposes is again decreasing and our indebtedness once more increasing instead of diminishing. How long is this disgraceful state of things to continue? How long is the growth of the Church to be dwarfed by this lack of funds? Our Bishop and the members of the Mission Board know, that forty thousand dollars a year could be employed in extending our Diocesan Mission Field, raising the stipends of our Missionaries to something like what they ought to be, and in leaving a moderate margin for Domestic and Foreign Missions. Now what is our income at present? I believe I am correct in saying, only about one third of that amount. Many plans have been tried to increase the funds most of them practically successful for a time and only for a time, and then we have had to deplore lamentable failure. Now, we have a Diocesan branch of the "Society of the Treasury of God," a society to promote the Scriptural plan of Systematic and Proportionate Giving "as God has prospered us those who have adopted it and therefore speak from experience, are convinced themselves, and assure us that if generally practised by our people, ample means would be provided for "lengthening our cords and strengthening our stakes," and yet the great body of our clergy and laity look on passively and idly, if not with contempt, on the efforts of a few, mostly of the

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