"Father, not My will, but Thine be done." Thy way, O Lord! Thy way-not mine! Although opprest, For smoother, sunnier paths I pine, Thy way is best.

Though crossing thirsty descris drear, Or mountain's crest; Although I faint with toll and fear, Thy way is bost.

Though not one open door befriend The passingquest; Though night its darkest terrors lend, thy way is bost.

So aseming wild without a plan, Now east, now west, Joys born and slain, bopes blighted, can Thy way is best.

My soul by grief seems not to be More pure and blest; Alas! I cannot, cannot see Thy way is best.

I cannot see—on every hand By anguish prest, In vain I try to understand Thy way is bost. But I believe-Thy life and death,

Thy love attest, And every promise clearly saith-'Thy way is best." I cannot see-but I believe;

If heavenly rest
Is reached by roads where most I grieve,

NOTHING BUT LEAVES. BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

Jesus was on His way from Bethany to Jerusalem—"hungry." He espied a fig-tree afar off, well laden with leaves. As that tree puts forth its fruit in advance of its folinge—when a man should discover leaves on it he would, of courre, expect to find figs. The successor having already appeared, he would look for the forerunner.

Jesus hastens to the tree which had telegraphed to Him already that it was in bearing condition; and lo, "He found nothing but leaves!" Forthwith He dooms it to perpetual barrenness. "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever!" The deceitful tree thus cursed of its Owner, withered down to its very roots.

Here is a parable for the close of the year. It is full of tender and touching solemnity to thousands of our readers, who may be waiting for a word in season for their souls. This parable from history teaches us the worthlessnes of religious promises that are never ful-filled, and the guilt of appearing to be fruit-bearers when the eye of God sees "nothing but leaves."

There is no sin promises. Cherry trees must issue their white and fragrant "promissory notes" in May, or there would be no payment of delicious fruit at the end of the allotted sixty days. God makes precious promises to us; and a converted heart is only in the line of duty when it makes a solemn promise, or covenant, to the Church and its Head Christ Jesus. There is no sin in a Church-covenant honestly made. The sin is in breaking it.

How full of leaves was the plausible fig-tree on the road to Bethany! How profuse of promises is many a young professor, as he stands up laden with the follinge on which the dow-drops of hope are glistening! How much the pastor expects from him. He makes no xeserve when he covenants to "consecrate himself, all that he is, and all that he has, to the service of his Redeemer.' As many a reader of this article sees this solemn sentence, it sends a pang to their hearts. That was their promise. They once put forth just such 'leaves' before their Master's eye, and before the eyes of men, and led them to expect an abundance of fruit. For a time the glossy leaves of profession made a fair show. But when the novelty of a new position had worn off, and that time of reaction came which always follows a strong mental excitement, then the yoke began to gall the conscience, and every religious duty became an irksome drudg-ery. The Cross lost its charm; prayer lost its power; the Word of God lost its attraction; the very name of Jesus lost its hold; and church-membership be-came a hateful mask which its owner was ashamed to wear, and yet afraid to fling away. Before the world, the figtree still bore leaves; but beneath them was utter barrenness.

My backsliding friend this tells the sad story of your past year's life. As you look back over the barren year now closing, you find nothing but leaves. Your name is still on a chur h-record, but this fruitless, wasted year has no "record on high." Out of all the three hundred and sixty days that God has given you, not one has been passed with Christ; not one is marked with "a white stone" of fidelity. Instead of a sheaf, you have not gathered a single spear. Instead of leading others to Christ, you have not even followed Him yourself. Instead of growing in grace, you have lost even the self-respect which a false life always forfeits. The past is past. Fold up the page of this dead, barren, wasted year, and write on it the bitter inscription "Nothing but leaves."

Will you bear with a few plain truths even though they have a sharp edge? You need them, and they are spoken in love. The simple fact is that you are

"backsliders in heart." The best evidence of this assertion is that you do not feel as you once felt, you do not do what you once did, you do not enjoy what you once enjoyed, you do not pray as you once prayed, and you do not live as you did in the days of your first love. You are off the track; and are on a track that leads away from heaven. You are more intent on making money, or in pleasure-hunting, or in pushing up into social promotions than you are in serving God, or in trying to save sinners from hell. You would blush if you attempted to ask an impenitent sinner to become what you profess to be! Your world self-seeking have only been a climb up to that dizzy "mast-head" from which you may be flung off the farther into the yawning sea. If you confess your sins to God, you still cling to them. And if you dealt as faithlessly with your fellow-men, as you deal with your Lord, your note or your word would not be taken by a solitary person for a moment! While you live thus, you can have no peace of conscience. While you live thus, neither the Church nor the world fully trusts you; for you once left the world to join the Church, and then slipped away from the very fellowship which you still professs to tellowship which you still profess to hold. While you live so, you are nullifying your pastor's labours, and voting deliberately against a revival of religion in your church. Nor are you yielding "nothing but leaves," but they are the brown, withered, worthless leaves, such as the wintry winds are now whirling through the forests.

> "Nothing but leaves; the Spirit grieves Over a wasted life; Sin committed while conscience slept, Promises made, but never kept, Idle words for earnest deeds-Nothing but leaves!

through the forests.

And shall we meet the Master so, Bearing our withored leaves?
The Saviour looks for perfect fruit— We stand before Him ashaned and mute Waiting that word He breathes— Nothing but leares !"

Such are the sad thoughts and sor owful self-reproaches that are troubling the spirits of many professed Christians as they review the year now closing They admit that they have backslidden from their "first love," and have borne no fruit to their Master's glory. But the best repentance for sin is to forsake it; and the only amends that can be made for neglected duties is to resume them and perform them at once. Do not stop, then, my brother, with sighing and sorrowing over the lost year that is just going with its accounts to God. Iny hold of the incoming year by the forelock, and begin it with a new consecration of yourself to Jesus. Go back to that deserted place of prayer. Put on the armour afresh-humbled, yet hopeful. Seek such a reconversion as Peter had when he came out of Pilate's garden weeping, but forgiven. Make for yourself a "happy new year" by commencing a new life! "This buttle is lost," said one of his Marshals to Napoleon, "but there is time enough before sundown to fight another and win it." The opening year calls us to new resolutions, new hopes, and new consecrations. It has glorious revivals in store for us, if we will but resolve with God's help—to cover with golden fruit the boughs that have been bearing nothing but leaves!—N. Y. Evangelist.

## ON THE DOWN GRADE.

An old Colifornia stage-driver was on his death-bed. His eyes were closed. His hands were cold. He was rapidly replied: "Im on the down grade, and I can't reach the brake."

1. Death comes to all. No will-power of man can resist it. After the most faithful effort to reach the hights ot middle life; after the steadiest pressure on the "brakes," to ease the descent to death, there comes a moment when the foot refuses to obey the will, when the brake" slips from our hold, and we glide down to our doom of death. This is invariable and unavoidable.

2. The tendency of sin is downward It sweeps the soul on with a swift cur-Sin runs on a down grade all the rent. The descent may be slow, and at first imperceptible, but is sure, and at every step the downward inclination increases, and the movement becomes more rapid. It is very deceptive, often delightful; but, unarrested, it is damn-

ing. How terrible to find one self on the "down grade" at the end of life! 8. The hold upon the "brake " lost! How terrible! The frantic steeds press on. The unlightened load pushes upon them. The deep chasm yawns now on this side, now on that. The stagercels. The passengers shrick out in the agony of fear, and then of despair. Convulsively the driver reaches after the lost brake. It is in vain. Too late! The speed of this chariot of death cannot be checked. The ruin is irretrievable. Habit is master now. Passion is master now. The will is demoralized Hope is gone. Strength is gone. Time wasted, returns no more. Down, down, down. A cry! a deep darkness! Silence!—

DR. GUTHRIE CLERICAL ON

INCOMES. The Rev. Dr. Guthrie presided at the annual meeting in Glasgow, on the 22nd ult., of the Society for the Benefit of the Sons and Daughters of those Minimum and Minimum of the English of isters and Missionaries of the Free Church of Scotland whose circumstances prevent them from giving their children an education befitting a clergy-man's family. The report read showed that the income for the year amounted to £1,454, and that 180 applicants had received grants, the average sum given to each being £11 8s. 8d. After referring to the remarkable success which had attended all the great organizations of the Free Church since her severance from the State, now possessing an annual revenue of above £400,000, with three theological colleges, with a staff of missionaries occupying the high places of the field in the three Presidencies of India and Africa, with stations planted along the Mediterranean from the Rock of Gibraltar to the Bay of Naples, not to speak of her schools at home planted in the poorest and sparsest as well as in the richest and most densely peopled district, the Rev. Dr. said she had her Sustenation Fund which, like a great central heart, sends its blood and nutriment to the most distant extremities of the country. No wonder that the lessons of her history had shaped the course of statesmen, and that other Churches had been ready to borrow her machinery. Much, however, as she had done, she had before her work as regarded the emoluments of her ministers, for they were not adequate to the necessities of their position. This is, however, he continued to say, a truth that applies to other Christian bodies than our own, and the evil of which in some instances presses even more hardly and heavily on State endowed Churches than it does on us. Our pre-Disruption ministers, for example, have enjoyed larger incomes than we find ministers holding the position of parish ministers in Scotland. And, then, we have nothing corresponding to what you will find in the State endowed Church of Englandmen "passing rich on £40 a year"gentlemen and clergymen of whom some years ago, in the diocese of Worcester, there were £200 that had not more than £100 a year—of whom, in the diocese of Carlisle some years ago, half that sum was the whole hvings of the half of

the whole clergy in the diocese. I know somewhat of the hardships of a minister's position, and I speak frankly because I am in a position to do so more than many of my brethren. Formally and nominally minister of St. John's Edinburgh, I receive nothing from its funds, and beyond the Sustenation Fund I receive nothing from the I'rec Church. By the bounty of a generous public and the resources of my own pen, I live. I feel on that very account all the more bound to speak for my brethren. They cannot clamour like the Irish beggar. In fact, I think they err in having too much delicacy. Delicacy is all very well, but the interests of their families, and the interests of religion, and the interests of Christ's kingdom, are not to be sacrificed to delicacy. You may say there is moral cowardice in that case, that there is pusillanimity. Well, I don't deny but to some extent there is. It were far better that a minister should set the matter plainly before those by whom he has a right to be comfortably maintamed-state the matter frankly and reaching the "station" at the end of plainly to his people—than be harassed his "run" of lite. A friend standing with pecuniary cares and carry a load by observed that the dying man was of anxiety on his spirit, unfitting himmoving his right foot with a sort of convulsive jerk, and said to him: "What's debt, getting into the Bankruptey the matter?" The dying stage-driver court, and getting friends to raise subscriptions to inquidate his obligations, and having the prospect before him when he dies of having his wife and children thrown on public charity. I am not astenished at worldly people, more formal professors, who think they do their duty when they go to church Sunday after Sunday taking no interest in their minister's comfort. But I do stand astonished when I find that pious people, leaves of Leaves (their standard of them.

lovers of Jesus Christ, man, of them take so little interest in regard to the comfort and condition of their ministers. I have asked such people, What is your minister's stipend? but they know no more about it than the man in the moon, and they give themselves no concern about the matter. Now, I say that is not as things should be. People ought to take into account the very increase of household expenses-they ought to take into account that the price of provisions has increased to nearly double what it was many years ago—they ought to take into account the large increase on the wages and resources of the other classes of society. But as if they were in profound ignorance of all that, in many cases they leave their ministers at the old mark, with the old sum of money, that won't command more than half what it once did. Why should not the minister rise with the rising pro-sperity of the country? But, worse than that, the prosperity of the country is his ruin. While household servants, tradepeople, postmen, policemen, and even scavengers are getting a rise in wages, the minister is bound down to

the old sum of money, and thereby is worse off than ever he was before. Now, these things ought to be remedied. believe in many cases it is true, as the poet sings, that more evil is wrought by want of thought than want of heart; and I think there are better days coming, that the tide of Christian liberality is rising—and rising rapidily. I look forward to the day, at no distant period, I may not live to see it—it is not likely I shall-but I think I see the dawn of a better day, when the pulpit shall be no longer the only profession that is doomed to poverty. I do not ask great things for my brethren, but I ask that they should enjoy the common comforts that they should be, as far as possible, relieved from the pecuniary cares of life. I do not desire that ministers should roll in wealth. I do not like to see them like the rich man in the parable, or a cardinal at Rome, clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day. I stand here for them, and in their name offer the prayer of Agar—I address it to God—I address it to the people—"Give me neither poverty nor riches," but take poverty away with its forbidding aspect. And I want that removed that the finest talent and and genius of the country may grace its pulpits, and that the energy which many a pious layman now carries to business may be consecrated to the highest of all businesses — to the preaching of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. I trust that day is coming—may God speed it on; and how were it he ped and hastened on if the prophecies of Tyre, whose merchants and traffickers, like your own, were among the honourable of the earth, if these prophecies were fulfilled in our country—"And her mer-chandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord; it shall not be treasured or laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently and for durable clothing.

## ILLUSTRATIONS AND FIGURES OF SPEECH.

Blackwood's Magazine says, in an article on "Illustration:"—

"Perhaps there is no intellectual gift that conveys a greater sense of power than that of ready and felicitous illustration, or one that wins its possessor a more undisputed pre-eminence. It is one of those points on which it may be said that all people know themselves, and are forced to acknowledge a superior. A man may talk nonsense and not know it, or write commonplace in full persuasion that he is original, or uphold his fallacies against the conclusions of the ablest logician; but he cannot help knowing when he is n hand at an illus-

It adds: "When we say that most men are without the gift in question, it is obvious that we mean of original illustration. Only a poet could first invest Time with wings; but we talk of the flight of time now without pretending to any share of his gift. There are certain figures incorporated in the language which we cannot speak without using. We are all poetical by proxy."

Of the object of illustration: "Its serious office is to help along an abstract argument, to lighten and facilitate the discussion of grave topics, to administer a fillip to infirm attention, and arrest a straggling wayward faucy. Illustations don't prove a point, but they help us to tide over the labour of proof, and sweeten the extreme effort to most men of steady thought. Of all gifts this secures readers for weighty and toilsome questions on morals, politics, and religion; and is the only legitimate method of lightening these, except, indeed, extreme severity of the topic under treatment."

Figures are out of place when used evidently as a mero embellishment:

"When authors insert metaphor as an ornament, which is the way many people view it, it does not deserve to be read. A really happy metaphor is part and parcel of the work, and ought no more to be regarded as a superfluity than a child's golden tresses, on the ground that it can live in health with-

out them. "The simile that lives is of the essence of the page where it is enshrined, coeval with the matter it illuminates, or at least flashing upon the author while he still muses upon what he has writ-

## HIGH RATES OF INTEREST.

With a view of indicating plainly the great difficulty on the part of boorowers paying a high rate of interest, we ask a careful consideration of the increase of capital invested at the various rates of interest, as set forth in the following statement:

If one dollar be invested, and the interest added to the principal annually, at the rate named, we shall have the following result as the accumulation of 100 years :

100 years :

One dollar, 100 years at 1 per cent...

do do 3 do ...

do do 6 do ...

do do 8 do ...

do do 9 de ...

do do 10 do ...

do do 12 do ...

do do 15 do ...

do do 6 18 do ...

do do 18 do ...

THE DEACON'S SERMON

From the deacon's standpoint the minister's salary was large, indeed "en-ormous," as the deacon used to say. In point of fact, it was very moderate, being only \$450 a year, and \$50 of that to be taken in wood. But we must look at it from the deacon's point of view.

He lived upon and cultivated a farm that furnished him and his family almost an entire living. When they wanted groceries, or any kind of store "goods," he would make a trade of butter and eggs, and supply their wants. This left him but very little to sell for each, and consequently the good deacon handled but little actual money from one year's end to the other. Two hundred dollars, and sometimes fifty or seventy-five more, was all the real cash the deacon saw in the year, and, his necessities not requiring this much, he usually had a considerable sum to his credit at the bank. How his minister, with not a large family, could spend four hundred dollars in cash every year, was more than he could possibly comprehend. "There must be," he thought, "great extrava-gance somewhere."

Scratching his head in a meditative sort of way, he went over to the "store," where he found a willing crowd to listen to his "views." In his opinion, the minister did not earn his money. "What does he do, any way?" he said, addressing a neighbour who sat on a box amusing himself by tossing up in his hand a couple of beans. "Most of the time he wears his best clothes and goes around a-visiting on the people, ataking tea with the women, and a havin' a good time, while me and you is hard a-workin'.'

The men of the beans nodded his head and flung the beans more assidu-ously, as though they had something to do with the work referred to by the deacon.

"And then as to preachin'—I'd like to know what there is in that?" he continued. "If a man couldn't write in half a day enough to read half an hour on, why I'd think he'd better quit the business, wouldn't you?" The the business, wouldn't you?" The thrower of beans not being disposed to take issue with the deacon, he continued, "Now, I don't set up pretensions to be smarter than most folks, but if I can't write with this very hand" (holding out a hand that did not look as though it had been goven up with any special reference to helding a pen), "as good a sermon in half a day as the minister preaches to us, I'll quit being a deacon—and I'll preach it, too, in the church, if he'd give me a chance."

This last remark, in the course of time, got around to the minister's ears, and he determined at the first opportunity to give the deacon a chance to try his "gifts."

This soon occurred. Only a few weeks after the conversation referred to, it happened that the minister was called to be absent from home for a Sabbath. So going over to the deacon's house early on Monday morning, he stated to him the necessities of the case, and insisted that he should prepare a sermon and preach in the pulpit the following Sabbath.

A view of the deacon's face that moment would have been highly amusing. The first slight tinge of surprise soon give way to an expression of pride, confidence, and triumph most refreshing to contemplate. Laying hold of the lower of two buttons that held his vest together, he commenced twisting at itas was his custom when labouring under great mental excitement—and replied: hightening these, except, indeed, externed neatness and precision of expression, which can for a time dispense with all ornament or alleviation whatever, to the ornament or alleviation whatever, the ornament or alleviation where the ornament or alleviation where the ornament of the ornament or alleviation where the ornament of the ornament or alleviation where the ornament of the ornament of the ornament or alleviation where the ornament of the orn best I can." And then he added, after a moment's hesitation, "I ham't got the books. I suppose you will let me into your study to write-I'll go home for dinner."
"Oh, certainly," replied the dominic,

hardly able to suppress a slight twinkle in his eyes, "and my wife will be pleased to have you take dinner and supper, too, with her, if you should not get through before mealtime."

"Very good," said the deacon; "I'll go over as soon as I get my morning chores done up."

An hour later, but yet early in the morning, found the deacon in the minister's study proparing for work. He had left word at home to keep some dinner for him, as he might possibly not get his sermon written so soon as he expected, but still expressed the opinion that as he only had to write enough to keep him reading half an hour, he would, if he had no bad luck,

get through by noon.

To give the deacon the credit due him, it must be said that he did have, with all his failings, a fountain of good sense in his mind, and was a pretty good judge of what a sermon ought to

The minister's good wife had pre-pared everything to his hand. She had placed paper and ink on the table, to-gether with a Bible, Cruden's Concordance, and a most formidable pile of com-

mentaries. The deacon proceeded at once to business. He stood a moment to take a