

adore the perfect goodness and to bow before the prerogatives of the Almighty. How much must God often do to us; through what discipline of disappointment, loss, and sorrow must He put us, before the heart becomes truly humble and resigned to His will! It is surely very instructive that the primary meaning of the word translated "meek," is, "afflicted." The term employed in the passage before us means properly, suffering, depressed; as if to show that in most cases, only when God has dealt with our hard natures in the way of judgment or chastisement, are their high thoughts and lofty imaginations brought down, and the spirit rendered entirely humble and submissive.

The meek, thus, are the humble in heart, the poor in spirit, the contrite. The statement made respecting them is, that the Lord "will beautify them with salvation." The underlying truth here is, that He will bestow on them salvation. It is one to which numerous passages bear testimony. "Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." "The Lord preserveth the simple;" "God saves the meek." The key of the kingdom is in the hands of the humble. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." God pardons those who are penitent. He justifies those who condemn themselves. He "giveth grace to the humble." He exalts them of low degree. He visits the lowly with salvation. He works deliverance for those who, renouncing every other confidence, look only to Him. He saves those who exercise faith; but what is faith, but meekness, reclining where it has found a worthy ground of confidence!

"God saves the meek." This is the implied or underlying truth in the text. The main truth, however, which the text asserts is, that God not only saves the meek, but beautifies them in saving them; that He not only gives grace to the humble, but in giving them grace He renders them lovely and attractive; that the salvation which is of God becomes in some way the ornament of the man on whom it is bestowed.

In seeking to estimate the constituents of the beauty of which the Psalmist speaks, one must begin with forgiveness. The process of beautifying the meek may be said to commence in pardoning their sins. All sin is deformity. It is not only a wrong against God, and an injury to the man himself who commits it; it is an evil and unsightly thing, abominable to God and to all pure beings. There is no room to speak of beauty so long as the life is chargeable therewith. In pardon, God sets the man free from it. Forgiveness is not simply release from guilt and from punishment; it is release from the sin itself, which draws after it guilt and which deserves punishment. The sinner is not only delivered from wrath, yea, restored to favour, he is also cleansed. His sin itself is cancelled, blotted out by Him who has the sole and exclusive power to do this. And thus the sinner forgiven is no longer a proper object of aversion. That in him which awoke repulsion has been removed. If, in the act of forgiveness, positive beauty is not imparted, at least actual defilement is taken away, and the proper and indispensable foundation laid for those graces in which the soul is to be arrayed. The more deep and spiritual our conception of what forgiveness is, the more closely shall we discover it to be allied with that beauty with which God clothes the meek.

But if forgiveness is the commencement, it is the commencement only, of that process of beautifying the meek to which the text refers. Other and more positive adornments follow. The forgiven are also sanctified. "The washing of regeneration" is accompanied by "the renewing of the Holy Ghost." The image of God is restored to the soul. "The new man is put on, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." The believer becomes a new creature in Jesus Christ. His life is brought under the influence of new motives, is informed by a new spirit, and is marked by new and heavenlier qualities. The grace of God, in bringing salvation to him, teaches him to "live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world." He is made a participant of the Spirit of God, and "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith." The salvation that is of God carries with it such re-

sults as these, or rather, they form its very essence; and just because of this is the soul beautified in being saved, are the meek clothed with beauty in being clothed with the garments of salvation. The graces which are produced in them, patience, temperance, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity; the pure aim, the upright life, the heavenly mind, the gentle and tender heart, are not only of inestimable value, they are supremely beautiful. They at once accredit and adorn the discipleship on which they are stamped. He whose work they are does more than secure the safety of those in whom they are found. He invests them with charms, which are not the less real that they can be fully appreciated only by the spiritually-minded or the pure in heart. In other words, He beautifies the meek in the very act of saving them.

I have said nothing as yet of the sentiments which are awakened in the breasts of the saved; the sentiment of gratitude for the redemption which has been wrought, and at so great a cost; the peace, sometimes rising into joy, with which the soul is filled as it contemplates the perfection of the Saviour's sacrifice, the hope to which it is begotten by His resurrection from the dead, the love by which it is inspired not only to the Lord, but to all who are His. But no proper estimate can be formed of the beauty which God puts on the meek, while these are overlooked. These sentiments, indeed, so unmistakably divine in their origination and character, may be said to do for the Christian life in general what the sunlight does for the ordinary landscape, lending a new charm to rock and tree and river, glorifying its commonest features. The whole character is irradiated by their heavenly glow. Than the devotion of the saved to Him who redeemed them with His blood; than the love they bear to those who share in this redemption; than the peace, so deep and holy, of the soul which has come to rest beneath the cross; than its joy, so bright, yet so free from boisterous excitement, when it gives itself to Christ's service and feels assured of His favour; than the hope of a heaven of which He shall be the chief attraction;—than these, human life has nothing more beautiful to show—nothing, indeed, half so beautiful. But they are, in one measure or another, the common attainments of the saved. It is once more true, then, that God beautifies the meek with salvation.

We see the work only in process of accomplishment here, even in the case of the most advanced. Heaven will first witness its completion. The salvation of the meek will be first perfected when they enter into the presence of their Lord, and with and through the perfecting of their salvation shall come the perfecting of the beauty of their characters and persons. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him." Then, first, when found in that likeness—when, having "borne the image of the earthly," they "bear the image of the heavenly"—when, having laid aside forever the stained raiments of earth, they receive the vesture of heaven and join the company of the white-robed, will the words come to their full meaning, "He will beautify the meek with salvation."

It has not escaped your notice that in beautifying the meek God lends beauty to beauty. There is no incongruity here between object and embellishment such as we often see in human life, but, on the contrary, the most perfect harmony, as when God sows glittering stars in the deep, clear vault of heaven, or scatters in profusion flowers of many hues in the green meadow. The adornment, moreover, is of no external kind. It forms a part of the man. It is inseparable from his character. It seems brought out rather than put on; resembling the vesture of green with which spring clothes field and forest, rather than the snowy robe in which winter wraps all things. Even when it assumes its highest character—when what is grace here develops into glory there, it is "the glory which shall be revealed in us."

To no one who was acquainted with the deceased will it be matter of surprise that, called to speak respecting him, the thoughts of the preacher have turned to the theme which has been now discussed. Duncan McColl was deeply pious, and piety in him was preeminently beautiful. There was a captivating charm about it such as all confess in the smile of infancy, or the calm, benevolent face of age. This was indeed its outstanding feature. The story of his brief life is soon told, and it may be told perhaps as appropriately here in this church with which he had so long a connection as anywhere else. He was born in the town-

ship of Westminster in 1853, of pious parents, one of whom laboured for many years and with great acceptance as a catechist in the neighbouring districts; the other is spared to mourn his loss. Having received such elementary instruction near his home as the public school could give him, he went at thirteen years of age to London, and for the next four years attended the High School of that city. He then taught for a period of one year and nine months, continuing at the same time his preparation for the University of Toronto, which he entered as a second year's student in October, 1873. At an early period in his University course his health threatened to give way. Attendance in classes was discontinued for a time, and the former and loved but exhausting work of teaching was resumed, this time in the city of Hamilton. Returning to Toronto, he completed his literary studies in the spring of 1878 with much honour, though without the distinctions which would have been readily his, had he possessed a frame capable of the strain of more continuous exertion. Entering Knox College, to the professors and students of which he was greatly endeared, and discharging with marked fidelity and success the duties of classical tutor in the institution for the last two sessions of his course, he completed his theological studies in the spring of 1881, and left the city in a state of health which excited the alarm of his friends, and which he himself knew to be extremely threatening. By the advice of physicians, he went in July to Wyoming and Colorado, and for a time he seemed to receive benefit from the drier and more bracing atmosphere of that country. But the benefit was only partial and temporary. He returned to Canada in the early part of January, and after nine weeks of little pain, but of daily increasing weakness, receiving throughout the attention of those to whom he was very dear, he passed peacefully away on the morning of Sabbath, the 19th of March.

Passing from the outward facts of his life, and coming to its inward character, it appears that he was one of those in whose case religious life begins in very early years. Before he was ten years of age, the books which appeal to that life and nourish it were favourites with him. Before leaving London he made public profession of his faith in Christ, under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Scott, for whom he cherished a warm and lasting regard. In October, 1873, he joined the membership of this congregation, and, with the exception of a brief interval spent in Hamilton, he continued to be connected with it until God called him to a purer fellowship. In the earlier years he was a regular attendant on the Bible-class, and to the last of his residence in this city he was an earnest and devout worshipper. Most of the students of our Church, as you know, employ the summer months in supplying with ordinances districts which do not possess settled pastors. These months, in the case of the deceased, should probably have been kept for recreation. But the people in more than one Mission station, coming to know his worth, urged him to give them the benefit of his services. In this way he laboured for three months with much zeal and with the very best results in London East, and on another occasion for a similar or perhaps longer period in a suburb of our city. It was his ambition, almost his passion, to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and as if to seize and enjoy, for however brief a period, a gratification of which death was threatening to rob him, he undertook in the month of November last to give supply to the vacant congregation of Fort Collins, in Colorado. He preached his last sermon to it on the 1st of January. A minister of our Church, the Rev. Dr. Smith, of Kingston, going there soon after he had left, bears testimony to the wonderful effect produced on a population far from impressible by that less than two months' ministry. He spoke doubtless as a dying man. His message was one the preciousness of which he felt in every fibre of his being, and he spoke it with such tenderness and winning power that the most indifferent were impressed as they had never been before. He loved life; he had more cause than many to love it, for he had a keen appreciation of its more refined pleasures. There is no reason to think that, any more than others, he was able to accept the alternative of death without some inward conflict. This over, he bowed with entire submission to what was seen to be the will of God. Those who visited him in the last weeks of his life, if Christian, were cheered by blessed testimonies to the power of the Gospel; if indifferent and unbelieving, were most