

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit

A NEW CREATION.

A Sermon

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DELIVERED BY

C. H. SPURGEON,

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“He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new.”—
Revelation xxi. 5.

MEN generally venerate antiquity. It were hard to say which has the stronger power over the human mind—antiquity or novelty. While men will frequently dote upon the old, they are most easily dazzled by the new. Anything new has at least one attraction. Restless spirits consider that the new must be better than the old. Though often disappointed, they are still ready to be caught by the same bait, and, like the Athenians of Mars Hill, spend their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing. And as for ourselves, dear friends, mournfully as we sometimes think of the flight of time, we are wont cheerfully to look out upon the new epochs as they begin to dawn upon us. If our calendar suggests some dismal memories in the past, our calculation forestals some happier prospects in the future. And it will sometimes happen that we leave so much anxiety, adversity, and chastisement behind us, that it is a relief to hope that the tide has turned, and that a course of comfort, prosperity, and mercy lies before us. One weeps over the past and the lost. I suppose the best of men must do so at times. I am sure those of us who are not the best, feel often constrained to pour out some such a lamentation as this:—

“Much of our time has run to waste;
Our sins, how great the sum!
Lord, give us pardon for the past,
And strength for days to come.”

I do not know but it is sometimes as well, when one has been plunged in sorrow, or feels ashamed of his past life—after having

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regretted that which is bygone and repented of it, and sorrowed over it—to feel as if he breathed another atmosphere, and had started on a fresh career. Having thrown away the old sword, he is now about to see what he can do with the new: having put off an old garment, he is desirous to walk more worthily of his vocation with fresh ones that are provided for him. Perhaps the thought of freshness, the fact of new time having dawned on our path, may be a little help to those of us who are dull and heavy, and we may be stirred up to action, or, if not to action, it may awaken earnest hope that the infusion of a new start into our lives, new vigour instead of the old lethargy, new love instead of the old lukewarmness, new zeal instead of the old deathlikeness; new, pertinacious, persevering industry for Christ, instead of the old idleness, may result. God grant that it may be so!

Looking at the text in this light, I think it speaks to everyone here present—Would you begin anew, lo, there is one who can help you to do so! From the throne where sits the once crucified but now glorified Saviour, there comes a whisper of hope to each and every soul who would be made new, and would begin life anew. “Behold I make all things new.” In trying to bring out the thoughts contained in this exclamation from the throne, from the Emperor of the Universe, from the court of the King of Kings, we shall first speak, very briefly, *of the new creation*; secondly, *we should bid you adore the great Regenerator*; and, in the third place, we shall ask you to *behold with attention the fact before you, with a view of receiving benefit from it*. Observe the text speaks of:—

I. A NEW CREATION.

“I make.” That is a divine word. “I make *all things*.” That, also, is divine. “I make all things *new*.” That seems to reach the third stage, wherein the thrice holy God appears glorious in the highest degree. “I make all things new.” This our Lord Jesus Christ has done upon the greatest scale. We must view his purpose. It is the purpose and intention of the Lord Jesus to make this world entirely new. You recollect how it was made at first—pure and perfect. It sang with its sister-spheres the song of joy and reverence. It was a fair world, full of everything that was lovely, beautiful, happy, holy. And if we might be permitted to dream for a moment of what it would have been if it had continued as God created it, one might fancy what a blessed world it would be at this moment. Had it possessed a teeming population like its present one, and if, one by one, those godly ones had been caught away, like Elijah, without knowing death, to be succeeded by pious descendants—oh! what a blessed world it would have been! A world where every man would have been a priest, and every house a temple, and every garment a vestment, and every meal a sacrifice, and every place holiness to the Lord, for the tabernacle of God would have been among them, and God himself would have dwelt among them! What songs would have hailed the rising of the sun—the birds of paradise carolling on every hill and in every dale their Maker’s

praise! What songs would have ushered in the stillness of the night! Ay, and angels, hovering over this fair world, would oft have heard the strain of joy breaking the silence of midnight, as glad and pure hearts beheld the eyes of the Creator beaming down upon them from the stars which stud the vault of heaven. But there came a serpent, and his craft spoiled it all. He whispered into the ears of mother Eve; she fell, and we fell with her, and what a world this now is! If a man walks about in it with his eyes open, he will see it to be a horrible sphere. I do not mean that its rivers, its lakes, its valleys, its mountains are repulsive. Nay, it is a world fit for angels, naturally; but it is a horrible world morally. As I walked the other day down the streets of Paris, and saw the soldiers with their pretty dresses, and the knives and forks which they carried with them to carve men and make a meal for death, I could not help thinking—this is a pretty world, this is. Only let one man lift his finger, and a hundred thousand men are ready to meet a hundred thousand other men, all intent upon doing—what? Why, upon cutting each other's throats, upon tearing out each other's bleeding hearts, and wading up to their knees in each other's gore, till the ditches be full of blood, horses and men all mingled, and left to be food for dogs and for carrion crows. And then the victors on either side in the fray, return, and beat the drums, and sound the trumpets, and say, "Glory! glory! see what we have done." Devils could not be worse than men when their passions are let loose. Dogs would scarce tear each other as men do. Men of intellect sit down, and put their fingers to their foreheads, racking their brains to find out new ways of using gunpowder, and shot, and shell, so as to be able to blow twenty thousand souls into eternity as easily as twenty might be massacred by present appliances. And he is considered a clever man, a patriot, a benefactor of his own nation, who, by dint of genius, can discover some new way of destroying his fellow-creatures. Oh! it is a horrible world, appalling to think of. When God looks at it, I wonder he does not stamp it out, just as you and I do a spark of coal that flies upon our carpet from the fire. It is a dreadful world. But Jesus Christ, who knew that we should never make this world much better, let us do what we would with it, designed from the very first to make a new world of it. Truly, truly, this seems to me to be a glorious purpose. To make a world is something wonderful, but to make a world new is something more wonderful still. When God spake and said, "Let there be light," it was a fiat which showed him to be divine. Yet there was nothing then to resist his will; he had no opponent; he could build as he pleased, and there was none to pluck down. But when Jesus Christ comes to make a new world, there is everything opposed to him. When he saith, "Let there be light," darkness saith, "There shall not be light." When he says, "Let there be order," chaos says, "Nay, I will maintain confusion." When he says, "Let there be holiness, let there be love, let there be truth," the principalities and powers of evil withstand him, and say, "There

shall not be holiness, there shall be sin ; there shall not be love, there shall be hate ; there shall not be truth, there shall be error ; there shall not be the worship of God, there shall be the worship of stocks and stones ; men shall bow down before idols which their own hands have made." And yet, for all that, Jesus Christ, coming in the form of a man, revealing himself as the Son of God, determines to make all things new ; and be assured, brethren and sisters, he will do it. What though he pleases to take his time, and to use humble instrumentalities to effect his purposes, yet do it he will. The day shall come when this world shall be as fair as it was at the primæval Sabbath ; when there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein shall dwell righteousness. The ancient prophecy shall be fulfilled to the letter. God shall dwell among men, peace shall be domiciled on earth, and glory shall be ascribed to God in the highest. This great work of Christ, this grand design of making this old world into a new one, shall be carried into effect.

In order to accomplish this, it hath come to pass that *Christ has made for us a new covenant*. The old covenant was, "Do this and live." That covenant was a sentence of death upon us all. We could not do, therefore we could not live, and so we died. The new covenant has nothing in it contingent upon creature doing, but it bases all its provisions upon Christ having done the work. "I will, and you shall," this is the language of the new covenant. The covenant of law, in which we were weak through the flesh, left us mangled and broken. The covenant of grace reveals God's kindness towards us, and our part thereof has been fulfilled for us by our surety, Christ Jesus. Thus it runs, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more for ever ; a new heart also will I give them, and a right spirit will I put within them." The old world is still under the old covenant of works, and its children perish, for they cannot carry out the conditions of the covenant, they cannot keep God's law, they break it constantly, and they die. But the children of grace are under the new covenant of grace, and through the precious blood, which is the penalty of the old broken covenant, and through the spotless righteousness of Christ, which is the fulfilment and magnifying of the old covenant, the Christian stands secure, and rejoices that he is saved. Christ has thus made his people dwell under a new covenant, instead of under the old one.

In addition to the new covenant, Christ has been pleased to *make us new men*. His saints are "new creatures in Christ Jesus." They have a new nature. God has breathed into them a new life. The Holy Spirit, though the old nature is still there, has been pleased to put within them a new nature. There is now a contending force within them—the old carnal nature inclining to evil, and the new God-given nature panting after perfection. They are new men, "begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." This new nature is moved by new principles. The old nature needed to be awed with threatenings, or bribed with rewards ; the new nature feels the impulse of love. Gratitude

is its mainspring: "We love him because he first loved us." No mercenary motive now stirs the new creature:—

"My God, I love thee not because
I hope for heaven thereby,
Nor yet because who love thee not
Must burn eternally."

I love thee, O my Saviour, because on the cross thou didst bear shame, and spitting, and manifold disgrace for me. New principles stir the new nature which God has given. And this new nature is conscious of new emotions. It loves what once it hated; it hates what once it loved. It finds blight where once it sought for bliss, and finds bliss where once it found nothing but bitterness. It leaps at the sound which was once dull to its ears—the name of a precious Christ. It rejoices in hopes which once seemed idle as dreams. It is filled with a divine enthusiasm which it once rejected as fanatical. It is conscious now of living in a new element, breathing a fresh air, partaking of new food, drinking out of new wells not digged by men or filled from the earth. The man is new—new in principles, and new in emotions.

And now the man is also *new in relationship*. He was an heir to wrath; he is now a child of God. He was a bond-slave; he is now a freeman. He was the Ishmael who dwelt in the wilderness; he is now the Isaac, and dwells with Sarah after the tenor of the new covenant. He rejoices in Christ Jesus, and feasts to the full. He was the citizen of earth once; he is now a citizen of heaven. He once found his all beneath the clouds; but now his all is beyond the stars. He has new relationships. Christ is his brother; God is his father; the angels are his friends; and the despised people of God are his best and nearest kinsfolk. And hence the man has new aspirations. He now pants to glorify God. What cared he about the glory of God once? He now pants to see God; once he would have paid the fare, if it had cost his life, that he might escape from the presence of the Lord. Now he hungers and thirsts after the living God; yea, if his soul had wings, and he could break the fetters of this mortality, he would mount at once to dwell where Jesus is. Dear friends, are you new men? If you are, you understand what it is; if you are not, I know I cannot explain it to you. Oh! to be born again is a great mystery; blessed is the soul that comprehends it! But he that knows it not will never learn it by the lip; he can only know it by the Spirit of God causing him also to be made a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Thus far I have said that the object of Christ was to make a new world, and he began by making a new covenant. Then, through his Spirit, he goes on to make new men under the new covenant, and you will see that by this means *he makes a new society*. Swelling words have been spoken and great attempts taken in hand to renovate society, but you can never renovate society till you have renovated the individual members who compose society. You may

build a brick house, if you please; but, build it as you like, it will be a house of brick upon whatever principles of architecture it may be constructed; not until that brick shall be transformed to marble can you hope to "dwell in marble halls." So men may launch their divers theories, and patent their social inventions, but after they have re-shaped the society of sinners, they will leave it a sinful society still. It is otherwise with Christ. By making new men he makes a new society, which society he calls his "Church." That Church he sends into the world to act upon the rest of mankind. Verily the day will come—whether it shall be at his second advent or before his second advent, I do not know—the day when from the east to the west, and from the north to the south, there shall be a new world as far as men are concerned. There shall be no injustice towards the poor; there shall be no envying of the rich; there shall be no law to make men slaves; there shall be no power to oppress, because there shall be no will to do it. Our Lord Jesus Christ shall put a new heart into earth's kings, and then he shall come himself to take their thrones and their crowns, and to be himself our Universal King, and in his day shall the righteous flourish.

Now I believe the way for us to regard that happy day in which he will make all things new; that happy day when the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, when the sword shall be turned into the sickle, and the spear into the pruning hook—the way for us to regard that day, I think, is not standing with our mouths open expecting it, but by setting to work after the Master's own fashion, seeking to bring it about, to gather out the elect from mankind, to illustrate the gospel practically in our lives, and so to do as Jesus did among the sons of men; promoting light, and peace, and truth, and holiness, and happiness as God may help us.

I wish we had more time to enter fully into this part of the subject. We have not, and, therefore, we must leave it, but may you and I have a part in this new creation! Turning to our second point, I want you to:—

II. ADORE THIS GREAT REGENERATOR.

He says, "Behold I make all things new." Behold him! He is a man dressed in the common garments of the poor! He hath no form nor comeliness, and when you shall see him there is no beauty in him that you should desire him. He has come to make the world new. He has no soldiery, no book of laws, no new philosophy. He had come to make the world new, and to do this he has brought with him—what? Why, *himself*. He spends a life of weariness and sorrow amongst those who despise him, and if you want to know first and foremost how he makes all things new, you must see him sweating great drops of blood in the garden—that is the blood of the new world which he is pouring forth! You must see him bound, scourged, spat upon, led to the accursed tree. While God's wrath for sin is yet unspent, the world cannot be new; but when that

wrath on account of sin is all poured upon the head of the great Substitute, then the world stands in a new relation to God, and it can be a new world. See the Saviour then, in groans and pangs which cannot be described, bearing the curse of God, for he made him to be sin for us, though he knew no sin. The curse fell on him, as it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." It pleased the Father to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; he hath made his soul to be an offering for sin." That dolorous pain, then, of the Master was the world's new-making. It was then and there that the world was born again. No mother's pangs, when she brought forth a man-child, were such as those of Christ when he brought forth the new creation. It was there in the travail of his soul—did you ever catch that idea, *the travail of his soul*?—it was there that the new world was born! "Behold I make all things new" is a mysterious voice from the broken heart of a dying Saviour. From the empty tomb, as he rises, I hear it come in silvery notes, "Behold I make all things new." You must trace the birth of the new creation up to the grave of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the place where the cross stood, and where his body lay.

But the actual operations of new-making the world takes place *through the truth which Christ promulgated*. After the relation of the world to God had been changed by the sufferings of Jesus, the world's thought concerning God came to be changed by the preaching of Jesus. He came and revealed God to man as man had never seen God before. It was through him we learned that "God is love." It was through him that we understood that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It is the preaching of the cross of Jesus that is to make the world new. It is not the philosophies of men, but the wisdom of God which effects the change. In the presence of Christ your philosophies must sink into darkness as stars in the presence of the sun.

And it is also by *the giving of the Holy Ghost*, as the result of the ascension of Christ on high, that the world is made new. Thus he gives power to the ministry. There were three thousand new creations in one day when Peter preached the gospel under the influence of the Holy Spirit. And that blessed Spirit of God is here to-night. Oh! I would that there might be some new creations to-night, that that divine heavenly Spirit would come into some of your souls, and drop there that vital spark of heavenly flame which shall never be quenched, but shall burn brightly in heaven for ever. Wherever the gospel is preached, the Spirit is present in that gospel, and he gives faith to men, gives life to men, and so they are made new, and the new-making thus goes on.

I have not time—though thoughts crowd into my mind—to speak about the way in which Christ thus new-makes the world. It is quite certain that three parts of his history are connected with it. I have only referred to his death, his burial, and his resurrection, but I might go on to speak of his constant and prevalent interces-

sions, for his pleading before the throne is also a part of the mighty operation; nor can I doubt but that his Second Advent will be the bringing out of the top-stone with shoutings of "Grace, grace unto it!" Then shall be fulfilled—finally and exhaustively fulfilled—the saying that is written, "Behold I make all things new." The text begins with "Behold!" and I am going to close with that same note of admiration. I want you to:—

III. BEHOLD AND TO BELIEVE.

Behold, the Lord Jesus is now enthroned in heaven. He it is who makes all things new. Is not this what some of you here present deeply need? If you look within, yourselves will see much to disgust and alarm you. Peradventure, you dare not take stock of yourselves now; you dare not consider where you are, nor what you are, nor whither you are bound. "To speak candidly," you say, "I want reforming." Very likely, but you want a great deal more than mere reformation. I have heard of a being who used habitually to swear, "God mend me!" Somebody said, "Better make a new one." That is the case with full many of you. You are saying, "Well, I will turn over a new leaf." You had better shut the book up altogether, and never turn over any more leaves, for all the pages are alike bad. "Oh! well," says one, "I shall try if I cannot alter." I wish you would try God's altering of you, instead of altering yourselves. "Well, but surely, surely, I may wash and be clean; I will try to make myself as clean as possible?" Yes, yes, that is all very well; but what if you have a corpse in the house? I would have you make it clean, yet that will not make it live. However much you may wash it, it is corrupt still. You may reform yourselves as much as ever you please, all your reformation will be futile; you need more, a great deal more than that. The fact is, you must be made new. Nothing less will do; you must be made new; you must be born again. "Ah!" says one, "if I could be made new, there might be a chance for me." Well now, Christ looks down from this throne in heaven, and he says, "Behold I will make all things new." "Yes," you say, "but he will not make me new." Why not? Does he not say, "I make *all things* new"? "But my heart is as hard as a rock," say you. Well, but he says, "I will make *all things* news," so he can give you a new heart. "Oh! but I am so very stubborn. Aye, aye, but he makes all things new, and he can make you as tender and sensitive as a little child. Oftentimes a grey-headed sinner has looked back to his childhood, and remembered the time when he used to sing his little hymn at his mother's knee, and he has said, "Ah! I have been in many strange places since then, and my heart has got seared and hard; I wish I could get back to what I was then!" Well, you can, you can. Christ can bring you there. Nay, he can bring you to something better than you ever were when those golden ringlets hung so plentifully about that pretty little head of yours, for you were not so innocent then as you now think you were. Christ can make you really pure in heart; he can make

you a new creature, so that you shall be converted and become as a little child. "Oh!" say you, "how can I get it? How can I prepare myself for him?" You do not want to prepare yourself for him. Go to him just as you are; trust him to do it, and he will do it. That is faith, you know—trust, dependence. Canst thou believe that Christ can save thee? Oh! thou canst believe that; well now, wilt thou trust him to save thee? Wilt thou trust him to deliver thee from thy drunkenness, from thine angry temper, thy pride, thy love of self, thy lusts? Dost thou desire to be a new creature in Christ Jesus? If so, that very desire must have come from heaven. I could fain hope that he has already begun the good work in you, and he that begins it will carry it on. Do not be afraid, however bad thy character, or however vicious thy disposition. "Behold," says Christ, "I make all things new." What a wonder it is that a man should ever have a new heart! You know if a lobster loses its claw in a fight it can get a new claw, and that is thought to be very marvellous. It would be very wonderful if men should be able to grow new arms and new legs, but who ever heard of a creature who grew a new heart? You may have seen a bough lopped off a tree, and you may have thought that, perhaps, the tree will sprout again, and there will be a new limb, but who ever heard of old trees getting new sap and a new core? But my Lord and Master, the crucified and exalted Saviour, has given new hearts and new cores; he has put the vital substance into man afresh, and made new creatures of them. I am glad to notice the tear in your eye, when you think on the past, but wipe it away now, and look up to the cross and say:—

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bid'st me come to thee,
O Lamb, O God, I come."

"Oh! make me a new creature!" If you have said that from your heart, you are a new creature, dear brother, and we will rejoice together in this regenerating Saviour.

Let me just say a few words to those of you who love the Lord. You may have some very bad children, or you have some relatives who are going on in sin from bad to worse. I earnestly recommend *you* attentively to consider my text. "Behold," says Christ, "I make all things new." "No, no," says the old father, "I used to pray for my boy; he broke my heart; he brought his mother's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave; but he has gone away, and I have not heard of him for years, and I am almost afraid to wish I ever may hear of him again, for he did seem so reckless, that my only comfort is in trying to forget him." "Yes," says a husband here, "I have prayed for my wife so many times, that I do feel tempted to give it up; it is not likely that I shall ever live to see her saved." Oh! but, brethren and sisters, we do not know; since the Lord saved us, there cannot be any limits as to what he can do.

Look at the text, "Behold I make all things new." I will pray, "Lord, make my children new." You shall pray, "Lord, make my wife new." You godly wives, who have ungodly husbands, you shall pray, "Lord, make our husbands new." You who have dear friends who lie upon your bosom, as you anxiously think of them, pray the Lord Jesus to make them new. When our friends are made new, oh! what a great comfort they are; just as much so as they formerly were a sorrow. The greater the sinner, the greater the joy to loving believers when they see him saved. "Behold," says Christ—I do like that word—"Behold it! Stand and look at it! See how I took the man when he was up to his neck in sin, and made him preach the gospel. Can I not do the same again? Look there and see the dying thief upon the cross, black with a thousand crimes: I washed him and took him to Paradise the same day; what can I not do? Behold I make all things new." Courage, my brethren and sisters. We will not entertain any more doubt about Christ's power to save. Rather, by God's grace, may we henceforth believe more in him, and, according to our faith, so shall it be done unto us. If we can only trust him for those of our friends whose faults seem to us few and light, our little trust will reap little reward; but if we can go with strong faith in a great God, and bring great sinners in our arms, and put them down before this mighty Regenerator of men, and say, "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make them new"; and if we will never cease the pleading till we get the blessing, then we shall see ever-accumulating illustrations of the fact that Jesus makes all things new; and calling up the witnesses of his redeeming power, we shall cry in the ears of a drowsy Church and an incredulous world, "Behold, behold, behold! He makes all things new." The Lord give us to see it. Amen.

Exposition by C. H. Spurgeon.

REVELATION I 1—14.

Verse 1. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:*

Twice is that title used—"servant." This is a revelation to Christ's servants, made first unto his servant John. There is no higher honour under heaven than to be the servant of such a Master. His servants we are this day, and we find in that service perfect freedom and the highest imaginable delight. This, then, is to us.

2-3. *Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.*

It is not said, "Blessed is he that understands the book of Revelation," or else I am afraid very few would come in for that benediction, but "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear," for it is a blessed thing to hear our Father speaking, even when we cannot understand it. When you were a little child, how did you learn to understand your father but by at first hearing him say a great deal which was far above you and out of your reach? I love to read those parts of God's Word which I cannot yet understand, because I remember there are some parts which