

2nd January

Memory verse:

Therefore

**if any man be in Christ,
he is a new creature.**

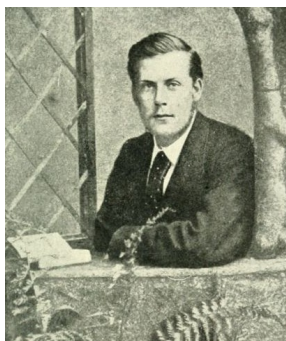
2 Corinthians 5:17.

Information about this text in tomorrow's lesson.

Something to make¹

An attractive wall planner is a very useful thing to make at this time of year. In today's optional resources files you will find some pages (A to I) which can be printed out and glued together to make a large wall chart that form a planner with a space for every day of the year. The file called "key" has the instructions on how to position the other pages in order and how to fill in the titles of the months and the dates. When we first made this chart in our home we headed it "Behold, now is the day of salvation." (II Corinthians 6:2b) but you can choose any appropriate text to write in the space at the top. We used coloured shading to make the chart more useful with a key at the side, e.g. family birthdays were shaded red, holidays yellow, trips and outings green and so on. This helps you build up an at-a-glance picture of the year. You can use the daily spaces to record weather, events, family news or anything you like – even what you have for dinner each day!

A true story to read: A new creature!²



There was once a very rich young man called Frederick Charrington, Fred to his friends. His parents were active members of the Church of England and did much charity work in the slum areas of London's East End where their business was located. They were kind and considerate parents and did the best they could for their children.

Rather than going to Oxford or Cambridge after he finished his school education, Fred decided to travel on the continent to broaden his mind. But before he set off something happened that made a lasting impression on him, although he did not understand it at all at the time. He made friends while staying at Hastings with a young man called Canning, who later inherited the title Lord Garvagh. When he first met Fred, Canning had just come from hearing Lord Radstock³ preach. Filled with enthusiasm, he at once told his new friend all about the meeting, and mentioned particularly John's Gospel chapter three. He said that he believed that he was now a saved man: he had been converted. All this was like nonsense to young Fred. Why on earth should a young aristocrat like Canning go and listen to a Dissenter preach? he wondered – even if the Dissenter was an aristocrat himself.

Fred set off to France, Switzerland and Italy. Then he returned home and settled down to learning how to manage his father's business, for he was the eldest son. The enterprise that made all the family wealth was the great Charrington's brewery⁴ on the Mile End Road. It was a vast brewery works and the entrance gate and offices remain today. You can see them in the picture.



¹ Adapted from a project on the *Mothers Companion* flashdrive. Available from <https://motherscompanion.weebly.com>

² Information from *the Great Acceptance* by Guy Thorne (London 1913) and other sources.

³ See the lesson for 8th December yet to come.

Another continental tour followed, this time with his family and he met and made friends with another young Englishman, William Rainsford. The two got on so well together that when they returned to England Fred asked William come with him to his home. What follows can be told in Fred's own words:

At the time I was living a very moral life, and not without some interest in eternal things, but my only belief and trust was in the *Book of Common Prayer*, and especially the statement, "Wherein I was made a member of Christ, the Child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven."⁵ When we got to my father's home, to my great astonishment Rainsford suddenly said, "I feel very guilty, we have travelled together all the way over the Continent, and enjoyed ourselves very much, but I have never spoken to you about your soul. The fact is, I am a Christian, but I have spent the winter in the South of France for my health, and I have been in very worldly society; but now that I have got back to old England, these things seem to rise in my mind, and I feel that I must ask you if you are saved." I said, "Really, Rainsford, we have had a very good time on the Continent, and I think it is a very great pity that you bring up such a debatable subject just now." He said, "I only will ask you to do one thing, and that is: when I am gone you will promise me to read through the third chapter of St. John's Gospel." I promised him I would, and accordingly the next night, while smoking a pipe before I went to bed, I read the third chapter of St. John, and as I read it I thought to myself, "This is a very curious thing: here are two men, my new friend Rainsford, and my old friend Lord Garvagh, both say the same thing, that they are 'saved';" and as I read the chapter, Light came into my soul, and as I came to the words, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life' I realised that I, too, possessed the 'eternal life.'"

Fred's parents supported him and he began working with the early ragged schools, later championed by Lord Shaftesbury, for destitute and very poor lads in the slums round the Mile End road. But then came another event that changed his life. He was walking from the brewery to a slum where he and another worker were to hold an evangelistic meeting over an old stable and he passed a pub called The Rising Sun. He explained later:



As I approached this public-house a poor woman, with two or three children dragging at her skirts, went up to the swing doors, and calling out to her husband inside, she said, 'Oh, Tom, do give me some money, the children are crying for bread.' At that the man came through the doorway. He made no reply in words. He looked at her for a moment, and then knocked her down into the gutter. Just then I looked up and saw my own name, Charrington, in huge gilt letters on the top of the public-house, and it suddenly flashed into my mind that that was only one case of dreadful misery and fiendish brutality in one

of the several hundred public-houses that our firm possessed. I realised that there were probably numbers of similar cases arising from this one public-house alone. I thought, as if in a flash, that, whatever the actual statistics might have been, there was, at any rate, an appalling and incalculable amount of wretchedness and degradation caused by our enormous business. It was a crushing

4 Permission sought for image from <https://lookup.london/about-look-up-london/> 21/04/22

5 This is from the Church of England Catechism which speaks of "...my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven."

realisation, the most concrete, unavoidable object-lesson that a man could possibly have. What a frightful responsibility for evil rested upon us! And then and there, without any hesitation, I said to myself—in reference to the sodden brute who had knocked his wife into the gutter—'Well, you have knocked your poor wife down, and with the same blow you have knocked me out of the brewery business.'

I knew that I could never bear the awful responsibility of so much guilt upon my soul. I could not possibly allow myself to be a contributory cause, and I determined that, whatever the result, I would never enter the brewery again.

Fred at once explained to his father his decision and the reason for it. He renounced his inheritance, he said, and he would not be working for the brewery. His father was outraged, horrified, angry and amazed. His son's decision seemed the very height of folly. To renounce all his great wealth! He explained that he himself had considered the question of drunkenness very carefully. It was not the fault of the Brewery if men drank too much and became drunk. It was the fault of the drunkard himself not the brewer.

After the first shock, however, my father was extremely kind to me, when he realised that I could not change. He certainly sympathised with my wish to do good among the poor, and he had always helped me in my early efforts among the very rough juvenile population, and himself paid for more suitable premises in which we could carry on the work.

Shortly after my decision was made my poor father met with a very severe accident. He was thrown from his horse while out riding, and he never recovered. When he was upon his deathbed I was sent for, and what occurred between us at that solemn moment has always been a most precious memory to me. Several other members of the family were gathered round, but he said, "You all go out of the room for a little time. Let Fred remain with me. He is the only one who knows about these things."

When we were left alone together, my father said, "You are right, Fred. You have chosen the better part, which will never be taken away." We prayed together then, and the next morning he again said to me, "After you prayed with me, my sleep was like an angel's slumbers." Finally he whispered, "I am afraid I have left you very badly off, but it is too late now." Shortly afterwards he passed away.



Frederick Charrington went on to do an immense amount of missionary work in the east end of London's slum district. He used music halls to hold evangelistic meetings and carried out a poster campaign that saw hoardings, derelict walls and building-site fences covered with Scripture posters. When there were no longer enough indoor spaces to contain the crowds that wanted to hear the gospel he established open air meetings in a park and on waste ground. A huge work of God was carried on in a most desperately needy area. On his thirty-sixth birthday he was able to open a huge building, the Great Assembly Hall in Mile End. The picture on the left shows part of the interior. It held five thousand people. On a Sunday, a tea would be provided for poor and destitute people before the evening service and the Hall was crowded.

During the week, the building was used for outreach work, including a Coffee Tavern and a bookshop. That such a vast work was funded and provided for despite Fred having turned down every penny of the brewery money was a tribute to God's goodness.

Frederick Charrington died on **January 2nd** 1936 aged 86, still serving his Saviour.

