

## FROM NEW ZEALAND.

DEAR CHRISTIAN—I am almost ashamed to think how long it is since I wrote anything for your columns. There are so many local calls upon my time, that those things that are out of sight get neglected. The regular visits of our paper always remind me of this neglect, and fresh resolves are made only to be broken. I look with interest, however, for its arrival and scan its pages for information of what is passing in "my own, my native land."

The great question of Australasian federation is now absorbing the attention of the inhabitants of these colonies. For years it has been talked of, and leading statesmen have urged its consideration and pleaded with the people to look to their destiny and emerge from their position of petty states with boards wrangling, into a united nation, whose voice might be heard in the councils of the nations of the world. The late Sir Henry Parker, for many years the leading statesman of the colony of the New South Wales was amongst the first to raise his voice in favour of federation. The motto suggestion by him of "One people, one destiny," has now been adopted as the motto of the commonwealth. During the past twelve months great strides have been made and it is now almost certain that next year will see the birth of the Commonwealth of Australasia. On the continent of Australia there are five colonies: New South Wales (the oldest), Victoria, South Australia, West Australia and Queensland. These, with Tasmania and New Zealand, it is proposed to unite in a federal government on similar lines to the federal government of the Dominion of Canada. The Island of Tasmania lies some two hundred miles south of Australia, while New Zealand is twelve hundred miles east.

A constitution has been drafted by a succession of conferences of leading men. This has been adopted by the legislature of all but West Australia and New Zealand. In addition to this the electors of four of the seven colonies have, by referendum, voted for the constitution and carried it by large majorities in each case. The fifth, Queensland, is today voting on the question and it is confidently expected that it will also vote for federation. West Australian legislators are now considering the bill, but is feared that this colony, with the largest area and the smallest population, may not at present vote for federation. New Zealand has lagged behind in the race. Our leading politicians have viewed the subject with indifference up to the present, but the people are beginning to express themselves strongly in favor of joining their kinsman in Australia.

As soon as the people begin to move, the politicians will be ready to follow, so that it is hoped that New Zealand may yet take its place as one of the original states. I am an ardent federationist, and am working for this end. The population of the seven colonies is nearly five millions, and the revenues about £20,000,000 sterling per annum. These figures show what strides Australasia has made in the past century. Federation will do much to increase the strength and promote the growth of this young nation.

The time for the triennial struggle on the question of license or no license is approach-

ing. Already the contending parties are preparing for the fight. Last week M. Joseph Malish, Grand Worthy Chief Templar of England, arrived at Auckland, and is now addressing meetings in the chief centres of the colony. A fierce contest is expected. "The trade" (as the publicans and brewers are called) has a complete organization, and expends a very large sum in these fights for life. Three years ago prohibition was carried in only one electoral district, but it is believed that more success will attend the temperance party's efforts this time.

Old age pensions are now the order of the day in this progressive country. Persons, male or female, 65 years of age and upwards, in indigent circumstances, who have resided not less than twenty-five years in the colony, and who have a record for respectability, can obtain a pension of £18 per annum, equal to \$90, from government. About 10,000 pensions have already been granted, involving an annual expenditure of £150,000. In this matter New Zealand leads the way. The colony of Victoria has an old age pension bill now before its parliament, which runs very much on the same lines as the New Zealand act, which was only passed last year. It is admitted that this is only an experiment in providing for the aged, who, from misfortunes or other causes (generally other causes), are poor, and dependent either upon charitable aid from government or help from friends.

There is little of more than ordinary interest in church matters to chronicle, and what there is I will reserve for my next.

Yours sincerely,

L. J. BAGNALL.

Tuna, N. Z. Sept. 2, 1899.

## DEER ISLAND LETTER.

On my way home from the Jubilee Convention, I remained in Confluence, Pa., a few days, preaching several times. One young man was immersed and others were quite interested.

After getting home I gave an address on the trip to the convention in Lord's Cove on Sunday evening, 17th, and also in Leonardville on the following Sunday.

The brethren at Leonardville have raised quite a sum of money to be used in painting and repairing the church building; they will do this in the near future. They have also a new communion service, beautiful in design and an ornament to the church.

At Lord's Cove our congregations are growing as the people are getting home after being away all summer.

I preached at Blask's Harbour one evening last week and had a good meeting. This is a point where good work might be done. We have a good house here which has not been used for some time.

Before I write again or before you will read what I write, we will have begun a new year—the last year of the nineteenth century. I think we ought to make a great effort to make this last year a great one in our work. It can be done, and I am going to tell you how very soon, but not in this letter.

I have also preached on Indian Island since I came home and have enjoyed my visit to the people there very much.

W. H. HARDING.

## Original Contributions.

## SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EARLY CHURCH.

## No. 1.—A CONVERTED MEMBERSHIP.

M. B. RYAN.

No fact strikes us so forcibly in the character of the early Church, than the radical change which had taken place in the lives of those who had become its members. In many ways is this change emphasized and illustrated.

The Book of Acts gives us a glimpse of the establishment of the church. The most prominent feature of the book is its account of conversions. The Apostles went out with a proclamation of salvation to men and with a demand upon men that they "turn," and begin a new life. "Repent and turn again," is Peter's demand upon the Jews. Paul was called and sent unto the Gentiles that they might "turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God."

The ministry of the Apostles was attended by a great "turning" of the people. "And all that dwelt in Lydda and Sharon saw him, and turned to the Lord." "And a great number that believed, turned to the Lord." The Thessalonians turned unto God from idols. Those who came into the church, both Jews and Gentiles, were "turned," or converted, people.

The radical nature of the change thus indicated is illustrated in many ways. From many standpoints the Scripture writers bid us view it. Now it is the judicial standpoint; and the criminal, under condemnation, is justified, or made right, before God.

From the biological standpoint, there has been the impartation of life—a begetting, and a transition into a new state, a birth; and men have become sons of God in a spiritual sense. As sons of God they possess the spirit of God, and grow up into His likeness.

Then it is a circumcision, by which the body of the flesh has been cut off, these carnal passions and practices which constitute the sinful state, and the man is separated unto Christ and a pure life. Or it is a death to sin, a burial with Christ in baptism into his death, and a resurrection unto a new life. Or a quickening out of death in sin, and a resurrection to a new life in Christ. Or it is being built as a living stone into the spiritual temple of God.

The change is absolute and vital. It involves the condition, the relation, the direction, the power, and the destiny of the life. Those who were dead in trespasses and sins have been quickened, and raised up to sit in heavenly places with Christ. Those who were separate from Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world, are now brought nigh in the blood of Jesus Christ; they are