GEORGE WASHINGTON WALKER.

To the Editor of the Christian Times.

Sir—The Tasmanian papers record the death of George Washington Walker, Esq., of Hobart Town. The memory of a good man is sweet. A brief notice of an old colonist, who for more than a quarter of a century was associated with the cause of progress, may not be unacceptable to your readers.

George Washington Walker, the Quaker missionary and the associate of James Backhouse, first visited these colonies, on an errand of mercy, in 1832. The two philanthropists had crossed the deserts of South Africa, in their zeal to learn the condition of their coloured race, and the hopes of their evangelisation. The record of that tour is one of the most pleasing ever presented to the British public. To the colony of German, French, Dutch, and English societies received the hearty sympathy of these two simple-minded ministers of Christ.

Well educated, agreeable in manners, gentle in deportment, and sincere in religious zeal, they were objects of peculiar attention and esteem, and the honoured instruments of much good in Australia. Their disinterested benevolence gave them a passport into every society and in every heart. Colonial Governors paid them marked respect. They not only received them as guests at their table, but afforded them every facility for carrying on their Christian work.

Although devoted to the real welfare of the entire community, their labours in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land were chiefly directed to the amelioration of the condition of convict prisoners—the whites and the black outcasts of society. To this end they travelled, talked, and wrote; they memorialized Governments, they denounced abuses, they suggested improvements in the penal discipline, by the formation of Temperance societies, by the distribution of tracts and Bibles, by private entreaty and public appeal, they sought to deliver the negro from the slavery of sin, and direct his eye to the Atoning One.

If the friends of the prisoners, they were not less the friends of the natives. Arriving at the termination of the Black War of Van Diemen's Land, they were indefatigable in their endeavours to secure the physical comfort and moral good of the miserable captive sons of the forest. They took an equal interest in our own Australian natives, as evidenced in their early visits to Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide.

After nine years of useful labour, James Backhouse went to England, where he published his interesting and instructive narrative, and George Washington Walker remained to settle in Tasmania.

It was my happiness to become acquainted with the good man in 1841, and for years to be associated with him in Temperance and other movements. When not the initiator, he was the active conductor of others in good enterprises. He was the untiring advocate of the unhappy prisoner. The Bible Society found in him a constant and zealous supporter. Upon the platform of moral and social reform he was a frequent speaker, having a pleasing manner, and a simple but conviction-carrying eloquence. His religious addresses were characterised by much tenderness of feeling and spirituality of sentiment, with deep humility and reverence. He was preeminently a man who lived near to God in habitual religious exercises. But it was in private admittance that the great charm of his Christian character became apparent. His judicious treatment of the inquirers, his solemn tone with the profane, his affectionate and sympathising language toward the struggler and the mourner, and his loving smile for the young, will long be remembered.

He faithfully performed his duty as a citizen. As a merchant, he was honoured in the court; as the manager of the Savings Bank, he taught reading to himself, he sought to extend to adults as well as to youth the advantages of learning. A naturalist and lover of science, he was for many years a most influential member of the council of the Philosophic Institute in Hobart Town. Earnest for the welfare of his fellow-creatures, and liberal of his time and money to that object, he was at the same time as faithful in the performance of family duties. His partner had not to complain of his indifference, nor his children to feel his neglect. Favoured with years of intamity with that beloved family circle, the writer can deeply sympathise with the bereaved ones of that household.

Our friend departed this life on the 1st inst., in his sixtieth year. His funeral was attended by the Chief Justice, the Colonial Secretary, a number of members of Parliament, the ministers of all denominations, and representatives from the corporation, the Friends' meeting, the Bible Society, and Temperance Societies, in all 150 persons, to testify to the public recognition of his benevolent and useful life.

Australia can ill spare such a sterling man as George Washington Walker. A desire to make known the virtues and labours of one of the true heroes of these colonies, with the hope of enkindling the zeal of others, was the simple object of my addressing you.—Yours respectfully,

JAMES BUNWICK.

Ballarat, Feb. 12, 1829.