



THE "FREE PRESS,"

By George Howard,

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COMMUNICATIONS.

FOR THE FREE PRESS.

THE HOLY BIBLE.

The Scriptures contain, independently of a divine origin, more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, more morality, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence, than could be collected within the same compass from all other books that were ever composed in any age or in any idiom. The two parts of which the Scriptures consist, are connected by a chain of compositions, which bear no resemblance, in form or style, to any that can be produced from the stores of Grecian, Indian, Persian, or even Arabian learning. The antiquity of those compositions no man should doubt; and the unstrained application of them to events long subsequent to their publication, is a solid ground of belief that they were genuine predictions, and consequently inspired.—This wonderful and inimitable Book is now pouring its divine rays into the regions of the Pagan world, and enlightening the vast wilderness of the East. The brilliant star, that guided the wise men to the Babe of Bethlehem—missionaries, and the wise men of the west have a similar light—the refulgent meteor, the herald angel that great divine St. John saw in Patmos, the everlasting gospel, is now rising to the meridian of the eastern hemisphere, and ere long will beam her radiant glory over the benighted world: then will the "sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings," and usher in the great millennium. The time is at hand; the great day of accounts is very properly termed the day of the Lord, as you will find recorded in the last chapter in the Old Testament. This book has stood the test of ages: kingdoms have arisen, flourished, and fallen; the work of power, the adamant of human greatness have crumbled; moral earthquakes have dashed in ruin the strongest and fairest fabrics of human greatness; the Bible yet remained, in the midst of conflagrations. If we examine the institutions of man, we shall find them all partaking of that mutability which characterizes his own strange, fitful and feverish existence. Perishable himself, how can he confer eternity upon his works? He erects his statue of brass, the colossus of ages—triumphant time! thou hurlest it to the dust. True, he can ascend the enduring temple of fame, and circumscribe the soffit arch of renown, and there deposit his statue: each impost and key, with incipient day, inscribes his venerable name; the glittering bead and golden cim-

irecta encircles Vespasian, the triumphal arch of Titus, a beacon to the universe, but he cannot call the last faint sigh of his existence, and protect his trophies against the scythe of destruction. Go, learn this truth from the melancholy picture of history: go, and moralize amidst the ruin of Thebes, and ask where are her hundred gates, and her millions of warriors? Go, and learn wisdom from solitary Tyre, and ask where are her golden palaces and her numberless natives? Go, and ask Egypt where are her twenty thousand cities, her temple of the sun, her oracle of Ammon, and her sacred fountain? There the sun shines on a bleak waste, the voice of the oracle hath been silenced for ages, and the wild weed hath long waved in the bed of its fountain. Let Macedonia produce the trophies of her conquering son; let Persia shew the diadem of Cyrus, and spear of Cambyses; they are enveloped by the oblivious pall, and the mournful voice of history tells only that they have been. So it is with man and the works of man; child of doubt and danger, the spectre of uncertainty bends over his cradle slumbers; darkness pervades the warm noon of his manhood, and extends his dusky arm over the evening of his decline. He walks forth in his majesty, the image of God and the Lord of creation; his path is on the mighty deep, his footsteps are on the lofty mountain; he stands on his proud eminence, and looks down on a subject world: Look once again, and where is he? The mysterious fire of his existence is extinguished, the cold clod presses on his bosom, the dull worm banquets on that brow where once sparkled genius and beauty, and the charnel shroud enwraps that form where once glowed the star of honor and the purple of dominion. Since, then, instability is inherent in the very nature of man, and spreads itself over all his works, it is the best criterion to judge whether the Bible is a cunningly devised fable, the work of man, or the work of God. The sacking of Corinth, the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, the burning of the library of Alexander, destroyed every historical work then extant in the world except the Bible, which was miraculously preserved by a superior power, which the skeptic must allow. It has resisted every change and braved every tempest; it hath stood firm and beheld the wide spreading pine of Assyria strewing the earth with its branches in vast and gigantic ruin; it hath seen the rising flood of mighty hosts desolate imperial Babylon; it hath seen the starry throne of the just Haroun broken down; it hath seen the majestic eagle of the Romans extending his dark form over battle-fields; the hand of desolation hath spread its folds over palaces and temples; the fierce storm of war, and the lazy moth of luxury have united in this work of destruction, and the impetuous wave of time hath ever been chequered by the fragments of glory and the wreck of magnificence, floating alone in fearful and melancholy ruin. If this be the fact, then

why so many unbelievers in the world? The reason is obvious; it condemns sinful man. Foreign Bible Societies have done great things for the Redeemer's kingdom. The utility of domestic missionaries are the theme of councils. National and state legislatures have contributed to this godlike excellence. The aborigines of America are become the participants of this inimitable Book: "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." Isaiah xxxv. And we have seen the mighty hand of Jehovah in the solitary groves and the once howling wilds of the west, now the consecrated tabernacle of the Most High. Where the Indian led his lonely dog in savage chase, was heard the soothing song of melody, the praise of Almighty God. Where we also heard the doctrinal truths of this Holy Book judiciously and ably discussed on the first Sabbath instant, or third day of our late Camp-meeting at Pierce's. Pulpit or Bible eloquence surpasses every species of oratory in the world, and particularly to the soul that is hungering and thirsting after righteousness. It cheers the dormant powers of the soul, informs the judgment, edifies the mind, concentrates the mental faculties, and renders the heart susceptible of divine impressions, and beholds God in all his works of creation.

PHILO.

[BY REQUEST.]

From the Albany Argus.

Sketch of the life and character of

WM. H. CRAWFORD.

The uncommon industry and perseverance with which Mr. CRAWFORD devoted himself to the attainment of his profession, were equally exemplified in his conduct as a lawyer, & they soon made him conspicuous at the bar to which he carried a high character for talent and integrity. In the year 1800, he was appointed, with two others, to revise and digest the laws of the state. The task was principally discharged by him, and the manner in which it was performed, was highly approved of by the profession and the public. Disdaining the humbler walks of the profession, he placed himself in the midst of the most powerful competition, which at that time existed in the state. His competitors and adversaries were men of the first reputation at the bar; but his ambition prompted him to enter the lists with the foremost of them, and his vigorous intellect, his great professional zeal, and unremitting attention to business, enabled him not only to reach the eminence to which he aspired, but to maintain it without a rival. The concurrent testimony of all who knew him in Georgia is, that, while at the bar, his reputation as a lawyer was unrivalled in that state. And his professional attainments were accompanied and adorned by an irreproachable moral character, and by manners the most frank, plain, and accessible.

In the mean time, he had taken a decided stand in the arc-

na of party. The political dissensions which agitated the Union during and after the presidential election in 1800, were carried in Georgia to the greatest extremities. A Republican by birth, by habit, and by reflection, Mr. CRAWFORD early espoused the cause of the People, and supported the election of Mr. JEFFERSON with ardor and fidelity. He was also particularly distinguished as an active and inflexible opponent of the Yazoo faction. His commanding talents, and his political firmness, exposed him to the persecution of the federal party, and he was often obliged to force his way through opposition both personal and political, of the severest and most malignant character. Two of these collisions resulted in rencounters, in one of which he had the misfortune to kill his antagonist, and in the other to be himself severely wounded. The first of these contests took place in the year 1802 with Peter L. Van Alen, then solicitor general of the western circuit of Georgia, but a native of this state. It resulted, as is well known, in the death of Mr. Van Alen. The origin and character of this affair have been so grossly misrepresented, especially in this state, that a development of circumstances, over which it would be otherwise desirable to cast a veil, is demanded in justice to Mr. CRAWFORD. The following statement has been derived from the most authentic sources and may be relied on as implicitly correct.

Mr. Van Alen was an active member of the federal and Yazoo parties, and was somewhat distinguished for the impetuosity of his temper, and the violence of his personal quarrels. At a court held in the town of Washington, [Wilks co. Georgia,] in the beginning of the year 1802, a difference arose between him and Mr. Tait, (then a practising lawyer, but afterwards a Judge of the superior court of the state, and Senator in Congress) in which the latter considered himself to have been grossly insulted. Mr. Tait determined to demand satisfaction, according to the custom of the times, and applied to Mr. Crawford, who was his personal friend, to bear the challenge, to which the latter strenuously objected, and endeavored to dissuade Mr. Tait from the measure, but without success. By great importunities, he was prevailed upon to bear the challenge. To the astonishment of all persons acquainted with the parties, Mr. Van Alen refused to accept, on the ground that his opponent was *deficient in respectability*. This would have afforded Mr. Crawford a fit opportunity to have "called out" Mr. Van Alen, had he been disposed to seek a quarrel with that gentleman; but having no disposition of that sort, he declined doing so; for which, with the more punctilious devotees of the idle honor, he was exposed to some animadversion. Subsequently to this, and probably in consequence of being posted by Mr. Tait, Mr. Van Alen challenged that gentleman by a Mr. Tankersley, of Washington, as his friend. At the moment of its

receipt, Mr. Tait was unable to write an answer; he therefore accepted it verbally, and as soon as his engagements allowed, again prevailed on Mr. Crawford to bear a written acceptance to Mr. Van Alen through Mr. Tankersley. Crawford accordingly went to Washington, and after calling at Mr. Tankersley's lodgings, found he had gone to Columbia county. He there pursued and found him. Mr. Tankersley informed him that his agency in the affair was at an end, as Mr. Tait had not met Mr. Van Alen when called upon. Upon Mr. Crawford's return, he again passed through Washington. In the mean time Mr. Van Alen, who resided near that place, had ascertained that Mr. Crawford had been there, and had gone in pursuit of Mr. Tankersley, from which it was easy to infer the nature of his visit, and although no personal difference existed between them, he determined to challenge Mr. Crawford. As soon, therefore, as Mr. Crawford entered the tavern of Col. Willis, at which he stopped on his return, he was met by Mr. Van Alen, insulted in terms the most gross, and *immediately challenged*. It was well ascertained that Mr. Van Alen had been instigated to this course by his political friends, and as Mr. Crawford had originally declined making the quarrel of Mr. Tait his own, it was probably supposed that he would decline the challenge, and in that way expose himself to insult and contempt. In this they were mistaken. Mr. Crawford, satisfied that his antagonist was the instrument of his political enemies, and that through him an attempt was to be made to destroy his character, or his life, accepted the challenge, and the unfortunate Van Alen became the victim of his own violence and folly.

From this statement of the facts, it will be seen that Mr. Crawford, so far from forcing an unoffending man into a contest of life and death, as his enemies in this quarter of the Union have frequently asserted, was himself forced into the quarrel, and however much we may regret the issue of the duel, no candid man will deny that there was on his part every circumstance to palliate, and nothing to demand peculiar animadversion. In the other case, (the affair with Governor Clark) he was also the challenged party; but as his conduct in that contest has never, so far as I can learn, been made the subject of censure, it is unnecessary to say any more of it, than barely to remark, that it was forced upon him by the bitter and unrelenting hostility of his antagonist. Thus much for the duels in which Mr. Crawford has been involved—the clamor in regard to which I cannot but consider as equally illiberal and unjust. I am neither the advocate nor the apologist of duelling; on that subject my sentiments are in unison with those entertained by the great mass of our population.

Justice, however, requires us not only to weigh well attending circumstances, but also to bear in mind the actual state of public opinion in the Southern