

the books of the Old Testament which we read now ; and Josephus tells us that the High Priest even shewed to Alexander, Daniel's prophecy respecting himself. God made the Jewish nation his librarians ; and with rigorous fidelity did they preserve, every book, every psalm, every prophecy, scrupulously guarding even the letters from corruption. Thus the Bible is its own witness ; it is the oldest and most venerable monument of antiquity ; it is minutely interwoven with the great events of the world's history ; the more it is examined, the more exactly it is found to agree with facts at the time when it professes to have been written.

No book has ever endured such assaults as the Bible. Some people write and argue as if the sceptics of our day were the first who ever questioned the authority of the Scripture. But the Bible has always been the object of assault. Men withstood the works of the Lord Himself, and then everywhere contradicted the Apostles. The early Christians lived and suffered and held fast their faith amid fierce and incessant conflicts. When the Bible lay for ages unread by the people, infidelity was silent ; but when learning revived, infidelity sprang up again. Many of the leading writers of the last century in England and France were infidels. It was the age of infidelity. They boasted that Christian faith should be swept clean from the earth. A fiery furnace was kindled and the Holy Bible submitted to the torture. Sceptics have ever sought to disprove its facts, and ridicule its characters. Men of science alleged that its statements were contradicted by their discoveries ; philosophers have found fault with its morals and argued against all belief in its miracles, as a thing simply incredible ; kings have forbidden it to be read ; popes have put it under their curse ; generals have drawn the sword against it ; grave and venerable councils decreed that it is a dangerous book, not to be possessed ; houses have been ransacked to destroy it ; learning perverted to misinterpret it ; all the charities of life sacrificed in hot zeal for its extermination ; and yet in the face of tempests and universal uproar, the Bible stands—

“Like the cerulean arch that spans the sky,
Majestic in its own simplicity.”

No fragment of any army ever survived so many battles as the Bible ; no citadel ever witnessed so many sieges ; no rock was ever battered by so many hurricanes, and so swept by storms. And yet it stands. It has seen the rise and downfall of Daniel's four empires. Assyria bequeathes a few mutilated figures to the niches of our national museum. Media and Persia, like Babylon which they conquered, have been weighed in the balance and long ago found wanting. Greece faintly survives in its historic fame : “'Tis living Greece no more ;” and the iron Rome of the Cæsars is held in precarious occupation by a feeble hand. And yet the Book that foretells this still survives. While nations, kings, philosophers, systems, institutions have died away, the Bible now engages men's deepest thoughts, is examined by the keenest intellects, stands revered before the highest tribunals, is