



HOW, WHEN, WHERE, AND WHY WE GOT OUR BIBLE.

IT seldom happens that a story however wonderful is believed by everybody, and the Bible is no exception to the rule. Many men at all times have declared that they did not believe that the books of the New Testament were written by the men whose name they bear, or that they were written at the time we say. Their ignorance has led them to doubt these things, and their doubts have led them to continue in ignorance. Few things work such cruel havoc in our minds as doubt. Saint James says "He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." To *waver* is to doubt. Indeed *wavereth* and *wave* come from the same root, and the idea in each is the same. Now let us first see what these men say;—the men who, in trying to tell us when and by whom the New Testament has been written, are like waves tossed about with the wind, rolling and breaking into spray, and never in the same position more than a moment.

They are most bitter against the stories written by St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke and St. John. They say that the Gospels could not have been written during the second half of the first century, as we believe, or until long afterwards, because that in other books written immediately after the days of the Apostles no mention is made of them. If Jesus had been such a wonderful man, surely the story of all he had said and done would have been so remarkable that all the other books of the time would have made some reference to it.

I have just said that we believe the Gospels to have been written in the first century. A century is one hundred years, and the *first century* means the first hundred years after we begin to count. We begin to count the years from the time Christ was born, and therefore the first century means the first hundred years after that important event. Now, these *doubters*, or *waverers*, say that among all the books that were written during that first hundred years, there is not one which makes any reference to the New Testament writings, and that therefore it is impossible that they could have been in existence then.

If, in works composed at the end of the first or the beginning of the second century, no mention is made of the Gospels, then our faith in their date is much shaken. If this be the case, the fact would give us no proof that they did exist then; but at the same time, it would not give us proof that they did not exist, which is a very different thing. However, instead of it being true that there is no mention made, we have abundant proof that there was: and not only so, but that direct quotations from the very language were made, and that the Gospels themselves were treated with the most profound respect and reverence. These proofs are to be found not only among the writings of men who loved the Gospels, but among those who hated them; not only among friends of the New Story and of the Beautiful Life which the story told, but also among its enemies,—the men who might have been but too glad to destroy it forever.

GOOD MORROW, VALENTINE.

BY SWEETHEART.



AKIND of second Christmas it is—an echo of the happy feast, and an echo that it is well to cherish and maintain. We should all send valentines. But we had better not all expect one. The surprise will be all the sweeter, and the disappointment will be lighter.

The shop windows are gay with long rows of prettily coloured cupids, angels, dreams, weddings, hearts transfixt with cupid's dart, and sweetly-honeyed verses. The tables inside are spread over with dainty aristocratic ones, and the postmen go round with heavily-laden bags, carrying from door to door the messages of love. Sometimes as many as a hundred thousand of a day.

It was not always thus. The young people used to congregate in the village green. Each wrote his and her name on a slip of paper. Sometimes a feigned name was given. The names were all shaken together, when the maidens drew, as a lot, from the young men's names, and the young men from the maidens'. The young maiden whose name came to Robin's lot, was Robin's valentine, or companion, and when the entire party was selected, all went off to the confectioner's to indulge in treats of sweets. Robin wore his valentine's name for days next his heart, and his valentine wore his next hers, and sometimes, indeed, it happened that they became valentines for life.

Then as now, individual taste came into play. Names were written in blue and gold. Mottoes with honeyed sentiments were attached. Swains became poetic over the perfections, real or imagined, of their valentines; and sometimes extravagant presents and jewels were enclosed. The idea of the treat or present came in course of time to be an obligation, and many curious ways were adopted in olden days to get relief from this obligation.

Even after this obligation was paid, however, the choice of a valentine persisted in associating itself with a future wedding. As the customs of the day changed, this idea did not. It was the day when the little birds selected their mates. There was something romantic in the day—in the air. Belles got bay leaves and pinned them to their pillows. If happy dreams came to them, the very first youth that came across their path next day was to be their valentine for life. Sly young maidens thought to make it sure by boiling an egg hard. The yolk was taken out and its place filled with salt. The egg was then eaten without speaking, and, what is still more wonderful, without drinking. If the ordeal was patiently endured, the valentine was secured.

The most curious part of the observance of the day is that Saint Valentine himself had nothing to do with the day associated with his name.

FEBRUARY

is one of the two months added to the Roman Calendar when the year was made to have twelve, January being the other one. The name comes from *Februare*, to purify, doubtless referring to the religious expiation and purification that took place among the Romans at the beginning of this month.

It is a much abused month, a sort of step-bairn in the year, with less than its share of days, and a kind of waste-basket for all the odd days that come along. Why could not the months that claim thirty-one go shares with poor February!