

# The Young Churchman.

"Feed my Lambs."

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## MEMOIRS OF EMINENT ENGLISH CHURCHMEN.

### THE VENERABLE BEDE.

It is our intention in the following pages to lay before our young readers, a series of biographical sketches of the lives of eminent Englishmen, remarkable in the annals of our Church, as affording us many a pattern of unadorned piety and sanctity, and who have followed in the footsteps of their blessed example, the meek and lowly Jesus. Vague and indistinct as the history of the early Fathers of our beloved Church must be, as seen through the dark vista of retreating ages, and meagre as the details are, which have reached us concerning their lives and conversation, sufficient yet remains from which may be extracted many a useful lesson of Christian piety, and many an illustration of the Christian graces. Foremost amidst the many bright ensamples written for our learning in the early history of the English Church stands a name, which no doubt many of our youthful readers have heard, that of the Venerable Bede, whose piety and learning have earned him a reputation which has spread far and wide throughout the Christian world. But before we enter on the details of the life of this eminent man, it will be necessary to take a retrospective view of the state of Christianity in England prior to the age in which he lived.

At what time or by what individual the inestimable blessings of Christianity were introduced into England it is almost impossible to say, but it is highly probable that the Gospel was preached there at a very early period. Indeed if the evidence we possess can be relied upon, it affords a strong

presumption that St. Paul himself was the first messenger of glad tidings that landed upon the shores of white-cliffed Albion, for we are told by a writer of the second century, that that holy Apostle preached the Gospel "to the utmost bounds of the West," which the British Isles were then considered.— However this may be, it is certain that at a very early period Christianity had found its way to England, and its truths been disseminated amongst a large portion of its population. General tradition has pointed out King Lucius, a British Prince, as one of the first persons, who, possessing power and rank, undertook to establish Christianity in the island as a national religion; and Tertullian, bearing witness to the readiness with which the Britons received the faith, says, that "places in Britain, inaccessible to the Romans were yet subdued to Christ;" and Origen tells us that "the power of God our Saviour was with them."

But the scourge of persecution fell on this remote branch of the Church of Christ, with as much severity as on her sister Churches. To use the eloquent words of an old writer, "God, though he made our Church his darling, would not make it a wanton; she must taste of the rod with the rest of her sisters; the fiery trial, spoken of by the Apostle, now found out even those which by water were divided from the rest of the world." The name of St. Alban deserves to be remembered, as the first Englishman who shed his blood in the cause of Christ and his Gospel, and his martyrdom was followed by that of many others. But soon after his death, we find that a great change had taken place in the affairs of the Anglican Church, for many of the English Bishops took a prominent part in the first councils called together for the regulation of