

**GLEANINGS FROM BRITISH AND  
IRISH ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY:  
FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF  
CHRISTIANITY TO THE PERIOD OF  
THE REFORMATION**

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Gleanings from British and Irish Ecclesiastical History: From the Introduction of Christianity to the Period of the Reformation by Barbara Bedford

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**BARBARA BEDFORD**

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE "Gleanings from British and Irish Ecclesiastical History" now offered to the public, were first gathered up by the writer as a mental solace during lengthened periods of severe affliction and beguiled hope. As time has passed away, with regret has she observed, that a marked and unaccountable ignorance prevailed amongst otherwise well-informed persons in matters connected with the early Church history of England and our sister Island. In the hope, therefore, of engaging the attention of the generation progressing into active life to a more enlarged consideration of the subject, she has determined, although with the hesitating and enfeebled hand attendant on impaired health and declining years, to scatter her Ecclesiastical Gleanings further than she at first intended. The title she affixes to this volume at once explains its character and its limited pretensions, for history of this date cannot be expected to afford any really original matter. The writer's aim has been merely to select from the best authors those facts which it seemed desirable for every well-educated female, or intelligent person, of the middle classes, to be conversant with; but which being hardly reverted to in the pages of our national history, are only to be found fully detailed in volumes rarely within their reach; she shuns not, therefore, to avow, nay, rather feels the more confidence from acknowledging, that every event or fact recorded in

the following pages has been extracted by herself from authors of the most established credit. The arrangement of them, and the connecting link of ideas, with occasional remarks thereon, are all she can claim as the genuine produce of her own pen. The Reformation in England has been so judiciously handled, by its history being adapted by the most efficient writers to the capacity of every description of reader, that she has not trespassed on that rich harvest-field of England's Church. Her only object has been to make the path thereto clearer and more fully known, and thereby more interesting and instructive; and by not only proving the existence both here and in Ireland of a Christian Church from an apostolic date, but by likewise exposing the insidious intrusions and progress of error, to warn the reader against the same quicksands, and further lead him to the conviction that the hand of Jehovah ever protected and guided to its destined purpose every event and judgment which befel these early Christian Churches. And now, at the last moment of sending this little volume forth to wend its way amongst the public, earnestly does the writer pray the blessing of the Most High may accompany it whithersoever it wanders, and that whatever may have been written amiss by man may be forgotten, and by the Lord forgiven. And if aught of benefit arise to any reader, to the Lord alone would she desire to ascribe all the might, all the power, and all the praise.

33. 33.

*November 12th, 1849.*

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CHAPTER I.

*Introduction.—The Patriarchal and Druidical Belief, and Rites  
of the Primitive Britons.*

AMIDST the waste waters of oblivion, o'er which the prying historian is wont to cast an anxious glance, the Holy Scriptures alone offer him a footing from whence he may catch the first glimpse of past events, as they emerge from off its dark and obscured surface, and, entering on the stream of time, successively approach our era,—that stream which now holds encircled in its eddy the present generation of man, and is likewise propelling it onward, with hurried force, to launch it into the unfathomable depths of eternity.

The truth of this introductory remark will be unequivocally established by the immediate appeal we must have to Sacred Writ, in the very few remarks which it seems desirable to make (in connexion with the early Church History of Britain) respecting its first inhabitants; from whom they sprang; from whence they came; and what religious knowledge they brought with them.