

Essay on bede's ecclesiastical history of the english people

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England has always been a strong point of Christianity, as such, the difficult times that came from the conquest of the territory by the Romans up to the moment when finally Henry VIII decides to separate from the Vatican and “their deceptions”; making of England one of the most important places where Christian history has been made.

During such times of change, despite the different forces that shaped and misshaped the path of faith and religion in England, some conducts remained unchanged such as the belief that a person should focus only in what was adequate according to the standards that the Vatican had stated that were adequate.

The first four chapters of Bede's book only refer to England in the way it was formed, the benefits and paradisiacal surroundings that both England and its surrounding neighbours had to offer in terms of water, soil, vegetation and even animals. In the first book, Bede makes a strong point of reference in the martyrdom that British Christians suffered at the hands of the Roman conquistador empire. It is interesting the difference between other martyr books and references to the ones that Bede states in the book. Jack 2

Here, therefore, the head of most courageous martyr was struck off, and here he received the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love Him. But he who gave the wicked stroke, was not permitted to rejoice over the deceased; for his eyes dropped upon the ground together with the blessed martyr's head. (Bede, Book 1: VII, 51-52) Other accounts only make strong points of the punishment that God allegedly gives those who inflict the martyrdom in cases against the female virtue and those where the executor is a member of their own family.

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Though it is not evidently put, the writing of Bede actually infers that God will claim vengeance to anyone that dares raise an arm against His Flock. In the second book, Bede leaves behind the martyrdom that suffered the Brits at the hands of the Romans and deepens into the creation of the modern day Britannica form of beliefs. It seems that as a result of the preceding changes and strength that the martyrs of days before provided the Christian belief in England gave the Church sufficient hold to unite then flourishing Kingdom by respecting religious festivities such as Easter time.

It should be noted that by the time that Bede is making reference to evidently St. Agustin (or Augustine to some authors) makes no reference to an Irish saint: Saint Patrick that had sufficient leverage among the clergy of the time. Almost 300 years have passed between the death of Albas martyr and the next evident miracle in Bede's book, the time when Bishop Mellitus by simple prayers suffocates a fire. Jack 3

And thus the man of God, whose mind was inflamed with the fire of Divine charity, and who was wont to drive away the powers of the air by his frequent prayers, from doing harm to himself, or his people, was deservedly allowed to prevail over the worldly winds and flames, and to obtain that they should not injure him or his. (Bede, Book 2: VII, 114-115) According to Bede it is only through the power of prayer and a meditative life, succumbed to the will, power and guidance of God (through the church) that any person can command any forces of nature and prevent damage, injury or even death.

So far Bede has been able to demonstrate the power and benefits of being a truthful Christian to those readers without dabbling into politics. However, by <https://assignbuster.com/essay-on-bedes-ecclesiastical-history-of-the-english-people/>

book three, Bede can make a strong statement of this since Chapter I, when he states that a Christian king (Oswald) can reconstitute the faith of the people in the nation and in his own kingship. One of the most important things to remember when reading this book is that monarchies were believed to be granted by God Himself, thus it was a "divine right".

Most of Book three is devoted to two main characters: King Oswald who vaguely resembles King Arthur in the importance that he receives from this historian as a God-follower who, happened to be so saint that even after being slaughtered in battle performed miracles. The other person of importance is Bishop Aidan who was a strong supporter of King Oswald's piety actions, much like the wizard Merlin in King Arthur's descriptions; this was a particularly important character in the development of the king's ruling.

Jack 4 However, it seems that when the kingdom lacked of religious stability, the worst circumstances were present: In the above-mentioned year of the aforesaid eclipse, which was presently followed by the pestilence, in which also Bishop Colman, being overcome by the unanimous consent of the Catholics, returned home, Deusdedit, the sixth bishop of the church of Canterbury, died on the 14th of July.

Erconbert, also, king of Kent, departed this life the same month and day; leaving his kingdom to his son Egbert, (Bede, Book 4: I, 204) It seems interesting that a terrible disease such as pestilence (or plague) might have been deemed common enough not to deserve any of the religious teachings that the book of Bede is full of. There are no prayers that will stop or detain

the disease in its tracks, but more over, it refers to mundane affairs such as the setting the affairs in order of a specific archbishop.

Despite this, most of the book is full of miracles that happened during the pestilence, people who in their dying beds saw the Glory of Heaven or deaths that were simply " heavenly" with no pain or misery. Naturally, as the book progresses in dates, other important events happen; such as the assassination of royal heirs, though not in the way that Shakespearian artists would do, but simply stating that anyone who knows the basis of Christianity will deem his or her Jack 5

life in little value because the promise of everlasting life would conquer their hearts in a moment. Finally, book five speaks of basically the same things than the other four books, nonetheless, chapter XII has a significant detail: Having stood there a long time in much dread, not knowing what to do, which way to turn, or what end I might expect, on a sudden I heard behind me the noise of a most hideous and wretched lamentation, and at the same time a loud laughing, as of a rude multitude insulting captured enemies.

When that noise, growing plainer, came up to me, I observed a gang of evil spirits dragging the howling and lamenting souls of men into the midst of the darkness, whilst they themselves laughed and rejoiced. Among those men, as I could discern, there was one shorn like a clergyman, a layman, and a woman. (Bede, Book 5: XII, 286) The importance of this description is the imagery that it gives, since this description until our days souls in purgatory damnation have been depicted in the same way and even using the same three human elements: The clergyman, the layman and the woman.

Nonetheless, the entire chapter portrays a vision quite similar to the one that Dante provides almost 600 years later: An afterlife divided into sections that are populated by those who are "less than perfect", "barely repented" and "outwardly evil". Just like Jack 6 Dante, the visionary in Bede's book five chapter twelve has a guidance that explains things to him so that he might return to life and tell everyone. What is the truth? Well, it is difficult to state it.

According to the Bible, Jesus came to earth to create a final covenant, one of the eternal love and forgiveness; nevertheless, the Church had gone out of their way to create an environment of fear and uncertainty. During the time of Bede, it is evident that Church in England used hell and purgatory as means of control and coercion both in social and political atmospheres. Undoubtedly, the use of these "boogie men" for the society in early Christianity and the first years of medieval era was beneficial providing church and rulers with sufficient authority to handle and create empires.

Would it work nowadays? Yes it will as it has begun to work with the new age belief; the uncertainty of what lies beyond the natural death is something that will present a problem in the human mind; as a result, whatever we can find that will soothe us will become a leverage for those who provide it to us. Jack 7 Works Cited Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Penguin Classics, revised edition, May 1991. Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1969 Internet medieval source book November 30th, 2008