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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed April 4, 1935

HOT AND COLD CLIMATES

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Authority on Meteorology

Exaggerated ideas prevailing today concerning the coldness of the polar regions and the heat of the tropics are in part a heritage from ancient and medieval philosophy. That all parts of the world except the temperate zones were uninhabitable on account of their climates was long believed. Thus the Venerable Bede, writing in the early part of the eighth century and following the views of Macrobius, who wrote three centuries earlier, says:

"The world is divided into five zones, the differences between them being that certain temperate parts are inhabited, while other parts remain uninhabited on account of cold or heat. The first is the northern, uninhabitable on account of cold, whose stars never set for us. The second is the summer zone, which is temperate and habitable for us from the highest part of the zodiac up to its northern edge. The third is the equinoctial, going from the middle circumference of the circle of the zodiac, torrid and uninhabitable. The fourth is the winter zone, from the lowest part of the zodiac towards the southern pole, temperate and habitable. The fifth is the southern, around the south pole which is covered by land and uninhabitable by reason of the cold. The three middle zones, however, are distinguishable by the inequalities of their seasons; when the sun holds the first at the summer solstice, the second at the equinox and the third at the winter solstice. The extreme zones are always without sun. Therefore with one day's sailing from the island of Thule to the north, frozen sea is found."

But although "the winter zone on the lower side turned towards the pole" was thus "temperate and habitable," Bede strongly denied that it actually was inhabited by human beings.

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