

**THE ESCHATOLOGICAL FUNCTION OF THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR  
IN THE CHRISTO-MIMETIC THEOLOGY  
OF ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX**

by

Ian D. Lawrence

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in History with Distinction

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Knights Templar had been a controversial organization since their inception. Medieval scholars viewed them in many ways, and even the Church took some time to acclimate itself to their existence. Bernard of Clairvaux, one of the greatest theologians of the first half of the twelfth century, was especially fond of the Order. The paper asserts that two factors drove St. Bernard to praise the Templars. The first factor, monasticism, was perhaps the dearer to Bernard's heart. He himself was a Cistercian, and thus saw monasticism as the perfect way of life for anyone seeking purely after God. The second factor, Jerusalem, was also indescribably important to Bernard. He saw Jerusalem in a number of ways. These include the Holy City itself in Palestine, the human soul, and the monastery. Given the two factors of monasticism and Jerusalem, it is no wonder that Bernard was drawn to the Templars, given their monastic life and central location in the city of Jerusalem. The paper argues that Bernard contextualized the two factors in the ideal of Christo-mimesis, or the imitation of Christ. That Bernard saw the Templars as perfect imitators of Christ is clear. Moreover, the paper argues that Bernard viewed the ultimate purpose of the Templars' Christo-mimetic function as eschatological. It was through their imitation of Christ as monks living within the Holy City that they acted as apocalyptic figures. They were destined both to protect Jerusalem from the infidels, as well as purify the Heavenly Jerusalem in their own souls in preparation for death and ascension to the

Kingdom of God. In fusing the two Jerusalems together they effected the end of the physical world and the advent of the New Jerusalem.

## **Chapter 1**

### **HOW THE IMITATION OF CHRIST TOOK ON A VIOLENT CHARACTER**

#### **Introduction**

The following pages will attempt to present a novel and intriguing view of the eschatological role of the legendary Knights Templar in the Christo-mimetic theology of St. Bernard of Clairvaux. It will argue that the opinions of this most prolific admirer of the Templars were strongly influenced by a number of his other views, namely, on monasticism, Christo-mimesis, eschatology, and the role of the city of Jerusalem in both the spiritual ascension of the soul of the monk as well as the historical Second Coming of Christ. Certainly, Jerusalem had many meanings to medieval thinkers, as Giles Constable notes: “Jerusalem was wherever there were relics of the cross or of other events associated with the life of Christ. Places of exceptional holiness, such as the monasteries of Cluny and Clairvaux, were called Jerusalem, as were the goals of the crusaders, even when they were far from the earthly city in the Holy Land.”<sup>1</sup> This paper, however, will only be working with three interpretations of the Holy City. These concepts, as the paper will attempt to demonstrate, were closest theologically to those of the main figure of the paper, St.

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<sup>1</sup> Giles Constable, “The Fourth Crusade”, in *Crusaders and Crusading in the Twelfth Century* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 343.



Bernard of Clairvaux. They are essentially different, but nevertheless profoundly intertwined in Bernard's work. The first is the Heavenly Jerusalem, the locus of which is quite variable when one looks at the full scope of historical and exegetical interpretation, but in the context of Bernard's theology presently considered, refers either to the human soul or the monastery. The second is the legendary Earthly Jerusalem situated in the Judean Mountains in Palestine. The third is the New Jerusalem, prophesied in the New Testament to come down from Heaven at the termination of the temporal world. This paper will argue that St. Bernard viewed the Templars as vitally important on account of their monastic role as apocalyptic defenders of both the Earthly and Heavenly Jerusalems. It will contend that the Knights Templar essentially fused these two manifestations of Jerusalem together by means of their dual role as knights and monks, and in so doing ushered in the New Jerusalem. The central argument of the paper will be that the Templars, in acting as the perfected synthesizers of the heavenly and earthly planes in an eschatological manner, were functioning as imitators of Christ.

To lend support to this ultimate conclusion this paper will be defending a number of preliminary assertions. Firstly, it will affirm that the ideal of Christomimesis changed drastically in the eleven-hundred years between which Christianity was founded and the Templars were created, and that that ideal reached a sort of martial culmination in the birth of the violent Templar monks. As Giles Constable notes with regard to the changing nature of Christomimesis: "as the Middle Ages progressed the term *imitatio Christi*...took on new meaning without entirely losing its

old ones.”<sup>2</sup> It will illustrate this point with four syntheses, which may be seen to have acted as major driving forces behind these changes. It will show that the fourth change, which allowed the Templars to begin to exist, greatly influenced St. Bernard’s Christo-mimetic eschatology and gave the Templars a prominent place within it.

As stated above, the paper will conclude that the final purpose of this acclamation was Bernard’s viewing the Templars in an eschatological and Christo-mimetic light. It will show that eschatology was very much present in the saint’s writings and in perfect accord with his essential attitudes toward monasticism and Jerusalem. It will divide eschatology into two types commonly posited by scholars of the apocalypse including Bernard McGinn. The first type is historical, or horizontal, eschatology, common to all men and evidenced in the external world in the scope of history. The second is spiritual, or vertical, eschatology, concerned with the ascent of the individual soul to heaven either after death or into ecstasy in the presence of God through contemplation during life. This paper will attempt to show, furthermore, that in St. Bernard’s view the Templars exemplified both of these eschatological forms and essentially fused them into a final Christo-mimetic dialectical synthesis, bringing about the physical apocalypse by the employment of spiritual power while simultaneously joining together the two Jerusalems into the synthesis of the New Jerusalem. In sum, the paper will attempt to demonstrate that to St. Bernard, it was

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<sup>2</sup> Giles Constable, “The Ideal of the Imitation of Christ”, in *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 169.

the Templars who would effectively bring about the Second Coming of Christ and the advent of the New Jerusalem by their spiritual mastery over both the heavenly and temporal spheres of being.

### **The Original Message**

The message of Christ has been developed, perverted, and reinterpreted without cease for the two millennia since its proclamation. Each believer, it seems, finds his own way of following the Messiah, whether he believes Him to be divine or merely the superhuman Son of God. Most professed followers perceive Him to be without sin, either able not to err by his human nature or not able to err by his divine nature. To orthodox Christians, He is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Alpha and the Omega, the Lamb That Was Slain, and the Redeemer of all through His death and resurrection. To non-believers, he is little more than a prophet, a good man or, to some of a more skeptical bent, a magician or conjurer. For those who call Him the Christ, He is the means to salvation. To attain His promise, that is, the beatific vision of God in the presence of the Almighty for eternity, believers must follow His commandments as fully as possible. Christ, in his own words, is “the way, and the truth, and the life”<sup>3</sup> and declares of Himself that “no man cometh to the Father, but by me.”<sup>4</sup> All Christians professing to seek after God must first seek out Christ Himself.

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<sup>3</sup>Jn 14:6 (Douay Version).

<sup>4</sup> John 14:6.

How, then, does the Christian attain Christ? How does he rightly follow the commandments of the Son of God? The most clear and common method is, and has been throughout all of Christian history, by the imitation of Christ, or Christomimesis. In examining the life of Jesus of Nazareth and forming one's own life after its saintly patterns, the Christian slowly becomes a steadier follower of his Lord and ensures beatitude in the life to come. The diligent believer recognizes the daily need to exercise Christian faith, hope, and love<sup>5</sup> in all things insofar as they draw him closer to God, just as Christ did whenever temptation and the tendency toward human weakness assailed Him. One need only recall His spiritual battle against Satan in the desert following His baptism<sup>6</sup> or the obedience He exhibited with regard to His impending crucifixion in the Garden of Gethsemane as evidences for this fact<sup>7</sup>. The Christian gladly accepts the pains of the cross when he must, perpetually looking forward to the resurrection and glorification of his spirit as a reward for his struggle. In all things, the ideal Christian, like Jesus, says unto God, "But yet not my will, but thine be done."<sup>8</sup> Therefore, by the means of his action the Christian imitates Christ, following Him as perfectly as any sinner is able to.

With the freedom of Christ's salvation comes the restraint of some of our human instincts, one of the most beastly being a hasty propensity to violence. As Peter learned in the Garden of Gethsemane when Christ rebuked him for chopping off

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<sup>5</sup> Corinthians 13:13.

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 4:1-10.

<sup>7</sup> Luke 22:42-44.

<sup>8</sup> Luke 22:42.

the ear of the servant Malchus<sup>9</sup>, the daily life of one who wishes to be a follower of Christ necessitates peace. An assault against a disciple of the Lord should never be repaid with violence on the part of that disciple. Rather, as Christ Himself commanded, violent attacks should be repaid with active beneficence: “and to him that striketh thee on the one cheek, offer also the other. And him that taketh away from thee thy cloak, forbid not to take thy coat also.”<sup>10</sup> Nowhere in the Gospels does Christ Himself resort to violence to do His Father’s will. Of course, He goes through the Temple of Jerusalem with whips in a fit of righteous anger<sup>11</sup>, but not once does He exercise any notable degree of violence against anyone. It is evidently contrary to His Gospel, as He Himself points out: “blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called children of God.”<sup>12</sup> Not once did He offer resistance to those who crucified Him. On the contrary, He showed nothing but mercy to His torturers. Nor did He advocate any odium on the part of His disciples toward their enemies. Rather, He commanded His followers never to let into their hearts any feeling but love: “But I say to you, Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.”<sup>13</sup>

It is expressly manifest, throughout the New Testament, that violence and hatred are something strictly forbidden to the true Christian who seeks salvation

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<sup>9</sup> John 18:10

<sup>10</sup> Luke 6:29.

<sup>11</sup> Matthew 21:12

<sup>12</sup> Matthew 5:9

<sup>13</sup> Matthew 5:44.

through the imitation of Christ. The one whose life reflects Jesus' ought to submit to opposition in as many things as possible and oppose an enemy only when the law of God mandates it (as did the early Christians who refused to worship the emperors of Rome). St. Paul forbids his spiritual children to even rebel against the state for any reason not directly necessitated by God's law: "Let every soul be subject to higher powers: for there is no power but from God: and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation."<sup>14</sup> The Christian martyrs of the first three Christian centuries certainly delighted in this commandment. They exhibited no violent tendencies or rebellion as they were led away to their deaths by the civil authorities of a government ordained by God. It seems that to them such a thought as armed resistance against an enemy of the Lord was far from even a consideration. There was no purpose in violence of the flesh or contention against an earthly power. This is made evident in countless narratives of the early Christian martyrdoms such as that of St. Ignatius of Antioch, whose pre-martyrdom letter is quoted in Eusebius: "Let fire and cross, encounters with wild animals, tearing apart of bones, hacking of limbs, crushing of the whole body, tortures of the devil come upon me, if only I may attain to Jesus Christ!"<sup>15</sup> Such organizations as the Roman Empire were transitory and the land upon which they were built would one day be utterly destroyed by the Eternal King of

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<sup>14</sup> Romans 13 1-2.

<sup>15</sup> Eusebius, *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*, translated by G.A. Williamson (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1990), 98.

Glory. The true devotion of a follower of Christ was to Heaven, not to the material earth. Thus declare the Gospels, the Epistles, and the lives of the early Christians regarding the proper imitation of Christ.

Moreover, it cannot be doubted that the Christian desire to live a saintly life in imitation of Christ carried an eschatological message from the beginning. The early Christians lived their lives in expectation of the imminent Second Coming of Christ, even as many Christians do today. Bernard McGinn writes that “Christianity was born as an apocalyptic religion.”<sup>16</sup> That an apocalyptic view of world history dominated the apostolic Church, a phenomenon which manifested itself in a number of the epistles circulating in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (of which many made their way into the Biblical Canon), St. Paul of Tarsus, the most prolific of the apostles, makes perfectly lucid by writing aphoristically in his epistle to the Philippians that “the Lord is nigh.”<sup>17</sup> Even Christ Himself warns ominously that “be you then also ready: for at what hour you think not, the Son of man will come.”<sup>18</sup> It cannot be doubted that in the early Church eschatology was an influential factor in determining the state of mind for those who sought to imitate Christ. This concept will become increasingly important as we move into a discussion of Christo-mimesis once again taking on an eschatological bent in St. Bernard’s theology of the role of the Templars as the apocalyptic guardians of Jerusalem.

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<sup>16</sup> Bernard McGinn, introduction to *Apocalypticism in the Western Tradition*, (Norfolk, Great Britain: Galliard Ltd, 1994), viii.

<sup>17</sup> Philippians 4:5.

<sup>18</sup> Luke 12:40.

### **Constantine**

Pacific devotion to the pure teachings of Christ slowly eroded as the Church was forced to come to terms with the socio-political struggles of the Roman Empire. Constantine the Great effectively made Christianity a political religion in 312 by legalizing it and favoring it in the Edict of Milan<sup>19</sup>, and Theodosius I made it the official religion of the Empire less than a century later<sup>20</sup>. Paul Keresztes, a renowned historian of Constantine and his conversion to Christianity, writes that “in the Edict of Milan and the ‘African letters’ it was Constantine himself who confessed the new Imperial faith.”<sup>21</sup> No longer could the followers of Christ hide themselves away in the shadowy catacombs of Rome, hoping for a martyr’s death. They were forced to surrender their separation from the world to the tempting evil of secular popularity. Of course, the reactions of Pachomius, the eremitic hermits, and the other founders of Western monasticism sought to offer a solution to this problem by offering a remote, contemplative life to Christians who wished to retire from the world; but those men were a small percentage of Christians, and their lifestyle far from possible for the average believer. Thus, Christianity’s first external synthesis, between the thesis of the transcendental Church and the antithesis of the secular Roman government, seems to have occurred with Constantine and resulted in the formation of the first Christian

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<sup>19</sup> Brian Tierney, *Western Europe in the Middle Ages: 300 – 1475*, (United States of America: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc, 1998), 44.

<sup>20</sup> Tierney 43.

<sup>21</sup> Paul Keresztes, *Constantine, A Great Christian Monarch and Apostle* (Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1981), 37.



state. Although internally fraught with problems arising from the natural tendency of many Christians to oppose the necessary inclusion of their spiritual brothers and sisters in earthly warfare, the synthesis was soon strengthened by Augustine of Hippo's laying some of the foundations of Just War Theory in his *City of God*. In this great work Augustine suggested that a war in the name of Christ could indeed be fought with good faith, and without sin, if done in fulfillment of a number of specific conditions which the good bishop proceeded to explain. Augustine wrote that "peace is the aim of wars, with all their hardships; it is this peace that glorious victory (so called) achieves."<sup>22</sup> That is, when a war was fought for the sake of the greater good of general peace, it was justly fought by the earthly Christian state against its material enemies. Lewis Swift writes that "Augustine's ideas on war, violence and military service hinge on a few basic assumptions concerning man's present condition in the created world and the role of the state in human society. On both of these issues it is hard to overemphasize the importance of Original Sin in the bishop's thinking."<sup>23</sup> Such wars, though lamentable, indeed produced a safer society and higher conditions of living for the population than would exist were they not fought. They were, however, necessary conditions of man's fallen state, and in no way to be sought after for spiritual benefits.

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<sup>22</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, translated by Henry Bettenson, (London, England: Penguin Books, 2003), 600.

<sup>23</sup> Lewis Swift, *The Early Fathers on War and Military Service*, (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc, 1983), 111.

### **Charlemagne**

Constantine's ecclesiastical state presented a radical change for the imitator of Christ, though another synthesis about five hundred years later required an even more drastic adaptation. This synthesis occurred during the Carolingian Empire of Charlemagne (742-814), the emperor who sought to effectively unify Church and state completely with no underlying tension between the worldly and heavenly spheres. Charlemagne's crowning by Pope Leo III on Christmas Day 800 A.D. marks the complete unity between Church and empire, that is, the Holy kingdom of God represented upon earth (the Church) and the kingdom of men (the Carolingian Empire). The emperor in the west had retaken his office by the authority of the Pope who crowned him, and, consequently, had effectively fused Church and state. The Western Empire thus became more similar in structure to the Byzantine Empire, which saw the emperor as "a sacred person appointed by God to rule over his subjects. He was crowned and anointed in solemn ceremonies, and everything connected with him was holy."<sup>24</sup> Under Constantine, the emperor had been the Christian head of state, leading the Church as its secular ruler and with the Church's legitimacy as a political institution largely dependent upon his person. Under Charlemagne, a powerful coalescence of ecclesiastical and secular power occurred, the leader of the Franks obtaining imperial legitimacy from the Church through an anointing from the pope. As the protector of the pope, the emperor's attempts at conquering foreign lands could

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<sup>24</sup> Tierney, *Western Europe in the Middle Ages*, 90.

essentially be seen as the Church's endeavors as well. Walter Ullman writes in *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship* that "there was no conceptual distinction between a Carolingian State and a Carolingian Church, nor anything approaching a pluralistic society."<sup>25</sup> The challenges which this deep synthesis presented to the Christian who sought to imitate Christ were presumably life-changing.

Ullman moreover writes that the Franks believed themselves to be the "populus Dei," and that "society...was to be viewed entirely from the ecclesiological angle and to be based, not on Frankish or Germanic or any other naturally grown habits and usages, but on the laws of God."<sup>26</sup> Frederick Russell, in his *Just War in the Middle Ages*, asserts that "the Franks admitted no separation of function between Church, clergy, laity, kingdom and Empire."<sup>27</sup> Thus, two previously contradictory concepts, the thesis of the Church, the transcendental body of believers peacefully present within though still excluded from the political world, and the antithesis of the civil Empire, the Frankish body which sought princely dominion over Europe, were synthesized into one progressive idea, the Carolingian Empire. The Christo-mimesis of the ideal Christian was developing on a scale equal to that which it had undergone with Constantine. In order to follow the commandments of Christ actively, one had to

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<sup>25</sup> Walter Ullman, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship*, (London: Methuen, 1969), 17.

<sup>26</sup> Ullman 22.

<sup>27</sup> Frederick H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 29.

defer not only to the clerics of the Church, especially to the bishop of Rome, but to the Emperor as well. The flaws in this synthesis would become increasingly evident as the Investiture Contest erupted in the eleventh century between King Henry IV (1050-1106) and Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085). What needs to be reflected upon is that the idea of Christo-mimesis had taken on a more violent, worldly, imperial, and materialistic tone than it had under Constantine. One needs only recall the deeds of Archbishop Turpin in the *Song of Roland* for evidence of this fact. “He [Turpin] will not pause ere Abisme he assail” the anonymous author writes, “...so Turpin strikes, spares him not anyway; after that blow, he’s worth no penny wage; the carcass he’s sliced, rib from rib away, so flings him down dead in an empty place.”<sup>28</sup> The heavenly and earthly spheres of warfare were gradually becoming one body in the early medieval culture of the Carolingian empire. Yet, during the reign of Charlemagne this unity had not yet been consummated. A third synthesis in Christian social history was still to occur.

It must also be noted that Charlemagne held a significant position in the scope of medieval eschatology, and that the ‘omega’ features of his person were stressed later in the Middle Ages. This understanding will help to guide arguments made later in this paper, namely that the synthesis resulting in the Knights Templar produced a strongly eschatological tone and was probably influenced by a strongly eschatological

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<sup>28</sup> *The Song of Roland*, translated by Charles Scott Moncrieff, (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1920), 54-55.

theology. One can strongly attribute the eschatological themes present in the High Middle Ages to the Sibylline Tradition, positively acclaimed by Augustine and regaining popularity by the time Bernard of Clairvaux had become active.<sup>29</sup> The Sibylline books so revered by the medieval Christians were allegedly the products of ancient seeresses of the lost oracles of Ancient Greece, though they have since been shown to have been forged by Jewish Christians in the second and third centuries AD.<sup>30</sup> Their medieval influence, however, cannot be underestimated, and as Bernard McGinn, a leading scholar of the subject, writes in *Apocalypticism in the Western Tradition* (*Teste David cum Sibylla*: the significance of the Sibylline Tradition in the Middle Ages) regarding the prophecies, “At times they also contain hopes for a coming messianic figure, a monarch who will make all right with the world.”<sup>31</sup> He explains that in the prophecy of the Erythraean Sibyl, probably actually produced around the twelfth century, a mighty lion is prophesied in the West who will fight off a new horrible creature of abomination. McGinn believes that the clearest interpretation of the beast referred to is Mohammed, and that the lion who destroys it is Charlemagne.<sup>32</sup> If this is indeed the case, it is evident that medieval thinkers like Bernard probably viewed Charlemagne as an apocalyptically significant man, one of

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<sup>29</sup> Bernard McGinn, “*Teste David cum Sibylla*: the significance of the Sibylline Tradition in the Middle Ages”, in *Apocalypticism in the Western Tradition*, 31.

<sup>30</sup> Bernard McGinn, “*Teste David cum Sibylla*”, 1.

<sup>31</sup> Bernard McGinn, “*Teste David cum Sibylla*”, 17.

<sup>32</sup> Bernard McGinn, “*Teste David cum Sibylla*”, 33.

the forces of goodness holding back the new evil of beastly Islam until the final coming of the Antichrist. It will be important to keep this evidence in mind when we move to the claim that historical eschatology was a highly motivating subject of medieval thought, and that the idea of Christian violence was not without eschatological significance in the time St. Bernard was active.

### **Urban II**

The next synthesis struck the western world like a bolt of lightning with the preaching of the First Crusade, and the one who cast the bolt was the fiery Pope Urban II (1088-1099). The influence of this man and his cause upon Christian history should not be underestimated. For the first time, the Catholic Church itself, under the direction of the Bishop of Rome, had successfully summoned a large general assembly of all Christians for the cause of “taking up the cross” of Christ for the sake of Jerusalem. An obvious development from the synthesis undertaken by Charlemagne, the First Crusade of Urban II essentially turned the vision of Christendom upward. From the secular pursuit of land for the advancement of a lord or king, the crusaders now moved into a mission to reclaim the Holy Land upon which Christ Himself walked with the promise of full remission of their sins.

Crusading was an extreme development even from the martial theories which the growing Church had begun to develop seven centuries prior. Even St. Augustine of Hippo, who, along with his mentor St. Ambrose of Milan, laid the groundwork for

Just War theory in the western world, mentions no such activity as spiritually marked as Crusading. He merely writes that, in a tone much more cautious than Urban II,

This city [the earthly city] is often divided against itself by litigations, wars, quarrels, and such victories as are either life-destroying or short-lived...but if it turns its thoughts upon the common casualties of our mortal condition, and is rather anxious concerning the disasters that may befall it than elated with the successes already achieved, this victory, though of a higher kind, is still only short-lived...but the things which this city desires cannot justly be said to be evil, for it is itself, in its own kind, better than all other human good. For it desires earthly peace for the sake of enjoying earthly goods, and it makes war in order to attain to this peace; since, if it has conquered, and there remains no one to resist it, it enjoys a peace which it had not while there was opposing parties who contested for the enjoyment of those things which were too small to satisfy both. This peace is purchased by toilsome wars; it is obtained by what they style a glorious victory...these things, then, are good things, and without doubt the gifts of God.<sup>33</sup>

Though Augustine says that some good might indeed be attained through just wars, he makes no mention of their heavenly relevance. They are fought simply for the good of man's life on earth. Certainly, Augustine's wars are by no means Christo-mimetic. The idea that holy warfare was indicative of an imitation of Christ came to pragmatic fruition in Urban's call to arms at the Council of Clermont in 1095.

The synthesis of the First Crusade brought about by Urban II between a thesis, the reward of Heaven, and an antithesis, the defense of the earthly Christian empire, had almost immeasurable consequences for those who sought to live a life in imitation of the life of Christ. Christo-mimesis had been developing with an acceptance of Christian violence for centuries, as has already been shown by the examples of

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<sup>33</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, 599.

Constantine and Charlemagne, with thinkers condoning the engagement in heavy warfare in the material world so long as peace and righteousness were the ultimate goal. However, never had it been attached to heavenly rewards through a mission centered on such holy ground as Jerusalem.

Of course it must be recognized that the cry of Pope Urban II for the holy warriors to rescue the city of God, Jerusalem, from the Muslim hordes seems different from the evangelical message of Christ. Yet, there is no question that the Crusaders saw themselves to be doing the will of Christ, who had been crucified in the city they sought to conquer. In fact, the Crusaders actually seem to have thought that their deeds expressed Christian love. Jonathan Riley-Smith writes that “it was believed that crusaders particularly expressed their love of God in the way they became literally followers of Christ. From the first, they were treated as ‘soldiers of Christ’, who had joined an expedition out of love for him.”<sup>34</sup>

William Purkis also discusses this phenomenon at length in his work *Crusading Spirituality in the Holy Land and Iberia, c. 1095-1187*. In this masterful work of research, he argues that “the penitential aspects of a crusade were closely associated with ideas of pilgrimage and Christo-mimesis”<sup>35</sup> and that “there can be no doubt that the [First] crusade was envisioned as a Christo-mimetic activity from the

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<sup>34</sup> Jonathan Riley-Smith, “Crusading as an act of love”, *History*, Volume 65, Issue 214 (18 December 2007), <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-229X.1980.tb01939.x/pdf> (accessed April 1, 2013), 178.

<sup>35</sup> William Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality in the Holy Land and Iberia, c. 1095-c.1187* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2008), 5.



outset.”<sup>36</sup> Yet the questioning reader asks how such polar ideologies as Christian charity and violent crusading warfare could be synthesized in the minds of those engaging in the First Crusade. Was it truly an abandonment of the true message of Christ for the sake of man’s carnal satiations? Was it merely delusion? Or was it a firm belief that the best way to imitate Christ was by going on crusade?

Purkis as well as this paper argue the latter view. Purkis defends the idea that the Crusaders actually viewed their mission as the fulfillment of Christ’s commandment to his followers to “take up their cross.” Purkis cites the anonymous *Gesta Francorum* to bolster this position, in which an ardent desire is exhibited by many Christians to “take up the cross” in direct reference to a pilgrimage for the reclamation of Jerusalem.<sup>37</sup> It seems as if the Crusaders viewed their imitation of Christ as implicit in their use of violence, the killing of the infidel as well as the martial protection of the eastern Christian brothers and sisters being simply the necessary way by which the devoted Christian aligned himself to his savior on the road to Calvary. It was to bear the cross of their savior that the Crusaders chose to willingly endure the excursion to the Holy Land and shed blood in the Holy City. The road to Jerusalem was the *Via Dolorosa*, the violent entry into Jerusalem, the Golgotha.

Two seemingly incompatible philosophies were thus synthesized in the Crusading mission. As H. E. J. Cowdrey points out, Gregory VII (1073-1085) had

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<sup>36</sup> *Gesta Francorum*. Quoted in William Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality*, 31.

<sup>37</sup> Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality*, 30.

unsuccessfully “called upon the military classes to take part in a ‘militia Christi’, or ‘militia sancti Petri’, in which they placed themselves at the service of the vicar of St. Peter.”<sup>38</sup> His failure to actualize this dream stemmed from unwillingness on the part of the Crusaders to submit completely to the service of the Pope. Urban II, on the other hand, “appreciated that a call which was too straitly tied to the hierarchical claims of the Apostolic See was likely to find but little response. So he took the novel step of associating his own summons to a military enterprise with the idea of a pilgrimage.”<sup>39</sup> Thus, Pope Urban issued the first successful call for a general Christian holy war, something a number of his predecessors had attempted but failed to achieve.

The expedition and the violence itself seem to have been the means by which the Crusaders imitated Christ, since it was the logical consequence of their pilgrimage to Jerusalem. As shocking as this might seem to one who compares the action of the crusaders to the peaceful behavior instructed by Christ, it was undoubtedly the Zeitgeist of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was not, however, the zenith of this aspect of crusading ideology. Another synthesis was yet to occur. The fourth change to be discussed may be the most surprising and disturbing to the peaceful Christian. The following pages will elucidate the synthesis begun by St. Bernard of Clairvaux which resulted in the Knights Templar, the fighting monks, becoming an apocalyptic Christo-

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<sup>38</sup> H.E.J. Cowdrey, “Pope Urban II’s preaching of the First Crusade”, in *Popes, Monks and Crusaders* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), 178.

<sup>39</sup> Cowdrey, “Pope Urban II’s preaching of the First Crusade”, 178.

mimetic religious organization essentially fusing Heaven to earth on an unprecedented level.

## Chapter 2

### THE RISE OF THE TEMPLARS

Though the First Crusade may already seem an inordinate aberration from the original message of Christ, it did have a restriction which made it more palatable even in its own time to Christians of a more pacific bent. The heavenly violence of the Crusade was restricted to laymen, forbidden to anyone who had taken a previous vow as a cleric of the Church. Carl Erdmann, in his *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*, writes:

Large numbers of clerics and monks wished to participate in the journey...Urban rectified this error and allowed clerics to participate only if they obtained their bishops' permission to carry out pastoral duties in the army. To monks who had vowed *militia spiritualis*, he forbade not only the bearing of arms, but the journey itself.<sup>40</sup>

Monks, priests, and nuns were strictly prohibited to bear arms against the heathen, as they had been throughout all of Church history. They were involved remotely in the Crusading mission and usually permitted to aid the fighters by whatever non-violent means necessary<sup>41</sup>, but were forbidden to shed the blood of another human being. Their mission was higher. Their adversaries were the more

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<sup>40</sup> Carl Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), 336.

<sup>41</sup> Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*, 336.

powerful enemies of God, the demons of hell and Lucifer himself. Their battleground was not the desert of Palestine, but the abbey, convent, or altar of the Holy Sacrament. By vowing to serve God in the Church, they had renounced any involvement in the affairs of the world. They had been called to a higher place as angelic servants of Christ, and their Crusade was invisible. In the case of monks especially, the design of warfare was very clearly elucidated by St. Benedict of Nursia in his 6<sup>th</sup>-century rule: “To thee, therefore, my speech is now directed, who, giving up thine own will, takest up the strong and most excellent arms of obedience, to do battle for Christ the Lord, the true King.”<sup>42</sup> The monks were soldiers under the command of Christ, battling under the jurisdiction of no earthly man but of the King who was in Heaven. Thus, it was rightfully they who could be said to have had embarked upon the more noble path, focusing their sights above and not upon earth.

The physical warfare of the crusaders and the spiritual warfare of the monks each had its place, but each seemed to be separated by a seemingly impassable gap. In the creation of one organization, however, this gap was effectively bridged. The Knights Templar successfully synthesized two seemingly irreconcilable ideas, the material war and the spiritual war, in a new, exclusively monastic, way. According to the dialectical pattern we have been using to illustrate previous changes in Christomimesis, the material warfare of lay crusaders will be denominated as the antithesis of

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<sup>42</sup> Benedict of Nursia, *The Holy Rule of St. Benedict*, translated by Rev. Boniface Verheyen, OSB (Atchison, Kansas, 1949), <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/benedict/rule2/files/rule2.html#prologue> (accessed March 13, 2013).

the function. The spiritual warfare of monks against the forces of evil, which drove the Muslims to commit their blasphemous atrocities against the people of God, will be viewed as the thesis. By what means did the Knights Templar join these polarities? How did the monk, the spiritual warrior, and the knight, the noblest type of material warrior, exist in reasonable union?

The Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon had been originally organized around 1118 by two noble knights, Hugh of Payns and Godfrey of Saint-Omer, who chose to remain in the newly-founded and still weak Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem established after the success of the First Crusade twenty years prior. With permission from King Baldwin II of Jerusalem, who obviously saw good potential in the men, the poor knights betook upon themselves the protection of Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land. They were based on the south side of the Temple of the Lord, the Frankish name for the Muslim Dome of the Rock.<sup>43</sup> This land was thought to be the space upon which the Biblical Temple of Solomon was built, and from this association their name derives. The roads from Europe to the Levant were treacherous, with danger of one sort or other lurking around every turn. The fledgling guardian body of the Templars was thus more than welcomed by all Christians who encountered it. It was this sort of honor which would later lead to the Templars becoming one of the wealthiest and most powerful organizations in all of Europe.

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<sup>43</sup> Macolm Barber, *The New Knighthood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 7.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux, the central figure of the present paper, first involved himself with the new phenomenon of fighting monks nearly ten years after its inception. He was largely responsible for the composition of the Rule of the Templars beginning at the Council of Troyes in 1129, and was an influential mover in getting papal approval for the new Order. The culmination of his support came around 1135 with the composition of his letter entitled *De laude novae militiae*, or *In Praise of the New Knighthood*. By the time St. Bernard wrote his panegyric in 1135, the Templars had already become fully approved by the Church as a monastic Order and had begun to receive numerous land grants, charitable donations, and laudatory attention all across Europe. It would only be four years after the writing of *De Laude*, in 1139, that Pope Innocent II would write his bull *Omne Datum Optimum*, in which the Templars were declared to be essentially absolved from required submission to any exterior ecclesiastical authority but the Pope. Malcolm Barber suggests the strong influence which St. Bernard's writing had on Pope Innocent's decision to give the Templars such extensive power.<sup>44</sup> It therefore seems very likely that a potent driving force of the Templars' success was St. Bernard of Clairvaux.

What did St. Bernard, one of the most influential churchmen of the 12th century and one of the greatest of all medieval mystics, see in the revolutionary Knights of the Temple? His support of the Templars should be considered seriously

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<sup>44</sup> Hugh de Payns. "Letter of Hugh 'Peccator' to the Templars in the East", in *The Templars*, translated by Malcolm Barber and Keith Bate (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2002), 56.

and not as the mere triviality of a benefactor attempting to gain an ounce of glory for himself. For the sake of anticipating an objection, this paper will first offer a more mundane explanation for his ardent approbation of the Order, and then move into what it argues to be the more important factor navigating his thinking.

There is a rather interesting if slightly unconvincing explanation for why such a powerful and fiery monk, so previously attached to the martial spirituality of St. Benedict, would suddenly wish to attach his name to a novel monastic order. It is possible that Bernard felt a debt of gratitude to a certain Hugh I of Champagne, and saw that the best method by which to fulfill this putative debt was by supporting the new institution of the Templars. After Hugh of Champagne donated a plot of land to the Cistercians in 1115, which would eventually become the site of the famous abbey of Clairvaux, Bernard wrote an endearing letter of deep thanksgiving to him. The letter is quite expressive of Bernard's high regard for Hugh:

I am as grateful as I can be to you and keep the memory of your great goodness ever before my eyes and, if I might, I would prove my gratitude by deeds. How willingly would I provide for your soul and body were it but granted to us to live in the company of each other! But because this is not to be, because I may not have you ever present as I should like, it only remains for me always to pray for you absent.<sup>45</sup>

Clearly, Bernard, even ten years after the land had been donated, found himself extraordinarily indebted to Hugh, and still found the need to show proof of his

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<sup>45</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, "To Hugh, Count of Champagne, who had become a Knight of the Temple", in *Letters of St. Bernard*, translated by Bruno Scott James (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), 65.



gratitude to the Count of Champagne. Shortly after the letter was written around 1124, Hugh became a Templar, and only four years beyond that, Bernard assisted in drawing up the official Templar code, that is, the monastic rule by which they were to live, at the Council of Troyes. One could argue that Bernard volunteered his support for this fledgling organization simply by virtue of his gratitude to Hugh. Moreover, considering that Bernard doubtless saw great spiritual providence in the donation of land for the Cistercian abbey, he may have seen Hugh as some sort of spiritual benefactor. Yet, considering other aspects of Bernard's theological and philosophical perspective, it seems much more likely that there was a deeper motivation at work in his support of the Poor Knights. Though the explanation above may have affected Bernard in some wise, this paper will argue that there was a much deeper spiritual theme pervading the mind behind *De Laude*.

The theme to be explored is Christo-mimesis, or the imitation of Christ which, as has been shown in the previous chapter, by the time of the Templars had already come to terms with lay violence in the physical world. Giles Constable asserts that the imitation of Christ was deeply important to Bernard. Constable states that "there are many references to imitating and following Christ in the sermons and treatises of Bernard of Clairvaux, who was later especially associated with the type of personal devotion to Christ and desire to imitate Him literally which emerged in the twelfth century."<sup>46</sup> It is evident that to Bernard, the monastic life was heavily involved in the

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<sup>46</sup> Giles Constable, "The Ideal of the Imitation of Christ", 188.

proper imitation of Christ, and this paper argues that it was through their monastic role that the Templars gained Bernard's favor. That Bernard so strongly recognized the Christo-mimetic trait in the Templars is obvious when it is treated in regards to his philosophy of Christo-mimesis in the very idea of crusading.

Indeed, Bernard's philosophy of the crusades clearly demonstrates that he believed the Templars to be great imitators of Christ. Purkis writes "he [Bernard] believed that the way of life of the Templar presented the Christian arms-bearer with a unique opportunity to follow Christ by making a lifetime's votive commitment to the performance of acts of sacred violence."<sup>47</sup> Moreover, "for Bernard, the imitation of Christ was (quite literally) at the heart of the monastic life."<sup>48</sup> By becoming a Templar, a man lived out the life of Christ in a way previously unknown to the crusader, that is, in committing violence through monastic vocation. The thesis that Bernard saw the Templars as ideal imitators of Christ is supported by Purkis' assertion that Bernard attempted to distance lay crusaders from the idea that they were *imitatores Christi*. He writes, "Bernard understood the spirituality of the Templar to be quite distinct from that of the Crusader"<sup>49</sup> and "the only true way to follow Christ...was to renounce the secular world for full religious profession. In this respect the crusade – whilst undeniably helpful and meritorious – was too elementary, because it was a temporary

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<sup>47</sup> Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality*, 101.

<sup>48</sup> Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality*, 100.

<sup>49</sup> Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality*, 98.

form of lay devotion that emphasized the primacy of the earthly over the heavenly Jerusalem.<sup>50</sup> In this manner, Bernard attempted to change the entire philosophy of lay crusading. He instead chose to focus on the land of Jerusalem itself and the importance thereof to the lay crusaders, putting a deep desire into their hearts to place their feet where ‘His feet have stood.’ Certainly, Bernard viewed this type of crusade as a noble venture for men of the world. Crusading as an imitation of Christ, however, he assigned as a function to the Knights Templar, as the quotes above show. Through their monastic vocation, and thus their closer connection to God and the spiritual world, they could raise the crusading cause to the level of the heavenly Jerusalem while simultaneously defending the earthly one. While the lay Crusaders were bound to the wars of the earth, the Templars transcended the martial life and entered into communion with heaven. Their crusade was not bound simply to combat with men but, in consequence of their monastic vocation, also with demons.

Purkis writes that, with regards to crusading, “Bernard believed that devotion to Christ’s humanity...was but a precursor to spiritual advancement and maturity.”<sup>51</sup> There can be no doubt that, to Bernard, there was nothing but merit in one’s seeking the earthly Jerusalem for Christ’s sake in the manner of a pilgrim, though the true imitation of Christ required seeking the spiritual, heavenly Jerusalem and thus a deeper connection to God. Moreover, for the Cistercian monk to “abandon the heavenly for the earthly Jerusalem was therefore a patently retrograde step, and

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<sup>50</sup> Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality*, 100.

<sup>51</sup> Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality*, 99.

revealed a palpable misunderstanding of the ideal of imitation Christ itself.”<sup>52</sup> Thus, Bernard himself did not see his own monks to be suited for the violence of the crusades, and upheld the ideal that clerics of the previously founded orders should refrain from all armsbearing.

As such, the Templars, according to Purkis, had a quite different role from that of the crusaders and the monks of other orders. While the Templars had renounced the world for the sake of Christ, and thus it was no longer for their own glory, but His, that they killed their enemies, they still, being monks as well as knights, sought the spiritual realm and thus acquired the same grace from God as any other monk. Renouncing the world, they were more freely able to imitate Christ as ideal crusaders and also as ideal monks. The Templars had therefore become the new model of those who sought to be *imitatores Christi*.

An important factor in Bernard’s viewing the Templars not merely as taking up the cross of Christ, but as deeply seeking after his life through their monastic lifestyle, was the fact that their mission was to the Holy Land where Christ Himself had walked. Of the places relevant to Christ’s life the Templars were closer than anyone else, having unique access to “the places where his feet have stood.”<sup>53</sup> As will be shown later in the paper, Jerusalem was of utmost importance to Bernard, and thus the Templars’ connection to it doubtless heavily influenced his affection for them.

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<sup>52</sup> Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality*, 100.

<sup>53</sup> Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality*, 110.

So, according to one mellifluous man, to the Templars belonged the future of holy violence as an expression of the imitation of Christ. It can be argued that the Templars were the deepest synthesis yet achieved in the unity between the heavenly and earthly spheres of operation in the context of Christo-mimetic violence, connecting the human experience to heaven unlike any similar development which preceded them. Constantine's state church was but a shadowy and tentative connection between heaven and earth in relation to the fighting monks. Charlemagne's empire was more potently a synthesis of Church and state, though its effect on Christo-mimesis did not extend to monastic warfare. In no wise was it bonded to such a deep monastic theology as that pertaining to the Templars. Urban's crusade, though the direct precursor of the Templar synthesis, was only for the layman, and thus too failed to bridge the final gap between heavenly and earthly war. The Templars, as expressed in Bernard's deep Christo-mimetic theology, most perfectly and smoothly intertwined the very essence of material and spiritual perfection and thus perfectly unified the temporal and the eternal. In all their deeds, whether knightly or monastic, they conquered evil as their knightly and monastic deeds became one. As imitators of Christ they seemed to be the very archetypes, achieving an almost hypostatic union of monk and knight, just as Jesus had achieved the perfect union between God and man through his Incarnation. Their spiritual deeds intertwined with their material deeds and their two natures became inseparable. Thus is the basic nature of the synthesis.

But what aspect of Christo-mimesis influenced Bernard to support the Templars? What planted in his mind the idea that monks fighting to protect Jerusalem, a previously unknown phenomenon within the Church, were the paramount imitators of Christ? The answer to this question, this paper argues, is eschatology.

### Chapter 3

## MONASTICISM AND THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM IN BERNARD'S THEOLOGY, AND HOW THE CHRISTO-MIMETIC TEMPLARS FIT INTO IT

### Monasticism

In order to see why the Templars were the perfect imitators of Christ in St. Bernard's eschatological theology, it is necessary to understand what Bernard believed about the nature of two other subjects. One of these is the nature of monasticism itself. The importance of Christo-mimesis in Bernard's monastic ideal is evident throughout his writings. Henri Daniel-Rops writes in his biography *Bernard of Clairvaux* that "Bernard would be impassioned all his life, but impassioned of the One and Only Model..."<sup>54</sup>

It is evident that Bernard perceived monasticism to be the highest form of living in the earthly world. To Bernard, it was through the struggles of the monastic life that one came to be unified, body and soul, to God. According to Dom Jean Leclercq, in his masterful work *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, Bernard's view of the effect of the monastic life properly lived was "the establishment

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<sup>54</sup> Henri Daniel-Rops, *Bernard of Clairvaux*, translated by Elisabeth Abbott (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1964), 28.

of a certain contact with God, a profound attachment to Him..."<sup>55</sup> Moreover, in another work entitled *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Cistercian Spirit*, Leclercq quotes St. Bernard as saying "the monastic vocation is the best means of satisfying the double exigency which grace places in the heart of every Christian: personal purification and communion in the life of the whole Church."<sup>56</sup> Thus, to Bernard, there was no better way to transcendently imitate Christ and to attain unity with God than to live a monastic life. Giving up one's material possessions and following the Spirit of God in one's soul in all things directly reflects the exhortations and life of Christ in the New Testament.

It is also manifest that Bernard recognized the Templars as exemplary representations of the Christo-mimesis of monastic life. In *De Laude*, Bernard praises the manner in which the Knights of the Temple lived out their monastic vocation to the fullest. Of them, he says that "discipline is always observed...their comings and goings are decided by their leader, their clothes are those that he has distributed...they live together in cheerful, sober fashion without their wives and children...they possess no personal property...this numerous band has a single heart, a single soul...individual precedence is not fixed....so that each carries the burdens of another

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<sup>55</sup> Jean Leclercq, *Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, translated by Catharine Misrahi (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982), 5.

<sup>56</sup> Jean Leclercq, *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Cistercian Spirit*, translated by Claire Lavoie (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1976), 39.



at one time or another to fulfill the law of Christ.”<sup>57</sup> A more perfect life to be lived by the devoted Christian could not be imagined. Surely, Bernard sees the Knights Templar as ideal monks. They are perfectly obedient to their leader and in this manner are exemplary imitators of Christ, who by undertaking the pain of crucifixion and death was perfectly obedient to his father. Bernard compares them to the soldier in Luke 7:8, who recognized his need to defer to Christ though he himself was a centurion and in command of one hundred subordinates. Bernard refers to Paul’s exhortation to the children of God in Ephesians 4:3 as the commandment which the Templars exemplify in their monastic life: “Careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” commands Paul,<sup>58</sup> and truly Templars live as one spirit in perfect unity, reflecting the soul of Christ.

It is moreover evident that Bernard saw the Templars’ monastic lifestyle as a way to sanctify their knightly deeds. After deriding the selfish, effeminate, and worthless killings of secular knights in *De Laude*, Bernard praises the Knights Templar for committing exactly the same sorts of violent acts. He clearly shows how the position of the Templars as monks, in their imitation of Christ and Godly spirit, envelops their knightly deeds and thus makes them acceptable in the eyes of God. He speaks of their hatred for shimmering armor, saying that they arm themselves instead with faith. All of their martial accessories are chosen for practicality, not ostentation.

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<sup>57</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, in *The Templars*, translated by Malcolm Barber and Keith Bate (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 222-223.

<sup>58</sup> Ephesians 4:3.

They fight to instill the fear of God, not to gain glory. He even makes Biblical connections by saying that they act like Israelite kings when the battle commences. “Like true Israelites”, Bernard says, “they go to war as peacemakers, but when the battle actually starts they finally put aside their former gentleness as if they were saying: Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?”<sup>59</sup> He claims, moreover, that their “strength cometh from Heaven.”<sup>60</sup> Thus, even in their worldly battles they act angelically. He stresses their Christo-mimesis by saying that they act as Christ did in Matthew 21:12 when, in righteous anger, He chased out the moneychangers from the House of God.<sup>61</sup> Bernard speaks of their zeal for God as being “as fervent as that shown by a former leader of knights, when he was angered to the point of violence and entered the temple, with a weapon in his most holy hand.”<sup>62</sup> Thus, the Knights Templar guardianship of Jerusalem mirrors Christ’s casting out of the moneychangers from the Temple.

Thus runs Bernard’s view of the Templars as Christo-mimetic superlatives by their monasticism and their knighthood. He seems to argue that monastic life and knightly life, though fused, exist in an unequal consubstantiation. The monastic life seems to envelop and permeate the knightly life, sanctifying it. The knightly life, however, seems to have no such effect on the monastic life. The Templars as monks

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<sup>59</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, 223.

<sup>60</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, 224.

<sup>61</sup> Matthew 21:12.

<sup>62</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, 225.

sanctify knighthood and make it holy, just as Christ sanctified humanity when He betook upon Himself its fleshly burdens.

With regard to the idea of spirit-matter fusion, Bernard attempted to erase any separation between the earthly and heavenly spheres. In the *Cistercian Spirit*, Leclercq writes that Bernard “saw such a continuity between the earthly church and the heavenly Church – both constituting the unique spouse of the Incarnate Word – that he showed how the Church here below is constantly assisted by the one on high in her struggle against evil, in her prayer, and in all that she does to unite herself to the One she loves and whose love has benefitted all.”<sup>63</sup> In a different place he quotes the saint as saying “even if the temporal and spiritual are distinct, they cannot be separated.”<sup>64</sup> Thus, it seems that Bernard attempted to effectively unify the heavenly and earthly worlds, insofar as they could be unified in the spirit and body of mankind. As might be inferred from what has been stated above, it was the task of the monk to act as the nexus between the spiritual world and the material. In this way he represented something of a second Christ in his own right. As Christ was the nexus between God and men, so was the good monk the nexus between heaven and earth. The effect of this philosophy of monasticism upon the world in which it acted will become incredibly important when a consideration is made of the Templars in Bernard’s doctrine of New Jerusalem eschatology in the context of the *imitatio Christi*.

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<sup>63</sup> Leclercq, *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Cistercian Spirit*, 85.

<sup>64</sup> Leclercq, *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Cistercian Spirit*, 53.

### **The Heavenly Jerusalem**

Bernard saw not only the monk as acting in a very special manner. The monastery in which he lived and prayed also represented a very special place, Jerusalem. The monk in Bernard's eyes was, according to Dom Jean Leclercq, a "dweller in Jerusalem." This Jerusalem "might be anywhere."<sup>65</sup> The spiritual element of the invisible heavenly Jerusalem is essentially present in the soul of the monk, and not dependent upon his being present in any particular material location. Jerusalem, as much as it was a place, was also a state of mind for Bernard, representing the presence of the monk in the glory of God.

The monastery was, of course, the paramount site for monastic unity with God, as it most perfectly reflected the shimmering beauty of the Holy City. Bernard believed the abbey at Clairvaux to be the most righteous representation of Jerusalem on earth. According to Leclercq, Bernard believed that "the monastery is then a Jerusalem in anticipation, a place of waiting and of desire, of preparation for the holy city toward which we look with joy."<sup>66</sup> A monk was always in some way present in Jerusalem, and most present when that monk was in the monastery itself. Jerusalem was also the final end of the monk, according to Bernard. In imitation of Christ he ascended to heaven spiritually, detaching himself completely from the world. It was as a monk that one became a citizen of the true Jerusalem.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Leclercq, *Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, 55

<sup>66</sup> Leclercq, *Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, 56.

<sup>67</sup> Mette Bruun, *Parables: Bernard of Clairvaux's Mapping of Spiritual Topography* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2007), 67.

Should it be supposed that, given such a love for the Heavenly Jerusalem, Bernard saw no value in the Earthly Jerusalem for the salvation of the monk? Certainly it should not, though to St. Bernard, the earthly Jerusalem, though incredibly important for a variety of reasons, was merely a figure of the heavenly one. It was a type of the spiritual Jerusalem after which the Christian sought in his heart. The earthly Jerusalem's lasting salvation from the hands of Muslims was incredibly important for Christianity to function properly in the world. "He [the enemy] will soon invade the very city of the living God," warned Bernard in an attempt to garner support for the Second Crusade, "destroy the workshop of our redemption, and defile the holy places which have been adorned by the blood of the immaculate lamb."<sup>68</sup> The maintenance of the earthly Jerusalem as well as its vigilant protection from the ever-threatening infidel was not only something to be pursued by the lay Crusader; for the Templar, the fighting monk, it was also quite important for salvation, since it represented the perfection of his earthly, knightly calling. To the Templar, then, both the Heavenly and Earthly Jerusalems held the deepest significance.

The eschatological significance of Jerusalem to the life of the monk must also be clearly understood. It was a special place for the man called to monastic life, not merely because Jesus died there, but because it was where He would return at the end of time. Leclercq writes regarding the blessings of Jerusalem being freely available to the monk through the modality of the monastery:

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<sup>68</sup> Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality*, 89.

The spiritual benefits which are proper to the places sanctified by the life of the Lord, by His Passion and Ascension, and which will one day see His return in glory. The mountain of the return is the symbol of the monastic mystery, and for every Christian who becomes a monk, it is as if he always lived in this blessed spot.<sup>69</sup>

The eschatological consequences of this statement for the life of the monk are obvious and severe. One of the contributing factors to the monk's being so close to the spirit of Christ by situating himself spiritually in those places where Christ walked is the fact that those places find their ultimate significance in His Second Coming. It is the monk who symbolizes by his holy life the very apocalypse itself, and it is by his spiritual ascent that he realizes Christ's imminent return to earth. The eschatological connection between the monks and Christ finds its ultimate nexus in Jerusalem.

It is important to note that Bernard thought there should have been no marked difference between the Earthly and the Heavenly Jerusalem. They were two cities, indeed, one in the soul and one in the world, but essentially they were reflections of one another. Bernard stated his view in quite lucid terms: "the temporal glory of the earthly city does not subtract from the heavenly advantages, it adds to them, if we accept without hesitation that this city is a figure of our Mother who is in Heaven."<sup>70</sup> Mette B. Bruun quotes one of Bernard's sermons on the Cantic of Canticles to support the idea that Bernard believed in more than one meaning for Jerusalem: "though in part reigning in heaven and in part pilgrimaging on earth, it is still one

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<sup>69</sup> Leclercq, *Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, 55.

<sup>70</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, "In Praise of the New Knighthood", 222.

city.”<sup>71</sup> It is truly a city with two facets, that is, two natures reflective of the hypostatic union of Christ. It was the role of the Templars to unify these two natures into one final entity, just as they unified knightly and angelic natures within themselves by their novel role.

Bernard connects the Templars to the earthly as well as the Heavenly Jerusalem, and defines their role partly based upon their dedication to its holy sites. He makes numerous connections between the Templars and the earthly Jerusalem by describing how their primary dwelling place, the monastery in Jerusalem, reflects and yet surpasses Solomon’s Temple. He says that “while the magnificence of Solomon’s Temple lay in corruptible materials...all the beauty and pleasing charm of the decoration of this one lies in the religious piety of its inhabitants and their most orderly way of life...He [God] prefers pure minds to golden walls...This temple is also decorated...by arms not by jewels...hanging shields, not with ancient golden crowns.”<sup>72</sup> Thus, it was central to the Templars’ role as monastic figures that they be dedicated to the earthly as well as the spiritual Jerusalem, and thus through them it seems that he connected the two Jerusalems together. Moreover, he saw their presence in Jerusalem as central to their imitation of Christ. In the imitation of Christ material beauty is rejected for the sake of austerity in the Templar monastery in Jerusalem. The Templars have made the holy places of the earthly Jerusalem Christ-

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<sup>71</sup> Bruun, *Parables*, 66.

<sup>72</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, 224.

like, putting away earthly possessions for the glory of the world which is to come. The heavenly Jerusalem thus enveloped the role of the earthly into itself, creating an unequal fusion similar to the fusion of the monk with the knight in the Knight Templar. In this wise it again seems that the Templars have bridged the gap between the earthly and heavenly worlds, just as Christ did when He was made Incarnate.

What is the significance of the Templar, the unity of monk and knight, unifying the earthly and heavenly Jerusalems in a monastic manner reflective of Christ? The answer proposed by this paper is that the Templars had an openly apocalyptic function to play in Bernard's theory of history as well as in his theology of monasticism. They acted as types of Christ portending his Second Coming, erasing all barriers between the earthly and heavenly spheres by fusing together the two Jerusalems in order to usher in the New Jerusalem. By this method they paved the way for the return of the true Redeemer to earth, to unify spirit and matter one last time in His eternal Heavenly Kingdom.



## **Chapter 4**

### **ESCHATOLOGY IN THE MINDS OF THE CRUSADERS AND ST. BERNARD**

#### **Apocalypticism as a Result of the First Crusade**

Before launching into a discussion of the Templars as the Christo-mimetic guardians of Jerusalem in the eschatology of St. Bernard, it is necessary to lay out some background information regarding medieval apocalypticism in general as well as Bernard's eschatological mindset. For it cannot be argued that he saw the Templars as eschatologically significant unless it is first effectively shown that he had an apocalyptic bent to begin with. Thus it is necessary to give some background illustration, showing that these ideas indeed did influence the mind of Bernard and other medieval thinkers.

An exposition of eschatological views permeating the medieval world as a result of the First Crusade will serve to put all these ideas into context. A leading scholar on medieval apocalyptic traditions, Bernard McGinn, sums up the apocalyptic influence of the Crusades quite nicely. He writes that "the crusade was not so much the result of apocalypticism as it was a notable stimulus to the revival of apocalyptic themes. Jerusalem became a concrete historical place as well as an apocalyptic ideal, and changes that affected the political situation of the city were bound to suggest

apocalyptic implications after 1100.”<sup>73</sup> The Templars, this paper will argue, fit nicely into this new apocalypticism in the writings of St. Bernard.

The ideas of crusading and martially protecting the Holy Land from attack had often carried an eschatological message since historians began writing about them shortly after the First Crusade. This is not to suggest that the First Crusade was eschatological in tone when it was called, but it seems as though an eschatological interest resulted from it. Guibert of Nogent, who wrote extensively on the history of the First Crusade in his crusading chronicle *Gesta Dei per Francos*, states that “although pure strength was pre-eminent among the ancients, yet among us, though the end of time has come upon us, the gifts of nature have not entirely rotted away.”<sup>74</sup> In the next sentence he describes the world as “slipping into old age.”<sup>75</sup>

Clearly, there is an overt apocalyptic view guiding his work. His casual mentioning of the “end of time” without any further explanation suggests that the end of time was approaching and that the crusading ideal would somehow be involved in its culmination. His comparison of his own time with that of the ancients also lends credence to the idea that the “end of time” meant a literal end of the world, an event occurring historically within the material sphere.

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<sup>73</sup> Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia UP, 1979), 89.

<sup>74</sup> Guibert of Nogent, *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, translated by Robert Levine (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell, 1997), 27.

<sup>75</sup> Guibert of Nogent, *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, 27.

Guibert's eschatological leanings are made more evident upon an examination of his account of Pope Urban's call for the First Crusade. According to Guibert, one of the pope's messages, paraphrased, was essentially as follows:

God is working through your efforts to restore the church that is the mother of churches; he might wish to restore the faith in some of the eastern lands, in spite of the nearness of the time of the Antichrist. For it is clear that the Antichrist makes war neither against Jews, nor against pagans, but, according to the etymology of his name, he will move against Christians. And if the Antichrist comes upon no Christian there, as today there is scarcely any, there will be no one to resist him, or any whom he might justly move among. Accordingly to Daniel and Jerome his interpreter, his tent will be fixed on the Mount of Olives, and he will certainly take his seat, as the Apostle teaches, in Jerusalem, 'in the temple of God, as though he were God,' and according to the prophet, he will undoubtedly kill three kings pre-eminent for their faith in Christ, that is, the kings of Egypt, of Africa, and of Ethiopia. This cannot happen at all, unless Christianity is established where paganism now rules.<sup>76</sup>

Here, Guibert seems to be taking for granted the proximate advent of the Antichrist. He presupposes that the Antichrist will come to Jerusalem, whether the Crusade occurs or not; the Crusades simply function to ensure that the apocalypse occurs properly by the formula of the prophecy. The Crusaders must retrieve Jerusalem for Christendom in order that Christians might be killed by their ultimate enemy and the end of the world might ensue.

The theme of rescuing Jerusalem and purifying it for the coming of Christ, an idea which will become integral when the role of the Templars is considered, is put to extensive use in Guibert's rendition of the Clermont address. He quotes Luke 21:24: "Jerusalem will be trodden down by Gentiles, until the time of the nations will be

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<sup>76</sup> Guibert of Nogent, *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, 43-44.

fulfilled.”<sup>77</sup> Clearly, the recapture of Jerusalem is a key to the eschatological process. He cements his view by saying that “according to the prophecies, it is necessary, before the coming of the Antichrist in those parts...that the empire of Christianity be renewed...Consider then, that Almighty providence may have destined you for the task of rescuing Jerusalem from such abasement.”<sup>78</sup> According to Guibert’s rendering of the pope’s message, Jerusalem must be recaptured in order for the end times to commence.

It is interesting to note that immediately following the eschatological speech, Urban speaks of the importance of what would become the primary purpose of the Templars, the protection of pilgrims. “Think of the pilgrims who travel the Mediterranean; if they are wealthy, to what tributes, to what violence are they subjected...the money that they did not have was forced from them by intolerable tortures; the skin of their bones was probed and stripped, in search of anything that they might have sewed within.”<sup>79</sup>

Another example of the eschatological element so prevalent in post-Crusade writings comes from an account of the First Crusade written by Ekkehard von Aura, a Benedictine chronicler and historian of the First Crusade, around 1115. His account, *Jerusalem Journey*, is rife with apocalyptic language that suggests imagery used by

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<sup>77</sup> Guibert of Nogent, *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, 43-44.

<sup>78</sup> Guibert of Nogent, *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, 43-44.

<sup>79</sup> Guibert of Nogent, *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, 45.

John in the Book of Revelation. Ekkehard's descriptions of the miracles occurring before the Crusade are quite vivid:

A sign in the sun that had been foretold was seen, many portents appeared in the sky as well as on the earth and excited not a few who were previously indifferent to the Crusade...About the fifth of October we saw a comet in the south, its tail extending sideways like a sword. In the third year after these events, on February 24, we saw another star in the east changing its position by leaps and bounds after a long interval. We and many witnesses attest to have seen blood-red clouds rising from the west as well as the east and rushing together in the center of the sky, as well as brilliant fires from the north in the middle of the night, and frequently sparks flying through the air...In the afternoon saw two knights charging against each other in the sky...saw a sword of marvelous strength, arising from an unknown source, borne off into the heavens in a whirlwind...Others who kept watch feeding horses reported that they saw the likeness of a city in the air. Some showed the sign of the cross stamped by divine influence on their foreheads or clothes or in some part of their body...a woman...gave birth to a son already speaking when her womb finally opened?<sup>80</sup>

Ekkehard's explanations in detail of visions of stars, red clouds, celestial fires, and comets in the sky evoke the Johannine visions. The Crusaders, divinely stamped on their foreheads with the sign of the cross, may suggest God's divine mark upon his warriors in the last days of the world. More interestingly, the vision of a city in the sky probably symbolizes the Heavenly Jerusalem and perhaps its eschatological connection to the Earthly. Ekkehard's account not only offers a vivid example of apocalyptic language and thought present in the minds of some of the first contemporary historical writers of the Crusades; it also reveals how each of the apocalyptic themes they stress can be seen to have come to fruition in the formation of the Knights Templar.

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<sup>80</sup> Ekkehard von Aura. "Jerusalem Journey", in Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 92-93.

### **Bernard's Eschatology**

One would rightly ask how eschatological thinking influenced St. Bernard.

Did he truly think eschatologically? Certainly, Bernard's apocalyptic thought influenced those who looked up to him. Bernard McGinn writes of Bernard's influence on Joachim of Fiore, the 12<sup>th</sup> century mystic, that "the abbot of Clairvaux is also given a distinctive place in the Calabrian's apocalyptic theology."<sup>81</sup> It is also evident from Bernard's own writings that eschatology was a strong element in his thinking. To show a clear example of the importance of eschatology to Bernard's theology, we will now move into an examination of the dynamic nature of his eschatological method regarding his views on the Antichrist.

It seems that the Mellifluous Doctor went from being an eschatological conservative, unwilling to make a definitive statement one way or the other regarding the historical apocalypse and the advent of one of its key figures, the Antichrist, to an ardent supporter of the idea that the Antichrist was alive and well in his own time. An attempt to trace the history of his views would do well to begin with a letter he wrote in either 1124 or 1128 to Geoffrey, Bishop of Chartres. The letter concerns an encounter Bernard had with his contemporary, Bishop Norbert of Xanten. Bernard mentioned to Geoffrey that he had met Norbert and spoken with him regarding the coming of the Antichrist. Norbert allegedly argued in favor of the idea that the

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<sup>81</sup> Bernard McGinn, "Alter Moyses: The Role of Bernard of Clairvaux in the thought of Joachim of Fiore", in *Apocalypticism in the Western Tradition*, (Aldershot, Hampshire, Great Britain: Variorum, 1994), 429.

Antichrist would arrive on the earth in the lifetimes of both men. However, Bernard, after hearing Norbert's argument, states, "I did not feel compelled to agree with him."<sup>82</sup> Thus, it is evident that around the end of the 1120s, Bernard did not believe in any imminent arrival of the Antichrist and, consequently, in any approaching historical end to the material world.

Now it is important to note that in the Middle Ages, theologians often made generous use of 'Antichrist' language, and Bernard was no exception. McGinn writes that "Bernard made frequent use of Antichrist rhetoric in the many quarrels in which he was involved...but an important letter indicates that the Cistercian disagreed with his friend and contemporary St. Norbert, who thought that the final Enemy would come in the current generation."<sup>83</sup> Thus, Bernard's assertions that certain persons were the Antichrist must be examined in a more figurative than literal light. As will be shown, Bernard did associate a few individuals with the Antichrist, and even openly labeled one as the Antichrist himself. It is safer, nevertheless, to interpret these indictments as merely rhetorically exaggerated statements. Bernard certainly believed that such individuals were prefigurations, or portents, of the true Antichrist, but whether he actually thought they were Antichrists themselves is dubious if not highly unlikely. Nevertheless, the eschatological roles which he believed these types of the Antichrist to play are clear and argue in favor of his having an apocalyptic worldview.

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<sup>82</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, "Letter to Geoffrey, Bishop of Chartres", in *The Letters of St. Bernard of Clairvaux*, 86.

<sup>83</sup> Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 109.

With these things in mind, it was not extraordinary for Bernard to label the “antipope” Anacletus II, the rival claimant to the Papal throne against Innocent II, the Antichrist in the year 1131. In one letter Bernard writes about Anacletus that “the abomination of desolation is standing in the Holy Place, to gain possession of which he has set fire to the sanctuary of God.”<sup>84</sup> Clearly, Bernard views Anacletus II as a veritable threat to the Church and, given the clear Antichrist rhetoric being used to describe him, an eschatological character.

In the 1120s, Bernard was guarded in his view regarding the coming of the Antichrist. However, by 1131, the upheaval of the papal turmoil seems to have liberalized his opinions about the possibility of an impending Antichrist. A few years prior to Anacletus, Bernard felt the coming of the Antichrist to be doubtful; now, perhaps he felt that the nemesis of Christ was approaching and would shortly arrive. As will be shown in the next example, Anacletus was not the only figure with whom Bernard associated such apocalyptic attributes.

Anacletus II died in 1138. In the late 1130s and early 1140s, however, Bernard became involved in a series of conflicts with the controversial scholastic Peter Abelard, and the language used in Bernard’s invectives against him demonstrates an eschatological tone similar to that employed against Anacletus. In one letter probably written during this period to an anonymous abbot, Bernard writes that “Peter Abelard

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<sup>84</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “Letter to Hildbert, Archbishop of Tours”, in *The Letters of St. Bernard of Clairvaux*, 188.



has gone before the face of Antichrist to prepare his way, holding forth on faith.”<sup>85</sup>

Bernard does not believe Abelard to be the Antichrist, nor does he label him haphazardly as such. He does seem to suggest, however, that Abelard in some way portends the Antichrist, as Anacletus did, figuratively acting as a destroyer of orthodox Christianity in order to make the Antichrist’s advent easier.

By the end of his life, Bernard’s eschatological belief in the impending arrival of the Antichrist had become quite literal and he saw no shame in expressing his views. In the prologue to his life of St. Malachy, written in 1152, a year before his death, Bernard writes:

And, as I suspect, he concerning whom it is written ‘Want will go before his face’ (Job 41:13), is either at hand or near. Unless I am mistaken, Antichrist is the man whom hunger and a lack of all goodness both precedes and accompanies. Therefore, whether these are messages of his presence or messages already sent ahead of his coming, want is evident.<sup>86</sup>

Bernard could not have been more vivid with his language. He believes that the Antichrist is either “at hand” or “near” on account of the lack of goodness and wellness he observed around him when he wrote. Thus, Bernard’s manifest belief in the approaching coming of Antichrist and thus the end of the world had reached its peak by 1152. Bernard’s eschatology was anything but static; it was developing and becoming ever more dynamic. Moreover, it was certainly a subject which influenced

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<sup>85</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “Letter to a Certain Abbott”, in *The Letters of St. Bernard of Clairvaux*, 327.

<sup>86</sup> Bernard McGinn, “Saint Bernard and Eschatology”, in *Bernard of Clairvaux: Studies Presented to Dom Jean Leclercq* (Washington: Cistercian Publications, 1973), 170-171.

his thinking. His frequent use of Antichrist rhetoric to describe those with whom he associated the literal coming of Christ's antithesis is a clear indication of this fact.

It was around 1135 that Bernard wrote in praise of the Templars. Anacletus II, whom Bernard saw as a figurative Antichrist and as a portent of the real one, was still alive and masquerading as pope. Moreover, though the Kingdom of Jerusalem still existed safely in Christian hands, the Islamic threat still loomed. It is the central argument of this paper that *De Laude Novae Militiae* represents Bernard's attempt to attach eschatological significance to the Christo-mimesis of the Knights Templar, putting them in a firm apocalyptic context alongside both the earthly and heavenly aspects of Jerusalem.

## Chapter 5

### THE ROLE OF THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR IN THE ESCHATOLOGY OF ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

#### Historical Eschatology

It must be reiterated that Jerusalem was the single unifying factor in Bernard's viewing the Templars apocalyptically as imitators of Christ. Moreover, Bernard's view of the earthly Jerusalem itself carried a markedly apocalyptic element. This element is crucial to understanding the Templars as apocalyptic figures. Mette Bruun writes that to Bernard, Jerusalem was the very antithesis of Babylon. Bruun affirms that with regard to Bernard's New Testament exegesis, Jerusalem is heavily involved in the fight against the Babylon spoken about at length in the Apocalypse of John. "The contrast" says Bruun, "is primarily recalled with awesome prophecy in Revelation's distinction between the fall of the blood-drunken whore of Babylon and the coming of the New Jerusalem."<sup>87</sup>

Immediately at the beginning of *De Laude*, Bernard mentions the Templars' connection to Jerusalem and introduces the idea of their imitation of Christ by saying that "a new sort of knighthood is said to have sprung up in those lands and that region

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<sup>87</sup> Bruun, *Parables*, 64.

once visited in the living flesh by the One who was born on High.”<sup>88</sup> The Templars act as Christ by appearing in the very lands which He Himself had once occupied. The Christo-mimetic implication of their martial deeds is illuminated when Bernard adds: “He [Christ] drove out from there by the might of His hand the princes of darkness, and now by the hand of his brave warriors He will scatter and destroy the captains, the sons of the infidels.”<sup>89</sup> The deeds of the Templars are compared to Christ’s clearing out of the Temple before His death. The Templars ‘scatter’ the leading men of their adversaries. The eschatological sense in which this Christo-mimesis is contextualized is suggested in the following sentence, in which Bernard says that “He [Christ] will redeem His people and raise the horn of Salvation for us in the house of his son David.”<sup>90</sup> The Templars are defined as being raised within the Holy City, the horns of salvation which will lead the people of God to Himself. Historically, this may well suggest, as the rest of the paper will attempt to show, that Jerusalem is to be guarded by the Templars in the last days, before the Second Coming of Christ. Spiritually, it suggests that the Templars have a redemptive connection to Christ, invested with the power to assist the salvation of the souls of God’s people. Bernard’s labeling them the “horns of salvation” and claiming that Christ will “redeem His people” through them attests to this redemptive connection.

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<sup>88</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, 216.

<sup>89</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, 216.

<sup>90</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, 216.

Bernard's quotes here are evidently influenced by the Benedictus of Zechariah in Luke 1:68-79. The canticle mentions the Lord's redemption of his people through Christ, the horn of salvation, for whom Bernard's letter simply substitutes the Templars.<sup>91</sup> The second piece of the Benedictus refers to John the Baptist, and clearly, given the above quotes, has an eschatological undertone if applied to the role of the Templars. Zechariah sings:

And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways: To give knowledge of salvation to his people, unto the remission of their sins: Through the bowels of the mercy of our God, in which the Orient from on high hath visited us: To enlighten them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death: to direct our feet into the way of peace.<sup>92</sup>

Bernard must have understood and appreciated an eschatological tone in the Benedictus when writing his letter. The Templars, in the context of the letter, "go before the face of the Lord", that is, come before him, in order to "prepare his ways." They prepare the way for his Second Coming, acting as prophets in a manner similar to John the Baptist. By living as monks in the city of Jerusalem, they "give knowledge of salvation to his people."

Bernard later reiterates that the primary purpose of the Templars is to defend the city of Jerusalem from the hands of invaders and to keep it in the hands of the Christians. His views on the apocalyptic nature of Jerusalem have already been

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<sup>91</sup> "Benedictus (Song of Zechariah)", Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benedictus\\_\(Song\\_of\\_Zechariah\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benedictus_(Song_of_Zechariah)) (accessed October 1, 2012).

<sup>92</sup> "Benedictus (Song of Zechariah)", Wikipedia.

discussed. His views, however, on the ultimate purpose of the Templars' function of constantly fighting off the heathen for the sake of the continuance of the Christian occupation seems clear in the following statement: "after their [the heathens'] expulsion He [Christ] will return into the house that is His inheritance."<sup>93</sup> That is, when Jerusalem, by means of the Templars, is purified spiritually and physically, Christ will reappear there. When the Templars have effectively fought off the Muslims and secured lasting security for the city, Christ will return "into the house that is His inheritance." Or, to view it in a different way, when Jerusalem was liberated by the Crusaders, the Templars, "sprung up" within it, as Bernard says, to keep it pure before the true Second Coming. They did this by means of scattering and destroying "the captains, the sons of the infidels", in a manner reflective of Christ's casting the money-changers from the Temple. That is, in imitation of Christ they came to Jerusalem after it was purified by the Crusaders in order to guard it in preparation for the arrival of the One they imitate.

The following passages abound with Biblical references with clear apocalyptic meanings. Immediately after speaking about Christ's return to Jerusalem after it has been purified, Bernard references Christ's words from Matthew 23:38: "behold, your house shall be left to you, desolate."<sup>94</sup> The house spoken of is the house of Jerusalem, which according to the same passage, on account of her persecution of the prophets, will "not see me [Christ] henceforth till you say: Blessed is he that cometh in the name

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<sup>93</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, "In Praise of the New Knighthood", 220.

<sup>94</sup> Matthew 23:38.

of the Lord.”<sup>95</sup> The continual repelling of the heathens by the Templars following the Christianization of Jerusalem may surely fulfill this prophecy.

Bernard states that through the Templars, God will fulfill the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:12: “they shall come and shall give praise in Mount Sion and they shall rejoice in the good things of the Lord.”<sup>96</sup> When Christians have entered into the city, when the enemy has been defeated, Bernard instructs the Holy City to “rejoice, Jerusalem, and know now the time of your visitation!”<sup>97</sup> The ‘visitation’ refers to another prophecy made by Christ in Luke 19:41-44 before the cleansing of the Temple. The prophecy warns the money-changers and the merchants who defiled the Temple of God that one day, because of their lack of piety and ignorance of the times in which they lived, they would be cast to the ground and not a stone of the Temple would stand. Conversely, Bernard’s quote suggests that, by the coming of the Templars into Jerusalem for the sake of defending it, it has been made aware of the time of its visitation. Whereas the money-lenders and hypocrites of the Temple knew not that they were being visited by the Messiah, the purified Jerusalem will know that Christ’s advent into it is imminent. Thus, the Templars, being the vehicle of its guardianship and preserver of its purification, are also the means by which the Holy City will be made aware of the Second Coming of Christ.

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<sup>95</sup> Matthew 23:39.

<sup>96</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, 221.

<sup>97</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, 221.

In another sentence, Bernard exclaims: “break forth into joy and give praise together, ye waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord hath comforted his people: he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath prepared his holy arm in the eyes of all nations.”<sup>98</sup> The Templars act as *imitatores Christi*, as they have been shown to do before in this letter, as figurative redeemers of Jerusalem. By defending it from Muslim attacks, they are quickening the purification process which the city must undergo before Christ is to return. The passage is quoted from Isaiah 52:9-10, which finishes by saying that “all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”<sup>99</sup> Clearly, Bernard intends that Jerusalem, in his time, become the beacon of light through which all the nations of the earth shall see the light of God.

It seems that there is a pattern in *De Laude* of applying Old Testament prophecy to the coming of the Templars. Bernard doubtless sees them as a sort of biblically foretold organization, their purpose given by a number of Old Testament passages. They were not simply warriors in his eyes: they were almost messianic in character, having been predicted for millennia by the followers of God as the final defenders of Jerusalem against the bondage of her pagan enemies. They were precursors of Christ’s return, angelic messengers from the throne of God Himself.

Further evidence that Bernard saw the Knights of the Temple as final liberators and the fulfillers of prophecy abounds as the letter progresses. A few instances will be noted here. He again cites Isaiah, this time 62:4 saying that “thou shalt no more be

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<sup>98</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, 221.

<sup>99</sup> Isaiah 52:9-10.



termed “forsaken,” neither shall thy land any more be termed “desolate”; for the Lord hath delighted in thee, and thy land shall be inhabited.”<sup>100</sup> There is a clear sense of finality in this quote. No longer will Jerusalem undergo the persecution of her enemies, but as long as the Templars remain in the city, it shall be safe from persecution. The Lord delights in the newfound purity of the city, and shall bless it until the end of time.

Bernard then defines the Templars as directly sent by God, and claims that “through them right now is completely fulfilled that ancient promise to you: ‘I will make thee an everlasting excellency, a joy of many generations, and thou shalt suck the milk of the Gentiles: and thou shalt be nourished by the breast of kings.’”<sup>101</sup> Again, Bernard references the fulfilling by the Templars of an “ancient promise,” a Biblical covenant made by God to those who follow Him. The ancient promise referenced comes from Isaiah 60:15-16, which God makes to Jerusalem and in which He promises her eternal glory and the place as a beacon of light to the world. The prophecy concerns the final end of the Holy City, that it shall be an “everlasting glory.”<sup>102</sup> By the redemption effected by the Templars, Jerusalem will become a source of eternal goodness and light for the Gentiles, bringing many to the light of Christ as a forerunner to his bodily coming.

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<sup>100</sup> Isaiah 62:4.

<sup>101</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, 221.

<sup>102</sup> Isaiah 60:15-16.

Bernard again mentions the Templars as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. He affirms that the “new knighthood is frequently sanctioned by the testimony of the ancients, and that ‘as we have heard, so we see in the city of the Lord of virtues.’”<sup>103</sup> The Templars are not only sporadically mentioned in the Old Testament. In Bernard’s eyes, they are the subject of many prophecies.

Concerning the exegesis of all of these passages in relation to the Knights Templar, Bernard writes:

As long as the literal interpretation does not prejudice the spiritual meaning from which we hope in eternity, we borrow from the words of the prophets whatever is applicable to the present time, in case our beliefs should disappear because of what we see, and the poverty of reality diminish the riches of our hopes; the testimony of today would be the loss of tomorrow.<sup>104</sup>

This quote in no way lessens the validity of Bernard’s belief in the eschatological nature of the Templars, or in their role as the fulfillers of Old Testament prophecy. In fact, it cements those beliefs since, as Bernard claims that as long as a literal interpretation does not take away from the spiritual, that is, the more important interpretation, the literal interpretation can be applied rightly to one’s own time in order that hope might be restored to an otherwise spiritually lukewarm people. Since the spiritual connotation of an interpretation is always the more crucial to Bernard, applying the spiritual effect of the prophecies to the Templars is a perfectly valid move. It represents the unequal fusion of the spiritual with the material, in which the

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<sup>103</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, 221.

<sup>104</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, 221-222.

material is purified by the spiritual. God would never deceive His people, and thus any right literal interpretation, as long as it is spiritually beneficial, is truly relevant to the events of one's own time. The exegeses of prophecies must be applied carefully and with spiritual guidance. Anything which must be done to restore the faith of the people, so long as it is just, is accurate and true in the eyes of God. Thus, these prophecies, in Bernard's opinion, can indeed be rightfully literally applied to the Templars and their role in the historical end of the world through their defense and apocalyptic preparation of the earthly Jerusalem.

Still, the spiritual aspect outweighs the literal aspect, as Bernard makes clear in the following sentence, quoted earlier: "The temporal glory of the earthly city does not subtract from the heavenly advantages, it adds to them, if we accept without hesitation that this city is a figure of our Mother who is in Heaven."<sup>105</sup> The 'Mother' referred to is the heavenly Jerusalem. An interesting parallel thus arises. The literal interpretation of a Biblical passage coincides with the less important, nevertheless crucial, earthly Jerusalem, and the spiritual interpretation coincides with the heavenly, more sacred Jerusalem. Thus, the literal interpretation of a Biblical passage is but a figure of the spiritual interpretation. Interpreting Old Testament prophecies to refer to the eschatology of the Templars and their redemption of Jerusalem in the last days is in no way wrong; it is simply subordinate to the spiritual interpretation of God's metaphysical effecting of the salvation of the Holy City. The redemption is a spiritual

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<sup>105</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, "In Praise of the New Knighthood", 222.

work throughout a series of times, and the Templars are simply one, and according to this thesis, the last, point in the series.

This is the way in which the Knights Templar fit into the historical eschatology of St. Bernard. The representation of them as imitators of Christ is evident. Just as Christ will return again to Jerusalem in order to liberate it from the heathen and purify it for His chosen people, so the Templars, acting as His precursors, begin to pave the way for Him by acting as Christo-mimetic defenders of the Holy City.

### **Spiritual Eschatology**

Historical eschatology, however, is not the only form of apocalyptic thought by which Bernard was influenced. Bernard, as a monk, was naturally also focused on what is called the ‘spiritualizing eschatology’ of the soul, which concerns the ascent of the soul into heaven, that is, the soul’s final destiny or individual apocalypse. McGinn writes of spiritual eschatology that “unfulfilled eschatological expectation could be re-interpreted in a purely spiritual sense – imagery originally meant to depict the future history of God’s kingdom could be seen as telling the story of the destiny of the soul.”<sup>106</sup> Richard K. Emmerson writes that “The city [New Jerusalem] is also an emblem of a future reality – of life after death, the City of God in which Christians

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<sup>106</sup> Bernard McGinn, “Saint Bernard and Eschatology”, 161.

seek to become eternal citizens and even building blocks.”<sup>107</sup> Thus, to discuss vertical eschatology does not entail an entirely novel form of apocalypticism. It merely shifts the view from history to the ideal path of the individual soul. Perhaps most important to this paper is McGinn’s assertion that “the presence of this tradition in Cistercian theology is undeniable.”<sup>108</sup> Moreover, McGinn writes that “it is obvious that there is much spiritualizing eschatology and purely vertical anagogy in the writings of Bernard of Clairvaux – so much indeed that no paper could really do them justice.”<sup>109</sup> Hence, we now move into an application of this sort of eschatology in *De Laude*, applying it to the Mellifluous Doctor’s apocalyptic theology of the Templars. We can view the spiritual eschatology of the Templars in *De Laude* as sort of enveloping the historical eschatology and thus giving it greater comprehension. When the two forms of eschatology overlap in the case of the Templars, the result is a potent monastic apocalypticism of Jerusalem centered on a Christo-mimetic ideal. So, where does Bernard begin his spiritually eschatological analysis of the Templars in *De Laude*? A close examination of the letter will reveal how the Templars fit nicely into the spiritually eschatological paradigm.

Before moving into this analysis, let us understand the meaning behind the semantic interpretations to be made of this profound philosophy of spiritual apocalypticism. When Jerusalem is referred to in the eschatological sense, the Holy

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<sup>107</sup> Richard K. Emmerson, “The Apocalypse in Medieval Culture”, in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 313.

<sup>108</sup> Bernard McGinn, “St. Bernard of Eschatology”, 163.

<sup>109</sup> Bernard McGinn, “St. Bernard of Eschatology”, 163.

City seems to apply to the soul itself. It has been shown already that Bernard viewed the Heavenly Jerusalem as eternally present in the soul of the monk, and thus the eschatological interpretation seems to follow. The theme of the redemption of Jerusalem is to be interpreted to mean the redemption of the soul, which every Templar experiences upon answering the call to spiritual and physical arms. The theme of the coming of the Redeemer into the soul may either be taken to mean Christ entering into union with it, or the betaking upon oneself of the monastic life of the Templar. Since it was through their monastic vocation that the Templars imitated Christ, these two types of meaning need not be greatly disassociated from one another. In fact, they can be seen as two facets of one dominant theme. This semantic formula is the best way to view the relevant passages from *De Laude* in a spiritually eschatological fashion.

Bernard makes the spiritually eschatological significance of the Knight Templar manifest in the very first paragraph of *De Laude*, when he asks: “Why should he [the Templar] fear, whether living or dying, since for him life is Christ and death is reward.”<sup>110</sup> The destination of his soul is clearly and succinctly laid out, no mention being made of a need for purgation or indulgence. The purgation of the soul of the individual Templar is itself described when Bernard writes that “He [Christ] drove out from there by the might of His hand the princes of darkness,”<sup>111</sup> describing not only the final redemption of Jerusalem in the historical sense, but also the driving forth of

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<sup>110</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, 217.

<sup>111</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, 216.

evil from the soul of the Templar in the vertical sense, when the Templar betakes upon himself the monastic life lived for the glorification of Christ. Bernard adds to this statement that “He will redeem His people and raise the horn of Salvation for us in the house of his son David.”<sup>112</sup> By throwing away the life of sin and worldliness, the Templar raises unto himself the horn of Christ and purifies himself and his personal Temple of the Heavenly Jerusalem, his body. The ascent of the soul to the Heavenly Jerusalem is thus clearly laid out, a clear and wondrous example of the spiritual eschatology present in Bernard’s theology of the Templars.

Bernard gives a number of similar references. He says that “after their [the heretics’] expulsion He will return into the house that is His inheritance.”<sup>113</sup> Besides being an obviously historical quote regarding the Second Coming, this may just as rightly pertain to the expulsion of the worldly man and of sin from the soul of the Templar when he takes his monastic vows, at which point Christ enters his heart. Sanctified and renewed, he is made clean and prepared for the coming of the Spirit of God into his house, his soul. “Rejoice Jerusalem, and know now the time of your visitation!”<sup>114</sup>

Further quotes regarding the redemption of Jerusalem by the Lord abound, and all of them, when viewed in a spiritually eschatological light, acquire a very deep meaning with regard to the function of the Knights Templar. It is clear that Bernard

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<sup>112</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, 216.

<sup>113</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, 221.

<sup>114</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, 221.

wishes to make clear with his historically eschatological themes the spiritual themes underlying and surrounding them. He says: “Rise up now, shake off your dust, maiden, captive daughter of Sion...thou shalt no more be termed ‘forsaken’ neither shall thy land any more be termed ‘desolate’.”<sup>115</sup> As the historical interpretation would suggest the Templars acting as Christ coming to liberate Jerusalem, so the spiritual interpretation suggests the purification of the Templar’s individual soul by his taking the habit of a Poor Knight. Bernard quotes Isaiah 60:15-16 as the prophecy of the fulfillment of God’s ancient promise to Jerusalem. “I will make thee an everlasting excellency, and thou shalt suck the milk of the Gentiles,”<sup>116</sup> says the God of Israel. A portent of the future eternal glory of the city of Jerusalem, this passage may easily be interpreted in the spiritual sense, to prophesy the future glory of the Templar’s soul at his own death.

“These things are done in Jerusalem” Bernard says, “and the whole world is aroused.”<sup>117</sup> The Templars realize their call, bringing the light of salvation to the people of all nations in the last days of the world. It is their conversion which will bring about the ultimate redemption of Jerusalem, the work being done in their own monastic souls which will spur them on to protect the earthly Jerusalem and thereby unite it to the heavenly one in their hearts. We see how the vertical, spiritual interpretation envelops the horizontal, historical one. Just as the heavenly Jerusalem

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<sup>115</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, 221.

<sup>116</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, 221.

<sup>117</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Praise of the New Knighthood”, 225.



envelops the earthly, and the monk the knight, the spiritual eschatology of the Templars envelops the historical. It is the Templar's monastic vocation, his work and his spiritual ascent to heaven, which is the ultimate cause of his physical guardianship of the material Jerusalem in the last days.

The idea that a spiritual eschatology is present in the context of the Templars' monastic conversion is further made evident by Bernard's mentioning that "He [Christ], who turned his one- time persecutor Saul into his preacher Paul, is now making knights of his enemies."<sup>118</sup> Bernard gives the quote above in the general context of the Templars' willingly preserving Jerusalem from the enemies of God, and thus is further evidence of his view that their spiritual eschatology enveloped the historical. The Templars convert from sinning knights to holy ones, and accept their apocalyptic duties. The idea of conversion is made no less potent in another quote: "Hail therefore, holy city, sanctified as His temple the Most High, who will save so great a nation in you and through you."<sup>119</sup> The historically eschatological implications of this quote have already been explained, but the spiritual ones now seem quite obvious given our previous elucidations.

Thus, the Templars realize, through their conversion, the eschatological implications of their monasticism. They realize that they are imitating Christ by both sanctifying Jerusalem physically, as He Himself did by casting out the moneychangers from the Temple, and spiritually, with the purification of their own souls, little

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<sup>118</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, "In Praise of the New Knighthood", 226.

<sup>119</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, "In Praise of the New Knighthood", 226.

Jerusalems, by means of the monastic life. Since Jerusalem itself was literally within the soul of the Templars, they had dominion over its destiny. They recognize the envelopment of the physical by the spiritual, and see that their spiritual conversion is the only means by which they will attain their physical goals. They are constantly reminded of the apocalyptic consequences of this conversion. Their personal apocalypse determines the very historical apocalypse of the world. Their personal unity with Christ determines their effectiveness in bringing about the general unity of the earth with the New Jerusalem at the end of the world. They are the eschatological nexus between the earthly and heavenly spheres. Bernard's attempt at erasing all boundaries between the earthly and physical worlds in the hands of the monks saw no greater culmination than in the Knights Templar.

### **The New Jerusalem**

Not only do the Templars fuse their souls, the loci of the Heavenly Jerusalem, to the earthly Jerusalem by their monastic conviction. Once these two Jerusalems have been made one, the fusion they create draws in the New Jerusalem of the end of the world. In this fact lies the unifying eschatological key to the entire paper. It is through the unification of the Templars' individual souls and their protection of the earthly Jerusalem that they finally usher in the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem, in the Apocalypse of John, is nearly the representation of Heaven on earth. It is a place in which the body may subsist, but in which the soul of the citizen is perfectly united to God. It is the perfection of the human ideal, the perfect place for the soul to

bring its imitation of Christ to the deepest level possible. It is where Christ reigns as God and man; it is the ultimate expression of unity between Creator and creation. It is the coming of the New Jerusalem which is the ultimate goal of the Templars' existence.

Bruun, in *Parables*, affirms this proposition by arguing that the concept of Jerusalem itself represented to St. Bernard a metamorphosis of a depraved state into one of the highest spiritual caliber. He demonstrates the metamorphosis by showing how St. Augustine viewed the founding of the first Jerusalem upon the ruins of the ancient pagan site of Jebus as indicative of the construction of a city of God.<sup>120</sup> Bruun writes that "Just as the old city was destroyed so that a new one might be built, the old must be destroyed in man in order that the new may take its place."<sup>121</sup> Not only does this quote apply perfectly to the spiritual eschatological functions of the Templars, it applies directly to the concept that the New Jerusalem represents a more perfect version of the old. Bruun moreover writes that "the New Jerusalem is introduced as a replacement of the old and thus as a type of the recreation by grace. Bernard also brings out this association of the new Jerusalem and the restoration in Christ."<sup>122</sup> Bruun then moves on to quote a lengthy but highly relevant passage from Bernard's work, *In Adventu Domini*:

When you thus keep the word of God there is no doubt that you will be kept by it. The Son will come to you with the Father, the great prophet will come who will

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<sup>120</sup> Bruun, *Parables*, 217.

<sup>121</sup> Bruun, *Parables*, 217.

<sup>122</sup> Bruun, *Parables*, 218.

renew Jerusalem and make everything new. Because this advent will bring about that ‘just as we have carried the terrestrial image, we shall also carry the celestial image.’ And just as the old Adam permeated the whole man and occupied him completely, in the same way will Christ hold him completely. He who has created him completely and redeemed him completely will also glorify him completely, he who healed a man wholly on the Sabbath.<sup>123</sup>

The passage in the second line implies the advent of a prophet who will come in order to restore Jerusalem, improving it and bringing it closer to God by essentially replacing its present state with the New Jerusalem. Based on the Christo-mimetic interpretation of the Templars in Bernard’s theology, however, the “great prophet” mentioned the second line may also well refer to the Templars themselves. It will be they, in the type of Christ, who come as gifts from Heaven in order to bring about the destruction of the old Jerusalem in favor of the construction of the New. The passage also makes use of the idea that this New Jerusalem will act as the result of the fusion between the earthly and heavenly Jerusalems already existing in the world and in the soul, respectively. The third and fourth lines of the passage are evidence of such an idea. Indeed, they seem to argue that the present Jerusalems are merely figures of the future Jerusalem, in which spirit and matter will become one.

The theme of the spiritual enveloping and influencing the material for the latter’s advancement has been extensively discussed as a recurring theme in Bernard’s discussion of various topics including the Templars. It appears again in the passage

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<sup>123</sup> Bruun, *Parables*, 218.

above. Where the passage speaks of the old Adam permeating man, that is, his purely base life, in the present world, in the New Jerusalem, it will be Christ who will permeate him. Not that Christ will change the essence of man himself. Rather, Christ will effectively transfigure the essence of man into a more holy state, thereby integrating the realm of spirit into the material existence of man and perfecting him. One can easily see how the same themes which have appeared in Bernard's philosophy of monasticism, eschatology, the Templars, and the present Jerusalem reappear here when discussion is made of the New Jerusalem to come, the culmination of all of these things into one perfect entity.

#### Conclusions

Bernard viewed the Templars as angelic warriors, monks who fight demons as well as knights who fight men. It is clear that through demonic and knightly combat, a Templar is fully monk and fully knight in hypostatic union, as Christ was fully God and fully man. The Templar is one person with two natures. The one nature is higher but joined to the lower in order to redeem the earthly city of Jerusalem, and the other nature is in need of salvation. The eschatology of the soul of the Templar, it seems, can be traced to this union, when he realizes he is seeking ever upwards into heaven through spiritual combat. He is fully monk, and thus the method by which a monk is saved is applied to him. The Christo-mimesis evident in the Templar's role is the key to understanding everything about him.

The synthesis of the Templars is the realization of a thesis, the monastic life, and the antithesis, a worldly, knightly life, into perfection by means of the envelopment of the latter into the former. The dialectic occurs when the Templars realize that they are the keys to the ultimate synthesis of Christianity, heaven and earth, God and man, spirit and matter. Moreover, the driving and necessary impetus of this dialectic is Jerusalem. The ultimate purpose of it is eschatological, both historically and spiritually. The Templars both purify their own souls and thereby purify the material Holy City for the coming of Christ at the end of the physical world. They are the harbingers of the Lamb of God, the destroyers of the spirit of Antichrist, the nexus between the heavenly and earthly spheres. Every martial synthesis of Church and state since Constantine culminates in them. They are in a metaphorical way the alpha, the imitators of Christ, and the omega, the heralds of His Second Coming. They fuse the two Jerusalems, the earthly and heavenly together into one entity, and by this means usher in the New Jerusalem which utterly replaces and outshines the old. Their ultimate goal as imitators of Christ is to prepare the world for His Second Coming, acting as His heralds until the day that He will return to reign in the New Jerusalem at the end of time.



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