Cardinal Manning and the Prophecy of the Jewish Antichrist

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This document contains the core text for a short paper I delivered at the Catholic Records Society Conference in Liverpool in July 2011. Whilst it has not been reworked into a finished article, it has been supplemented with endnotes and a bibliography. A more comprehensive examination of constructions of the diabolic Jew in the English Catholic Discourse can be found in Simon Mayers, ‘From the Christ-Killer to the Luciferian: The Mythologized Jew and Freemason in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century English Catholic Discourse’, Melilah 8 (2011), http://www.melilahjournal.org/p/2011-volume-8.html

Introduction

I would like to use the opportunity that I have been presented with today to talk to you about one particular narrative that I only discovered recently and which is quite different to those I have previously encountered. The narrative form is that of prophecy and its subject is the arrival of ‘the’ Jewish Antichrist. The earliest instance I have found of this narrative in the English Catholic discourse was by Henry Manning in a series of lectures which he first published in 1862. In this short paper I introduce Manning’s narrative about the Jewish antichrist and the later reception of this narrative in the early 20th century. I will also briefly speculate as to Manning’s intent with this narrative and contrast it with his more positive relationship with Jews later in the 19th century. I would like to stress that Cardinal Manning has not been a focus of my research, as for the greater part he lived before the timeframe of my investigation. I thus do not profess to be an expert on his life and thought and would welcome any insights that you have with regard to his discourse on the Jewish Antichrist which might help me to contextualise it. I was lead to Manning by an article spread over four issues of the Catholic Times by Canon William Barry which
also discussed the Jewish Antichrist and made repeated reference to Manning’s lectures.

**Manning’s Antichrist Narrative**

First I will introduce Manning’s narrative about the Jewish Antichrist. In 1862, when most of the Papal States had been seized by the *Risorgimento*, Henry Manning published a series of lectures in a volume entitled *The Temporal Power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ*.2 These lectures were written a few years prior to his being appointed Archbishop of Westminster. They were republished verbatim but with a new preface by Manning in 1880.3 These lectures cited a number of sources, including passages from the bible such as 2 Thessalonians and 1 John, statements by various Church Fathers such as St. Jerome, St. Ambrose and St. John Chrysostom, and theologians such as Francisco Suarez. Manning explained in these lectures that whilst it may “run counter to the popular spirit of these times,” for someone who believes in revelation, it is inconsistent to try to explain contemporary history without taking prophecy into consideration.4 He explained that the “theory that politics and religion have different spheres,” should be considered “an illusion and a snare.”5 Manning stated that it is a “master-stroke of deceit,” to attempt to allay fears and misdirect attention by dismissing the Antichrist as a mere “spirit or system” of the times. According to Manning, the Holy Scripture contains prophecies which describe the Antichrist with “the attributes of a person.” He concludes that “to deny the personality of Antichrist, is therefore to deny the plain testimony of Holy Scripture.”6 Manning informed his audience that the Church Fathers “believed that Antichrist will be of the Jewish race.” He stated that such was the belief of St. Irenaeus, St. Jerome, St. Ambrose and “many others.” He concluded that they were probably correct, that the Antichrist, adhering to
prophecy, would be Jewish. It is not inconsistent to suggest, he argued, that an Antichrist “should arise of Jewish blood, naturalised in some of the peoples of Europe, a protector of the Jews, the purse-bearers, and journalists, and telegraph wires of the revolution of Europe.” He would be “hailed by them as their saviour,” be “surrounded by the phenomena of antichristian and anticatholic spiritualism” and be “an arch-medium himself.”

Citing Francisco Suarez, a Spanish theologian from the 16th century, Manning explained that whilst the Antichrist will at first “pretend to believe that the law of Moses is true and to be observed,” he will only do this “in dissimulation, to deceive [the Jews] and to obtain supreme power.” Afterwards he will “reject the law of Moses, and will deny the true God who gave it.” The Antichrist, he explained, will be well received by the Jews because they are still awaiting the coming of their messiah. He stated that “they have prepared themselves for delusion by crucifying the true Messias” and that it is not “difficult to understand how those who have lost the true and divine idea of the Messias may accept a false [Messiah].” They will be, he stated, “dazzled by the greatness of political and military successes,” and pay a similar homage to the Antichrist, that “Christians pay to the true Messias.” This Jewish Antichrist, Manning argued, will “deny the Incarnation” and “the whole Christian faith and Church.”

Manning argued that it is the duty of the “remnant of the Christian society” to hold “in check” the “manifestation of this antichristian power and the person who shall wield it.” The Antichrist, “the lawless one,” has no “antagonist on earth more direct than the Vicar of Jesus Christ.” Manning stated that there are two types of society. The first
type is the “natural society” in which “the political order … comes from the will of man.” Conversely, the second type, the “supernatural society,” is “still being penetrated by the spirit of faith and of the Catholic unity.” He argued that many countries, such as England, France and Austria, have changed from the supernatural type of society to the natural type of society. “In England, religion is banished from politics,” and in France and Austria “it is declared by public act that the State has no religion” and that “all sects are equally participators in the political life and political power of the nation.” Manning clarified that he was not arguing that the admission of Jews to political privileges was wrong. “On the contrary,” he stated, “if there be no other order than the order of nature, it would be a political injustice to exclude any one of the race of Israel from a participation of equal privileges.” However, he then stated that, “I maintain equally, that in the day in which you admit those who deny the Incarnation to an equality of privileges, you remove the social life and order in which you live from the Incarnation to the basis of mere nature.” This, he concluded, “is precisely what was foretold of the antichristian period.” Manning thus accepted that in the natural society, it would be unjust to deprive the Jews of equal standing, but in the supernatural society, it would be a mistake to “admit those who deny the Incarnation to an equality of privileges.” He stated that this was because “the denial of the Incarnation” is “the third and special mark of Antichrist.”

Reception of Antichrist Narrative

Before returning to Manning, I would like to briefly discuss the English Catholic reception of this Antichrist narrative in the 20th century. In 1901 and 1904, Colonel James Ratton, an English Catholic author, argued that the Antichrist was Jewish and allied with the Freemasons. In 1901, he published X-Rays in Freemasonry. This
repeated traditional stereotypes about the anti-Christian nature of Freemasonry and its alleged war against the Church. It repeatedly emphasised Jewish involvement in Freemasonry and informed readers that the Jews killed Christ and have clung onto their “anti-Christian” principles and ideals ever since. According to Ratton, these ideals include “the expectation of another Messiah, who, we know, will be Antichrist.” He argued that Freemasonry is Satanic, and that the B’nai B’rith is a branch of Jewish Freemasonry whose goal is the domination of all Freemasonry and the reestablishment of King Solomon’s Temple. Ratton added new material when he republished X-Rays in 1904. He argued that Zionism is of interest because it has been prophesised that when the Jews return to Jerusalem, “anti-Christ will appear in their midst.” According to Ratton, Freemasonry, guided by the Jews, is preparing to move its headquarters to Jerusalem, and when the B’nai B’rith joins them, “then will anti-Christ appear in alliance with the Sovereign Pontiff of Freemasonry, and incite the international Masonic forces to persecute the Church in such fashion as has never been before.” Despite common features in their narratives, Ratton did not however cite Manning as a source.

In 1923, an editorial in The Month, the periodical of the British Jesuits, stated that “Manning’s prophecy” had actually been realised “in Soviet Russia.” “Antichrist, in the person of … apostate Jews, is already in power,” the periodical concluded, and “Marx, another apostate Jew, is his evangelist.” This editorial summarised what Canon William Barry, a prolific author, scholar and theologian, had written a few years previously. In 1920, Barry published a four part article in The Catholic Times. In this, Barry expressed concern that the “end of the age is upon us.” The “long-drawn anti-Christian movement, centuries old,” was, he stated, poised to defeat Christendom
having been “quickened by victory after victory.”

Barry cited many passages verbatim from Manning’s lectures which he intertwined with his own impressions about the coming of the Jewish Antichrist. Closely following Manning’s lectures, Barry asserted that the Antichrist would “arise of Jewish blood,” an “arch-medium” and practitioner of “anti-Christian and anti-Catholic Spiritualism,” he would be a “protector of the Jews” and be “hailed by them as their saviour.”

Barry stated that it is clear from “St. Paul’s doctrine of their destiny, and with what St. John and the Fathers have left us concerning the Antichrist,” that the question of the Jew’s role in the fate of Europe will be the “most vital and most decisive of all.”

In his lectures, Manning expressed concern that it might, “appear strange to attach much importance to any event the sphere of which seems to be the Jewish race.” Barry argued that the various crises and revolutions of the sixty years since Manning first published his lectures should overcome any lingering temptation to dismiss Manning’s prophetic warning. The world he suggested is rife with the revolutionary spirit, evident in Turkey and Russia, where the ideas of Karl Marx hold sway.

The years, he argued, are bringing the “Antichrist nearer,” and many voices announce his approach “to the City of God.” “All the portents,” he concluded, “have been fulfilled in Russia, not to say elsewhere.”

According to Barry, “the Catholic spirit and the Hebrew genius” have been locked in conflict ever since Israel chose to reject the Gospel message. The oppression of Paul and the early Christians was just the beginning. “Israel,” he tells his readers, “did surely fulfil the prophets when it gave birth to Christ.” It is doing so yet again, he concluded, but this time it has “paved the way for Antichrist.” Following Manning, he suggested that only the “remnant of the Christian society” can hold back the
Barry did not however hold much hope for the coming battle, for the Christian remnant was torn apart by the Reformation, and the Protestants, he concluded, have “withdrawn from the battlefield.” Barry returned to the Antichrist narrative in an article published in 1923. Again referring to Manning’s interpretation of prophecy, he concluded that the events in Russia, the triumph of atheism over Christianity, demonstrated that the Antichrist was “now in the world.” According to Barry, the “unholy alliance” of “revolution,” “the evil elements in emancipated Judaism,” and “the assailants of Papal Rome, … justifies the forecast which he,” that is to say Cardinal Manning, “made of a coming Antichrist, now looming large upon our Christian inheritance.”

Conclusion

Cardinal Manning was posthumously praised on a number of occasions by the Jewish Chronicle in the late 19th and early 20th century for the support he had provided Jews during blood libels and pogroms. In an address delivered at a meeting organised by the Lord Mayor of London in 1882, Manning condemned the persecution of Jews in Russia and praised the virtues of Jews in England, France and Germany. Manning asked, “for uprightness, for refinement, for generosity, for charity, for all the graces and virtues that adorn humanity where will be found examples brighter or more true of human excellence than in this Hebrew race”? In 1890, after a book which endorsed the Jewish ritual murder charge was given a stamp of approval from the Holy See, Manning wrote to the Secretary of State at the Vatican and obtained an assurance that the Pope did not support the content of the book. He was presented with an illuminated address of thanks by Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler and many other important representatives of Anglo-Jewish organisations. In a speech he gave in
response, he referred to the charity and generosity of his Jewish countrymen in the
care of the sick and poor.\textsuperscript{31} David Kertzer, a scholar who has been justifiably critical
of Roman Catholic attitudes towards Jew across Europe during the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, also
refers to Manning’s assistance to the Jewish community. Kertzer concludes from
Manning’s example, that “as members of a despised religious minority themselves,
England’s Catholics were unusually sensitive to the Jews’ plight.”\textsuperscript{32} Considering the
support that Manning provided the Jewish community in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century, it
seems strange and inconsistent for him to have embraced the Jewish Antichrist
narrative in a series of lectures.

One possible explanation is that Manning followed the not uncommon Catholic
precedent of excoriating the Jew theologically whilst defending Jews socially. After
addressing the question of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council (1868-1870),
Manning became less concerned with theological problems and more focused on the
social needs of English Catholics.\textsuperscript{33} This change in focus may explain why his
acceptance of the Jewish Antichrist myth was subsequently accompanied by an
admiration for Jewish communal organisation and character. For example, he argued
that Jews were doing more for their poor in the East End than Catholics.\textsuperscript{34} He also
stated, in a letter written to Sir John Simon in 1890, that the Jews are:

\begin{quote}
A race with a sacred history of nearly four thousand years; at present
without a parallel, dispersed in all lands, with an imperishable personal
identity, isolated and changeless, greatly afflicted, without home or
fatherland; visibly reserved for a future of signal mercy. ... any man who
does not believe in their future must be a careless reader, not only of the
old Jewish Scriptures, but even of our own.\textsuperscript{35}
\end{quote}

Though this portrayal was not overtly negative like the myth of the Jewish Antichrist,
it was still an essentialistic construction of a “changeless” mythologized people.
Another possible explanation is that his principle concern in composing the lectures was the fate of the temporal power which was threatened by various forces. It was the erosion of the twin authority of the temporal and spiritual power at the heart of Christendom that worried him rather than the Jews per se. The purpose of the lectures was thus to demonstrate the “Divine origin” of the temporal power and its importance to the “civil order of Christendom.” In explaining the purpose of writing these lectures in his preface to the 1880 volume, Manning refers to the French, Italians, Austrians, Germans, Russians and English; also the “Garibaldian conspiracies and invasions,” “the duplicity of Sardinia,” “the complicity and countenance of Napoleon III,” but he does not mention Jews. As Jews were not the main focus of his attention, he could, unlike Barry, argue that the Jews themselves would also be deceived by the antichrist. Nevertheless, it is impossible to ignore that he explains this so-called gullibility that will supposedly lead the Jews to embrace the antichrist by referring to the alleged role played by the Jews in crucifying the Messiah. He therefore embraced not just the myth of the Jewish Antichrist but also the myth of the Jewish Christ-Killer. And he also embraced other traditional stereotypes, arguing that Jews, as “purse-bearers, and journalists, and telegraph wires of the revolution,” are responsible for the Risorgimento, which presumably explains why he concludes that to protect Christian society from the “antichristian” power it is necessary to ensure that the Jews do not share an equal political status.
Bibliography


Endnotes

1 The antichrist was sometimes invoked by English Catholic newspapers to explain contemporary developments. The antichrist was a resilient theme, by no means always dependent on a discourse about Jews and often without the claim that he would be born of Jewish blood. For example, the Universe contained two editorials in 1914, one in June and the other in November, which revolved around the antichrist. According to the June editorial, the “cultus of evil spirits” which had become a “fashion of the day” was a portent that “the Lawless One is abroad.” According to the editorial, this was manifest by an increase in spiritualist activities such as clairvoyance, fortune-telling, crystal-gazing, necromancy, astrology and “even overt devil-worship.” The antichrist’s arrival was a part of “the everlasting unseen war” between the forces of “the Evil One” and the forces of heaven. Evil in the world was explained by the “forces of evil” which “range themselves in most furious onslaught on humanity.” “Lawlessness takes up many names and masquerades in many shapes,” the paper continued, and “it invades the household, degrades letters, outrages art, violates liberty, subverts the fabric of society and attacks religion in its most sacred aspects.” Every degenerate anti-Christian and anti-Church impulse of modern society, the author of the article suggests, can be traced to the “dethronement of Christ in the hearts of men, and the erection of the throne of Satan.” Referring to anti-Catholic atrocities occurring in Mexico, the destruction of Catholic property, the desecration of alters and sacred vestments and the massacring of the sick and wounded, the November editorial argued that the “spirit of Antichrist is, indeed, ranging the earth.” The editorial stated that “those who believe in the presence of unseen forces that surround us and enter the currents of manifestation, are compelled to see in all these revelations the manifestation of the ‘the mystery of iniquity.’” “In Mexico,” the paper concluded, “the spirit of Antichrist in its hideous malignity unmasks itself.” These articles prompted letters to the Universe which discussed and debated how prophecies about the arrival of the antichrist correlated to current events. ‘The Lawless One’, Universe, 19 June 1914, 8; ‘Antichrist in Mexico’, Universe, 20 November 1914, 6; ‘Letters to the Editor: Antichrist’, Universe, 4 December 1914, 4 and ‘Letters to the Editor: Antichrist’, Universe, 24 December 1914, 4.


3 The page numbering and text for the 2nd edition published in 1862 and the 3rd edition published in 1880 are identical. The only difference is the preface. I have not located a copy of the 1st edition.

4 Manning, The Temporal Power, 81.

5 Manning, The Temporal Power, 102.

6 Manning, The Temporal Power, 103-104. This view was not Manning’s alone. According to Cuthbert Lattey, an important English Catholic biblical scholar during the early 20th century, it can “hardly be doubted that St. Paul conceives of Antichrist as a single person.” Cuthbert Lattey, St. Paul’s Epistles to the Churches. Part I. The Epistles to the Thessalonians (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1913), 13, 21.

7 Manning, The Temporal Power, 105-106.


10 Manning, The Temporal Power, 127-130. Manning’s position was not inconsistent with earlier papal policy. As Charlotte Klein observes, prior to Vatican II, papal declarations emphasised the exclusion of “non-Christians from any participation in the life of the Christian State.” Charlotte Klein, ‘New Vision at the Vatican’, Wiener Library Bulletin XX/1 (Winter 1965-66), 1. This article was written under her Catholic name, Sister Marie Louis Gabriel.

11 Colonel Ratton, a retired army doctor and author, published a number of books on diverse, not exclusively religious subjects. Several of his books were however concerned with the Antichrist and the apocalypse. The Catholic Who’s Who observed that Ratton had “made a special study of the Apocalypse, and is the author of several well-considered works.” F. C. Burnand, ed., Catholic Who’s Who & Year Book, 1908 (London: Burns & Oates, 1908), 335.

12 James Ratton [A. Cowan, pseud.], X-Rays in Freemasonry (London: Effingham Wilson, 1901), passim.
13 Ratton, *X-Rays in Freemasonry* (1901), 104-123.
15 ‘Antichrist in Russia’, *The Month*, CXLI (1923), 552-553.
23 William Barry, ‘Sign of the Times I’, *Catholic Times*, 30 October 1920, 7. Hilaire Belloc made a similar point. He noted that “there are two, and only two, organized international forces in Europe to-day with a soul and identity in them. One is the Catholic Church, and the other is Jewry.” Hilaire Belloc, *The Jews* (London: Constable, 1922), 172.
24 Barry may have taken the idea of the ‘Hebrew genius’ from Hilaire Belloc, whom he greatly admired. Belloc suggested that the Jews have intellectual gifts that are alien those of non-Jews. With the Jews the intellect is “coldly used when ours are used enthusiastically,” with the Jews “they are used with intensity when we use them with carelessness.” “The Jew concentrates upon one matter. He does not disperse his mind.” This can cause some resentment Belloc argued. The Jew’s argument is never muddled; his “exactly constructed process of reasoning, from which there is no escape, has in it … something of the bully. A man may feel the conclusion to be false: perhaps he knows it to be false,” but “he lacks the power to express his reasons.” This “iron logic” and “lucidity,” is used by the Jews “like a pistol.” Belloc, *The Jews*, 80-81.
28 See *Jewish Chronicle*: 7 February 1890, 5-7; 12 September 1890, 13; 12 December 1890, 8; 16 December 1892, 6-9; 18 February 1898, 18-19; 15 February 1907, 16-17; 31 July 1908, 7.
29 Transcript of speech by Cardinal Manning, in “Persecution of the Jews in Russia,” *Times*, 2 February 1882, 4. My thanks to Dr Peter Nockles for bringing this to my attention.
30 Manning was thanked by the Chief Rabbi and representatives of the Board of Deputies, the Anglo-Jewish Association, the United Synagogue, the Spanish and Portuguese Jews’ Congregation (Moses Gaster), the West London Synagogue of British Jews, the Federation of Synagogues, the
Liberal Jewish Synagogue (Claude Montefiore) and the Jewish Board of Guardians. See *Jewish Chronicle*, 31 October 1890, 18-20.  
31 ‘Response of Cardinal Manning’, *Jewish Chronicle*, 31 October 1890.  
32 David I. Kertzer, *The Popes Against the Jews: The Vatican’s Role in the Rise of Modern Anti-Semitism* (New York: Vintage Books, 2002), 214-215. However, my PhD research demonstrates that English Catholic reactions to antisemitism were often ambivalent at best. In the English Catholic discourse, Jews were often stereotyped as greedy, cowardly, unpatriotic and secretive parasites. Constructions of the Jew derived from biblical and medieval myths were also pervasive. Jews continued to be cast in the role of the intransigent Pharisee, the Christ-Killer, the Ritual Murderer, the Sorcerer and the Antichrist. Jews were often portrayed in conjunction with Freemasons, and together vilified as secretive anti-Christian revolutionaries, and diabolized as Satanists and Luciferians. In some cases the language used to describe “the Jew” (and “the Freemason”) drew upon a vocabulary which suggested an apocalyptic war between the forces of good and evil. From 1917 onwards, constructions of the so-called “Zionist Menace,” combining contemporary stereotypes with traditional religious myths, became increasingly prevalent. See Simon Mayers, “From ‘the Pharisee’ to ‘the Zionist Menace’: Myths, Stereotypes and Constructions of the Jew in English Catholic Discourse, 1896-1929,” PhD thesis, *University of Manchester* (2012).  
36 See J. R. Gasquet, *Cardinal Manning* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1895), 56. Significantly, Manning was informed by Mgr Talbot that that he was attracting criticism in Rome for the “apocalyptic zeal” with which he defended the temporal power of Rome. The problem was not the idea of an antichrist waging war on the Church, or the fact that he was Jewish, but that Manning made an “inopportune” remark about Rome actually falling under the control of the anti-Christ and adopting paganism for a period. See various letters between Talbot and Manning, 13 June 1861 to 19 July 1861, cited by Robert Gray, *Cardinal Manning: A Biography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985, 177. Manning’s latter sermon, ‘Christ and Antichrist’, attributed the threat to Rome to “the terrible illusion of Satan”, the “snares of secret societies,” “the Revolution” and the “tyranny of modern nationalism,” but did not engage with the idea of the Antichrist. Henry Manning, ‘Christ and Antichrist: A Sermon’ (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1867).  