Antony

2021

### Prayers

“Ὁ Θεός, ἱλάσθητί μοι τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ.” — Luke 18:13

“God, let me, the sinner, have mercy, be atoned, be pardoned.” — Luke 18:13

### Definition

The fourth century is a defining moment for Christianity. We were, and still are, offered the choice of two paths: we chose the wrong path in the fourth century, and we have continued to do so ever since. On the one hand, we are confronted with the role model of Antony.[[1]](#footnote-1) On the other hand, Constantine’s example is set before us.[[2]](#footnote-2) Antony, a stellar example of Christian maturity, having neither power nor wealth, urges us to worship Christ, the Son and Word of God. Constantine, an unbaptized novice at most, yet possessed of great power and incredible wealth, finally persuades Christendom to proclaim, Hail Caesar. The worship of God is replaced with a subtle idolatry.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Even modern priests would falsely persuade us that Mark 10:21 is only for the exceptional individual; rather than expressing the norm of Christian discipleship: for, the pursuit of power and wealth is lethal to faith. “The love of money is the root of all evil.”[[4]](#footnote-4) Antony’s example of humility, solitude, and seeming weakness is the primary thing that he lives out before us. Pomp and pride are Constantine’s demonstration.

Still, Antony is not perfect: for had he owned a Bible; or was he learned — knowing little else than Coptic — he might have realized that true biblical humility and solitude are matters of the heart,[[5]](#footnote-5) not of geography. But, God in His infinite wisdom, called Antony into the desert: even though, greater examples of humility and solitude are found in Paul, and, most of all, in Christ Himself.

Had Antony been a learned man, who owned a Bible he might not have made mistakes like that reported concerning Arius: for, Arius, according to modern claims, never said, “there was a time when He was not”.[[6]](#footnote-6) Nor, evidently, did Arius claim that the Son was a creature. Rather, it seems that Arius reasoned that, if the Son is related to the Father by procession: there must be a not procession. Apparently, the word, time, was never used, not by Arius himself. Yet, even were such a blunder committed, Antony might have realized from Scripture that Arius stood or fell before Christ alone;[[7]](#footnote-7) and that John, speaking of Antichrist, refers specifically to the errors of Judaism.[[8]](#footnote-8)

The facts remain. None of us understand the mysteries of the Godhead or Godhood or essence; or of the incarnation; or of eternal judgement.

Even so, he sees the destruction of the Church taking place in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries: which, destruction, the bulk of Christendom usually hails as the greatest of victories. Yet, the true Church, living in humility and solitude, sees a far different picture.

“Wrath is about to seize the Church, and it is on the point of being given up to men who are like senseless beasts. For I saw the table of the Lord’s House, and mules standing around it on all sides in a ring, and kicking the things therein, just like a herd kicks when it leaps in confusion. … for I heard a voice saying, My altar shall be defiled.”

Antony so loathed public notoriety that even this brief summary, or even more so, the report of Athanasius, would have caused him great embarrassment. In contrast, we prize popularity, fame, success, to be called a prince of the pulpit. We even argue jealously over who is the greatest Christian orator, and award kudos to the Three Hierarchs. Anthony would have been ashamed.

Antony shows us a choice: Christ or Caesar.

We made the wrong choice.

[[9]](#footnote-9)

1. Please read:

   <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2811.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Please contrast the life of Antony with the following readings:

   <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2501.htm>

   <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2502.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Antony’s vision predict the whole sordid chain of events:

   <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2811.htm> paragraph 82 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 1 Timothy 6:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Colossians 3:15; 1 Peter 3:4, 15; and many other like verses:

   <https://classic.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?quicksearch=in+heart&qs_version=KJV> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. chapters 68, 69, 82, 86, 89, 91 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Romans 14:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
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