

Spring History & Heritage -- #6 (May 5)

Road to Damascus --- (Kirk; *Roots of American Order*, pp. 148-158)

This saying, a literal geographic description, is used to signify the dramatic conversion to Christianity of Saul of Tarsus, later known as the Apostle Paul (c. 10--65 AD)? In the conversion experience Saul had a vision in which he was confronted by Jesus, the “Lord of Glory” whom the fierce Pharisee was persecuting by his attacks on the Lord’s Church. Jesus healed Saul’s hostility and commissioned him His “Apostle to the Gentiles,” divinely sent “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light...”

Constantine the Great --- (Kirk; *Roots of American Order*, pp. 148-158)

This 4th-century Roman ruler (d. 337 AD), succeeding Diocletian as king, took command of the Empire, putting an end to the persecution of Christians? “[A] great bad man” in Kirk’s estimation, the Emperor may have granted privileged positions to Christians and issued edicts of toleration for the Faith more for the sake of political gain than any religious commitment. He did deem Christian unity vital to imperial cohesion, witnessed by his insistence on creedal consensus at the Council of Nicaea (325).

Nicene Creed --- (Kirk; *Roots of American Order*, pp. 148-158)

This early 4th-century creed (325 AD) served to define the basics of catholic Christianity, particularly with reference to Christ’s divinity? As Rome’s pagan cult was slipping into historical oblivion, the creed memorably exalted “one Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only-begotten, that is from the substance of the Father...” In fact, the creed’s threadbare, succinct affirmation of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) implied that salvation for man is only and solely the work of God.

John the Almsgiver --- (Grant/Wilbur; *Christian Almanac*, April 17)

This early 7th-century saint (d. about 620 AD), a native of Cyprus in the Mediterranean, was made chief bishop (patriarch) of the city of Alexandria, Egypt? As his name implies, he is best known for his charity, his labors of love, expressed by means of generous provision for the city’s poor and the creation of hospitals, hospices, and orphanages. Doctrinally speaking, he taught clergy, planted churches, and battled against monophysite (“one nature”) distortions of the truth about Christ’s identity.

The Love of Money --- (Kirk; *Roots of American Order*, pp. 148-158)

This phrase, an allusion to one of the so-called “Seven Deadly Sins,” was used by the Apostle Paul in the New Testament to point out “the root of all evil”? By using such language, the Apostle did not mean to suggest that the sin in question was the greatest or deepest of them all but rather a source of countless other iniquities. Pride or what is called “egoism” today, writes Kirk, is the Apostle’s and Christianity’s sin of all sins, “the desire of the individual man to usurp the throne of God...”

(sources for the Q&A’s are indicated; any errors of judgment are those of Veritas history teacher Mr. Zaffini, writer of this post for his students and their families)