

Spring History & Heritage -- P.S. (May 14)

Our last three entries for the spring, 1 Q&A and 2 summaries

Dorothy Thompson --- (John Willson, *Chronicles*, April 2012)

This Syracuse-educated journalist was, by all accounts in the interwar years, the most influential woman in America, save Eleanor Roosevelt? She wrote posts from abroad and columns for the *New York Herald Tribune*, and she was the first reporter expelled from Nazi Germany (by Hitler's direct order). In spite of her personal success, her 1939 essay "The Dilemma of the Liberal" lamented the empty prosperity and elusive happiness of the age in the absence of faith and communal roots.

"He descended into Hell" --- (Tabletalk daily lesson, April 30)

The phrase "He descended into hell" in the old Apostles' Creed, despite much controversy over its meaning through the ages, almost surely asserts that Christ bore the full wrath of hell while on the cross, satisfying the demands of divine justice for His people.

The notion of some that Christ's spirit went down to hell for a time after His death, either to more fully atone for sin or to preach to confined souls there, seems out of character with several biblical passages and teachings. (To mention here just one, Jesus, undergoing the pangs of crucifixion, told the repentant thief with whom He suffered that that very day they would meet in paradise).

Thus, Jesus' descent into hell is better understood after the manner of John Calvin (1509--1564). The French Reformer observed, "After explaining what Christ endured in the sight of man, the Creed appropriately adds the invisible and incomprehensible judgment which he endured before God, to teach us that not only was the body of Christ given up as the price of redemption, but that there was a greater and more excellent price---that he bore in his soul the tortures of a condemned and ruined man."

The Solemn Spectacle of the Choctaws --- (*America*, Vol. 1, pp. 246-247)

"I saw them embark to cross the great river, and this solemn spectacle will never leave my memory. One heard neither tears nor complaints among this assembled crowd; they were silent. Their misfortunes were old, and they felt them to be irreparable."

The observer was French nobleman and political theorist Alexis de Tocqueville (1805--1859), and the observation is recorded in his famous *Democracy in America* (1835). What Tocqueville saw was the departure of the Choctaws from Memphis, Tennessee, across the frozen Mississippi, late in the Year of Our Lord, 1831.

The Choctaws were one of several Native American tribes whose fate (banishment to the West on reservations) was sealed by Andrew Jackson's Indian removal policy, a prescription popular with most Americans and passed by Congress, "The Indian Removal Act," on May 30, 1830.