
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”

The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945

Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension

File No. 102

c. 1911 - 1913, 1919

Notes on a speech on Good Citizenship (lgh.)

(?) September 13, 1919

Speech on Citizenship - Notes

0102

Notes for Speeches 1911-13
in F. J. P.'s handwriting

Dec. 19, 1949.

these may be the notes for
a speech given by F.D.R. at
Dayton, Ohio, Sept. 13, 1919,
at an Americanization Day
Pageant. His address then
was entitled "Good
Citizenship."

RSJ

- Citizenship -

Yesterday I met two men in New York. Both were men of standing in the business world - One of them said to me "Politics are in a disgraceful situation - Our government is going to the dogs & I can see only dark days ahead."

I advanced a question "What?" you vote last fall?" "Well," he hesitated. "I must confess I was feeling tired and - well I just couldn't go all the way to the polls -"

The other man said: "You know its too bad - but the church seems to be losing its hold on people - it isn't the power it was once."

Next I advanced another question - "What church do you go to?"

"Well, you see" - he hesitated

I don't really belong to any one Church -

but of these men was a ~~the~~ millstone around the neck of our government - The other was drag on religious progress. Both men were unworthy citizens -

What is citizenship -? A great ~~scientist~~ has called it citizenship "the human instinct for the preservation of the race" - and a great divine has called citizenship "love of one's neighbor as oneself"

It matters little, though, what definition you take - you will always come back to the proposition that a people or a race or a nation or a State ^{or a Church} has never endured without citizenship -

Take the cases of my two friends - If every man in

This country, righted about
 the churches ~~we would~~ and
 never lifted his finger in an
 effort to help them, this
 United States would become
 a ~~Tyre and Sion~~ in Isachon
 & Samonah in 24 hours -
 And if every man had stayed
 away from the polls we should
 go straightway back to the
 days when the man with
 strongest right arm ruled the
 people - This of course
 sounds like a horrible over-
 statement of the fact - it
 seems like a silly, an un-
 necessary thing to talk about,
 because of course the answer
 is obvious that it can never
 happen - But the trouble
 is that it has happened -
 history does not lie - Churches
 have disappeared - governments
 by the people have been

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lost - not in a day perhaps -
but in a generation - and
we today can grasp what a
truly short time that means -
History again tells the un-
varnished truth when we read
that with every crash ~~has~~
~~gone~~ the disappearance of
citizenship has travelled
hand in hand - has been the
~~more more~~ primary, the
most effective cause.

How often we hear
our friends say today "Oh
well, we have passed through
troubles and dangers and
crises in this country before
and we have always sur-
vived and probably will
again". Is that American?
Is that the way our Fathers
fought through the Revolution?
Is that the way the early
struggles ^{for existence} of the young Republic
~~have~~ ~~can~~ were rewarded

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Is that the way a great
moral question was decided in
the dark days of the sixties?
Is that the way a mighty
nation was smited into a
prosperous and happy people?
Is it true that because we
have succeeded before we
must again? No - that is
false logic - It may be
a fact that previous success
is an aid to the solving of
future problems - The fact
that a ball team has won
gives it confidence in another
game - The fact that clergy
man has built up the church
helps him to build up
another - But you and I
know that if the ball
team says - we have
won one game & therefore

shall win the next - The odds⁶
are that the score will be
one large zero on its side
of the score-board - And
if the successful church
builder goes to another
parish and expects his repu-
tation to build it up without
an effort on his part, he
will preach to the Sexton
only on Sunday

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A statesman once said that
a government is only as
good as the people want
it to be - It is another
way of saying that if
the majority of the people
~~will~~ do their civic duty to
the utmost, they will not
have to complain of the
evils of government -

There has been a tendency
in this country to con-
sider a man by his
success as an individual,
not by his success as
a citizen - to judge him
by his ability to lay in
a stock of the world's
goods, rather than by
his efforts to help his
community, his neighbors

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