Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945
Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension

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1920 October 1

Louisville, KY - Campaign Speech
Let me call attention to one aspect of the discussion of the League of Nations issue which I have not yet brought out. It is the undoubted fact that all of the great moral influences in the United States believe that this country should join with the other thirty-nine nations of the world in making of the existing League the success it aims to achieve. I refer particularly to the churches throughout the country. When people tell me that the influence of the churches of the United States is negative, I tell them that they are deliberately misstating the fact. Never before in our history have the churches meant more in the life of the Nation - they are growing daily and extending their influence for better citizenship and better living.

I am in a position to know something about the attitude of the churches throughout the nation because I have visited over thirty states, and in every one of those states and in all the cities and towns I have been I have conversed with clergymen of every kind - pastors, ministers, priests and rabbis. Men representing every church and every denomination have come to me of their own accord to assure me that they regard the carrying out of the great purposes of the League of Nations as one of the most vital steps for the safety of the future of the world and for the strengthening and broadening of true religion everywhere.

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So too with the great stands which the United States has taken on vital issues throughout its history. We have set aside the doctrines of despair, the appeals to fear and hate, and we have chosen the path of faith, the path of new things which, after all, were but the making clearer of the simple truths of religion.

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Unlike Governor Morrow, who is quoted the other day as saying that the United States would have to send an army overseas in case of war between the King of Siam and the Emperor of the teachers and preachers of Timbuktu are conversant with geography. Also they know what means. They have read Article 10 of the existing Covenant of the League of Nations. They have read that thirty-nine nations of the world do not fear that Article 10 will take away any of their independence or the rights of their Congresses. Also they have read / the repeated declarations of Governor Cox and myself that if there is any doubt in the minds of any people in regard to what Article 10 means, it should be made absolutely clear and in writing that the United States does not obligate itself to change in any way our constitutional rights or the rights of our Congress to send men overseas or to declare war.

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EXTRACTS FROM SPEECH OF HON. F.D. ROOSEVELT
LOUISVILLE, KY., OCTOBER 1, 1920

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