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MS-53: Moses J. Gries Papers, 1850-1934 (bulk 1890-1930).

Series D: Sermons and Addresses, 1893-1917, undated.

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“John Hay,” 1905.

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1905

John Hay

Yesterday at this hour I stood in this hall, with the president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, now assembled in Cleveland, to bring in their behalf, and in behalf, symbolically, of the Jews of this nation and of the world, a modest tribute of respect to our honored dead. Here were tokens of king and emperor, from Czar and Mikado, royal tribute of respect to a great American, royal wreaths bespeaking royal honor to a king among men. We brought the simple palm of peace. But no royal tribute was tribute of love and honor more heartfelt and more sincere. We love and honor him because he belonged not to the

"Slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the weak".

On behalf of peoples and races oppressed, on behalf of Jews persecuted in their own fatherland and in the land of their fathers, he sounded a strong note of justice, and the nations heard and heeded. He was the real peacemaker of the world; he was a Prince of Peace. Beautiful are the words of Lowell:

"Life may be given in many ways
And loyalty to truth be sealed
As bravely in the closet as the field,
So bountiful is Fate."

A prince, a great man hath fallen in Israel.

As rabbi, and for the moment as representative of the Jews of this land, I honor and love the name of John Hay, and as Americans all, we should honor and love the name and life of John Hay. His name in history will forever be associated with the names of our martyred presidents, Abraham Lincoln and William McKinley. He was the friend and counselor of presidents, a true friend and a wise counsellor. Noble was his conception of America, a land consecrated to freedom, dedicated to justice; America, with her beautiful flag unsullied by oppression, with her beautiful flag honored among the great nations of the world, respected by the strongest and loved by the weakest, In the hour of the Nation's sorrow, may the Nation find heart and wisdom to thank God for his noble life. He was clean of hand and pure of heart; he belonged to the upright and to the pure among men. True of him are the words which Lowell wrote of Lincoln: "Wise, steadfast in the strength of God and true."

Let us thank God that in this hour we are able to praise without reserve and without qualification the spotless purity of

of his public life.

"Statesman, yet friend to truth! of soul sincere,
In action faithful and in honor clear;
Who broke no promise, served no private end,
Who gained no title and who lost no friend:
Ennobled by himself, by all approved
and praised, unenvied by the muse he loved."

The lives of the sons of the nation, pure and great,
exalt and ennoble the whole nation. John Hay was a patriot,
a true patriot, a true type of America's noblest and best.
What words more fitting to be spoken than those immortal
words spoken on the field of Gettysburg by Abraham Lincoln,
whom he loved and served so well? "It is rather for us
to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before
us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion
to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of
devotion."