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

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

Box
4

Folder
6

Item
5

“William McKinley,” 1901 September.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the
American Jewish Archives website.

The chairman then introduced Rabbi Moses J. Gries, of The Temple, who spoke as follows:

Rabbi Gries's Address.

On Thursday last, the day appointed for President McKinley's presence in our city, within these walls, many thousands of the men and women of Cleveland, gathered to speak their words of thanksgiving and to sing their songs of rejoicing because our president still lived. "Our thanksgiving has changed to mourning, and our songs of rejoicing to lamentation." To-day as we have assembled, throughout the land everywhere thousands of loyal-hearted men and women have gathered to pay their tribute of respect to one whom they loved and honored in life, to one whom they would love and honor in death. The whole nation mourns. Nowhere is joy, as in lands of oppression, when tyrants are slain; no hearts are exultant as when oppressors fall. From the millions rose spontaneously one cry of horror and pain, and the hearts of millions were heavy with weight of woe.

Forgotten - the rivalry of races, forgotten - the contention of religions and silenced the noise and clamor of party and partisanship. One is the heart of the nation, one in love of country, and freedom and our flag.

Thrice within the memory of men not old, presidents have fallen by the hand of the assassin. Abraham Lincoln fell - a victim to passion born of the fiercest civil conflict known in history. James A. Garfield fell - a victim to riotous political passion. William McKinley has fallen - a victim to the passion born neither of civil conflict, nor political factionalism, but in the hour of peace without shadow of slightest justification.

The assassin's assault upon the president was not an assault upon William McKinley but upon William McKinley - by voice of the people, the representative of law and government. To-day, be it spoken in the face of anar-

chy, individual and organized, we a free people, will vindicate the power and the majesty of law and government! Let us meet anarchy not with lawlessness; let us be swayed not by mob passion to mob violence! Let appeal be made to the true heart and to the sober judgment of the American people.

but Limit the liberty of the individual, dangerous to the well-being of all, safeguard freedom of speech and of thought and of conscience. Beaconsfield has said "assassination has never changed the history of the world-".

Utterly vain- absolutely without result has been this crime unspeakable.

The president is dead - the republic lives and will live. No blow of assassin and no ~~blow~~ plot of conspirators can destroy it.

I quote the thought of Lincoln, spoken on the field of Gettysburg: it is a thought that should move us while our honored president is being carried to his last resting place. Said Lincoln on the field of Gettysburg: "that " we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation under God, shall have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

William McKinley was born of the people, and to the end, though he rose to station and to power as great as that of king and emperor and czar he remained one of the people. It is the strength of the republic, that it rests upon the love - the strong foundation - of a free people.

William McKinley served his country as a soldier and as statesman.

North and South he joined together. His was the ~~memorable~~ thought the time is come when we should share with you in the care of the graves of your Confederate - your American dead. He was a Union soldier but he was an American patriot - his was the patriotism not only of war but of peace.

Of him be it said, as Lowell wrote of Lincoln: " Wise, steadfast in the

strength of God, and true."

We honor William McKinley, because he was a true American. We honor him for his splendid manhood for his honor to wife and to womanhood. Home was sacred to him, as home should be sacred to every American. He lived under "the fierce light that beats upon a throne." He lived as men should live, pure and brave, strong and upright - he died as man should die in the faith of righteousness. May he sleep

"As sleep the brave, who sink to rest,

By all their country's wishes blest."

Anarchy has dishonored the flag of this republic symbol of our government and of our liberty. Let us make true answer to anarchy by our loyalty to the flag. Our flag with its red, white and blue and its stars and stripes! Its red, symbol of blood - the blood not of anarchy but the blood of war, with which independence was bought on land and sea, by which the Union was preserved; and justice established in the western hemisphere - its white, the symbol of peace, its blue, symbol of the loyalty of our sons and daughters - its stars to shine by night and day, its stripes, bars of light streaming forth as the morning dawn!

Our flag, - be it ever, as William McKinley would have had it be - the symbol of freedom and justice, respected by the strongest, and loved by the weakest!