

AMERICA RIGHTLY HAS NO RELIGION

--RABBI GRIES

Attempt to Make Christian- ity State Faith Stamped Plot on Liberty.

Justice, Freedom and Peace, He Says, Are National Creed Enough.

America as a nation has no religion, according to Rabbi Moses Gries yesterday at The Temple in an address on "The Religion of America."

"Has America a religion? Let the answer be clear, emphatic," he said. "The United States of America as a country has no religion."

"Is this a Christian country? Let the answer be just as clear. Jews have been warned that they should be silent, that they should not raise the issue."

"What a misconception of the question! This issue is not raised by Jews. It is thrust upon us by Sunday legislation, by the attempt to introduce religion into the public schools, by those who say that they will introduce the name of Jesus Christ with that of God in the constitution."

"This is no light question. There is a principle involved that goes to the root of things. If this is a Christian country, it follows that all other religions are tolerated."

"I can express the hope that the people of this country shall become more and more truly Christian, not as a nation but as a people. I can only express the hope that the government shall never become a Christian government, that there shall never be a union between church and state. History proves that a state religion is far from a blessing to mankind. The union has been the source of more cruelty and bloodshed than anything else in the history of mankind."

America Belongs to Jew, Also.

"What effrontery is this on the part of those who say to you that if you do not like this country you should go back to your own country. This is a false idea. America belongs to the Jews as much as to the Christians. There has been no great cause here to which the Jew has not given life or treasure equally with the Christian."

"All free Americans will resist the aggression of narrow bigotry. In no sense is Christianity fundamental to Americanism. There is no particular Christian principle that was a guiding force in '76 or '89. On the other hand, the principles that inspired the revolution were more largely the fruit of the Old Testament thought than of thought in the New. The men that were the guiding spirits were not narrowly Christian. If they were Christians at all it was in the broader or larger sense."

"There is a sense in which America has a religion, a religion that disregards the forms of worship and forgets creeds. We have national ideals that guide our lives and our destiny. The American people believe in justice between man and man. We American people hate despotism. We are a freedom loving people. It is a part of the faith of the American people that we desire peace and we pursue peace. I know it is but yesterday that we hailed the return of the fleet. Yet in spite of this the nation desires peace."

Rabbi Gries spoke of the recent Cedar-av. grade crossing accident.

"It is called accident," he said, "but it is really negligence. Steam from the power plant settles on the tracks. If it had happened only once it would have been an accident. It has happened again and again. It is not accident. We should make the crossings safe. Human life is worth more than money. We in America are blood guilty. We hold human life too cheap. Accident, accident always accident. And never accident, always negligence. Thou shalt not kill."