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**AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES**

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

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

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“New Year's Evening,” 1913 October 1.

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American Jewish Archives website.

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RABBI GRIES, AT THE TEMPLE, NEW YEAR'S EVENING,

October 1st, 1913.

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The Rabbis of old have a quaint and most interesting idea. God, the ruler of the world, is sitting on His throne of judgment. Two scrolls are open before Him; one the Book of Life, the other the Book of Death. It is a beautiful conception, true to human life and feeling. 'Tis a fine and noble interpretation of the flight of time, inviting to solemn reflection and not to ribald revelry. Its appeal is to the dignity and the nobility and the glory of life. Its appeal is universal.

The prayer, "Inscribe us in the Book of Life", puts emphasis on life and not pleasure or riches or power. Life may be a blessing or a curse; a curse if buds of beauty are blighted and blossoms of fragrance withered and glorious possibilities unrealized, and blessing if it spells beauty and development, and usefulness and service.

The Jew does not despair of life and of the world; he is not filled with world weariness nor sated with its gaiety; neither is he overwhelmed by its sin and sorrow and burden. His religion teaches life is struggle and sacrifice, with joy and sorrow intermingling. He interprets

life as consecration to labor, to achievement, to duty, to love, to service.

The New Year invites to beautiful and happy reunion in every home and family. It calls for a reunion of Israel in the synagogue and temple under all the hallowing influences of memory and history. We witness a home-coming of Israel, a world-wide reunion of the great historic family. We feel the pulsing of the Jewish heart-beat around the great globe. Israel, historic Israel is worshipping the one God, God of all mankind. 'Tis wonderful that the Jew is alive in the twentieth century. It cannot be for a purposeless persistence nor has a people been consecrated for mere racial glorification. The Jew is representative of a divine purpose in history. Let us live true to the finest interpretation of the Jew, a glorious historic figure, linking an honored past with an honorable present. Child of the centuries, still proclaiming with Chofar trumpet tones Israel's ancient clarion call, "Hear, O Israel, hear all mankind, the Eternal is our God, the Eternal is One."

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