5

ISAAC MAYER WISE

To understand the ministry of Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf, the reader must know something about Isaac Mayer Wise. Not only had he influenced Joseph's decision to become a rabbi through his editorials and articles in the *American Israelite*, but he had provided the opportunity in his newly founded Hebrew Union College.

Dr. Wise was the founder of American Reform Judaism. He was by far the most vigorous and successful of the European-trained rabbis in his efforts to revitalize Judaism, as it existed in the mid-nineteenth century, into a modern religious force. "The story of American Judaism during the last half-century," Rabbi Krauskopf said in 1900, at the time of Rabbi Wise's death, "has been largely the biography of Reverend Isaac M. Wise."

When Rabbi Wise arrived in this country in 1846 he found Judaism splintered into many factions, depending on the national background of the majority of members of each congregation. Services were held in Spanish, Portuguese or German, with prayers entirely in Hebrew. Members of one congregation could be hopelessly lost worshipping with another congregation within the same city, though both professed to be worshipping in the manner of their ancestors. With few exceptions, no attempts had been made to modernize the services, and the old rites and ceremonies reflected the ancient usages of the Near East. "It was evident that our soil was not favorable to the Oriental species of Judaism," Rabbi Krauskopf said in discussing this era. "A reform, particularly in the external expression of Judaism, was sadly needed."

From the moment of his arrival in this country, Dr. Wise attempted to initiate that reform. In his first American congregation, Beth El, at Albany, N. Y., he was physically ejected from the pulpit by the president because he had expressed his disbelief in the coming of a personal messiah and in bodily resurrection. He was followed out of the congregation by a small, loyal group; a new congregation, Anshe Emeth, was formed under his spiritual leadership. In 1854 Dr. Wise accepted a call to Bene Yeshurun in Cincinnati, Ohio, whose pulpit he held until his death in 1900.

The reaction to many of Wise's reforms was variable, depending on the views held by lay officials and members of each separate congregation. Each Jewish congregation is autonomous, controlling its own policies by vote. Its rabbi is primarily a religious teacher and spiritual guide who can only advise in matters of direction and policy. "Each congregation is responsible to itself," as Rabbi David Philipson has said.

Many congregations were convinced that reforms were subtly designed to lead Jews into Christianity and would have none of them. Other congregations adopted some of the reforms, but refused to identify themselves with the Reform movement. There were varying degrees of liberalism within the Reform congregations, a variance which persists even now.

If Rabbi Wise's only contributions had been the reforms which he introduced and championed, the present status of American Judaism might not have developed. His most important contributions came about because of his insistence upon organization and because of his ability to organize needful institutions. In 1873, after twenty years of unsuccessful effort, he founded the first permanent association of Jewish congregations in the United States, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Two years later, under the auspices of the Union, he opened the first successful Jewish seminary in this country, Hebrew Union College. In 1889 he

organized the Central Conference of American Rabbis, to be a forum for all rabbis regardless of varying shades of belief. However, because it was boycotted by Orthodox and Conservative rabbis, who later set up rabbinical associations of their own, it came to be recognized as a Reform organization.

During the eight years of Joseph Krauskopf's exposure to the liberal ideas of Dr. Wise, through this great rabbi's teaching and counsel, he became infected with this same enthusiasm and sense of mission. All of Wise's reforms, and more, were accepted by the two congregations which Joseph Krauskopf led during his ministry. Wise's religious, ethical and social concepts were applied by him, but he did not consider them as limitations; rather, they were guidelines.

After Rabbi Wise's death in 1900, Joseph Krauskopf's name was the first to be proposed by the board of governors of Hebrew Union College for the presidency of the seminary. This offer must have appealed to Dr. Krauskopf, for it was tantamount to the leadership of Reform Judaism in America. But other irons in his fire needed tending.

He declined the honor, pleading that he could not abandon his work at Philadelphia. This was a critical period in the building of the National Farm School. Its first class would graduate the following year. To leave it in other hands at this point, when its value had not been proven, could have meant its failure.

6

REFORM JUDAISM

In 1907, Rabbi David Philipson defined Reform Judaism as a dynamic, modern approach to religion, having the flexibility necessary to meet changing religious concepts and spiritual needs:

> Reform Judaism claims that a distinction must be made between the universal precepts of religion and morality, and the enactments arising from the circumstances and conditions of special times and places. Customs and ceremonies must change with the varying needs of different generations. Successive ages have their individual requirements for the satisfaction of the religious nature. No ceremonial law can be eternally binding, no one generation can legislate for all future ages.[1]

Reform Judaism is considered to have had its beginning in Germany, though this was little more than a late awakening to the scientific and intellectual developments of the time. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, Moses Mendelssohn, grandfather of Felix Mendelssohn, is credited with arousing European Jews to a renaissance of secular thought and a stirring of religious liberalism. However, Reform Judaism made little headway in Europe because of the determined resistance of the traditionalists, the Orthodox rabbis, and because of the medieval policies of public officials who sensed that a liberal branch of Judaism would soon be demanding more liberal governmental policies toward Jews. The great early leaders of the Reform movement in American Judaism were European rabbis who found their efforts thwarted within

their native countries. They emigrated because they saw in the United States the conditions which they believed to be favorable to the modernization and revitalization of Judaism.

Dr. Wise, writing in the *American Israelite* in 1854, laid down the basic concepts of early American Reform Judaism:

> It is . . . our principle of reform: "All forms to which no meaning is attached any longer are an impediment to our religion, and must be done away with." Before we propose to abolish anything we should enquire: What is its practical benefit? If there is none, it is time to renounce it. . . .
>
> Another principle of reform is this: "Whatever makes us ridiculous before the world as it now is, may safely be abolished," for we are in possession of an intelligent religion.
>
> A third principle of reform is this: "Whatever tends to the elevation of the divine service, to inspire the heart of the worshipper and attract him, should be done without any unnecessary delay," for the value of divine service should be estimated according to its effect upon the heart and understanding.
>
> A fourth principle of reform is this: "Whenever religious services and the just demands of civilized society exclude each other, the former have lost their power"; for religion was taught for the purpose "to live therein and not to die therein"; our religion makes us active members of society, hence we must give full satisfaction to its just demands.
>
> . . . It must be remarked [that] the leading star of reform must be the maxim, "Religion is intended to make man happy, good, just, active, charitable, and intelligent." Whatever tends to this end is truly religious, and must be retained, or introduced if it does not yet exist. Whatever has an effect contrary to the above must be abolished as soon as possible.[2]

When, in 1858, the newly formed Congregation Sinai, in Chicago, decided that it would follow the ideas of Reform Judaism, its officers asked Rabbi Samuel Adler, of New York City, for advice on a course of action. Dr. Adler, an early advocate of reform, replied that the first step for such a congregation was to free its service of "shocking lies," to remove from it lamentations about oppression and persecution, the restoration of sacrifices, the return of Israel to Palestine, the hope for a personal messiah, and the resurrection of the body.[3]

Many of these ideas became the basis for the famed "Pittsburgh Platform" of 1885, at a conference of Reform rabbis presided over by Dr. Wise. Joseph Krauskopf was vice-president of the convention and chairman of the committee which drew up the platform. Rabbi Stuart E. Rosenberg has written:

> In the preaching of such men as Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf who, in 1883, was one of the first four graduates of the Hebrew Union College, we can hear the longing of the new American rabbi for the emancipation of Judaism from its outlandish, outmoded oriental cloak, coupled with the fervent wish to refit it with a garb better suited to the western, American environment. Like many of his contemporary Reform colleagues, he called upon his congregation to "observe what little progress the Israelite had made in his religious unfolding since he started upon his westward journey. His heart and mind, when at service, are still in the Orient, he still builds his synagogues in the oriental style of architecture, and his Holy of Holies he places in the east, in imitation of the heathen temples consecrated to the sun. . . ." Indeed, he went a step further. He sought to free the Jewish congregation in America of all traces of foreign influence. . . .[4]

Rabbi Krauskopf once spoke of the unstable position of American Judaism which existed when he was ordained:

> The young of the present generation have little conception of the state of Judaism in the United States in 1883, the year of the first graduation of the Hebrew Union College. There were but few English-speaking rabbis, ministering to the religious needs of hundreds of thousands of souls whose language was, or was fast becoming, the vernacular of the land. To a large extent, services were unattractive and unattended. Sabbath school was primitive, and attendance a compulsion. Young people were strangers in the synagogue; many of them had strayed from the fold. English books on Jewish subjects were few. A foreign spirit, hostile to American ideals, pervaded the synagogues.[5]

When the Rabbi first came to Philadelphia, he found that the term *Reform Judaism* stood as a synonym for everything destructive of Judaism, for innovations that aimed at nothing short of conversion of Jews to Christianity, of synagogues to churches.[6] In putting into effect the progressive ideas of the Reform movement, he encountered strong antagonism from many Philadelphia congregations, and from influential Orthodox and Conservative Jewish religious journals. He was prepared for this reaction. "Where there is progress, there must be antagonism to be overcome, difficulties to be conquered, ignorance to be routed, enemies to be faced, fought and vanquished. Where these are wanting, there can be stagnation only; and where there is stagnation, retrogression must soon follow."[7] His own congregation, Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, gave him its full support and unwavering loyalty. To those who feared that Reform Judaism was developing into a separate religion he was quick to point out that, while there were indeed differences between Orthodox and Reform congregations, these differences existed primarily in forms and rituals. "Both seek . . . communion with God, they through their mode of service, we through ours. The ceremonial differs, the religion is the same."[8]

Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein writes:

> This American Judaism had some valuable features. It was in keeping with the times. It retained the loyalty of many young, thoughtful, and social-minded Jews who otherwise would have been lost to Judaism entirely. It improved relations with non-Jews. . . . They produced a leadership which moved into the foreground of American religious life.[9]

The Reform movement in American Judaism led to the positive development of Orthodox Judaism as a distinct denomination. This was a logical reaction on the part of many American Jews who believed that they must preserve their traditions and rituals as they had been passed down by their fathers; that, if this were not done, Judaism would lose its distinct identity and become lost in the scramble for modernization. The movement started a counter-reformation within its congregations, raising standards of learning, allowing sermons in English, and permitting choirs in the synagogues, but drawing bounds beyond which it would not go.[10] The Conservative denomination developed between the two extreme positions, where modernization was desired, but reluctance was felt in abandoning time-honored ritual and ceremony. By 1885 three distinct denominations had developed, each with its own seminary, its own congregational affiliation, its own rabbinical organization, and its own clearly defined position within the overall body of American Judaism.

Modern Reform Judaism is no longer as liberal as the early pioneers of the Reform Movement envisioned, having jettisoned the Pittsburgh Platform at Columbus, Ohio, in 1937, in favor of more conservative principles.[11] Nor is Orthodox Judaism as reactionary and tradition-bound as it was at the turn of the century.[12] There has been an ingathering of the

three denominations, brought about by their common aspirations and needs, and by the trauma of the Hitler experience. The shock of the Nazi atrocities, unparalleled in scope, unprecedented in history, inhuman in concept and execution, brought the realization that American Jewry had become the saving remnant of Judaism; that a reassessment of denominational differences, a greater unity of the total religious group, had become necessary. Max Dimont phrases it neatly: "Today, all three Judaisms—Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform—are one interlocked faith without any serious, weakening schisms."[13]

American Judaism is fully integrated into the social and cultural mainstream of the United States, while yet retaining the intrinsic values of its own culture and tradition. Logical in its evolution, dynamic in its potential for good, it is a forward-moving body prepared to meet the challenges of the future. This is certainly one of the goals, perhaps the most important goal, sought by the pioneer rabbis in the Reform movement of American Judaism.

Part IV

Years of Ministry

7

CALL TO PHILADELPHIA

Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, in Philadelphia, was founded in 1847. Its first famous rabbi was the Reverend Dr. David Einhorn, who has been called the intellectual leader of early American Reform Judaism. In 1861, he had come to Keneseth Israel from Baltimore, where his life had been threatened because of his outspoken opposition to slavery. He stayed at Keneseth Israel for five years, when he resigned to accept a pulpit in New York City. Einhorn was succeeded by the Reverend Dr. Samuel Hirsch, the philosopher of the Reform movement. He was called directly from Europe, where he was then chief rabbi of the Duchy of Luxembourg. He was given a contract for life, a tribute to his recognized status as a religious leader. He had an opportunity in Philadelphia to apply many of the reforms which he had long championed in Europe, though he was hampered by his inability to conduct services in English.

These two patriarchs of the Reform movement paved the way for the wider practical reforms which began with Joseph Krauskopf. In 1886 the congregation was looking for a new rabbi, Dr. Hirsch having expressed a desire to retire because of age and illness. When Rabbi Krauskopf received a letter from Mr. Alfred T. Jones, a member of the board of trustees of Keneseth Israel, inviting him to accept the pulpit, he delayed answering it for several days. He was not sure that he could fill the pastoral shoes of Einhorn and Hirsch. "I am too painfully conscious of my shortcomings," he wrote, "to believe that I could possibly answer such expectations."[1] Besides, his contract with Congregation B'nai Jehuda, in

Kansas City, Missouri, would not expire until September, 1887.

He received another letter from Philadelphia in October, inviting him to come, at his convenience, to deliver a trial sermon which would enable the congregation to form an opinion of his ability in the pulpit. He refused to deliver such a trial sermon, pointing out that he was not seeking another position; that if they desired to hear him and assess his ability they might send a committee to Kansas City, at a time when its presence would be unknown to him. If a genuine call were then issued, he would give it serious consideration. He was happy with his position in Kansas City, he said, his congregation was building a new temple to house a rapidly growing membership, he believed that his work in that area was productive, and he was receiving excellent support from his congregation, the local press, and the community at large.[2]

A committee, led by Mr. Alfred Kohn, traveled to Kansas City, heard Dr. Krauskopf, "and also had a conversation with the reverend gentleman, and offered him the position of rabbi of our temple for a term of five years, the first two years at a salary of $5,000, and three years at $6,000 per year."[3] The Rabbi accepted. On September 20, 1887, Mr. Jones wrote to him, "I congratulate you heartily on your triumphant election to the pulpit of a congregation ranking among the highest in this country. . . . It is a just tribute to the learning, eloquence, and zeal that have marked your career."[4]

His career had been marked by spectacular activity as well. During his first year in Kansas City he had, in a joint effort with four Christian ministers and their congregations, organized a "Poor Man's Free Labor Bureau" to aid in a period of severe economic depression. Later, because of his active interest in prison reform, Governor Crittenden appointed him a convention delegate and a life member in the Board of National Charities and Corrections. His Sunday lectures were

reaching both Jews and Christians because of their publication as pamphlets and the interest of the local press. He had set up many of the congregational activities which he later introduced in Philadelphia. He had published two new books, he had been vice-president of the Pittsburgh Conference in 1885, and chairman of its platform committee. He was rapidly developing a national reputation.

Ten years later, he still wondered why *he* had been selected by the Philadelphia congregation. It is probable that Dr. Isaac Wise had suggested him, for Keneseth Israel had been a member of Wise's Union of American Hebrew Congregations, (the union sponsored and directed the Hebrew Union College), since 1878, and critical eyes had been kept on the first four graduates of this seminary. There can be little question that, of the four, Joseph Krauskopf had displayed greater initiative and versatility than the others.[5] These four rabbis represented a cadre upon which the hopes of American Reform Judaism depended at that time. Its future rested on their ability to prove the validity of Isaac Mayer Wise's religious philosophy and reform innovations.

David Philipson, the youngest of the four, remained with his congregation in Cincinnati for over fifty years, and wrote many books on Jewish history, in a style that was easy to read, yet scholarly. Henry Berkowitz was a gentle, persuasive man, the "Beloved Rabbi" of Congregation Rodeph Shalom, in Philadelphia. His ability as an organizer was shown in the Jewish Chautauqua, the Philadelphia Federation of Jewish Charities, and an earlier centralized charity fund in Kansas City, Missouri. Israel Aaron seems to have suffered poor health at a relatively early age, for he died in 1912, just a few weeks after the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of his ministry in Buffalo, New York. Joseph proved to be the great apostle, a missionary to his own people and emissary to the Gentiles. Fortunate in finding congregations eager for reform,

able to communicate his enthusiasm to others, his leadership ability found the latitude it required; it was widely recognized as outstanding.

Joseph and his wife, Rose, had sold their house in Kansas City and were packed, ready to leave, when the congregational officers of B'nai Jehuda suddenly became aware that they were losing their rabbi. A telegram was sent to Philadelphia:

> OUR CONGREGATION, OUR CITIZENS, AND THE SURROUNDING COUNTRY INSIST THAT DR. KRAUSKOPF REMAIN WITH US. A DELEGATION WILL BE WITH YOU IN A FEW DAYS.[6]

The board of trustees of Keneseth Israel was adamant, however, and replied that such a delegation would be fruitless.

Dr. and Mrs. Krauskopf and their three children were met at the train in Philadelphia by a welcoming party and escorted to the Lafayette Hotel, where a suite had been reserved. That evening they met the members of the board of trustees and the teachers of the congregation's religious school.

The following Saturday, October 22, 1887, Joseph Krauskopf was installed as the spiritual leader of Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel. Rabbi Samuel Hirsch became Rabbi Emeritus for the two years remaining in his life.

At this time, the congregation had a membership of 298, according to a review made by Mr. Horace Stern in 1917. Services were conducted partly in Hebrew, but for the most part in German. Children attending religious school were required to study German to enable them to understand the sermons; their interest, however, seems to have been low. In 1917, there were over 1200 seat- and pew-holders, representing close to 2500 members.[7] David Klein, the president of the congregation, had said in his annual report in 1890, "A good liberal spirit, peace and harmony, unity and fraternity, and a

yearning after those higher aims which lead to perfection, these are the main factors of our successful congregational life." After eighty years, this assessment of Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel is still valid.

Within his first year in Philadelphia, the Rabbi reorganized the religious school, employing public school teachers whenever possible. He initiated Confirmation for both boys and girls, in lieu of Bar Mitzvah, and taught the Confirmation classes himself. An early student in one of his classes recalled an incident which shows the quality of the Rabbi's instruction. He asked the group, "Is honesty the best policy?"

All hands were eagerly raised. He singled out one student for an answer. "Yes, sir, honesty *is* the best policy."

"No," the Rabbi admonished, "honesty is not the *best* policy." Then, after the shock had subsided, he added, "It is the *only* policy."[8]

Loyalty between rabbi and congregation has marked the entire course of the history of Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel. "Unless there is a congregation's support," Joseph Krauskopf once said, "there cannot be a minister's success. . . . Be he never so able, never so eloquent, if his congregation does not stand solidly, loyally behind him, does not work and strive and battle with him, in vain will all his efforts be, in vain will be all his hopes."[9]

Keneseth Israel's present senior rabbi, Dr. Bertram W. Korn, is only the fourth incumbent of this office since 1866. Always a congregation with a social conscience, it has never hesitated to support its rabbis in their humanitarian efforts in the betterment of society and the furtherance of Judaism.

8

REFORM CONCEPTS OF KENESETH ISRAEL

The religious thinking of Rabbi Krauskopf represented a liberalism which met tremendous resistance from more conservative rabbis and their congregations, winning the anathema of the orthodox. Some went so far as to question whether he was Jewish, suspecting that he was attempting to lead other Jews into Christianity.

As much as any other factor in this disaffection was the Reform view of reason and faith. Faith, they believed, should be based on truth, truth on reason. The Orthodox element held, on the other hand, that reason is too ephemeral to be a sound basis for faith: that which is called reason today may be considered unreasonable a hundred years from now, yet faith must remain steadfast.

In sermons at Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, Joseph Krauskopf clearly set forth these Reform tenets:

> We believe that religion concerns itself with deed; that active and effective participation in all things of human interest . . . is more in consonance with the spirit of religion than is the spinning of complicated theological cobwebs, or the straying and losing itself in profitless abstractions.
>
> We believe that religion is always with the rational spirit of the age, and never against it; that it is always in accordance with the postulates of reason, that it makes it imperative upon its adherents to seek and search everything for that knowledge which will promote right thinking, right living, and right doing.
>
> We discriminate between religion and theology, between that which concerns itself with things human and that which concerns itself with things divine; between that which is concrete, discernible, tangible, attainable, and that which is abstract, incomprehensible, unknowable, which transcends the limits of finite knowledge. We believe in bringing religion to the pulpit, to the home, in everyday life, and in consigning theology to the lecture room of the seminary, or to the philosopher's chair in the university.
>
> We believe that morality is the highest expression of religion, and that it should receive its greatest emphasis.
>
> We believe that, while holding that a future existence is a reasonable inference from the problem of life, it is of this present existence only that we have any positive knowledge; and that, therefore, it is our sacred duty to perfect this present existence, to make it as noble and as useful and as happy as lies within human power.
>
> We recognize truth in every religion. We discard that peculiar oriental conception that we alone, out of the hundreds of millions of people who inhabit our globe, have been selected to be God's own and peculiar treasure.
>
> We discard the belief that the Bible was written by God, or by man under the immediate dictation of God, and that its teachings are therefore infallible and binding upon all men and all ages. While we cheerfully admit that it has been and still is a most potent book for religious and moral instruction; while we value it for the influence which it has exercised upon the civilization of the world, and prize it as the work of our fathers; and while in recognition of its services in the past and for the valuable services it still does render we give it an honorable place in our homes, we nevertheless do not hesitate to admit that it is the work of man and shares all the faults that characterize the religious writings of bygone ages; that its self-evident contradictions, its conflicts with indisputable facts of science, show conclusively the human hand and the primitive human mind.
>
> Our religious conceptions are plastic, capable of being

remodeled, capable of accommodating themselves to the newer and better, capable of enlargement and improvement.[1]

The absolute religious truth has been related to none. No man living, be his ecclesiastical title what it may, can truthfully say he possesses it. The fanatic, who professes to possess the whole of it, has not acquired the first rudiment of it.[2]

They know little of religion who have not yet learned that the amelioration of the lot of the poor and the protection of the rights of the weak have constituted, from the first, the special mission of religion.[3]

We show the highest reverence to our fathers, not by always doing what they did, but by doing what they would have done had they lived in our day. . . .

No religion, if it is to serve its purpose. is to be permitted to become congealed or fossilized. The day a religion ceases to grow marks it for the grave.[4]

9

SUNDAY SERVICES

"Ah," complain nearly all our Amerian Jews . . . "Ah! we know that Saturday is the only day on which heaven is open for Sabbath prayers, but we cannot keep it."

"Why not?"

"Our vocations will not permit it."

"Why not?"

"It is the busiest day of the week, and if we stop, the large army of breadwinners will rush over us and trample us to death."

"Will the Sunday permit it?"

"Yes."

"Why not worship and rest on Sunday?"

"That is the Christian day."

"What does the Christian do on it?"

"He worships."

"Whom?"

"God."

"What else does the Christian do on that day?"

"He gives his children a religious education, and gives himself a rest."

"Can you not worship your God on the day on which the wheel of industry is chained, on which quiet reigns supreme, on which the very atmosphere seems filled with holiness and to inspire holiness, in your place of worship and in your own manner, and educate your children, and allow your bodies rest? Were not such a course more honest than to allow your praelector and your preacher to conduct, Saturday after Saturday in your houses of worship, services before empty benches?"[1]

The Rabbi held this imaginary conversation with the reluctant Jews who were critical of the Sunday Services held regularly at Temple Keneseth Israel. Sunday Services were not new there; the congregation had approved Sunday Services as early as 1881, but they had not been successfully introduced until Dr. Krauskopf's arrival in 1887.

The Jewish Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday and ends at nightfall on Saturday. In countries where Christianity is the religion of the majority, this has often conflicted with the work schedules of commerce and industry, and with the social usages of the majority. In recent years, the forty-hour workweek has virtually eliminated the major impediment to Saturday Sabbath attendance in synagogues. During Dr. Krauskopf's ministry, however, this was a genuine problem. As long ago as 1844, Dr. Samuel Hirsch had suggested that the Jewish Sabbath be changed to Sunday, and advocated that change throughout his career.[2] For a short while after coming to Philadelphia, Dr. Krauskopf tentatively suggested the change, but did not pursue it at length; opposition to such a radical change was obviously overwhelming, even among Reform rabbis and their congregations. His philosophy on the Sabbath was expressed in a sermon: "It is not the day in itself, but the use that is made of it, which has a virtue in it."[3]

The first recorded attempt to hold Sunday Services in a synagogue seems to have been made by the Hebrew Reformed Association in 1854, in Baltimore. (It later became the Har Sinai Congregation.) After a six-months trial the innovation was abandoned. Twenty years later, Sunday Services were again started there, continuing for more than thirty years. By 1907, a score of Reform congregations were holding the supplementary Sunday Service. When Dr. Stephen S. Wise started Sunday Services in his Free Synagogue in New York City Dr. Krauskopf was invited as the first speaker. Later that year (1907) he delivered a second sermon there.[4]

Many Reform Jews today, when asked about Sunday Services, are mildly jolted. The practice seems to have vanished, and is not likely to be revived. The need no longer exists. At no time, however, were Sunday Services a threat to the Jewish Sabbath; they merely provided an opportunity for worship for those who could not attend during the Sabbath. The reasoning behind them was explained by the Rabbi:

> It was our religious conviction that in an unkept Saturday Sabbath and an unattended Saturday Service lay the greatest danger to Judaism. . . . I knew that circumstances beyond their control prevented almost all our men, young and old, from attending upon divine services on Saturday. I also knew that if they were to continue faithful to their sacred heritage and to the moral law, they would have to attend upon more than a New Year and Atonement Day service. I also knew that the non-Israelite could as little attend upon Saturday services in the synagogue as could the Jew, and that if he was to rid himself of his misinformation respecting the Jew, and of his prejudice against him, services in the synagogue would have to be conducted at a time when he would be free to come, and to see, and to hear, and that the discourses would have to be put into print and distributed among such non-Jews who would not or could not hear them delivered.
>
> Recognizing that the Saturday Services were dear to a considerable number of people who were free to attend on that day, I held that it would be wrong to deny to these their sacred rights on Saturday as it would be wrong to deny to others their rights and needs on Sunday.[5]

Saturday services, then, continued as before. Surprisingly, as the attendance at Sunday services increased enormously from year to year at Congregation Keneseth Israel, so did it increase at Saturday services.

The start of Sunday services in Philadelphia came as a

shock to other Jewish congregations in the city, even though Keneseth Israel had experimented with the idea as early as 1870. The other Reform congregation, Rodeph Shalom, welcomed a few disgruntled "Keneseth Israelites" into its fold. Orthodox and Conservative rabbis and press mounted new attacks against Krauskopf, Sunday services, and Reform in general, for they suspected an effort to lead the Jews into Christianity. "Our answer to these attacks was a necessitated enlargement of our old Temple at the end of the first year, a second enlargement at the end of the second year . . . [and] the dedication of this magnificent House of God at the end of the fifth year."[6]

The *Sunday Lectures* were published each week and widely distributed. By 1923, over two million copies had been printed and distributed. The Rabbi received a stream of letters from those who read his sermons as pamphlets or in the Sunday newspapers. Most were letters of approval, though some took issue with him.

The Rabbi delivered his sermons entirely from memory, disdaining the use of notes. His oratory, even in an age of great orators, was evidently impressive. Herbert Allman said, " . . . [He had] a gift of expressing his thoughts cogently and with literary charm." Another friend wrote, "As Dr. Krauskopf read the twenty-first chapter of the first book of Kings, I realized that never before had I grasped half the significance of the story of Ahab and Jezebel, of Naboth and Elijah."[7]

Above all, the two things which the Sunday services were designed to do were accomplished insofar as one congregation could accomplish them: they brought a large number of Jews back to the active practice of religion, as shown by the tremendous growth of Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel during the Rabbi's tenure; and they brought about an infinitely greater understanding between American Christians and American Jews.

10

JEWISH PUBLICATION SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Two months after his installation as Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel's rabbi, Joseph Krauskopf launched a campaign to organize a religious publication society, a nonprofit, cooperative publishing facility whose objective would be the issuance of books and other printed material relating to American Judaism.

At that time, very few books on Jewish subjects had been published in the United States. Two or three attempts to develop such publication societies had been abortive, perhaps because they tended to represent only a narrow spectrum of Jewish belief. No English translation of the Scriptures, acceptable to American Jews, had been prepared. The King James version of the Bible was being used by many laymen, but most rabbis felt that this translation was slanted in its rendition of the Jewish Scriptures.

Dr. Krauskopf pointed out in a sermon that every major Christian denomination had its own publication society, engaged in publishing and distributing literature relating to its own particular religious position. American Judaism had failed to create such a facility. "We need, first and foremost, a publication society, and we must have it, and we can have it if we but want it."[1]

In May, 1888, acting upon this imperative challenge to action, the Knowledge Seekers, Keneseth Israel's young adult group, prevailed on the board of trustees to call an intercongregational conference to explore the feasibility of establishing such a publication society. The following month, representatives from all parts of the country, from congregations of a

wide range of religious opinion, met in Philadelphia to consider forming the society. "There have been many reasons why it was not created before," the Rabbi told the assembled representatives, "reasons of insufficient means and talents; but these reasons are no longer valid. We have the means and we have the talent. What we need is the will."[2] A constitution was soon agreed upon, and the Jewish Publication Society of America came into being.

Its first president was Morris Newburger, a member of the board of trustees of Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel. Dr. Krauskopf was elected secretary because of his ability as an organizer and administrator.

Dissension very nearly brought about the early demise of the society. One representative group of rabbis, in 1889, refused to support it financially because of its impartiality, "... because the officers of that society have determined, in accordance with the constitution ... which some of these opposing rabbis helped to make, not to favor in their publications the doctrines and views of one particular party or another ..."[3]

David Philipson, in his autobiography, tells us that Dr. Krauskopf was gradually forced out of the society by some of his "implacable foes" who gained its control. Philipson, who graduated from Hebrew Union College with Krauskopf in 1883, was associated with the Jewish Publication Society throughout his career. Perhaps he was more conciliatory than his friend Joseph. He tells us:

> As it chanced, these foes of Krauskopf were very friendly to me. But I constantly regretted what I felt was a great injustice that they had done to him. Fifty years have rolled around since the Jewish Publication Society was organized. A celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary took place in December, 1938. I was asked to preside at

> the anniversary meeting. In my address I took occasion to pay tribute to the memory of Joseph Krauskopf as the founder of the society. I felt that in paying this tribute I was correcting the wrong that had been done him ...[4]

Philipson lived to be eighty-five years old, a venerable, highly respected elder statesman of American Reform Judaism.

There is nothing in the Rabbi's published sermons, nor in his surviving correspondence, to indicate that he took umbrage at his banishment from the publication society. He seems to have believed that his role as initiator and early organizer was less significant than the fact that American Judaism now had its source of publications.

The Jewish Publication Society of America is now in its eighty-fifth year of sound, productive existence. It has always maintained high standards in its editorial policies, in its promotion of scholarly research, and in its publishing methods and techniques. It remains a monument to the creative mind of its founder.

26

ON LOVE

A gentle man, the Rabbi believed that love could be the panacea for all of man's ills if it were used intelligently. The thread of love was to be found interwoven through all his sermons and writings, and in every phase of his life.

"There is no dearth of mind today, but there is a woeful want of heart." He often used *heart* in the sense of *love,* a romantic synonym more often used in this sense a few decades ago than today. *Mind,* the cold intelligence, is opposed to *heart* when they are used separately or in contrast. Used together, as when love is applied with intelligence, they can find solutions for even the most formidable problems of men, societies, and nations.

> We need more heart in our homes. The brute instinct still plays a large part in our nurseries. We frown where we should smile, and we scold where we should pity. We stifle in our anger what we could develop in our forbearance. We punish with the rod where we should correct with kindness. We harden with rigor where we should soften with gentleness. . . .[1]

The Rabbi once told of a small boy, not yet five, who brought home merit cards for good conduct in kindergarten. (He didn't say so, but it is probable that this was his own son, Harold.) His parents were very pleased with these merit cards. Then, for a few days, the boy returned home without merit cards, and his parents learned that his deportment had been somewhat below the desired norm. The father instantly became angry and told his child that if he came home again

without a merit card he could not eat with the family, but must eat by himself in the kitchen. The next day the boy produced a merit card, and the father was pleased, sure that his method of discipline had been successful. The father later learned, however, that the lad had simply gone to his mother's desk and taken one of the old cards.

Anger rose again, but only for an instant; for he realized that his son had taken what seemed to him an innocent means of circumventing the punishment. Later, the father explained to his son the wrong that had been done, and the boy understood. Merit cards became regular trophies after that, and both father and son had learned valuable lessons. The Rabbi said that parents often defeat their own purpose by the severity of their punishments, driving their children to deception.[2]

Our schools concentrate almost entirely on training the intellect and exercising the body, with little or no thought given to developing love, consideration for others, tolerance and understanding of others' beliefs and opinions, or control of the decivilizing emotions. Tests are given to determine the progress of the mind's absorption of data, or to gauge the physical development, but little is done to further the education of the *heart*, of love for one's fellow creatures. The relationship between teacher and pupil is all too often lacking in empathy and mutual consideration. It is often openly hostile.

In our everyday dealings with our fellowmen, we depend too little upon generous impulses, stifling them in the course of highly competitive industrial and commercial pursuits.

> We have heard too much of the doctrine, "Each for himself, and the devil take the hindmost." It is a doctrine that may well fit into the life of the brute, but it is the distinction of man that he alone, out of all animal creation, is possessed of active fellow-feeling. He alone is a man who shows his manhood by active sympathy with his fellowman. . . . The more his sense of fellow-feeling is developed the richer grow his affections; and the richer his affections, the larger is his and others' happiness. . . .[3]

Our actions and attitudes engender like responses in others; "Unkindness begets unkindness; selfishness breeds selfishness. Lovelessness is paid in its own coin." But the man who is unselfish, thoughtful of others, readily sympathetic, capable of love, receives all that he gives, and more. Further, the happiness which he feels in knowing that his own actions are conducive to good compensates for any material loss, for he can live comfortably with his conscience. "One's own heart's approval is worth all the gain that selfishness procures. . . ."

The power of love to right the wrongs of this world is immense:

> For love is life, and life is love. They who do not love do not live. They who love nothing are nothing. . . . Love is the golden cord that ties our hearts to a thousand other hearts.
>
> It is more divine than theology, it is a form of religion itself. It has no need of creeds or dogmas to convince, of bans or inquisitions or torture chambers to convert. Its saints are not those who waste their years in prayers and penance, or who wage holy wars or battle mightily in theological controversies; but those who preach the gospel of love, and practice what they preach. . . .[4]

Joseph Krauskopf lived these idealistic standards. Every fact that can be learned about him now, half a century after his death, shows the motivation of love, love for all his fellowmen. Every social reform which he championed had as its purpose the betterment of civilized society. Every sermon he preached showed this selfless concern for others. Every facet of his private life which we can examine shows thoughtfulness,

consideration, understanding, love. He was thoroughly sincere in this approach to life. He believed that it was the only worthwhile attitude: "For they that have love in their hearts possess the true wisdom of life. . . . They that have that wisdom are the chosen of God."

27

ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

At the turn of the century few schools were concerned with individual learning levels and the varying capacities of their pupils. This sermon shows a compassionate concern for the slow learner, and for the retarded, which many educators still fail to share.

"We have in our larger cities now-a-days, dozens of institutions that deal with the consequences of ancestral sins in all the awful varieties of moral delinquencies, of mental deficiencies, of physical disabilities. But what do we do for those whose deficiencies are still undeveloped, or but rudimentarily manifest, or for those whose moral or mental awakening proceeds at a very slow pace? We send them to school and place them alongside the morally and physically and mentally sound and wide awake.

"The latter naturally progress faster than the others, and in discipline prove themselves less troublesome. And so they receive praise, while for the others there is but censure; and the standard of progress is gauged by their capacity and advance, while the others are forced to drag themselves behind, with naught but scolding and punishment and dunce caps and bad notes and bad reports to hurry them into a pace that exceeds their powers.

"And so the mentally deficient or slow fall gradually discouraged and disheartened by the wayside. As to the morally deficient, their disease instead of being gradually eliminated, is but driven deeper into the system and forced to take all the firmer root, often so deep and so firm as to render all future

fetched him a thrashing instead of candy. And yet she wondered at the boy's untruthfulness!

"It is, moreover, for parents to cure their own bad temper before attempting to cure that of their children. That little boy about hit it who, when sent to his room to pray for pardon for a display of temper, and to ask God to give him a good temper, ended his prayer by adding in a whisper, 'And, O God, make Mother's temper good, too.'

"It is for parents . . . to remember that what compass and charts are to mariners, proper knowledge of child-life and child training is to parents. As the slightest deflection from the proper course may in time lead to shipwreck, as drifting along compassless, rudderless, may bring the bark upon the rocks of destruction, even so may parental carelessness, aimlessness, want of forethought and foresight, cause a life to founder, cause a career to strand upon the rocks of sin and crime."[1]

29

ON TEACHING CHILDREN TO PRAY

The Rabbi said:

"Don't teach the child to pray for impossibilities, for miracles, for blessings which are not wanted and cannot be had.

"Children are believers and literalists. If you lead them to expect what is beyond the range of possibility, you practice deceit. They hope; and, their hope failing, they soon dislike and distrust the God to whom they are to pray.

"Don't make God appear to the child as the keeper of some large candy store or toy shop, or as the chief of police, and thus plant in early childhood the religion of fear or the religion of selfish ends.

"Teach the child the truth. Tell it that the flowers it loves, the grass on which it plays, the sky which it admires, the birds that sing, the ocean that roars, the lightnings that flash, the rain and snow that fall, are all parts of God.

"Teach it that the food it eats, and the clothes that it wears, and the house that shelters it, and the toys it plays with, and the parents who love it, are all gifts of God.

"Teach it that the God, who makes the earth so beautiful, and fills it with His love, and supplies it with all its reasonable wants, does not do any of these things to be paid for, to be praised for, or to be thanked for.

"Only fill it with a consciousness that God is Goodness, that God is everywhere and in all things, and—such is the appreciativeness of a child—of its own accord, and in its own words, it will turn to God with its own praise, with its thanks, with its

promise to be good because its God is good.

"Let the words be crude, and the phrases disconnected, there is truth, there is thought, there is sincerity in them.

"Any other form of prayer is mere mechanism."[1]

30

ON DIVORCE

Ever since statistics on the national divorce rate have been released, concern has been expressed for the condition and future of the marriage institution. In 1909 sociologists were so disturbed by the rapidly accelerating divorce rate that an entire issue of the *American Journal of Sociology* was devoted to this subject. Rabbi Krauskopf contributed a paper: *Marring the Marriage Bond.*[1] Having dealt with the subjects of marriage and divorce in his *Sunday Lectures,* he incorporated some of his previously expressed opinions into this paper.

The divorce rate at that time, he believed, though no surprise to sociologists and clergymen, had startled the public and raised much dire speculation. "Basing their estimate on the present rate of divorce, they claim that by the year 1920 every marriage entered into will ultimately be severed by the [divorce] law. . . ." Krauskopf, however, felt that this was unwarranted pessimism brought about through misunderstanding of the problems of marriage which often result in divorce. "While the facts and figures contained in the latest census report are saddening, I fail to find in them a reason for utter disheartenment or for such predictions of calamity."

The Rabbi inclined to the opinion that these higher divorce rates might, in fact, indicate a trend toward nobler and happier marriages. In analyzing the causes of unhappy marriages, he had learned from available information that male infidelity was responsible for roughly two-thirds of the instances. Wives find it demeaning to continue the marital bond with husbands who are unfaithful to their marriage vows;

and, being better prepared to earn their own livelihoods after divorce than was formerly the case, they are not generally restrained from divorce by financial dependence on their husbands.

It is not relevant to compare the divorce rate in the United States with that of Europe, which is much lower. The lower European divorce rate does not connote a higher condition of morality than that which exists here, nor a higher appreciation of the sacredness of marriage, nor a greater respect for womanhood. The major causes of the lower European divorce rate may be found in the greater difficulties of obtaining divorces there. The churches, as well as civil statutes, virtually forbid divorce in many European countries. "A wife in those countries may suffer the agony of hell [but] she can escape from [her unhappy marriage] only through the gateway of the grave."

Such is not the unhappy lot of the American woman. Occupying a position of legal equality with her husband, she finds the double standard in marriage intolerable. "She does not believe in one standard of morality for the wife, and another kind for the husband.... The true American woman will not, cannot, condone moral depravity in her husband."

What about the other third of the divorce rate, the divorces granted to husbands? Here, all too often, the parents of the bride have devoted their training and counsel toward preparing their daughter to make a good marital catch rather than a good marriage. More than being a clothes horse and a sophisticated member of the social world, the marriageable daughter needs training in the art of bringing happiness and balance to her marriage, "the science and art of keeping the husband contented and happy within the home of her sovereignty," and in keeping herself contented and happy, free of boredom, in the marriage bond.

There is too little preparation for marriage, for the needs

and responsibilities of domestic life. The skills of settling down happily in a home, of harmonizing differences of taste and temperament, of reconciling two separately developed personalities; the understanding of the responsibilities of parenthood and the mutual relationships of the marital condition—these things are assumed, but seldom taught. Too many women anticipate marriage through the vision of an idealistic daydream; they are unprepared to accept its realities.

As for reducing the high divorce rates, more careful thought must be given to the requisites for a happy marriage before marriage is entered into. Parents have a definite responsibility in preparing their children for marriage. The state, also, has a moral and social responsibility to insure that those who enter into marriage are physically and mentally qualified for that status. "The real remedy lies not in making divorce difficult or impossible, but in making entrance into marriage hard...."

For a small sum of money and answers to a few questions, the state will issue a marriage license. It requires no thorough inquiry by a physician, as an application for a life insurance policy would, nor a mental and moral evaluation, as a job application might. It unconcernedly allows those to unite whose chances of marital success are predictably nil, whose children will be handicapped from the instant of their conception, and to whom marriage is little or nothing more than legalized sexual license. The state, if it would reduce divorce rates, should take "every precaution in advance that those who join in holy wedlock shall possess those absolutely necessary prerequisites that may render possible a healthy, happy, sacred marital union."

32

ON DIVINE JUSTICE

The Rabbi said:

"There are those, who upon reading a chapter such as you have listened to this morning,* fling the Bible contemptuously aside as something too absurd to waste one's time upon. Others read a chapter like this with the profoundest reverence, believing it to contain a direct and personal revelation of God as to His mode of dispensing justice on earth. I sometimes wish that this ancient volume might have the power of speech, if but for a few hours. What a tale it would unfold of errors and wrongs attributed to it, of which it is as innocent as is the new-born babe!

"What a story it might tell of misreadings and misinterpretations and mistranslations and interpolations, dogmas and doctrines and miracles and fancies that have been tortured and spun from it which are as far from the truth as is the remotest planet from the depth of the deepest sea!

"Had it the power of speech this morning it would, I fully believe, say to us: The chapter you have read is very old. It was written at a time when men knew less of natural phenomena and of laws of nature than you do, and interpreted them differently from you. You think and speak thoughts; they, who lived in the childhood of the human family, thought and spoke pictures, as your children do today. You interpret phenomena and laws of nature according to the accumulated knowledge of thousands of years, which you call science and

* Genesis 18:16-33; 19:24-28.

philosophy. They interpreted them according to their lights, which were the science and philosophy of their day, and which were as far beneath yours as yours will be beneath the science and philosophy of four thousand years hence.

"You pick up a morning paper and read the account of the horrible destruction of St. Pierre [French West Indies], an entire city with all its population swept out of existence in less time than it takes to tell it. You have studied science, and you have an explanation at hand. A volcanic eruption of Mt. Pelee is the cause of the appalling catastrophe.

"Not so in primitive times. They have the same facts—Sodom and Gomorrah are suddenly destroyed by fire and brimstone—but they had not the same explanation at hand. They know nothing of subterranean explosions, nothing of volcanic eruptions. They ask no questions as to who did it. They are sure that life and death comes from God. It is the *why* that perplexes them.

"They cannot believe that the Judge of all the earth will deal unrighteously. They cannot believe that the cities would be destroyed if but fifty, thirty, or even but ten righteous men had been found therein. They brood and cogitate; they question and answer; and the psychic answer to their question they, ignorant of the science of psychology, interpret to be the answer of God Himself. The conclusion they arrive at is: the people of both the cities were destroyed by divine visitation, in punishment of grievous sin.

"We call this primitive reasoning. Yet, when we scan it closely, we find it quite modern, as modern as much of our best reasoning of today. It is but in its method of arriving at the conclusion wherein its primitiveness lies; the conclusion itself is as advanced as the most advanced of all our teachings respecting the origin of evil and the punishment of sin.

"The question, 'Shall the judge of all the earth not do justice?' and the answer, 'Suffering is the consequence of

man's sin,' are the question and answer of philosophers this very day. Cities might this very day be saved from all manners of evil and corruption if fifty or thirty or even but ten men could be found therein righteous enough to rise and do their whole duty, righteous enough to use their God-given reason in warding off menacing calamities.

"I do not pretend to be able to solve the more difficult problems of human suffering. I do not know whether I can give an explanation at all satisfactory to myself, or others, of the catastrophe of St. Pierre. But I sometimes think that, had man used his God-given reason as he ought to have done, not a single one of the inhabitants of St. Pierre needed to have perished; had man profited by direful calamities in the past, by such volcanic destruction as that of Pompeii and Herculaneum, no city would ever have been founded in such a volcanic region as that surrounding Mt. Pelee, no matter whether its crater be active or seem extinct; more especially when there is ample room for man's safe habitation elsewhere. I sometimes think that, had man made use of his God-given reason, he would never have suffered such a menacing dam as that which well-nigh destroyed the city of Johnstown and drowned thousands of its inhabitants. . . .

"But whether these thoughts be right or wrong, this much we may claim with perfect safety, that by far the largest number of human sufferings are self-created, are consequences of sin, are self-inflicted punishments for non-use of reason, for non-observance of known or knowable laws of life and health. I refuse to believe that a Demon-God is the creator of our sufferings. Nor will I believe that the universe is under a duality of powers, one supremely good, the other supremely evil, and that every visitation of suffering is to be ascribed to the malignant half of this duality. Nor will I content myself with the easy-going belief of those who, instead of searching and probing, instead of laying bare the sore spots and telling the truth, the whole truth, piously fold their hands

and roll their eyes and look owly wise, and say, 'It is all inscrutable mystery. It is manifestly intended for some divine purpose. There will be compensation by and by. It is the will of God. His will be done.'

"It is my firm conviction, a conviction that becomes stronger the older I grow, that nine-tenths of human suffering are not God's will but man's wanton violation or wanton ignorance of known or knowable laws of life and health and duty. It is my firm conviction that every suffering from malignant fever, from hereditary disease, from exhaustion and excess, from ignorance and neglect, from tyranny and oppression, from a thousand other causes, is a consequence of man's injustice and not a visitation from an unjust God. Had I a thousand tongues, I would have each one of them proclaim, 'Not God but man is unjust!'

"When in a house of mourning, where I am about to perform the last sad rites over the remains of one whose earthly career has been cut off long before his time, I hear God spoken of as unjust, I listen in silence. I sympathise with the grief of the stricken ones. I ascribe their mad outburst to a paroxysm of their pain and hold my peace, even though it is hard to hear God held responsible for a death that was but too plainly the consequence of a flagrant disregard of ordinary rules of life and health. . . .

"Suffering is largely man's creation, not God's. Man, not God, is man's worst enemy. It is God's will that man's stay on earth shall be one of healthful toil, and of plenteous rest and recreation and happiness. Man wills that it shall be full of evil; and full of evil it is. . . .

"God has endowed man with intellect to distinguish between the right and the wrong. He has given him free will to choose between the right and the wrong. He has made natural laws eternally and universally immutable so that their power of good or ill may ever be relied upon.

"When our intellect reveals to us that our body was given to

us for holy purposes and for joyous sensations; that teeth were given to us to masticate our food and not to ache; lungs to inhale pure air and not to ripen seeds of consumption; a heart to pump day and night the stream of life through the system and not to rack and torture us; a brain to think and plan, to learn and to remember, to furnish intellectual pleasures and spiritual delights, and not to make life a curse; when we know that excesses of all kinds . . . are causes of suffering and we continue in them despite our better knowledge; when we know that we suffer today because of sin or neglect of our fathers and yet continue excesses and abuses that are bound to inflict sufferings on those that shall come after us; when we know that by a proper use of the intellect we have lessened a thousand ills . . . and yet continue to suffer a thousand other ills because of refusal to grapple with them intellectually; when we know that the laws of nature cannot be transgressed with impunity—when all this we know and can guard against it, it is blasphemy to accuse God of cruelty when the cruelty is of man's own making.

"When will this blasphemy cease? . . . [It] will cease when the laws of nature will cease to be a sealed book to most people, when pupils at school will study the rules of life and health as diligently as now they study linguistic roots and mathematical formulae, when people in society will know as much of the sacredness of motherhood and fatherhood as they now know of style and fashion and etiquette.

"The blasphemy will cease when government officials will be as scrupulous in the examination of the fitness of those about to enter into the married state as they are now in examining the physical and moral and intellectual condition of immigrants; as scrupulous in the examination of the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, as they are now in searching the trunks of those who arrive from foreign travel, or in searching the distilleries or tobacco warehouses that

Uncle Sam be not cheated out of a dollar of revenue or duty.

"The blasphemy will cease when man will look to himself for the riddance of his sufferings and cease trusting to Providence for miracles. . . .

"The blasphemy will cease when man will appreciate that God has wrought the most stupendous miracles conceivable when He endowed man with the intellect and faculty for healthful and useful and happy life.

"When man will know what is given him to know, and do what is given him to do, and shun what is in his power to shun, the charge of God's injustice will no [longer] be heard. Abraham's faith, [that] the Judge of all the earth dealeth justly, will be the faith of all mankind."[1]

33

ON A FAITH UNIVERSAL

Joseph Krauskopf hoped for an ultimate fusion of Christianity and Judaism into a universal faith. He contemplated an eventual merging of these two religions, and believed that this would evolve through mutual desire and effort.

To achieve the *faith universal,* Christians must separate the Greco-Roman Christ from the Palestinian Jesus, stripping away the myth, fable and legend surrounding Him. They must "disentangle the man from the god," reject the magic and mysticism borrowed from the ancient mystery cults and grafted onto the main body of the faith by ignorant or self-seeking church councils and faction leaders. They must return to the pre-Pauline faith of Jesus of Nazareth.

As for Jews, they must forego claims of special favor with God, give up festivals and rites having only historical significance, renounce dietary laws, and reject circumcision as a religious requirement. They must overcome the clannishness which centuries of persecution have caused them to build protectively around their communities, but which is an impediment in a democratic society.[1]

Both Christian and Jew must lend and borrow from each other. The Christian must accept the Old Testament as more than a series of prophecies of a coming messiah, Jesus, and Jews must acknowledge the moral and ethical truths of the New Testament. Religious holidays could merge harmoniously, due regard being given to the laws and customs of the land.

Such a faith of Christian-Jewish brotherhood under one banner is coming, the Rabbi believed, "the advance guards of both sides walking bravely forward and toward each other."

He did not expect that this union could be achieved within his lifetime, nor for many years to come; but he actively aspired toward it, as had Isaac Wise and David Einhorn, and he worked to make it an eventual reality. The goal he set was not the uniformity of religious belief, which he considered both unattainable and unnecessary, but "harmony in the midst of difference."[2] Little fault may be found with the teachings of the religious bodies of the civilized world from the moral aspect; disagreement is basically theological. All have high ideals. "Peace on earth and good will toward men is the goal of each. Not one of them but enjoins upon its people as a fundamental duty to love their neighbors as themselves."[3]

A multitude of creeds divide the great religions from each other, and subdivide them among themselves. The true value of any creed may be measured only by its visible effects on its followers in terms of high moral and ethical attainment, consideration and sympathy for other human beings, and similar indications of its civilizing influence. If these end results are achieved, the differences in creed are unimportant. "Why should not Deed constitute a bond of fellowship? . . . Why is only that man to be considered my co-religionist who believes like me, no matter how different his deed? Why not more so he who acts like me, no matter how different his creed?" Too much stress, he felt, was laid on theology, which many mistake for religion; and upon ceremony, which some mistake for morality. Belief in a universal God makes the coreligionist. Disagreement in the concepts of God and in the manner of worshipping Him makes the sectarian.[4]

Such a universal faith would not be a new religion:

> The term "new religion" is a misnomer. I have never yet seen a new religion nor heard of one. . . . Judaism was the new form of a dozen old religions; Christianity was the new form of Judaism and Hellenism and other isms;

> Mohammedanism was a new form of Judaism and Christianity and of old Arabic beliefs. And all the sects that have sprung from them have been but new forms of the old, new expressions of the old yearnings after spiritual truth.[5]

That some Christians were sharing similar aspirations is seen in Charles William Eliot's concept of a "civilized" religion, expressed in "The Religion of the Future," an article in the *Harvard Theological Review* in October, 1909. In it, he envisioned very nearly the same shared religion, sweeping aside the artificial barriers that impede the realization of religious brotherhood, though he still preferred to think of it as an advanced form of Christianity. He later said, however, that he considered Reform Judaism to be entirely harmonious with his concept of the "religion of the Twentieth Century."[6]

There had been tentative efforts at understanding by religious groups before then. Shortly after arriving in Philadelphia, the Rabbi had organized an interfaith "Liberal Ministers' Conference," which met biweekly and later developed into a national organization. In 1908, a religious commemoration of Founders' Week in Philadelphia was held at the Friends Meeting, where sixteen ministers, "Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, orthodox and reform, conservative and radical, trinitarian and unitarian," appeared together before an audience of many different denominations. A little over a year later, an interfaith service was held at the Broad Street Temple of Congregation Keneseth Israel, where ministers of the Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Lutheran, Universalist and Unitarian denominations, the Society of Friends, and Reform Judaism sat together on the same platform. "In common, they worshipped the same God."

While this early hint of ecumenism was heartening to the Rabbi, subsequent events have given little hope for a genuine

reconciliation between Judaism and Christianity. Rabbi Ben Zion Bokser, of the Forest Hills Jewish Center (Forest Hills, New York), has listed three aspects of Christian teaching which keep the two religions apart. First is the dogma that Christianity is the only true flowering of Judaism. Next, the "continued preoccupation with proselytizing the Jews," through the maintenance of missions in areas of concentrated Jewish population. This carries with it the imputation that Judaism is in error while Christianity is not, that Jews must come to Christianity to find truth in religion. This is, of course, deeply resented by Jews. Finally, the persistence of the teaching of the Christian churches that the crucifixion of Jesus was "a crime perpetrated by the Jews," which totally ignores the last hundred years of historical scholarship; this study has shown that the apprehension, trial, and execution of Christ were controlled and carried out by the Romans as a suppressive measure against an incipient revolt by an oppressed captive colony. These teachings perpetrate one of the major justifications of anti-Semitism. The statement by Pope Paul VI that the Jews of today cannot be held responsible for the actions of a few of their ancestors falls short of correcting the errors present in the Gospel accounts which whitewash the Roman occupation troops.[7]

That these two great religions can work and worship amicably is amply supported by the harmonious relationship existing between them in the armed forces of the United States, where the same chapels are used for Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic worship services. A model for consideration was the U. S. Armed Forces Religious Center in Tokyo, during the Allied occupation of Japan. There, three sanctuaries radiated from a common entrance foyer, each furnished and staffed for the distinctive requirements of its worshippers. Another practical example of religious brotherhood is found in New York City, where two congregations, one Presbyterian, the

other Reform Jewish, have used the same house of worship for over fourteen years. The Village Presbyterian Church and Brotherhood Synagogue have recently been joined by a Catholic church in the Washington Square area.

Gradually, American Christianity and American Judaism are learning that there are many ways in which they may be mutually helpful. It is not too bizarre to expect that, in some distant future, there may yet be a *Faith Universal.*

In 1967, Rabbi Israel Margolis said: "For the first time in almost two millenia of rancor and recrimination, an enlightened effort is being made on both sides to replace archaic barriers with new bridges to brotherhood."[8]

Ecumenism, an explosive force slow to detonate, cannot be contained within the limits of one religion or faith once it has released its forces.

34

GOD IS DEAD!

God is dead!

The impact of this statement, revived in recent years, has led many of us to suppose that it is of recent origin, a declaration somehow symptomatic of the ethical and moral confusion of our time. It has even been attributed to the atheistic Communist propaganda designed to undermine the values and ideals of the democratic societies of the world.

In the 1880s, Nietzsche advanced this proposition in *Thus Spake Zarathustra,* "Once blasphemy against God was the greatest blasphemy; but God died. . . ." Nietzsche's pronouncement has since been challenged by many ministers, of many religions, in many lands. As early as 1888, the Rabbi used the influence of his pulpit to counteract this atheistic manifesto. These excerpts from some of his *Sunday Lectures,* covering a period of thirty years, show an unwavering belief in the existence and continuing being of God. To provide continuity of thought, they are given here without regard to their chronological order.

"There is no belief as common as that man can accept God or discard Him as he chooses. Man may do without God for a time, but sooner or later he will come back to Him, for the reason that he is so intimately linked with God that he cannot keep away from Him altogether. Religion is the efflorescence of the soul, not a concoction of priests. . . . There was religion before priests entered the world; it will endure long after they shall have ceased. . . . It has always been one of the instincts of man. . . ."[1]

"No nation has ever prospered long without a God. No man has ever long preserved his righteousness without religion. . . . No man has ever used aright the material of this earth without a due admixture of the spiritual. It is the thought of God that keeps alive the thought of good. It is the service of God that keeps alive the service to man. It is the dedication of one day in the week to God that sanctifies the life of the home, of the office, of the store or factory or shop. It is the communication with God that answers the questions, Whence we come? Why we come? Whither we go?"[2]

"Without a God to inspire and keep courage alive, the spasmodic fit of righteousness soon dies out; while rapacity and unscrupulousness never sleep nor slumber. . . . there is no depth of wickedness to which people will not sink if thoroughly dispossessed of a fear of God. There is no height to which people will not aspire if thoroughly imbued with faith in God, with a desire to hear Him, and to do His will."[3]

"In the hour of reckoning, Germany will discover that no one is so much alive as God, whom their idolized Nietzsche has pronounced 'dead'; and nothing as strong as the moral law of the Bible, which he had pronounced 'the teaching of weakness'; and no one so weak as the 'superman,' whose strength he had pronounced 'invincible.' In the hour of reckoning, Germany will discover that not only Nietzsche himself was mad, but his worshippers as well."[4]

"Unbelievers, even many who do believe, seem never to realize that God of rational believers is not a person, not an entity, but a philosophical concept, a supreme spiritual force, incorporeal, invisible, incomprehensible; yet made manifest to the intellect as Supreme, Creative Power, and Wisdom,

through the existence of the universe and through the law and harmony that obtain therein. A Being self-revealed also to the heart and soul and mind of man through the law of life and justice which are inscribed thereon. The wonders of the heavens above and of the earth below proclaim Him as the All-Powerful. . . .

"Creation without a Creator, nature without a Sustainer, law without a Law-giver, harmony without a Harmonizer, life without a Life-giver, are inconceivable terms to the thinking human mind. 'Give me matter,' said Kant, 'and I will explain the formation of the world; but give me matter without a God, and I cannot explain the formation even of a caterpillar.' "[5]

"The fault of such unbelievers lies in their setting up a God who never was, is not now, and never will be: a kind of God in the existence of which no intelligent reasoner ever believed. They set up a straw man, label him GOD, and then proceed to knock him down. That is what they did during the French Revolution, when their overwrought brains put God out of existence, only to bring Him back again when the horrible consequences of a godless society restored their reason.

"People pictured to themselves God as a colossal policeman, with a huge club in His hand with which to beat out the brains of miscreants the instant a law is violated by them, or as a ferocious monster existing for the purpose of springing upon criminals the moment their crime is committed. Not finding Him doing the things they predicted of Him . . . they themselves fly into a passion and promptly rule Him out of the universe."[6]

"With God in ethics, morality becomes divine. Ethics without a God must in the long run mean humanity without

morality. Morality is the canal, religion the feeder. Morality is the doer, religion the inspirer. Morality ministers to physical needs, religion has also comfort for those under mental and spiritual tribulations. Morality's realm is as high as man and as wide as the earth; religion's sphere is as wide as the Cosmos and as high as the Universe."[7]

"The enemies of religion . . . have no eye for the great good that religion does. They can only see its evils, and on these they harp with relish. . . . It argues intolerance as well as ignorance to pass sentence of uselessness upon any institution on the grounds of its abuse. Law and government, love and charity, home and school have been abused, but only a fool or knave will, for that reason, advocate their abolition."[8]

"Alas for that society that can worship nothing higher than itself; the time will come when it will find nothing lower than itself. Those that cannot lift their eyes upward to God soon cast them downward to the brute."[9]

"The heart's slightest whisper for immortality is stronger than the mind's strongest argument against it. I believe that the Hereafter exists because the Present exists, because God exists, because man exists. Without it, creation would have no purpose, the universe no meaning, God no existence, mankind no reason for not quickly ending its stay in this vale of tears by a speedy exit through the gateway of suicide.

"What madness, what cruelty it were, to bring into existence a universe so immeasurably vast, so inconceivably wonderful, so filled with countless millions of worlds, so marvelously governed and ruled by eternal and immutable laws, and to people at least one of these worlds—our Earth—with creatures without number, large and small, and most wonderfully made, and make their existence full of want and hardship;

moreover, to design and endow . . . the human species with capacities and yearnings and aspirations for the highest and noblest ends—and all for no other purpose than that they might live and struggle and suffer their brief day, and then rot and be forgot, and add so much dust to this earthly crust."[10]

In every way he could, the Rabbi proclaimed that God is alive. In his sermons, in his efforts to be of service to humanity, to improve society, to make his own life an example of practical idealism, of unselfish dedication to that which is good; in his public life and in the privacy of his home, he was completely dedicated to the proposition that God is alive. "As long as stars revolve in their orbits, as long as love throbs in the human breast," he declared, "as long as law and harmony rule the universe, let no man ask, 'Does God exist?' "[11]

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ON THE DECLINE OF RELIGION

The Rabbi would never concede that man is becoming less religious, that there is less religious motivation in the soul of mankind now than in the past. The prevalence of religion cannot be measured solely by the statistics of church attendance; other factors than this reveal an outpouring of religious feeling. If fewer costly cathedrals are built today than in the past, our age has more hospitals, orphanages, schools, and beneficent institutions than any in history.

> If we pay less for the remission of the sins of the dead, we pay more for keeping the living from sinning. If we make less use of holy water, we make more use of pure water. If we eat less of communion wafers, we give more of the bread of life to the poor. If we cease binding our phylacteries around our naked arm, it is because we are more mindful of covering the nakedness of the needy.[1]

What age, he asked, has been more religious than ours? It could not have been in the days of religious crusades and wars, nor of religious massacres because of differences of religious opinion. Nor could it have been when people were forced to choose between Christianity and death, as in the Inquisition; nor when Calvin ordered Servetus burnt at the stake for a difference of opinion concerning dogma.

> While in former times there were those who gave all their time to God, there are those who, in our day, give their time also to man. If we cannot see them in the pews of the church, we can find them in the hospitals nursing

> the sick, in the orphanages taking care of the fatherless, in the [slum] settlements shedding rays of sunshine into darkened lives, in other places where they labor in comforting and enlightening and ennobling man. All this may not be religion in the old conception of the term, but in the modern understanding . . . it is an evolution that bids fair some day to make of religion what, in the divine dispensation, it was intended to be.[2]

How these views might have been altered had he been able to foresee the official renunciation of religion by Russia, and the heathen atavism of Nazi Germany, one may only guess.

As for the problem of empty pews and dwindling congregations, many pulpits are uninspired and uninspiring, incapable of attracting and holding thoughtful worshippers, fearful of venturing away from the archaic creeds and forms into the problems of modern civilization.

> In the churches where ministers have the courage to place the cause of the new humanity above the creed of the old theology, to look upon all men who love God and obey the moral law as brethren . . . there the churches are not empty. . . .[3]

The church has a greater responsibility to mankind than the mere role of Biblical explication and ritual worship. It has a social responsibility. It must not only point the way to truth, sincerity and righteousness; it must actively champion them, and provide the opportunity for man to attain these high ends. Where a church remains only a reminder of ecclesiastic history and a purveyor of ancient theology, it can attract few modern minds.

If it projects itself into the present, meeting the spiritual needs of enlightened, present-day men and women, it will not suffer either spiritual atrophy or statistical decline.

40

ON DEATH

The Rabbi said:

"It is one of the hardest things for the living to understand that whatever punishment there is in bereavement it is the living that suffer it, and not the dead. It is one of the hardest things for the living to understand that, instead of being the bitterest enemy of man, death is often his greatest friend. Due to the perverted theologies of most people, death has generally been pictured as cruel and abhorrent. Priests have reared altars even to creeping things and ferocious beasts, but never to death. Poets have sung the praises even of human monsters; comparatively few of them have had a good word for death.

"When pictured by pen or brush, he was generally represented in the form of a hideous skeleton, with sword and scythe in hand, and a stare that curdled the blood of those that looked upon this caricature. Milton, in his *Paradise Lost,* represents him as the offspring of Sin and Satan, sitting at the gate of Hell, and gloating in anticipation over the victims that are to fall to his lot.

"Had people generally understood death aright they would have represented him far differently than they have. They would have pictured him as the peace-loving friend of man, as the one who brings solace to the inconsolable, healing to the sick, freedom to the enslaved, rest to the heavy-laden; one who, even when he summons the young, lifts them out of a vale of sin and sorrow into that sphere where sin and sorrow are unknown.

"If of cruelty we must speak, would it not be a more fitting

attribute of life than of death? For what is life for many but a long-drawn sigh that commences at the cradle and ends only at the grave? Even the longest and strongest life is often, as the Psalmist tells, but sorrow and trouble. Childhood is beset by disease and danger; youth is harassed by sin and passion; maturity by trials and burdens; old age, by feebleness and dotage. Toil there is for all, and trouble for all; unbroken joy there is for none. To live means to fight; to fight means to conquer or to be conquered; to conquer means to invite upon one's self the enmity and hatred of the conquered. Gain is followed by pain; love, by loss. Hope is delusive and joy is fleeting.

"Go where you may, you find man pitted against man. You hear the wail of the injured and see the misery of the wronged. You see prison walls and arsenals, almshouses and hospitals. You see dives and dens that tell their sad story of blasted lives, of ruined homes, of broken hearts. Is there not cruelty, is there not enmity in this, and shall life nevertheless be pictured only in the form of beauty, and death portrayed as horrible and cruel?

"Instead of the sword, I would put the torch of immortal life into his hands; instead of rattling bones, I would wing him with pinions of gold. . . . What sorrow has disturbed them, what wound has tortured them, since he rocked them to sleep? The medicine that human hands could not offer he offered, and they are cured. The peace that human power could not give he gave, and they are quieted. The sleep that human skill could not administer he administered, and they are at rest. And at rest they shall be, though seasons change, though years roll on, though decades pass and centuries vanish; for what he gives he gives forever, where he blesses he blesses for eternity.

"More yet than for death's blessings to the departed would I sing his praises for his blessings to the remaining. . . . But for his occasional entrance into our family circles, our affections

would not be half as deep as they are, nor half as sacred. But for his visits to the palace as well as to the hut, the mighty would not be half as humble as they are, nor half as considerate. But for his occasional knock at our doors, churches would rarely be built, and schoolhouses would rarely be filled. Life without death would not be livable.

"Some of you may be willing to admit the reasonableness of death for the sorrowing and suffering, for the aged and weary, for the homeless and helpless. But what reasonableness can be found, you may ask, in his plucking those who have but entered upon life, or who have not half completed the years ordinarily allotted to mortals, those who are in the full enjoyment of life and who spread cheer and happiness far and wide, whose work is scarcely begun or is not half done, those who have dear ones depending upon them for companionship, for support or guidance?

"I know this question. I have heard it often, and often I have heard it asked in accents tinged with sounds of unbelief and rebellion. And what is worse, though I know the question, I do not know the answer. Yet, with all my inability to grasp God's doings, I trust that He who deals so reasonably with the aged and weary, with the sorrowing and suffering, with the helpless and hopeless, must have a reason for occasionally summoning the young and strong, the useful and needful, a reason as great as that which He employs in summoning the others. The kindness which He displays toward the others leads me to believe there must be kindness in His summons of these, even though our finite sense cannot understand it.

"God's standard for gauging fitness may be wholly different from ours. . . . We judge by length of years, by physical strength, by position in private or public life. God may judge by qualities of heart and soul wholly unknown to us. . . . As it matters little to the gardener how long the fruit has grown so long as it is ripe for plucking, so may it matter little to God

how many or how few years a person has lived so long as that person is ripe for gathering.

"It is true, life's sunrise elsewhere after its sunset here is unproved. But equally unproved is the soul's annihilation when death ensues. Philosophy has not taught it, science has not demonstrated it. . . .

"The soul believes in immortality, not because it has been proved, but because it is part of its nature to believe it."[1]