

# RABBI JOSEPH KRAUSKOPF

A Biographical Sketch

By

RABBI ABRAHAM J. FELDMAN

In the *Epilogue to "Asolando"*, Browning speaks of

"One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,  
Never doubted clouds would break,  
Never dreamed, tho' right were worsted, wrong would triumph,  
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,  
Sleep to wake."

These lines represent the life-creed of the late Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf, as the writer reads that life and interprets it for himself. A study of Dr. Krauskopf's life, of the outstanding events of his life, however superficial that study may be, reveals the fact that in him Jewry had a son endowed with a supreme courage as to conviction and deed, with a nature that was incurably hopeful, one who was a daring dreamer and a yet more daring doer, a clear thinker and one gifted with the art of imparting thought simply and directly and understandingly.

There were those who knew Dr. Krauskopf only as he appeared to the public,—the courageous preacher, the indefatigable community worker, the organizer, the executive, the leader. They saw the success he attained in everything he undertook. And they created the legend of "Krauskopf luck." "When Krauskopf wants something he gets it"—said they.

He was aware of this legend, and though with a certain childlike naïveté he delighted in it, he often would say: "They know of the things that Krauskopf wanted and got. They know nothing of the many more things he wanted and did not get!"

He delighted in the attentions of the public and friends. But the "things he wanted" were not things for himself. He had a dream of well-nigh Messianic proportions. And he had faith in the realizability of that dream. He knew that life could be sweeter and easier and better—it required but the earnest will of the people to make it such. Theodor Herzl said, when taunted with the improbability of the fulfilment of Zionist aspirations: "Wenn Sie wollen es ist es kein Märchen." That was also Dr. Krauskopf's attitude towards the great ideals of life. It was an attitude justified by his own experience, but tressed by an iron will, aided by a strong physical constitution, by diligence and unceasing toil.

Consider his life. It is epic in its composition. It breathes with the romance of American opportunity and Jewish perseverance joined in one personality.

He was born on January 21, 1858, in Ostrowo, which is in the Polish province of Posen, then part of Prussia. His father, Hirsch Krauskopf, was a lumber dealer, and young Joseph spent much time with his father in the forests of his Native district. In that open-air life was developed that love of nature which in the man, later, was an outstanding characteristic. There and then, too, he laid up that store of physical energy and endurance which amongst his friends were proverbial, and which made it possible for him to work so hard, to create so much, and to achieve so greatly.

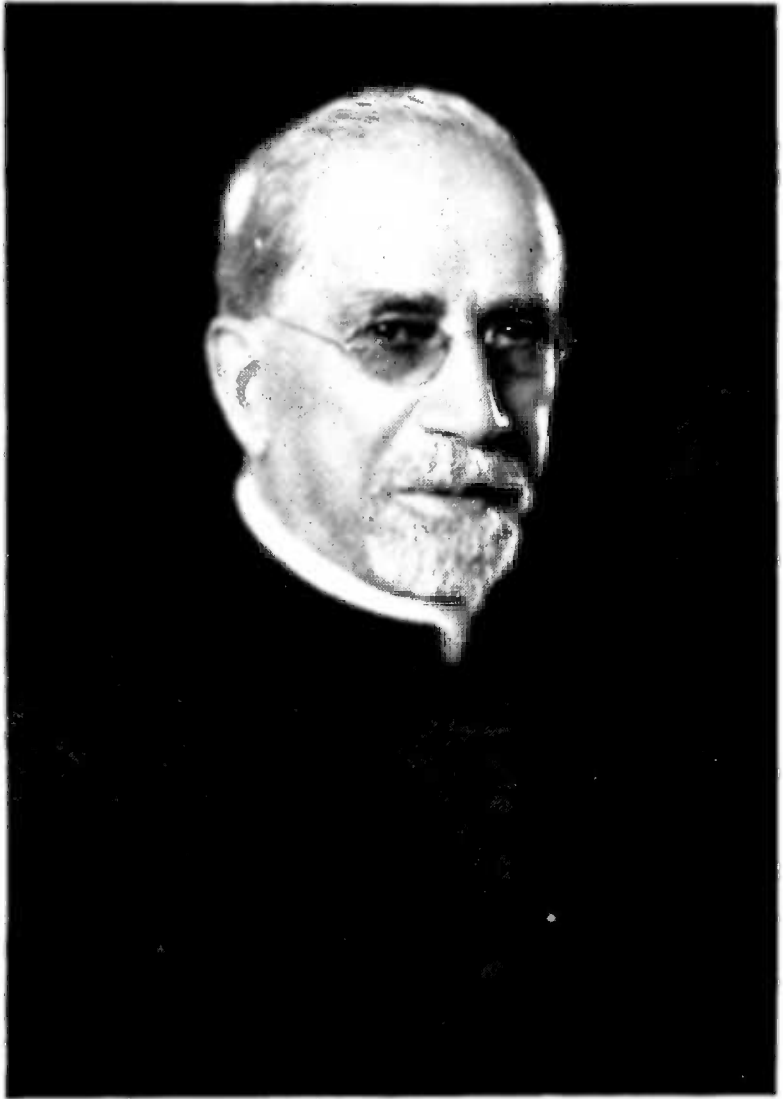
From his mother, a good orthodox, Jewish woman of an older generation, he inherited a piety, a reverence, and a love for study and diligence which, too, were characteristic of the man.

In 1872, at the age of fourteen, he followed an older brother to the United States, and in July of that year he found himself a clerk in a tea merchant's establishment in Fall River, Massachusetts.

Often he spoke to the present writer, of the drabness of those days, their irksomeness, as well as of his eagerness "to do things," of his ambitions and dreams. Often he spoke also, of his religious restlessness in those days, of his feeling of dissatisfaction with the ritual and existing forms of worship in the synagogue which he visited. Always he spoke of his yearning for knowledge, for information, and in those days of an overpowering eagerness to master the new language of his new environment.

A Mrs. M. B. Slade, of Fall River,—not a Jewess—became interested in the youth, and having read in the newspapers of the proposed founding, about that time, of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, for the training of Rabbis for Jewish Congregations in America, Rabbis who shall themselves be of America, understanding the spirit and needs of the new land and of a new generation born and reared in the spirit and atmosphere of freedom, she suggested to young Krauskopf the possibility of his entering this new field. Enthusiastically he agreed, and she communicated with Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, the founder and president of the new institution.

When the Hebrew Union College opened its doors on



JOSEPH H. KRAUSKOPF



October 3, 1875, Joseph Krauskopf was one of the twenty-three young men who constituted the first student-body.

His days at the Hebrew Union College early foreshadowed the man that was to be. Independent in thought and speech, independent in attitude, strong of will and powerful of body, he devoted himself diligently to his work. Like the other boys in the College, he studied at the High School and later at the University of Cincinnati during the forenoon, and attended the sessions of the Hebrew Union College in the afternoon. In addition, he earned some money by tutoring in private homes, by contributing occasional articles and essays to the Jewish press of the day, and in conjunction with Henry Berkowitz, classmate, room-mate, and chum, he published "The First and Second Hebrew Reader" and "Bible Ethics".

In 1883 he received the Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Cincinnati. That same year,—July 14th,—eight years after the opening of the institution, he was ordained Rabbi, one of four to survive out of the twenty-three who originally entered the Hebrew Union College. His graduation thesis was written on *The Influence of Mazdaism on Talmudism*.

It was a great and significant day for American Jewry, no less than for Isaac M. Wise, his associates, and the four pioneers in the field of an American-trained Rabbinate—that fourteenth of July, 1883. Up to that time the Rabbinate of America was composed of men, learned and brilliant and eloquent though some of them were, yet essentially European in training, in background, in point of view and in their conception of the religious needs of American Jewry as of the means to be used in

the necessary effort to perpetuate Judaism in America. "All beginnings are difficult", and the effort to establish a Training School for Rabbis in America was a *most* difficult one. There was opposition—and it was bitter and often unscrupulous. There were hatred and incrimination. There was misunderstanding, and there were doubts, suspicions and aspersions. But Isaac Mayer Wise was a leader, redoubtable, vigorous, persistent, clear-visioned and selfless. It was the cause he served and not the man. He persevered; he gained friends, loyal, enthusiastic, stalwart; he made converts to the cause, and he trained disciples. At last the day of triumph came—July 14, 1883! Four youths were prepared to go forth into the life of American Jewry to carry the message of a living faith to reconnoiter the field, to prepare the ground that others might follow. As one of the four—Dr. David Philipson—said at the Memorial Service held for Dr. Joseph Krauskopf at Temple Keneseth Israel, in Philadelphia, on November 4, 1923, after enumerating the difficulties of the early days:

"The end crowned the work when, on the fourteenth day of July, eighteen hundred and eighty-three, in the presence of hundreds who had come to Cincinnati from all parts of the country, our fatherly friend and teacher laid his hand in blessing upon our heads and placed the consecrating kiss upon the brows of the four of us who were thenceforth to be known as ordained Rabbis in Israel, the first of a long succession in the American Jewish pulpit. Consecrated were we four to a great task, how great we knew not! True adventurers were we in an untried field, how adventurous we dreamed not!...

"The four pioneer Rabbis sallied forth with high hopes and yet with certain qualms. The ultimate success of the venture was largely in their keeping! By a strange chance they separated from Cincinnati as the center, to the four points of the compass,

as though God ordained that the experiment of an American trained Jewish ministry should be tried out under differing conditions and in widely separated points—Aaron to the North—to Fort Wayne, Indiana; Berkowitz to the South—to Mobile, Alabama; Krauskopf to the West—to Kansas City, Missouri; and Philipson to the East, to Baltimore, Maryland. The future of the Hebrew Union College lay in great measure in their hands. The record is now before us."

Yes, indeed, the record *is* before us, and a glorious record it is!

As indicated above, Rabbi Krauskopf went to Congregation B'nai Jehudah, in Kansas City, Mo. There he gave himself with all the energy of youth and with the devotion of the zealot in a great cause to the preaching of Judaism, to the strengthening of Jewish life, to the dissemination of knowledge about the Jew to the Jew, to the dispelling of ignorance concerning the Jew, and the creation of a better understanding of the Jew by the non-Jew. He was dynamic and eloquent. He was eager and tireless. He built up the Congregation. He became the exponent of religious and social liberalism in the community. He lectured and wrote. And he was daringly fearless. His lectures on *Evolution in Judaism*, published in the local press and republished in book form, attracted nationwide attention. *The Jews and Moors in Spain*, originally a series of lectures delivered before his congregation in Kansas City, also appeared in book form.

While in Kansas City he organized a *Free Labor Bureau*, and his efforts in social welfare were given the recognition merited when the Governor of Missouri appointed him a Life Member of the Board of National Charities and Corrections.

In Jewish life, Rabbi Krauskopf rapidly began to forge forward as the exponent of radical Reform, fearless in exposition and daring in application. At the famous Pittsburgh Conference called by the Reverend Doctor Kaufmann Kohler for November 16, 17, and 18, 1885, Rabbi Krauskopf was an active participant, being elected Vice-President of the Conference and acting as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole on Platform which contained amongst others the following significant declarations:

"We hold that the modern discoveries of scientific researches in the domains of nature and history are not antagonistic to the doctrines of Judaism, the Bible reflecting the primitive ideas of its own age and at times clothing its conception of divine providence and justice dealing with man in miraculous narratives.

"We recognize in the Mosaic legislation a system of training the Jewish people for its mission during the national life in Palestine, and today we accept as binding only the moral laws and maintain only such ceremonies as elevate and sanctify our lives, but reject all such as are not adapted to the views and habits of modern civilization.

"We hold that all such Mosaic and Rabbinical laws as regulate diet, priestly purity and dress originated in ages and under the influence of ideas altogether foreign to our present mental and spiritual state. They fail to impress the modern Jew with a spirit of priestly holiness; their observance in our day is apt rather to obstruct than to further modern spiritual elevation...

"We consider ourselves no longer a nation but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the administration of the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state...

"We reassert the doctrine of Judaism, that the soul of man is immortal, grounding this belief on the divine nature of the human spirit, which forever finds bliss in righteousness and misery in wickedness. We reject as ideas not rooted in Judaism the

belief both in bodily resurrection and in Gehenna and Eden (hell and paradise), as abodes for everlasting punishment or reward.

"In full accordance with the spirit of Mosaic legislation which strives to regulate the relation between rich and poor, we deem it our duty to participate in the great task of modern times, to solve on the basis of justice and righteousness the problems presented by the contrasts and evils of the present organization of society."

In 1887, the faculty of the Hebrew Union College conferred upon Rabbi Krauskopf the degree of Doctor of Divinity, and that same year he received and after considerable reluctance accepted the call to the pulpit of Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel in Philadelphia, a pulpit made famous by the ministries of those giants in the history of the Reform Movement in Judaism—the prophetic David Einhorn and the profound Samuel Hirsch.

From the day, October 22, 1887, on which he preached his Inaugural Sermon, to a crowded Temple at Sixth and Brown Streets, in Philadelphia, to the day—December 24, 1923—when he preached his last sermon, Dr. Krauskopf gripped the Jewish community of Philadelphia and held its interest. There were hosts who opposed his radicalism in religion. There were numbers who frowned upon every effort he made. The lot that was his teacher's—Isaac M. Wise's—in a measure was his. But Krauskopf was never daunted for he was

"One who never turned his back but marched breast forward  
 .....  
 Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better."

One of the first to maintain that *in addition* to services held on Saturday (in Kansas City he "labored hard to improve the attendance of Friday evening and Saturday

morning Service" —and he labored successfully) services should also be provided on Sunday for that great majority of Jews who for economic and industrial reasons could not attend the synagogue on the Sabbath, Dr. Krauskopf, on the week following his installation at Keneseth Israel, introduced regular weekly Sunday Services which continue uninterrupted to this day. To be sure, there were sporadic attempts to introduce Sunday Services at Temple Keneseth Israel before Dr. Krauskopf's coming, but they were only sporadic and short-lived. When one realizes that Philadelphia—unlike New York City—has a very small transient population, that the preacher in Philadelphia, however famed or eloquent, has a scarcely varying audience, and when one thinks also of the fact that for a little less than thirty-seven years Joseph Krauskopf had people flocking to receive his message, one realizes what a remarkable tribute to the man's efforts these facts are!

There was bitter opposition to the Sunday Services and discourses. Said Dr. Krauskopf at the conclusion of the tenth season of Sunday Services at Keneseth Israel, on April 25th, 1897:

"Of prophets of evil there were many. Some gave us three month's time to end in disastrous failure, others, somewhat more liberal, allowed us a year, and if the acrimonious attacks could have effected failure, even the three month's limit might have proven too extravagant a prophecy.

"We held our peace and preserved. The abusively aggressive we did not deem deserving of an answer. The civil objections of the others we respected. These we felt sure that not our answer but time would disarm, and possibly convert to our way of thinking. It was their religious conviction that we could not introduce a Sunday service without doing violence to the Saturday-Sabbath,

and that we could not gather our young people into the Synagogue on Sunday without estranging them from Judaism, and opening wide to them the doors to Christianity. It was our religious conviction, a conviction inherited from our former revered teacher, the Rev. Dr. Samuel Hirsch, that in an unkept Saturday-Sabbath, and in an unattended Saturday-Sabbath Service lay the greatest danger to Judaism, that a Judaism that so clashed with existing conditions as no longer to afford our men and youth and thousands of women too, an opportunity for weekly public religious service and religious instruction, except at a great loss, coupled with considerable hypocrisy, was in a most excellent state to drive its people to Christianity or Ethical Culture or Infidelity. We saw numbers already belonging to one or to the other of the three parties, and others fast preparing to follow their footsteps. We felt convinced that for American Israel there was but one salvation, and that was, next to the Saturday—to be kept by those who can rest on that day and keep it holy—the Sunday must be placed, on which those may rest, and participate in Jewish religious services, who cannot do so on the day before.

“And we acted upon our conviction. And God blessed our work. We have grown and prospered. We have increased and multiplied. We have restored many of the lost. We have infused enthusiasm for our holy cause into the hearts that had grown cold. We have changed unbelievers to believers, non-Jews to Jews. Instead of driving Jews into the Christian Church, hundreds of Christian-born worship with us weekly, and regard our faith, the faith of reform Israel, as theirs. And the Saturday-Sabbath Services have flourished since the introduction of the Sunday Services as they never flourished before in our Congregation. And the enthusiasm kindled by those Sunday Services has spread to other Jewish Congregations and institutions, here and elsewhere, and have done good even among those congregations that have bitterest opposed them.

“It had been predicted that Sunday Services would kill the Saturday-Sabbath; ten years of experience have proven that they have infused new life into it. It had been predicted that the Sunday Services would estrange our youth from Judaism; ten

years of experience have proven that they have brought them nearer to our sacred cause than ever they stood before. It had been predicted that the Sunday Services would drive Jews into the Christian Church; ten years of experiences have proven that they draw Christians from the Church into the Synagogue."

But there was no English ritual to be used at these Services. With the supreme faith in the rightness of the cause and aware of the need, Krauskopf set himself to the task of preparing a *Service Ritual*, which appeared in 1888. The function and aim of the *Ritual* were succinctly stated in the preface to the book:

"The design of this *Service-Ritual* is modest. It does not intend to interfere with, or to supplant, any of the prayer-books now in use. It simply aims to be supplementary to them. Within recent years a want has arisen in the Jewish communal life which the older prayer-books cannot entirely satisfy, and to fill that want is the object of this *Ritual*. In this country, circumstances, almost uncontrollable, make it wellnigh impossible for the great majority of our brethren to attend the regular Saturday Services. To afford these an opportunity for attending Jewish Divine services one day in the week, it has been deemed advisable by a number of our congregations to conduct such services on Sunday, on the day that presents the least interference. For such services has this *Ritual* been written. . .

"The *Ritual* has been prepared with scrupulous care. It avoids the monotony of weekly repetitions of the same prayers by giving *thirty* completely different *Services*. It makes a hymn-book unnecessary by incorporating in each *Service* the appropriate hymns in their respective places. Doctrinal differences are strictly avoided. Psalms, in prose and in verse, and other Bible selections, are introduced in each service, and to give the different *Services* a distinctively Jewish tone the different prayers conclude with different Hebrew sentences from the older prayer-books."

Feeling that the Rabbi's sphere of influence should be

broadened and that his message should reach even wider circles than those which listen to the spoken utterance, Dr. Krauskopf prevailed upon his Congregation to publish the weekly Sunday discourses given in Keneseth Israel's pulpit, and the fact that these messages were requested from and sent to all parts of the world are justification of the wisdom of the suggestion.

In addition, he set himself to the task of reorganizing the Religious School, of organizing a Post-Confirmation Class, a *Weekly Lyceum*, which was a study class for young men and young women—a very unusual thing in those days; the *Society of Knowledge Seekers*, which became an agency of remarkable usefulness in the community in those days, and through the lives of communal usefulness of those who were its members—even today.

Through this last organization founded by Dr. Krauskopf in 1887, immediately upon his arrival in Philadelphia, Dr. Krauskopf was able to launch one of the most beneficent and most characteristically Jewish agencies in Jewish life, viz: *The Jewish Publication Society of America*. Early it became evident to these *Knowledge Seekers* that there was a pitiful dearth of information concerning Jews and Judaism in English. It was, therefore, suggested by Dr. Krauskopf that the *Knowledge Seekers* stand sponsor for a *Jewish Publication Society*. To give the movement further impetus, Dr. Krauskopf, in his first published Sunday discourse entitled *The Need of the Hour*, given on December 11th, 1887, (which was on Hanukkah,—less than two months after his settling in Philadelphia) urged the establishment of this agency. After pointing out the woeful lack of books of Jewish interest, he exclaimed:

"Show me that Jewish congregation that annually sets aside a certain sum, and not a meagre one, wherewith to publish and freely dispense, or sell at a mere nominal price, such literature as may give the outside world a true insight into Judaism and its doctrines, and a true appreciation of the real character of the Israelite and his wonderful history—or as may give these to thousands and tens of thousands of our own co-religionists, who live scattered in the smaller country places throughout our land, who are deprived of religious teachings the whole year round, whose children grow up in complete ignorance of the tenets of Judaism, and become gradually estranged from us; name that congregation, and with all my heart and soul I shall counsel you speedily to connect yourselves with it, for that is the only true Jewish congregation . . .

"Go down your business streets, read the signs: 'The Episcopalian Publication Society,' 'The Baptist Bible Society,' and then look for the name of 'The Hebrew Publication Society,' and when you have sought for it in vain, think how true to our mission we are. Count over the Jewish publications that grace our private libraries, and remember that it takes all of \$8.00 to provide our houses with the cheapest edition of Leese's large English Family Bible, and \$3.00 to provide ourselves with a copy of a prayer-book. See whether you can think without a blush of shame of that sad incident that recently made its round in the Jewish Press, that a Rabbi about to dedicate a synagogue in a small community, asked for a copy of the Bible, and no such copy could be found in the entire Jewish community, and a Gentile had to help the Rabbi out of this disgraceful predicament,—think of these facts and then of the mission of Israel which we repeat so often and with so much gusto, and then of those words of Isaiah: 'And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks.' . . .

"We need first and foremost a Publication Society, and we must have it, and we can have it, if we but want it. We have light to shed, and truths to teach, and wrongs to right, and errors to correct, and for this we need the larger pulpit of books and pamphlets and tracts. It requires money and we can have it. I can not believe that Israel has become so dead to its sacred cause as not to be

willing cheerfully to lay down a small sum to save that for which thousands, aye millions of our ancestry sacrificed their heart's blood, or suffered the tortures of the rack or the pangs of degradation. In the hours of need there ever arose the Judas Macabeus to champion the cause of Israel, and there will arise even in our own day some modern Judas Macabee, equally inflamed with enthusiasm, and offer upon the altar of his faith a sum that shall form the nucleus of such a society. He may sit among us now, and even at this moment he may piously resolve to give a part of what God has blessed him with for so goodly a purpose and thus make himself immortal in the history of American Israel; and scores will rally around him with their subscriptions, and to be one of these, I myself shall regard as a proud privilege. And other congregations will follow our example, and other cities will unite with us and the name of Israel will again become distinguished and full of life in the land.

"We have had enough of whining about Israel's decline, time it is that something be done to save it. We have had enough of complaining about empty benches, time it is to do something that may fill them again. We have had enough of blubbering that the young people become estranged from us, time it is that we do something that shall bring them back to us. We have had enough of grumbling that the outside world misunderstands us, time it is to do something that will put us in a proper light in their eyes. We have had enough of false lip-professions, time it is to begin with our heart and hand and mind service. When Columbus wanted a shorter route to India he did not whine nor blubber, but he went to find it. Toiling for the good is nobler than railing at the ill. One single positive has more weight than a score of negatives. Let us all be up and doing, for the cause is holy to us all alike, and 'the sceptre will not depart from Judah,' and we will be out and abroad among the people, in the noble effort of fulfilling Israel's mission, of proving ourselves a blessing to all mankind."

Immediately following this address, in January, 1888, *The Society of Knowledge Seekers* "issued a call to the Presidents of the different Jewish congregations and to

the Young Men's Hebrew Association, asking them to appoint delegates to meet them at the rooms of the Association for the purpose of effecting the organization of a Jewish Publication Society. The meeting took place, there being present delegates of the congregations which had been invited and also delegates from the Young Men's Hebrew Association. A special committee was appointed, subject to the call of the Chairman to draft a Constitution and By-Laws for such Society. After several meetings of this Committee had been held, a call for a meeting of the general committee for March 29th was issued, at which meeting a majority favored immediate organization of the Society in this city with a view of issuing a call for a National Convention after a fair trial had been made and the success proven. This report was adopted."

In May, 1888, Dr. Krauskopf, jointly with Dr. Solomon Solis Cohen issued the following Call:

"To the Jewish Community of America, With the object of Securing Representative Sympathizers to a Call for a Convention to organize an American Jewish Publication Society that shall have for its object:

To familiarize American Jews with

1—The Ethics of Judaism

2—The History of the Jewish People

3—The Writings of Jewish Ministers,

by the publication of books, essays, and such other writings as may from time to time, be deemed advisable, of such a tendency as shall command the support of all parties among Jews.

"This was issued to all Jewish Congregations and their ministers so far as these could be learned, and to a few individuals known to be interested. The response was encouraging, and a Call has been issued appointing Philadelphia, June 3d, 1888, as the place and time.

“As, however, there may be many who would gladly participate, whose addresses are unknown to the Committee having the matter in charge, and as it is desired to interest the entire Jewish community of America, the undersigned have appointed a sub-committee to issue, through the Jewish press, this general invitation to individuals and to Congregations and Jewish societies, to attend the meeting, or to be represented thereat by delegates or by letter.”

On June 3d, 1888, *The Jewish Publication Society of America* was constituted with Mr. Morris Newburger—a member of the *Society of Knowledge Seekers*,—as President, and Dr. Krauskopf as Secretary. The first pledge of funds was a subscription of \$100 from the *Knowledge Seekers*.

On the 18th of November, 1888, Dr. Krauskopf again used his pulpit in behalf of the *Jewish Publication Society*. Speaking on *The People of the Book*, he said in part:

“The Jewish pen rusts. The Jewish mind is now under the lethargic spell of a self-caused Dark Age. We see our reputation as ‘*the people of the Book*’ waning, waning more with each day, and we make no effort to arouse ourselves. There is intense activity within every denomination, their pens are busy day and night, their presses are rushed, millions upon millions of dollars flow into their treasuries year after year, millions of publications issue from them year by year, yet we, ‘*the people of the Book*’ remain inactive. The Christian denominations around about us publish our Bible, they translate and commentate it, they bring portions of our Rabbinical literature to light, they foster the study of our language, they write our Histories, they publish our characteristics, beliefs and customs, they pile error upon error, and blunder upon blunder concerning the Jew, and the Jew looks on, without raising a hand to help or to correct. Evil tongues malign us, they flood our country with literature that degrades our name and fame, and still we look on callously, as if it did not concern us in the slightest.

“Our own libraries are devoid of books treating on our History,

Religion and Literature. The presence of a copy of *our own great Book* within our homes is becoming to be more, and ever more, of a rarity. Whole Jewish communities are known to exist without a single copy of the Jewish Bible, or without a single book appertaining to Judaism, to be found among them. Christian Publication Societies furnish not infrequently Jewish children with their religious juvenile literature. The Christian appeals to us for literature, which shall afford him an insight into the Religion, History and Literature of our people, which shall enable him to examine into the merits of our claim for superiority of religion, and into the truthfulness of the charges that are brought against us, but we have next to nothing wherewith to meet his want. Breathe but the word: that you would like to have some knowledge of *Methodism*, and see how soon the "Methodist Book Concern" will overwhelm you with its literature, and gratuitously, too. So will the "Baptist Publishing Board", so will the Presbyterians and Episcopalians and Congregationalists, and all the others, supply you with an abundance of literature concerning their respective creeds; ask the Jews, and not for all the money in the world will your wish be gratified, unless you be a Hebrew, or possibly, a German scholar. Here is the British Bible Society publishing annually in the neighborhood of two millions of Bibles; here are the American Jews, '*the people of the Book,*' publishing annually *not one*. Here are our Methodist friends expending besides annually more than two millions of dollars on general religious literature, and here are the American Jews, '*the chosen people,*' the people that proclaims itself as the appointed of God, *to spread light and truth, among human kind*, expending annually, for Jewish Publication purposes, *not one cent*. We have no publication societies, and consequently we have but very few publications. . . .

"Proper books wield an influence for good which no man can over-estimate. The spoken word is powerful, the printed word surpasses it. The one is temporal, the other is eternal, the one is circumscribed, the other is unlimited. The spoken sermon of today is forgotten tomorrow, the written word of thousands of years ago still sways the masses today. Preachers denounced, and

legislators agitated, but slavery endured, until Harriet Beecher Stowe came with her 'Uncle Tom's Cabin', and struck the Keynote to the emancipation. Dickens has corrected more evils in England by a few of his books than did the Parliaments of many decades with all their tremendous power. . . . Place the proper literature into the hands of the Jewish people, and you may divert a crisis, which is threatening today.

"You have it not? Well, then, we must create it. The need is upon us, it will bear putting off no longer. There may have been reasons why it has not been created before, reasons of insufficient means and talents, but these reasons are no longer valid. We have the *means*, and we have the *talent*. *What we want is the will*. If we have that, our literature will follow, and our cause will be safe. Why hide a fact that refuses to be longer hid? Unless something is done, and that speedily, dissolution is inevitable. Where synagogues are empty, week after week, in most of our Jewish congregations, where the Sabbath is desecrated week after week, where the younger generations no longer affiliate with very many of our congregations, where no provisions are made for the smaller communities, who are without ministers and teachers, it calls for no prophet to foretell: *what the end must be*. Whining and complaining will not cure the evil. Lamentations never heal, where action is wanted. Activity prevents freezing. I have seen a stream completely frozen over, yet under the mill it was leaping and sparkling as in the midst of a summer's day. It was frost bound above and below the mill, but here it was too active and too busy to freeze. It is our stagnation that freezes our vitality and endangers our existence. . . .

"If we are in earnest, if we would divert the crisis, if we would fulfill our mission, let us have less complaints, less groans, but more action. The Jewish Publication Society of America has been organized, it must be made to work, and that it shall work we must go down, not on our knees, not into our stomachs, *but into our pockets*, for such material aid as shall enable us to fill a want, of which we '*the people of the Book*' are saddest in need of all the denominations of this country. . . .

"And we can have what we so urgently need. The Society is

ready for action. Our writers are ready to produce. Are you ready for membership? Are you ready to give us *three dollars annually*? Are you willing to become a patron of our cause? It is not for charity that I appeal today. I appeal for the preservation of our faith and cause....

"And that the membership may be...large depends on us Philadelphians. Here the Publication Society was first advocated. Here it came into existence. Here many of the most prominent Jews of our land stood sponsors to it. National in its scope, here is its headquarters. Its President and Treasurer and both of its Secretaries are Philadelphians, the Chairman of the Publication Committee, with three other gentlemen, four out of the nine, are Philadelphians. Here the first appeal for the Society is made. Every Jewish pulpit of this city devoted its discourse yesterday to this society. Much is expected from us, and on our satisfying the just expectations of the whole country, will depend the success or failure of the society. If you respond heartily the whole country will take up the refrain, and the word success will re-echo throughout the land.

"Laymen, the Society is yours. You have brought it forward. You have championed its cause in the National Convention. You have battled for it, and you have carried it to a successful issue. The Society is under your management. Of the thirty offices twenty-five are filled by you. If it fails, the fault will be laid at your doors...

"Philadelphians and Laymen, Cincinnati has her Hebrew Union College. Philadelphia attempted it before, but failed, Cincinnati labored hard for it, brought many sacrifices in its behalf, and today she is proud of its institution, and the whole country honors her for it. New York has the Jewish Theological Seminary. Philadelphians founded it, Philadelphians presided over it, but New York possesses it. Whether Philadelphia, the oldest recognized centre of American Judaism, shall possess the *Jewish Publication Society of America*, whether it shall exist at all, will depend on your response to our appeal and to your duty."

Thus was the *Jewish Publication Society* founded and

started on its long career of usefulness. To be sure, other attempts had been made before. In 1845 Isaac Leiser founded one in Philadelphia, which continued to exist until 1851 and ceased. In 1868 the late Judge Mayer Sulzberger, in an editorial in *The Occident*, urged the need of such a Society—yet nothing materialized. In 1873 a number of New York Jews started one. It died two years later. But it was characteristic of the organizing genius and perseverance of Joseph Krauskopf to proceed from thought to propaganda, and from that to deed, and persist until success crowned the effort.

In the larger community, too, his presence was felt. Thus, in 1892 he organized the *Personal Interest Society*, which was the forerunner of the present Social Service agencies. In February, 1893, he was instrumental in establishing the Model Dwelling Association, in an effort to rid the City of its slums. In March, 1893, the Liberal Ministers Conference of Philadelphia was organized in the Keneseth Israel Temple, and out of it came the National Federation of Religious Liberals. In December, 1894, he urged the establishment of a *Model Kitchen* for the poor of the city. In 1898, during America's war with Spain, he was appointed Special Field Commissioner of the National Relief Commission to study the relief conditions in the various camps of the United States Army. In 1900 he was designated special representative of the Secretary of Agriculture to investigate agricultural education and general conditions of agriculture in Europe, and to report to the Secretary of Agriculture. In 1901 he organized the Board of Jewish Ministers of Philadelphia. In 1903, the Alumni Association of the Hebrew Union College decided

to raise \$500,000 as an Isaac M. Wise Memorial Fund for the Hebrew Union College. Dr. Krauskopf was designated Director General of the Fund and in its behalf he travelled up and down the land raising \$325,000, and stopped only because the Union of American Hebrew Congregations decided to raise funds then for the new buildings of the Hebrew Union College. That same year he was elected President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. And during the World War, in the summer of 1917, he was appointed Organizer and Director of Food Conservation Propaganda among the Jews of the United States.

And thus one might continue to enumerate the various activities which occupied his interest, his time, which engaged his efforts, mental and physical. In constant demand as a lecturer, before Jewish and non-Jewish bodies, he gave of himself freely in every endeavor to bring the Jew forward as a valued member of the Commonwealth and to bring light and inspiration to his people.

In the meantime, his congregation was growing rapidly. During the first five years of his ministry, the Temple at Sixth and Brown Streets was enlarged twice to accommodate the growing needs of his congregation, the indebtedness on the Temple was paid off, and a new Temple at Broad Street and Columbia Avenue was built. He prepared the *Service Manual*, a prayer-book for use on Sabbaths and Festivals, in which, to quote from the Preface,

"The fixed order of Worship has been departed from... but merely in form. The spirit of the traditional service has been sacredly preserved. Its devotional sentiment has been brought nearer to the modern mind by the use of a number of the most approved liturgical aids. The gems of Biblical, Apocryphal, and Rabbinical literature have been freely introduced in the form

of Responsive Readings and Choral Chants, and have been incorporated in the Meditations and Exhortations.

"To each Sabbath a distinctive purpose has been given by assigning to it a special significance, which is made the theme of that day's service. The purport of each Festival is likewise made the central thought, which is elaborated in all the parts of the Festival service. To quicken the fervor of the worshipper, to ensure his participation in the service, and especially to awaken the interest of each individual, the Responsive Readings, Congregational Singing, and the various themes of each separate week have been provided."

Classes and Study Circles multiplied, the *Knowledge Seekers* expanded into a Lyceum, an Alumni Association of Keneseth Israel confirmants was organized, a Free Circulating Library was established, a *Service Hymnal* to replace the former *Service Ritual* was compiled, and so on.

In the summer of 1894, Dr. Krauskopf went to Russia "in an effort", to quote from the 1898 Year Book of The National Farm School, "to secure data concerning the condition of the Jews in that country and to urge means for its amelioration. While there, he observed the astonishing zeal with which Jews pursued agriculture within the limits allowed by the Russian government. He saw a people yearning, not as common prejudice has assumed, for a life of trade, but for opportunities to work out their existence from the soil. He furthermore visited, at the suggestion of Count Tolstoi, the Jewish agricultural school at Odessa, the end of whose activity was the graduation of practical working farmers, and instructors and managers of agricultural colonies. The avidity with which Jewish lads availed themselves of the facilities thus given them, convinced him that the agricultural instincts, fostered in

Biblical times, still lingered, and needed but opportunity for their manifestation.

"On his return to America, Dr. Krauskopf proceeded to formulate plans for the institution of a Farm School which, while welcoming all students regardless of creed, might satisfy the demand of large numbers of Jews for agricultural opportunities. After months of agitation, sufficient funds were procured for the purchase of a farm and the erection of adequate buildings thereon.

"On April 10th, 1896, The National Farm School was incorporated, the Watson Farm of 122 acres having been previously purchased for the sum of \$10,000. It is situated within a mile of Doylestown, the county seat of Bucks County, and within 25 miles of the city of Philadelphia. Shortly after the purchase of the farm, plans were drawn for the erection of the school building, and on June 20th, 1897, the building was formally dedicated."

From these humble beginnings, beginnings which took all of his personal savings and were augmented by the proceeds of lectures and collections and bequests, The National Farm School, "born", as he said in his Last Will and Testament, "of my innermost conviction in the supreme worth of agriculture, the honorable calling of our ancestors, as one of the best means of securing safety and happiness to the sorely afflicted of our people", has now grown into an institution truly *national* in scope, possessing nigh unto a thousand acres of land, a splendidly equipped plant, a Faculty of high order, and has graduated some three hundred and thirty men, the greater portion of whom are engaged in agriculture directly or in the allied fields.

From the day of its foundation to the day of his death,

Dr. Krauskopf was the President of this School, even though again and again he requested to be relieved of that burden. To it he gave a maximum of thought, and energy, and there is no doubt that its present prosperity and growth, as well as usefulness, are due entirely to his dynamic strength and far-seeing vision.

In a little book of autographs which he collected in his student days, in the years 1876 and 1877, the present writer found the following thought written by the late Dr. Max Lilienthal, who, with Dr. Isaac M. Wise, was of the first teachers at the then newly established Hebrew Union College. Dr. Lilienthal says there:

“*Religion*, and not mere *theology*, must be your motto in your future career as minister! Religion is universal, theology is temporary; Religion is humanitarian, theology is sectarian; Religion is the way, in which God and man are truly related; theology is the fleeting teaching of the various churches. ‘And the Lord shall be king over all the earth’, is the great prophet’s heavenly message, and teaches the common Fatherhood of God and the common Brotherhood of man. The older you will grow; the more knowledge you will acquire; the more you will investigate and gather experience; the better you will understand these short sentences and the advise of

Your friend and teacher  
Dr. Lilienthal.”

Sukkos, Sept. 5, 5637  
Centennial year 1876.

This truly became the motto of Dr. Krauskopf in his ministry. He found in Judaism the essence of religion. Theology did not matter much. In the various Rituals and prayers which he compiled he states his creed in three brief statements:

One God over All  
One Brotherhood of All  
Peace and Good Will among All.

In a lecture given on the 28th of October, 1894, he thus summarized his creed:

"I believe in the love of man and in the love of God. I believe in service human and in service divine. I believe in labor as manly and in duty as godly. While proudly acknowledging my Israelitish descent, and my and the civilized world's indebtedness to Judaism, and while eager to maintain my historical identity with that people and faith, still I believe that all people are my brethren, and that my God is all peoples' God. I believe in extending the hand of religious fellowship to all who believe as I believe, no matter what their descent or what their prior creed, and the hand of social fellowship to all who think and act as I do, no matter what their creed or condition. I believe in doing as I would be done by. I believe in obedience to the laws of God as written in our hearts, to the laws of nature as inscribed in the universe, to the laws of man as enjoined in the codes and scriptures. I believe in a weekly Sabbath for rest, recreation and worship. I believe that all men have a right to social and intellectual and moral and religious freedom. I believe that it is all men's duty to acquire knowledge, and to foster it, to love progress and to further it. I believe in the inviolability of life and property, in the sanctity of the home and of the family-ties. I believe that the good of all Bibles may be accepted and that the evil of all scriptures may be rejected. I believe that the good example and precepts of all religious teachers may be followed, no matter what their race or nationality, and that their evil example and precepts must be shunned, even if they are of our own faith or folk. I believe that virtue and sin will ultimately meet with their reward. I believe in the supremacy of reason over faith, of inquiry over credulity. I believe in forms and ceremonies, when they are accessories to awe and reverence, when they stimulate the mind to right thinking, and the heart to right feeling, and the hand to right doing. I believe that ignorance is a curse and should be extirpated, that

tyranny is a crime and should be eradicated, that fanaticism is a vice and should be uprooted, that war is a mortal sin and should be expunged. I believe that happiness is the highest good, and that peace and good will are the best means for its attainment."

In pursuance of this creed he eliminated everything that conflicted with it, retained or re-stated what was possible of adaptation. Indeed, however one might have differed from him in the interpretation of what was essential or non-essential, in Ritual, in ceremonial, in form, is not this creed, after all, but an elaboration of old Hillel's creed as summarized for the heathen who, according to the Talmud, wanted to learn the teachings of Judaism while he stood on one leg. Said Hillel: "What is hateful unto thee, that do not unto thy neighbor. That is the whole law. The rest is commentary."

Yet he was honest and courageous enough to reverse himself in the position taken when he felt justified in changing his convictions. Thus he was opposed to Jewish Nationalism. At one time he was a very bitter opponent of political Zionism. But, somewhat later, as a result of his visit to Palestine in 1914, when he observed the work that had been done by the Jewish settlers in Palestine and the promise held out for the future, his opposition waned, and on a great occasion, speaking at the Metropolitan Opera House in Philadelphia, he frankly reversed himself, and in a magnificent address declared himself a Zionist, and pledged his cooperation to the cause. To be sure, he did not accept the philosophy of political Zionism *in toto*, but he did accept unequivocally, the thesis of Palestine's restoration as a Jewish centre and a Homeland for those who would make it their home.

He was frequently abused, often misunderstood, not infrequently condemned, but, like Joseph of old, he was a dreamer of dreams and a seer of visions. Like unto that Joseph he was misunderstood and opposed because of his dreams and his words. Like unto that earlier Joseph, too, he was possessed of that determination, of that purposefulness, of that high integrity and probity which lead him through difficulties innumerable and obstacles uncounted to approach that goal which, in his dreams he saw clearly and to which he devoted his amazing energy and superlative ability.

He loved his people intensely. Indeed, so great was his love for them and so profoundly did he believe in their potency for good, that, despite opposition and abuse, he continued to serve them faithfully. In a very real sense, he was the ambassador of the Jewish community unto the Gentiles, and none, not even his bitterest or least generous opponents ever claimed that Joseph Krauskopf represented Jewry in the eyes of the world in any but the worthiest manner. He was, indeed, one who hallowed the name of God and the name of Israel in the presence of the multitudes.

That despite the estimate of him on the part of the reputed leaders of the community who opposed him he was beloved and respected by the large masses of his people, is clearly evidenced by the fact that when, in the spring of 1917, the American Jewish Congress was being called into being, of the various candidates from the city of Philadelphia who stood for election to the first sessions of that Congress, Joseph Krauskopf lead the list by virtue of the number of votes he received.

One might go on enumerating the things he did, the thoughts

he voiced, the countless services he rendered, but the writer must stop. This is not yet that comprehensive biography of Joseph Krauskopf which self-respecting American Jewry is destined to publish, to record unto future generations the life and deeds of one of its great sons. Joseph Krauskopf's life can best be understood in the light of, and the secret of his success is revealed by, the thought inscribed in that same little book of autographs, to which reference has been made above, a thought that was penned by that great master-builder of American Israel, Joseph Krauskopf's spiritual father, teacher, and friend, Isaac Mayer Wise. Says Dr. Wise, there: "The path to success is rugged, it must be levelled by faith, work and persistency."

\* \* \* \*

Joseph Krauskopf was gathered unto his fathers, after a prolonged illness, on June 12th, 1923.

\* \* \* \*

"Here lies the flesh that tried  
To follow the spirit's leading;  
Fallen at last, it died,  
Broken, bruised and bleeding,  
Burned by the high fires  
Of the spirit's desires."