

JUDAISM

A PORTRAIT

by

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In memory of

DAVID

(1893-1958)

and

DANIEL

(1894-1959)

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PREFACE

My purpose in this volume is to promote fresh thinking on the nature of Judaism and, since Judaism is the prototype of the monotheistic religions, to offer material for reflection on the nature of religion in general. I have cast my net wide and ranged freely over the centuries in order to present a broader perspective than is usual; and if I have made much of the philosophers, and especially of Maimonides, it is because they realized (as philosophers would) the deeper implications of the tradition and moulded it into a significant whole.

I am glad to express my thanks to the friends without whose interest the book would never have appeared—the late Mr. H. N. Spalding who first suggested the writing of it; Dr. Aaron Steinberg and Dr. E. J. Rosenthal who, over the years, lent an indulgent ear to its growing heresies; Professor David Daube and Mr. T. S. Gregory who encouraged me to complete it; Professor Ch. Wirszubski who helped to soften its asperities; Professor Judah Goldin who stilled my own last doubts. Dr. Steinberg and my brother Cecil corrected my mistakes of fact, Mr. M. H. Black my exuberance of style. Only my opinions remain my own.

An early draft of the first chapter was published in the American quarterly *Judaism* for 1956 and I am grateful to the Editor for allowing me to use it. The version of Psalm xc on page 231 is taken, by permission of Messrs. Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., from the new American Revised Standard Version of the Bible. The substance of chapters 11–13 was given in the form of public lectures at Brown University, Providence, R.I.,

PREFACE

while I was a visiting member of its Department of Philosophy in the spring of 1958, and I recall with pleasure the many kindnesses shown me by that distinguished company.

A portrait is not a photograph or a systematic survey. It is an attempt to catch the spirit of a living thing; and I have endeavoured throughout to keep before my mind the saying of Voltaire: *On doit la vérité aux morts; aux vivants on doit des égards.*

The texts and documents on which my account is based are assembled in my *God and Man in the Old Testament* (Allen and Unwin, 1955) and *Illustrations of Post-Biblical Jewish Ethical and Religious Thought* (Rubin Mass, Jerusalem, ed. 2, 1946).

L.R.