

Alexander Philip, M.A., LL.B. (Edin.).

ALEXANDER PHILIP was the son of the Reverend Alexander Philip, Minister of Cruden, who went out at the Disruption. He practised as a solicitor at Brechin. He was a man of active mind and many varied interests. Many of his holidays were spent abroad, and where it was practicable he preferred to travel on foot. He was the author of several books, among which are his numerous writings on the Calendar referred to below, and his contributions to epistemology. Of the last the best known is his *Essay towards a Theory of Knowledge*.

Among Philip's many interests the chief was the reform of the Calendar. From the point of view of modern life the calendar is inconvenient in many respects. The months are unequal, no respect has been shown to possible simplifications, "movable feasts" govern a large and important part of the year. Still all of these anomalous features have their defenders, or at least are so embedded in antiquity that they are difficult to remove. A calendar reformer must be proof against wet blankets and active opposition. Another obstacle is the zeal of those who are oblivious to the claims of the past. Between these two dangers Philip steered a course, with insistence and imperturbable good humour, which won respect from those who could not feel enthusiastic. First and last he advocated many schemes. Even in his last pamphlet, *The Essentials of Calendar Reform* (Routledge, 1930), he offers two, one of which he had sponsored in his book *The Calendar: Its History, Structure, and Improvement*, and the other in *The Improvement of the Gregorian Calendar*. But in spite of these manifest difficulties he worked indefatigably at the subject, studying its history, corresponding, interviewing individuals and Chambers of Commerce, and attending international gatherings.

He was born at Portobello in 1858; he was elected a Fellow of the Society in 1913, and died on 21st January 1932.

R. A. S.