

completely independent of each other, each "expressing" itself (the word is his own) through its own activity in its own world of what is commonly called reality or external reality. The true reality is thus the monads, the so-called world of knowledge is ideal. The crux of any such theory is its solipsism, but he avowed and defended that attitude. He evaded the objection to solipsism by making community with other individuals part of the essential nature of each individual. I do not myself see how if the universe is each man's expression, it can still contain individuals who, like himself, are independent centres of activity. Often, however, as I pressed this point upon him, he did not seem to feel that it presented a real difficulty, and he seemed to think he had met it by reference to speech and mutual intercourse. In the same way he seemed to me to make the special interpretations by individuals of the physical world too exclusive of each other, and to forget that the very pith of the doctrine of relativity is that physical laws are the same in form for every observer. Leibniz himself had God and the pre-established harmony to save his monadism: but for Carr, God was but a part of the world of each monad; and this, to my mind at least, presents difficulties.

Carr's explicit philosophy is chiefly contained in the work I have mentioned and the earlier "A Theory of Monads". But besides these and his expository books, there were others, which show what a wealth of knowledge he had, outside strict philosophy or only partially related to it; in particular, two books which he published during his Californian period, "Changing Backgrounds in Religion and Ethics" and "The Unique Status of Man". When I happened once to speak to him enthusiastically of Pascal's "Pensées", with which I had made acquaintance quite late in my

life, I found that the book had been his constant companion for many years.

His assiduity and industry were immense, and if his friends knew well the sweetness of his character, the amount of work he accomplished is a witness to the strength and persistence of it. To my mind, Carr's work has been for the philosophy of our time a refreshment, and even, with all allowance for its shortcomings, a fecundation; and I must not forget the singular beauty and simplicity of his style of writing, which reflected his own directness and candour of mind.

S. ALEXANDER.

#### MR. ERNEST NOEL.

MR. ERNEST NOEL, who died at his home, Dulaney House, Patching, Sussex, on May 20 at the age of ninety-nine years, was the doyen of the Geological Society of London. Elected into the Geological Society in 1849—P. Martin Duncan, who afterwards became a fellow of the Royal Society, was also among the chosen in that year—he had been eighty-two years on its roll, a span probably without parallel in the annals of English scientific bodies. At the date of Noel's election (he was then living at Hornsey), Sir Charles Lyell occupied the presidential chair, and Charles Darwin was a member of council. Such circumstances had provided many interesting reminiscences of contemporaries and original workers in geological and general science. Born on Aug. 18, 1831, Mr. Noel was the second son of the Rev. the Hon. Baptist Noel, who himself was the tenth son of Sir Gerard Noel, and brother of the first Earl of Gainsborough (second creation). Mr. Noel was educated at Edinburgh and Trinity College, Cambridge.

T. E. J.

### News and Views.

THE summary by Sir James Jeans of a series of lectures on the annihilation of matter, delivered by him during his recent visit to the United States, which we publish as our supplement this week, is a characteristically skilful presentation of the case for the reality of this process, of which he has for some time been convinced. Although, as he indicates, the doctrine of the permanence of matter has been a leading feature of the greater part of the history of science—it dates at the latest from the time of Aristotle—supporters of the opposite idea have never been wanting. It appears to be peculiar to our own time, however, that they are to be found among followers of the 'experimental philosophy'. Yet, fantastic as the idea would have seemed to the physicists of a few generations ago, it is impossible, after considering the evidence which Sir James Jeans so ably summarises, to dismiss it as unworthy of scientific attention. The process is mathematically possible; it is certainly not fundamentally inconsistent with modern atomic theory; it provides a plausible explanation of a physical

observation—the highly penetrating radiation; and it appears to be the only means of bringing order into the perplexing mass of data concerning the constitution and history of the stars. The cumulative effect of these facts, even if they are not strictly additive, is considerable, and it is not surprising that the hypothesis of annihilation is being treated with marked respect.

GENERAL acceptance of the idea, however, is out of the question until more facts of observation are available. Sir James remarks that "the majority of astronomers think it probable . . . while many, and perhaps most, physicists look on the possibility with caution and even distrust". It is perhaps for that reason that he has devoted the greater part of his discussion to the physical evidence. While his diagnosis of the situation is, perhaps, not very inaccurate, it is scarcely a fundamental one. The reaction of the man of science—whether he be physicist or astronomer—to the idea will depend on his mental constitution. The passage from mathematical possibility to physical