

for the Spiritual in the Realm of Science". The spiritual in this case is not to be identified with the 'spiritual' which Sir Oliver has so closely and patiently pursued in the purely human sphere. He has, as always, a word on this topic, and pleads for the open mind, a plea which every fair-minded person will be willing to support. But he goes on to speak—and it is the burden of his speech—of the need of admitting a spiritual explanation of the phenomena of the world as a whole.

Spiritual Elements in Science

SIR OLIVER is arguing throughout with those who maintain the strictly scientific or agnostic attitude, and in doing so he postulates what he calls "spiritual elements" or a "spiritual influence", which at the end of his discourse he weaves into "the one Reality which gives meaning to the existence of the whole material world . . . and illuminates the whole universe with Immortal Love". It is a fine passage, which takes us back to the triumphant finale of Dante's "Paradiso"—but one is bound to recognise that it is a supreme act of faith, an apotheosis of the Unknown rather than any extension of the scientific outlook. Science, *qua* science, will agree with Sir Oliver that the mere fact of the human mind attaining the power of prediction—forming, that is, scientific laws—proves that the universe, as presented to us, acts in an orderly or rational way. It will also agree with him that the progress of the human mind exhibits the development of truth, beauty, and love. But when he proceeds to evoke and apply these conceptions—as he frankly does—at any point in the story of evolution where scientific knowledge fails, one sees a danger and remembers the famous Hippocratic diagnosis of the sacred disease the 'sacred disease' was that of which men had not yet discovered the natural cause. Our religion should inspire and encourage, but, above all, it must not relieve us of the primary duty of following the truth into its most remote retreat.

World Agricultural Policy

THE general assembly of the International Commission of Agriculture, which met at Lausanne on July 21–22, was attended by delegates from sixteen countries and thirty-five national agricultural organisations, and a statement has been issued on world agricultural policy. It was emphasised that the world agricultural crisis is due to the fact that production and the increased means of securing production have outstripped both present consumption possibilities and population increases, while purchasing power has meanwhile declined. The Commission therefore considers that a judicious organisation of production and exchange will constitute one of the most effective means for fighting the agricultural crisis and establishing the prosperity of nations on a new basis. The first step would be to substitute orderly marketing, through the agency of associated bodies or by means of systematic State-controlled quota import arrangements, for the present unregulated offers of large quantities of commodities on world markets. Simul-

taneously, all means of stimulating consumption in general will have to be considered. Efforts will have to be made to improve and regularise quality and to cheapen retail sale. An appropriate wages policy will have to be adopted which, while allowing of a decrease in the number of the unemployed, will take account of national purchasing power. The question of new markets should also be studied, and, for the time being, also that of the export of existing surpluses to countries where the populations are suffering from underfeeding or famine. Further, an increased consumption of products of animal origin would absorb a larger portion of the surplus of vegetable products, which would be transformed into milk and meat. Finally, building should be encouraged by all suitable means. The International Commission of Agriculture recommends agriculturists to support the work of international collaboration, to associate themselves with efforts which aim at the maintenance of peace, at guaranteeing the security of property, and at drawing closer the bond which unites economic groups and nations in a common interest.

International Scientific Centres in Paris

LA Maison du Savant, which is to be built in Paris, will be a well-appointed meeting-place for French and foreign men of science, if the present plans come to fruition. Lecture rooms, restaurant, winter-garden, and other amenities will be at the disposal of members and visitors. In addition, it will possess an extensive office of information which will study projects for the erection of up-to-date laboratories and research institutions, and organise congresses, exhibitions, conferences, and all publicity necessary to attain the organisation's aims. An illustrated periodical will also be published eventually, to inform the public of the general progress of science. Other activities include a benevolent fund and the provision of scholarships. The Maison du Savant is under the patronage of M. Lebrun, President of the French Republic; it has received government support, and its honorary committee consists of a distinguished group of academicians, including MM. le Chatelier, Charcot, le duc de Broglie, Richet, etc. Its founder and president is M. Georges Lecuyer, president of the International Union of Decorative Arts, and its active director is M. Jean de Chappedelaine. The organisation hopes to raise fifty million francs in the near future for its extensive programme. Through the official support of the Chamber of Deputies and the Municipality of Paris, a beginning has been made with convenient office rooms at 5 Avenue de l'Opéra, Paris.

"LA Maison Internationale de la Science" is a project put forward on the occasion of the Colonial Exhibition of last year, during an international congress of men of science and research workers, for the furtherance of their interests. Its temporary headquarters are at the Institut Marey, Avenue Gordon-Bennett, Paris. It has not been very active, owing to the absence of its director, M. Pélissier, on a government mission to the island of Réunion; in all probability it will join forces with the Maison du Savant. "Le Foyer International Universitaire" is a centre

planned by the University of Paris. It was to be housed in part of the hôtel de la Rochefoucauld d'Estissac; this, however, has been bought by the "Maison de la Chimie" (see NATURE, June 11, p. 865) for three million francs, which will be used by the "Foyer International Universitaire" to acquire another building in rue de la Four (the former École de Bouffémont). "Le Cercle Universitaire International" is a club projected by the Associations of University Students to receive visiting colleagues and university men and to organise meetings and lectures that will promote international friendship. Its president is M. Paul Langevin, and its temporary address is at the Musée Pédagogique, 41 rue Gay-Lussac, Paris.

Institut International de Documentation

THE eleventh Conference of the Institut International de Documentation (formerly de Bibliographie) will be held this year at Frankfort-on-Main on Aug. 30-Sept. 3. The Conference is open to all persons interested in the various aspects of documentation, that is, the collection, arrangement, filing, and indexing of graphic records. As in previous years, an attractive programme of papers has been arranged for presentation and discussion during the mornings, whilst the afternoons and evenings will be devoted to visits of inspection and recreation. The latter include visits to Darmstadt and Mainz, where State and municipal libraries will be inspected. The Conference fee of 12 R.M. includes all excursions. A special exhibition of technical appliances for library purposes (Adrema machines, photocopying apparatus, duplicating machines, metal furniture, etc.) has been organised in a room of the Conference building during the meeting. The programme of papers to be presented is not yet available, but copies of all papers will be distributed to members of the Conference prior to the opening session. Full particulars regarding hotels and accommodation and further details of the Conference may be obtained from the organising secretary, Dr. Schürmeyer, Direktor der Bibliothek für Kunst und Technik, Frankfurt am Main, or from the Secretary, British Society for International Bibliography, Science Library, South Kensington, S.W.7.

Sotheran's "Bibliotheca Chemico-Mathematica"

MESSRS. Sotheran, Ltd., have issued a first supplement to their "Bibliotheca Chemico-Mathematica" which was published in two volumes in 1921, and have again laid all students of science and technology under a debt of gratitude. The work pretends to be no more than a bookseller's catalogue, and does not, therefore, aim at completeness, but in fact it contains a most representative list of works, to the number of more than seven thousand items, of old writers in all branches of science, and a number of standard modern works. It is rendered of permanent reference value by the fact that the title-pages in the majority of cases are transcribed in full, and by the unusual wealth and scope of the notes that accompany most of the entries. One of the most interesting items (presumably to be sold as a whole) is a collection of more than

eight hundred books from Newton's library, including copies of the first and second editions of the "Principia" with corrections, cancellations, and additions in Newton's handwriting—many of which were not incorporated in the later editions and would thus be of the utmost interest as showing the progress of Newton's thought—an annotated copy of Euclid, and many other works with Newton's autograph.

THE catalogue also includes a few books that belonged to Faraday and were bound and annotated by him, original copies of the first edition of Galileo's "Dialogo", a complete set of the Paris Academy's "Description des arts et métiers", with all its supplements, which is very rarely seen in the sale room—or the library—in its complete form, and, especially noteworthy, a copy of William Gilbert's "De Magnete", 1600, inscribed in what appears undoubtedly to be the autograph of the author, of which no other universally accepted example is known. The annotations are trustworthy and of great interest, and will save a great deal of searching through scattered authorities, the latest of whom appear to have been consulted. It is good to see that the title 'Honourable' is no longer given to Henry Cavendish, and it is to be hoped that Messrs. Sotheran's correction will finally destroy this persistent delusion. Prices appear to have risen since the date of the original catalogues, but remain moderate. Booksellers' catalogues are usually looked through rapidly for desired acquisitions, and if kept at all, are cut up for filing purposes, but the present volume is a bibliographical tool of value and should take its place beside its predecessors on the library shelf. It and the volumes still to come form a worthy memorial to the late H. C. Sotheran, to whom the volume is dedicated.

A New Periodical on Acoustics

THE rapid development of acoustics since the production of the thermionic valve is accompanied by so large an increase in the bulk of research papers that for some time the Acoustical Society of America has been publishing its own *Journal* devoted to the subject. A French journal, *Revue d'Acoustique*, is now to be published bi-monthly under the direction of a committee of well-known authorities. The first number, dated March 1932, wisely opens with a vocabulary, founded on that of the Committee on Acoustical Standardisation (*J. Acoustical Soc. of Am.*, 2, No. 3), of acoustical terms with definitions and English equivalents, and authors are asked to indicate when they use a term with a different meaning. In addition to papers, abstracts longer than those usually available in *Science Abstracts* and a bibliography of papers and books published since 1925 are given. This latter section is classified under physiological acoustics, acoustic measurements, propagation, sound sources, sound receivers, music, mechanical music, noise and architectural acoustics, and books and general articles. The titles are given in French, with some inconsistencies of translation. Although a journal of acoustics will naturally be used