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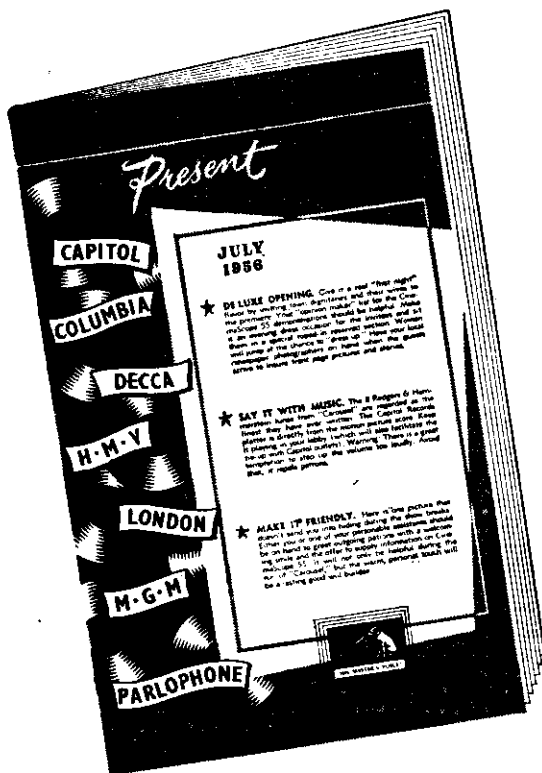
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The Awakened Mind

TALKS on the study of mind, announced on page 15, may not compete in present interest with the Springboks; but they should help many people towards unaccustomed ways of thinking. The subject is more than an opportunity for intellectual exercise; it has a direct bearing on an individual's conception of the world, and therefore on the way he conducts himself. Knowledge of the body-mind relationship may not prevent mental illness, but processes that are understood are less likely to be feared, and fear is an enemy of health. Similarly, in the larger interactions of the individual and society, the danger of conflict is reduced as more people understand the sources of action.

Full understanding is out of our reach; but every age has hypotheses which support codes of behaviour, some better than others; and although there is disagreement among thinkers (as there always has been) on the nature of mind, it is a fact that methods derived from psychological research are being used successfully in education, social services, and psychiatry. One of the oldest arguments, on the relationship between body and mind, is resolved by an emphasis on personality. Scientific study has weakened the theory of separate entities. There are many today who prefer to speak of body-mind, and who see personality as the expression of physical and mental harmonies and stresses. They are aided in this by modern psychology, and especially by that side of it which emphasises the importance of the subconscious. These ideas cannot be final. Some of them are merely new versions of old beliefs. It has been noticed, for instance, that the intuitions of men such as Freud and Jung are

really poetic, a revival of allegory and a systematic use of symbolism. Further, some of the therapeutic values of psycho-analysis have long been known in religious experience. It is surely significant that an increasing number of books on "pastoral" psychology are being written by churchmen.

When all has been said about the practical value of these studies, there remains another and abiding reason for their attraction. The curious situation of man as a thinking animal—able to think, not only of the world around him, but of consciousness itself—may be accepted without much question under the pressure of daily living. But men are not always working, or in search of pleasure; and no matter how much they love the company of their fellows they must sometimes be alone. At intervals, too, the lightning strikes: the shock of grief or a profound experience makes them look outwards and inwards with a sharper vision. Some prefer not to think of the mysteries until they are forced to, and turn away from them as quickly as possible. Yet the happiest man is he who has learnt to live with the strangeness. Life as it is revealed to us through consciousness is not only strange but beautiful; and to be fully conscious is to feel the need and perhaps the assurance of something beyond it. The study of mind can be a dry, academic exercise; but it can also take us to the centre of life. The experience of poets, who in their best moments seem to touch a larger mind of the world, and to snatch from it a brief and flying glory, may be beyond the rest of us. What remains, however, is so much worth seeking that those who can help us a little on the way are friends indeed.

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