

OPENING ADDRESS

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The task we face is important and delicate. That so many outstanding personalities have agreed to meet in order to examine a question that has provoked so much controversy, and has aroused views that are often hostile, is in itself a remarkable achievement. Parapsychology is undoubtedly the ideal meeting ground for a study of paranormal healings. Parapsychological findings, in which dynamic psychology is assuming an increasing role, have raised the curtain on new concepts of personality and of human relations. It is in this field, the full outlines of which we are just now beginning to perceive, that the age-old problem of disease and health will be re-assessed. Already, the findings of psychoanalysis and of psychosomatic medicine show that so-called illness is brought about by a variety of factors, related to the conscious and subconscious psychical processes of the patient. If the fact that the patient's psyche is itself the crossroad of numerous interpersonal relations and that these relations evolve by means of the "psi factor" is overlooked, then we will fail to understand these processes.

We know that measures taken on the endopsychical level or on the level of mental relation can produce changes and improvements, even in cases which have traditionally been regarded as being within the scope of organic medicine. This being so, it is evident that the question of "paranormal healing" can no longer be regarded as it was twenty or thirty years ago. There can no longer be any question of considering the "before" and "after" of the

patient separately; it is rather a matter of considering the binomial healer-patient pattern as a *specific* form of what had been known as the interpersonal situation of the patient, in *general*.

Is it not conceivable that, in the healer-patient relation, there exists a sort of "overcharge" of psychological and parapsychological factors which, in my opinion, are present in any situation, between the patient and his environment or between the patient and his physician? This, of course, is a working hypothesis which can only be tested if we succeed in establishing or in situating, more clearly, the "*psi* factor" in cases which at first view appear to be paranormal. To my mind, the entire question of methods and techniques to be used in ferreting out these elements, is a problem which should receive our very serious attention during this conference.

May I finally express the wish that this meeting may be a starting point for the re-assessment of an age-old problem, of paramount importance both from the purely medical angle, and for the new perspectives that its study may give us with regard to what the French call *Les sciences del' Homme*—the sciences concerning Man, and his destiny.