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EDITORIAL

GRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL STUDY

The far-reaching advances in medical practice in relatively recent years have materially modified medical education at all levels. Educational requirements for admission to medical colleges have been increased in time and scope. The undergraduate medical course has become more and more complex in respect to the extent and intricacy of factual data to be mastered and in skills to be acquired.

The complexity of modern medical practice has given emphasis to the need of continuous study and an ever-enlarging experience on the part of the physician who desires to remain professionally in step with medical progress.

The very complexity of practice, coupled with the desire to become particularly proficient in some branch of medicine or surgery, has led many physicians to limit themselves to a field of specialty practice. The formation of the American Boards for certification in medical specialties has given considerable emphasis and impetus to preparation for specialization.

Prior to the past three decades there was little formalized graduate instruction available to physicians desiring specialty training. Until relatively recent times much of the training was by preceptorship in a more or less haphazard fashion, supplemented by personal reading.

The demand for organized training programs and the setting up of standards of attainment for recognized specialty practices

have led to the gradual development of educational facilities in medical centers to provide for approved graduate study and specialty training intended to span the period between the completion of a general internship and the completion of training required for specialty certification. This educational period is rightly systematized and standardized in harmony with accepted teaching standards on the graduate level, and must be such as to merit approval of the Council on Medical Education and Hospitals of the American Medical Association and the respective American boards of medical specialties.

In preparing for specialty practice it is generally accepted that at least six months should be spent in the study of the basic medical sciences including organized courses in anatomy, physiology, pathology, biochemistry, and other sciences ancillary to medicine.

In presenting basic sciences on the graduate level emphasis is to be given the fundamentals relating to and underlying clinical medicine and not upon the accumulation of didactic factual data. The basic science courses—and this applies to all graduate training—are not to be given or regarded as “cram” courses for American Board examinations. In view of the clinical emphasis to be given the basic sciences, the teaching should be supervised by teachers experienced in clinical practice.

In hospitals connected with medical colleges having basic science and clinical teaching staffs available for graduate teaching, the teaching

of the basic sciences may be integrated with the clinical experience associated with resident or fellowship appointments. However, because many desirable resident appointments are available in hospitals where provision for teaching the basic sciences is not feasible, there is need for organized graduate teaching in these fields in certain medical centers. The College of Medical Evangelists is offering courses in the basic sciences in recognition of this need and opportunity to serve its alumni and other graduates.

Many physicians in general practice are seeking continuation and part-time courses on the graduate level as a means of keeping professionally well informed and acquainted with advancing techniques and increasing skills which enhance the effectiveness of the physician's care of his patients.

Time was when a physician might become a self-styled specialist; and though courses taken and degrees acquired do not ensure knowledge and skill on the part of the practitioner, yet all agree that the standards of both specialty practice and general practice have been materially raised by the greater emphasis now being given to advanced study and postgraduate courses intended to keep physicians young professionally and alert to

* White, Mrs. E. G.: *Ministry of Healing*, Mountain View, Calif., Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1909.

the gratifying advances being continuously made in the science and art of medical practice. The College of Medical Evangelists, through the varied courses offered by the Graduate School of Medicine and resident and fellowship appointments, is seeking to fulfill its mission and full responsibility in promoting and contributing to the advancement in medical education.

The majority of physicians recognize that they must remain continuously as students of medicine and devote no small amount of time and means to this end. The physician who does not, will soon find that the march of medicine has progressed far while he has been indolently standing by.

This need for constant growth in knowledge and skill is admirably brought to the Christian physician in the following counsel:

"The physician who desires to be an acceptable coworker with Christ will strive to become efficient in every feature of his work. He will study diligently, that he may be well qualified for the responsibilities of his profession, and will constantly endeavor to reach a higher standard, seeking for increased knowledge, greater skill, and deeper discernment. Every physician should realize that he who does weak, inefficient work is not only doing injury to the sick, but is also doing injustice to his fellow physicians. The physician who is satisfied with a low standard of skill and knowledge not only belittles the medical profession, but does dishonor to Christ, the Chief Physician."—*Ministry of Healing*, p. 116.*

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