

# SCIENCE

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## RESEARCH AND APPLICATION<sup>1</sup>

For nearly half a century, it has been the custom in this society to give its president every year "his day in court," and in conformity therewith many brilliant addresses have been delivered, and almost every conceivable subject has been discussed. It is therefore becoming more and more difficult for the incumbent to select a theme which shall have the merit of novelty, unless, perchance, he is himself working in the laboratory, and can bring forth some new and shining example of the progress of his science. I have not the good fortune to be so situated, and I must perforce satisfy myself with some other line of procedure in the hope that even in a discussion of old and well-known facts, some new light may be thrown, which will not be altogether without value. I have therefore selected for my subject, "Research and Application," knowing that many of my hearers have been spending their lives in considering and teaching it, and are far better prepared to instruct me than I am to reciprocate. I would remind such that there is at last a large and growing number of people who are intensely interested in what the chemist has done and is doing and still more in what he will accomplish in the future. It is therefore rather to that public, many representatives of which are present to-night, than to the chemists in this gathering that I would address myself.

Research in the distant past was the privilege of the few. In chemistry, during the middle ages, the alchemists were practically the only ones pursuing it, and they in secret, and not always from the highest of motives. Working by themselves, as they did, they had not the great advantage of meeting and discussing with others similarly engaged, and using their progress and mistakes to intensify

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<sup>1</sup> Address of the president of the American Chemical Society, Philadelphia, September 4, 1919.