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THE REV. PROF. LOUIS J. SIECK, D. D.

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President Louis J. Sieck, D. D.

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THE late president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., has gone to his heavenly rest. Therewith he joins the ranks of the theologians of the Church whom it remembers with honor.

Throughout his life it seemed as though Doctor Sieck was not destined for the role of theologian in the professional sense of the term. After an assistantship of one year to the late President of the Missouri Synod, Dr. F. Pfothenauer, at Hamburg, Minn., Louis J. Sieck became assistant pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in St. Louis, beginning in 1905, and pastor after 1914. A large and active congregation situated close to the business district of the city, this parish demanded incessant activity in the various domains of parish administration — management of plant and school, fund-raising, training for leadership of the laity. These administrative experiences and gifts were turned to wider fields in representing the St. Louis churches and clergy toward the public, forming and guiding the St. Louis Lutheran Publicity Organization and its pioneer activities in advertising and evangelism, developing some of the first English Lutheran work of the city in preaching and Sunday school work, helping to found and direct Station KFUE, and laboring as member of the Board of Control of Concordia Seminary from 1923 to 1943, the last four years as its chairman. He was president of the St. Louis City Mission Society for ten years, chairman of the St. Louis Pastoral Conference for twenty-four years, and member of the Board of Directors of Valparaiso University for eleven years. He was chairman from the beginning of the Emergency Planning Council of Synod.

Hence, when Dr. Sieck was called to Concordia Seminary as its president in 1943, it was felt that his prime function would be to administrate its growing and complicated activities. This he did in the perplexing years of war, acceleration, and inflation of student body, seeing to the construction of the Field House and the Graduate Building, devising of additional housing for staff and students, and piloting of the entire administrative and faculty structure into a reorganization. More significant than the many surface marks of his tenure were the underlying gains in faculty fellowship and consecration, the strengthening of educational and administrative routines, the closer bonds between faculty and students, and the interpreting of the role of the Seminary to the Church.

Despite his massive administrative skills and experience, however, it is not just a token of respect to assert that Dr. Sieck was first of all a theologian and that his lasting contribution to the Seminary will be a theological one. He had a quick mind and retentive memory and retained his facility to the end in the fields of systematic theology and the New Testament. He understood the disciplines of practical theology to be not merely quasi-secular administration, but from experience recognized the core of the Gospel in them all — in the cure of souls, in which he pioneered in pastoral counseling, in the administration of religious education, and in functional worship. He was a great preacher who knew how to preach the One Thing Needful and stress it for his flock. He was co-author with the Rev. W. C. Burhop of *Glory of Golgotha* (Concordia, 1944). He slaved arduously with his faculty for the improved theological content of ministerial training at the Seminary, sought to stimulate graduate theological studies through fellowships and the equipping of the Graduate School of the Seminary, fostered regular theological discussions by the faculty in its own meetings and with other theologians, corresponded with theologians throughout the world, and attended the Hanover convention of the Lutheran World Federation just this summer. His seminar in Pastoral Theology was the final springboard of Seminary seniors into the ministry. For years he supervised the book reviews of the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY.

Doctor Sieck's theology should not be understood, however, to have been merely "practical," inarticulate, unsystematized. In his

preaching, teaching, discussion, and leadership he revealed a remarkably consistent pattern of emphasis. For him the Bible was the inerrant source of all doctrine. What it said to him was this: God, who has wrath for all unrighteousness, loved man and gave His Son for man. The story of this love is the joyous message that plucks man from despair and godlessness and puts him into the glad fellowship of the Church and the happy business of the Christian calling. To bring that story and strengthen that fellowship is the precious task of the ministry.

We shall miss Doctor Sieck sorely and pray that his strenuous labors, which contributed to his death, may be kept in memory for the sake of the Lord Christ whom he served and the Gospel which he preached.