

Concordia Theological Monthly



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Martin Samuel Sommer, 1869—1949

DR. M. S. SOMMER was a gentleman of the first water. One could meet him at leisure or at work and find him always the same — kindly, wholehearted, congenial, and cheerful; ready and willing to enliven the conversation with a good quotation from classical literature, whether English, German, or Latin; or eager to tell a good story to illustrate a point he was trying to make.

He was a good friend, loyal and reliable, not easily ruffled by outward circumstances. If conditions of life were not too favorable, he never complained.

He was a good husband. During our long years of friendship I learned to know his second wife, the widow of the sainted Dr. G. Stoeckhardt, who for a series of years was disabled by accidents, which meant that he as husband had to take care of many things usually done by the woman in the home. It meant visits to the hospital, shopping for groceries, attending to many details of house-keeping — even though they had a cook and at times a nurse in the home. Not once did I see a look or hear a word of impatience.

He was a good father. He had two sons, one a literary man, one a preacher. The relations between them were excellent. It was my privilege to meet with the sons after the funeral, and I was deeply impressed by the high regard in which they held him.

He was a good preacher. His entire ministry of twenty-nine years was spent in Grace Church, St. Louis. That was pioneer work in many ways, yet after twenty years at Grace he was able to build a church which for seating space and for Sunday School rooms was one of our largest church buildings in St. Louis.

He was a good scholar and professor. The twenty-nine years of his professorship at Concordia Seminary were spent mostly in teaching young men how to preach. Our ministers in the Church are generally regarded as able preachers of the Word. About half of

our present ministry learned sermon making and sermon preaching from him.

He was a good writer and editor. Most of his writing was done for the *Lutheran Witness*. He could write clearly and potently. He knew how to write for the common man. After his retirement as one of the *Witness* editors last fall, many people expressed their deep regrets, for they value his writings highly. The books from his pen are: *Prayers*. Submitted by Prof. Martin S. Sommer (17 editions), Rudolf Volkening, St. Louis, Mo.; *The Voice of History*, Concordia Publishing House (1913); *Physical Training of Public Speakers*, Concordia Publishing House (1924); *Something Better Than Advice — Power!* (1928); *The Truth Which Makes Us Free* (1932); Editor of *Concordia Pulpit*, Concordia Publishing House, 1930—35. He was able to complete the manuscript of the translation of Dr. Stoeckhardt's *Commentary on Ephesians*.

Dr. Sommer made the following contributions to our journal:

"Tertulliani *Apologeticum*," Vol. IV, p. 811; "The Argument of St. Augustine's Confessions," Vol. V, p. 185; "The Pastor and Secular Literature," Vol. VII, p. 677; "That Review of Pastor Goerss' Book in the *Lutheran*," Vol. IX, p. 674; "The Province of Human Reason in Religion," Vol. X, p. 420; "The Articulus Catholicus," Vol. XI, p. 81.

Friend, husband, father, preacher, professor, writer, and editor — in all things conscientious and evangelical! His passing came quickly, unexpectedly. We remember him. We miss him.

In farewell we say: "Till we meet again!" W. G. POLACK