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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS
OF PREACHING FOR THE PURPOSE OF
TEACHING CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary
Department of Practical Theology

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Sacred Theology

by
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An Investigation of the Effectiveness of Preaching
for the Purpose of Teaching Christian Doctrine

Chapter I
Introduction

This thesis is "An Investigation of the Effectiveness of Preaching for the Purpose of Teaching Christian Doctrine." By Christian Doctrine we mean everything that the Bible tells us about God, His nature, His work and His attitude toward man, and everything that the Bible tells us about the origin, purpose, and destiny of man, his nature, and his relationship to God. Men and God are the great theme of Scripture. Everything that the Bible says can some way or another be fitted under this theme.

God is discernible even outside the Bible. Man by his very nature is aware of the fact that there must be a Supreme Being. All the world about him attests the fact that there is a God. Yet this testimony serves only to confuse and to frighten. Men do not understand the world and the more they contemplate the idea of a God the more they must come to fear the prospect of ever knowing Him.

The confusion and fear that come to men who know God from nature are results of inadequate knowledge. Only Revelation will help to replace confusion with order and purpose, and fear with love, trust, and respect. This Revelation

comes to us in the form of doctrine recorded and transmitted to us in the form of doctrine recorded and transmitted to us in the Bible.

We preach doctrine to bring this revelation to men. This preaching of doctrine is a tremendous job because there is so very much that the Bible tells us about God and about man. It would take a man a long time to learn all the facts of the Bible. It would take a great deal of preaching. But there is little value in the learning of the Bible for the sake of merely grasping a few facts. One might as profitably study philosophy and politics if one's objectives were only the gathering of information.

Doctrine is not an end in itself. This becomes evident to a man as he studies doctrine. As men come into contact with the Word of God they become aware of the fact that these words are not merely an encyclopedia from which one might learn facts. The doctrines of the Bible are given for a unique purpose. They are intended to meet spiritual need. Christian doctrine makes man aware of the absence of God in his life. It creates in man the desire to restore a condition which formerly existed and which is now lost; the condition of God living in man and activating him. The unique purpose of Christian doctrine is the restoration of the Kingdom of God. This is the purpose of preaching.

As Christ came to fit and qualify men for the Kingdom of Heaven, so the preaching of the Word is obviously intended to be the instrument of divine grace conferring on men the blessings which flowed from His

redeeming work.¹

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.²

We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.³

My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in a demonstration of the Spirit and power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.⁴

Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.⁵

Awareness of this objective will direct the preacher in his choice of doctrine as he prepares his sermons. Not all doctrines are capable of making man aware of his condition and of arousing in man a desire to have God come back into his life. It will not do to preach a sermon on inspiration or the atonement for the purpose of making man aware of his separation from God. Man becomes conscious of this fact only through preaching of the Law, the doctrine of sin, its cause, its consequences, and its presence in the life of every man. Otherwise there will be no interest in the doctrine of the love of God or the doctrine of the atonement.

1. John I. Yost. "The Kind of Preaching Needed in Our Day." Lutheran Church Quarterly. Vol. XVIII. p.335. (October, 1945.)

2. Romans 1:16.

3. 1 Cor. 1:23,24.

4. 1 Cor. 2:4,5.

5. 1 Peter 1:22,23.

The doctrine of sin is not capable of making a Christian of a man. This doctrine only aids in the diagnosis. It tells a man what is wrong and that he needs something else to straighten matters out. The Biblical concept of sin offers no solution. Only the doctrine of the atonement, of the grace and love of God in action, can restore the reign of God in man. This alone can make a Christian out of a man.

By placing emphasis on certain doctrines of the Bible as being absolutely essential it not to be concluded that other doctrines are useless or unimportant. Every doctrine of the Bible is useful. Everyone is so important that a Christian man must cherish it as a beautiful treasure. As a man grows in grace and the kingdom of God becomes more firmly fixed in his life, he sees the significance and truth in what the Bible teaches about creation, about inspiration, about the angels, about the last things and everything else that the Bible might say. He accepts them as the truth and eagerly seeks to learn more from the Word.

It is not enough to preach sin as a reality and the doctrine of the atonement as historical fact. It is one thing to say that these things are true and quite another to see in them personal significance. Phillips Brooks implied this fact when he said that preachers should preach all the doctrine they knew "not that men may believe it, but that men may be saved by believing it."⁶ Christian doctrine is expected to

6. Phillips Brooks, "Yale Lectures on Preaching", quoted by Michael Reu, Homiletics, p. 150.

convert people. It is capable of doing this and the preacher must be aware of this fact as he seeks to bring doctrine to his people. The conscientious preacher cannot feel that he has finished his teaching job by simply telling his listeners the facts and then turning the job over to the Holy Spirit from there on. The preacher must do all in his power to teach doctrine in a way that it will register with his hearers and produce in them the conversion which the Holy Spirit effects through the Word, the doctrine, which he is preaching. Problems of which a preacher must be aware will be discussed in this thesis.

Doctrine creates and preserves life. Spiritual life does not thrive on nothing nor will it remain at all alive without proper nourishment. "Actual growth in Christianity is not possible in a congregation without sermons rich in doctrine."⁷ Christian people are expected to increase their knowledge of God. It is the natural thing for men who have been reborn to know more and more about the God to whom they have been united again. Doctrine is the only thing that will develop increased knowledge of God.

Though Christians live in daily communion with God, they do not loose contact with the world. They are still subject to the influences of those forces that originally tore them away from God. The entire life of a Christian is a story of struggle against the powers of the world, flesh, and devil. The preacher is not equipping his hearers for this contest

7. C.F.W. Walther, quoted by Reu, Homiletics, p. 147.

by exhorting his people to be good and by rebuking them for being evil. The Word is the weapon against such enemies. Doctrine is the source of spiritual power and doctrine is that which will make it possible for Christian people to progress in their sanctification. Speaking of sermons on sanctification without sufficient emphasis on doctrine, Dr. Walther remarks:

So far from actually reaching the heart and kindling life, such sermons are more likely to preach people to death, to destroy any hunger they may have for the bread of life, and systematically to produce disgust and loathing for God's Word. It cannot but repel every hearer, to be admonished or reproved, again and again, without being shown the reason why, just as it must repel him to be comforted in soft and savorless fashion.⁸

The importance of doctrine in the pastor's preaching and teaching becomes more obvious as he looks at his job. Without doctrine there is no creation of spiritual life. Without doctrine there is no maintenance of spiritual life. Doctrine is the only content that a preacher can give to his hearers. It is his stock-in-trade. Without it he is a useless man.

Looking at the objectives of a preacher's teaching and teaching activity it becomes evident that his is literally the greatest and most important job among men.

As ambassadors of Christ who beseech sinners in His stead to be reconciled to God, the ministry of the Word is charged with a mission of eternal importance, and the preacher of the Gospel fills the most important office any mortal can occupy.⁹

If the preacher fails to get doctrine across to his hearers,

8. Ibid.

9. John I. Yost, Op. Cit. p. 335.

they die. If he succeeds, the Holy Spirit creates in them spiritual life.

In view of the importance of doctrine in a preacher's activity and of the importance of his job as a preacher and teacher of this doctrine, it is necessary for him to be fully aware of all the problems that confront him in this office.

Chapter II

Difficulties of Doctrinal Preaching

Christian people do not expect that every person in the world will become Christian. They accept the Savior's comment that "many are called but few are chosen" as literal truth. They are also aware of the fact that in the final analysis it is the Holy Spirit that does the converting. These facts do not excuse the Christian from critically observing the effectiveness of his witnessing for Christ to determine whether or not he is doing his job as well as he might. This is especially true of the preacher who has assumed the responsibility of being a leader in the business of bringing the Gospel of Jesus to people. He knows that he must depend upon human instruments to convey this truth to the minds of people and he must resort to human judgments and measurements to determine to what degree he has been effective in his ministry.

Many pastors have experienced the pain of disappointment as they have faced the fact that those whom they have sought to teach actually did not learn what they were supposed to learn. This fact was brought home to the experimenter in a number of ways. While teaching a Bible class in one of the large congregations of St. Louis he asked the question, "What is it that makes you sure that God is your friend?" He received the answer that if one tried to do what was right and obeyed the Ten Commandments as well as he could, God would be kindly disposed toward him. This answer came from one whom the teacher thought to be a well-indoctrinated Lutheran,

one who had been a member of the Lutheran Church for her entire life. Obviously the entire program of teaching and preaching in her life had not been effective to the extent that it might have been. We of course have to admit the possibility that she actually did not give an accurate statement of what she believed and that her answer was the result of her inability to express herself. But it is certainly part of the job of the Christian pastor to train his people to give accurate expression to their faith or else their testimony to others cannot possibly be effective.

Another incident that caused the experimenter to wonder about the effectiveness of teaching and preaching in the Lutheran Church is his experience while visiting patients at the Lutheran Hospital in St. Louis on Friday afternoons during the last semester of his senior year at the Seminary. He visited seven to twelve patients every Friday afternoon. Many of these patients were supposed to be of the Lutheran faith and most of them claimed to be Christians. Several of the patients were critically ill and the visitor specifically asked them why they felt that they could depend upon the goodness of God in these last days of their life. Without a single exception, every person, including those who professed to be Christians of the Lutheran faith, replied that he thought he had done his duty here in this life and that God would not let him down in his last days. Again we must admit that perhaps these people did not realize what they were saying and that their statements might not have been accurate expressions of their real faith; but we cannot

ignore the fact that not one of them was able to give an accurate statement of real Christian faith.

On another occasion the experimenter was talking with a lady who had been a member of the Lutheran Church her entire life, had gone through a Lutheran Parochial School, and whose parents had been very conscientious in instructing their children. The topic under discussion was the general conduct of young people in the congregation. Finally she concluded with the remark that "after all, they mean well and as long as they try to do what is right, everything will be all right." Here again we admit that this statement certainly does not say that this woman was not a Christian but it does indicate a completely warped view of Christian ethics and hence a problem which faces the preacher who some how or another must seek to formulate proper attitudes as to what is right and wrong.

In looking for a cause behind this lack of proper understanding among members of his congregation a pastor must look at the various agencies he employs to instruct and train his people. It is entirely possible that there has been a great deal of ineffective teaching going on.

First of all he might look at his system of confirming the children of his congregation. Many pastors have had to face the Palm Sunday deadline. The boys and girls in the eighth grade of elementary school graduate in June and their parents see no reason why they cannot be confirmed on Palm Sunday and so they are confirmed even if they are not as yet mentally matured or do not have the necessary knowledge to accept the responsibility that goes with becoming a communicant

member of the congregation. It is certainly not impossible to have people prepared for full communicant membership at this age. The point is that with the Palm Sunday deadline, readiness is not the criterion for confirmation but rather the fact that these people have reached a certain age and a certain date has come upon the calendar. The solution does not lie in removing the deadline. The solution lies in making the pastor aware of the problem and then adjusting his teaching methods accordingly. The pastor must realize the peculiar problems that confront him as he teaches Christian doctrine to his class and make sure that he does all in his power to overcome the difficulties.

Class for adults are still more difficult from the point of view of effective teaching of Christian doctrine. First of all, these people have to un-learn many of their own ideas of sin, of God, of the life to come, etc. Classes for adults are limited to a few weeks of instruction with one meeting each week. They are made up of people who have the problems of making a living on their minds. Many of them cannot devote much time to real study and thinking.

Another source of weakness in the matter of teaching Christian doctrine is the weekly sermon. Here the pastor must be aware of serious pitfalls if he does not want to become totally ineffective and useless in his preaching program. This is the real object of this thesis. We intend to investigate the effectiveness of doctrinal preaching in order to point up some of these problems.

People have long been aware of the fact that preaching

in our church is not always what it ought to be. Both laymen and pastors have sensed the fact that its effectiveness is not without question. In a survey Walter C. Koehler sent letters to several laymen requesting their opinion on what they expected to get from the pulpit. We include the comments of two of those who replied to Mr. Koehler's letter. They indicate the fact that people are not altogether satisfied with the preaching done in our church.

The owner of a manufacturing concern writes:

I think the sermons are too general and explanatory of points which are sort of non-essential as compared with the questions answered in a simple and definite form: "What is it to believe in Jesus?" "How do I come to Jesus?" "Am I saved if I do not feel saved?" Personally I believe it will be startling and possibly even inditing to the clergy if they knew how many seeking souls leave the church with these essential questions unanswered. Apparently the pastors think these questions too elemental and that everyone should know the answers without any special help from the pulpit. I am certain that it is right here that the Lutheran pastors miss the boat. They often preach as if every listener were a Christian and had found peace with God. Hence, the heavy laden, seeking, sinners often return home from church confused and unhappy. ¹

A student at a Lutheran college writes:

Sermons do not answer the doubts that are continually confronting young people today. Too many of us find it difficult to realize the part that Christ plays in our everyday life. We go to church in hopes of discovering this relationship and too often we leave church still harboring the same doubts. It is up to the pulpit to try to answer these doubts. Sermons do not solve the problems of everyday life. Pastors are not expected to take sides on questions concerning strikes, war, etc., but they should give us answers to these problems. Too many pastors do not preach the Gospel. More and more texts are being taken from the best sellers or popular movies, and Biblical examples are lacking. ²

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1. Walter C. Koehler. "What the Pew Expects from the Pulpit," Lutheran Church Quarterly. Vol. XIX. No4. p.365.
 2. Ibid. pp. 365-366.

All of this, the lack of proper information found among the masses of our people about the way of salvation and the fact that even laymen have begun to feel that something is missing in the preaching of our day, points to the fact that there must be a greater emphasis on a preaching-teaching ministry. The subject of this ministry must be solid doctrine, "the plain substantial truth and will of God which alone is able to convince the mind, convict the conscience, convert the will, and consecrate the heart of the individual."³

If there is going to be a re-emphasis on the teaching-preaching phase of the ministry a preacher must be aware of the principles of education. He must know what it takes to make a good teaching situation and he must be aware of the peculiar difficulties that he must meet when attempting to teach Christian doctrine from the pulpit in his weekly sermon. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to a discussion of some of the requirements of a good teaching situation and the special problems involved in teaching doctrine in a preaching situation.

Given a body of material for teaching, including such things as attitudes and judgments, and a class to instruct, the teacher must seek the best possible situation in which to bring the two together. It is his job to get the class to learn. To do this the teacher must secure the attention of his class. Throughout the learning process attention is the controlling factor and if attention is to be considered

3. John I. Yost, Op. Cit., pp. 341-342.

as a major factor it must be understood in its whole range of implications. ⁴

Factors of attention can be divided into those that are natural or unlearned and those that are learned. Both groups are important in understanding what makes up a good teaching situation. The natural or unlearned factors of attention are: change, intensity, repetition, striking quality, and definiteness of form. ⁵

Change or variety is probably the most important of the factors controlling attention. In a teaching situation this is easily demonstrated by the teacher on the kindergarten level who knows that her pupils can give their attention to a single object or activity for only a few minutes. As people grow older they are able to exert a certain amount of will power and give their attention to a subject for a longer period of time. Even with adults it is absolutely necessary to introduce diversified stimuli if attention to a given lesson is to be really alive and effective.

The strength or intensity of the stimulus determines whether a subject will give attention to any particular one of two or more stimuli to which he might be subjected at the same time. A child that is thoroughly excited about a story the teacher is telling will not be disturbed at all by the shadow thrown across the room as a cloud passes under the sun or as the curtain begins to move with the breeze passing thru

4. Robert Gault, An Outline of General Psychology, p.229.
5. Jon Eisenson, The Psychology of Speech, p.214.

the window. Half an hour later the same child will look out of the window as soon as it begins to get a little dark or watch the flapping of the curtain if he has been busy with a job of penmanship for 10 minutes and is growing tired of it.

Intensity or strength of stimulus alone are not sufficient to insure constant attention. The clatter of a lawn mower outside the class room window will at first attract a great deal of conscious attention from pupils. As they become accustomed to it, its noise no longer wedges into their consciousness unless there is a sudden change in its loudness or in the nature of its tone. Here too the law of change or variety of stimuli applies. In a teaching situation it means simply that the teacher cannot expect the novelty of dramatizing a story to last over a long period of time.

Repetition is the third factor in controlling attention. Repetition increases the strength or intensity of the stimulus. It will lose its value if it is repeated so often that a more novel stimulus will force its way into attention because of the monotony involved in too much repetition. With proper observance of this caution, the use of repetition is helpful in securing and maintaining attention.

Striking quality helps to hold attention. It is sometimes based on the intensification of a previous stimulus such as a sharp increase in the volume of voice or raise of pitch. Sometimes it might be something entirely different. Change from a simple exposition in a lecture to a form of dramatic story telling would not only be a novelty but would have the effect of something striking and new.

The more definitely one describes a certain thing, the more clearly it is bound to impress itself on the mind of a hearer. The description of a boy sitting on the bank of a river with his fishing pole holds the attention of a hearer or reader to the degree in which the description points up the boy to be a real, live, exciting person in the mind of the hearer or reader.

These are the so called unlearned or natural factors of attention. They are called such because they will cause attentive response in any normal human being subjected to stimuli like those mentioned. They do not depend upon the experience of the individual to secure their response.

Eisenson also speaks of what he calls "learned factors of attention." They are those which depend upon the experience of the individual for their effectiveness.⁶ They are the wants, interests, and attitudes of a person. Certain types of stimuli make their way into the individual's consciousness more easily because of his experiences and even cause certain natural stimuli to go by the board without registering at all. An illustration would be found in the young sand lot ball player listening to a game of the World Series. His experiences on the sand lot and reading and hearing about the players in newspapers and on the radio create in his mind a sensitiveness to any sort of stimulus connected with the mentioning of the names of these players or any game in which they might be playing. The stimuli created by

6. Ibid. pp.217-218.

the hearing of a World Series ball game on the radio are so strong that a call to lunch or an invitation to go for a ride in the country or even the sound of a fire truck fail to wedge their way into the boy's mind. It is in this field that the teacher can find a tremendous gold mine of stimuli with which to attract and hold the attention of his pupils.

Attention and interest are very closely associated, so much so that they are really inseparable. In defining the two terms Eisenson says:

We have characterized attention as an expression of the fundamental unity of the co-ordination of behavior which makes for clarity of stimuli and readiness of response. By interest we mean the maintenance of attention. ⁷

In the same section cited above, Eisenson suggests a number of natural factors of interest. They are animation, vitality, suspense, similarity and novelty, and concreteness. We can illustrate them briefly.

Animation means variation in stimuli. After a stimulus has succeeded in evoking a response it loses much of its power to cause any further response. A sharp crack of a whip can cause a sudden and violent reaction in an animal when it is first heard. The more often this stimulus is repeated, the weaker becomes its power to evoke response. If the stimulus is varied, the subject must adjust his response to every change in stimulus causing a certain degree of interest in what is going on.

7. Ibid., p. 233.

Any stimulus closely connected with bodily need is very successful in evoking response. The mention of attractive and appetizing food is bound to excite a hungry child. Any story closely connected with the production of food or its preparation finds ample interest in the mind of an imaginative hearer.

An incomplete situation arouses interest. Children over six years of age follow the radio and comic serials because there is a sense of incompleteness about them as they follow the narrative from day to day. If this incompleteness is not relieved some how, a feeling of conflict can set in. Suspense created by problem-solution thinking in the mind of the learner is a useful teaching aid. These principles apply to adults as well as to children.

Newness creates interest. A new hat delights a child mostly because it is new. The same applies to a new song, a new picture, or a new story. The newness must not be so great that confusion results instead of exciting interest. A set of building toys might be completely new to a little boy but since he does not know anything about them, they become little more than a heap of rods and sticks and bolts. They are too new. In a teaching situation the same applies. A totally new subject, unassociated with anything within the experiences of a learner, will confuse and mystify but will hardly create any useful interest.

Familiarity attracts interest. We have just said that a completely new situation is less useful as a learning aid than one containing elements of familiarity. Little children

delight in hearing familiar stories over and over. They are acquainted with the characters and the places. All seem like old friends. People in our churches love to sing old familiar songs and to hear familiar Bible stories, especially during the festival seasons. A news paper story interests us when we know some of the people, the places, or the events involved. The familiar items make the new meaningful. In teaching a lesson a teacher can do a better job if he is able to attach new material to circumstances, places, or people with which his learners are familiar.

Having secured the attention of the learner and assured him that there will be sufficient novelty and vitality to keep him interested, we have gone a long way in setting up a good teaching situation. Charles Russell suggests another approach to the problem of gaining and holding the interest and attention of the learner. He describes it in the words, "the want of a child." He defines "want" as "that set or attitude on the part of the child that determines his own satisfaction with the result of the response."⁸ It is the work of the teacher to inject into the teaching situation as many desirable wants as possible to maintain the attention and interest of his pupils.

The teacher's problem of creating the necessary "wants" is made clear with a simple analogy used by Russell on page five of the work just referred to above. A child's hunger for food might be the "want" of a learning situation. He

8. Charles Russell, Teaching Tomorrow, p.4.

eats because he wants food. So a child learns that for which he has a desire of want. Sometimes the child's desire for food does not fit into the pattern of good nutrition and diet. The child must be taught to want food that is good for him. He must be made to desire it and accept it as the thing he needs and thus create a "want" for the proper kind of food. Only then will he learn to eat it. In education a person learns only that which he wants to learn. It is the job of the teacher to create in the life of his pupils "wants" that can be supplied only with good education. The application of this principle to the teaching of doctrine is quite simple. No one will actually learn any Christian doctrine until he has sensed a living Want for it.

Approaching education in this way Russel has another definition for what we called interest. He defines interest as:

A feeling that accompanies learning and becomes a part of it. When one shows an interest in something, that interest is in reality the feeling that one has with respect to it. It is something that draws the learner to the learning, that helps the learner to find the learning and that satisfies him when the learning is accomplished. In a real sense interest is that which determines the immediate readiness of an individual to do something as well as that which determines the worth of a thing done. . . Interest is not static but moving, not inert but alive, not merely existing but developing, not indefinite or vague, but definite and distinct.⁹

The amount of "want" that a learner will sense in a teaching situation, or the amount of interest that he will

9. Ibid. p. 21.

have in it is almost entirely determined by his previous experience and his interpretation of the learning situation in the light of his previous experience. A given situation has meaning only to the extent to which a learner can connect it with his previous experiences. This is really a repetition of what we called "learned factors of attention." A boy whose father is an engineer for a railroad company will, because of his association with his father and his father's work, take more interest in a unit of school work on transportation because it has meaning to him. A man who has just experienced serious doubts about the love of God toward him will have a certain form of interest in a discussion of prayer that would never come to him if his experience had not provided a certain 'meaning' for the subject. The more experiences that a man has the more apt is he to have a wide variety of interests. The more a teacher is able to know and draw on these experiences of his learners, the more apt is he to conduct a class that is interesting, meaningful, and really effective as far as teaching is concerned.

Russell suggests three steps for a teacher who wishes to control the interests of the people in his class.

The first step in the control of these interests is through insuring that pupils have experiences, not merely gain a superficial knowledge of facts. . . second. . . consists of making the facts, or experiences, real and personal. . . third. . . making the objectives for the learning of the facts (gained by experience) clear, of laying the ground for the appreciation of the objectives or of making an objective that can be appreciated.¹⁰

10. Ibid. p. 28.

In connection with this discussion we might mention a law of learning that is really a simple statement of all we have said above. It is the law that in teaching one must always proceed from the known to the unknown.

We might also mention another psychological factor which Woodworth has called "mental set".¹¹ This is a "selective factor, a factor of advantage." An illustration of mental set in action might be found in the activities of a man who is given a list of words for which he is to provide the opposites. He is given such terms as day, light, white. Immediately he responds with night, dark, black. Evidently there is little intense thinking on his part yet he quickly and accurately gives his answer. Somehow his mind was geared to thinking in terms of opposites and he immediately eliminated from his thinking any terms such as red, grey, mid-day, and so forth, because they simply did not fit into the picture. This mental set is useful when we think of teaching because a mind that is set on getting certain things out of a lesson is less apt to be led astray than a person who comes to the class and listens hap-hazardly, without any concern about getting anything out of the lesson.

Much of the knowledge that a teacher must convey to his learner must be set forth in words. Obviously, it is most important that language be carefully chosen. Language must be absolutely clear. It must be meaningful. Clear language is that which is unmistakable in its meaning.

11. Robert S. Woodworth, Psychology, A Study of Mental Life, p. 382.

There dare never be any ambiguity.

The high purpose of language is to communicate meaning. Whatever impedes that service, no matter how decorative, is an abomination. Clarity is the writer's and speaker's first commandment. It says with august finality, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me".¹²

Meaningful language is that which has significance to the hearer or reader because of his own experience. It must never occur to the listener that he does not quite understand what the speaker has said or that he doubts whether or not he has understood him correctly. Any words that are not meaningful to the hearer will not only fail to bring him a message but are also apt to throw him completely off-track as far as following the thought of the speaker is concerned.

Concreteness is equally important. It is closely related to meaningfulness. Its importance in speaking and writing is well expressed by Lucecock.

Running through one's writing, no matter what the subject or mood, there must be the "gritty concreteness" of the specific word and idea, instead of the vague general word. Such specific quality gives traction for the mind, as sand on a slippery pavement gives traction for feet and wheels.¹²

Anything that is well taught is apt to be well retained. There are, however, a few thoughts that we might keep in mind if we are particularly interested in what hearers remember. Robert Gault has a useful comment on memory.

We grapple actively with the material to be learned and our power to remember is directly proportional to the depth of penetration which attention achieves.

12. Halford E. Lucecock. In the Minister's Workshop, p.184.
13. Ibid. p. 189.

We must agree, of course, that some kinds of material offer more assistance to the attentive activity than others, so that effectiveness in memorizing is conditioned by the nature of the subject matter as well as by the intensity and duration of attention.¹⁴

Oliver says that "within limits, we remember what we want to remember. Any actual motivation is an attention getter and memory fixer."¹⁵ In keeping with these thoughts, the ideas expressed under the subjects of attention and interest are pertinent. Subject matter that is vital, that supplies a definite "want" of the learner is very apt to be remembered. Anything that is to be remembered just for the sake of remembering is soon bound to slip away. This is particularly true of statistical or factual material presented without any attempt to make them vital or personally significant to the learner.

The matter of wanting to remember something and the bearing of this attitude on what is remembered is illustrated by Woodworth when he says:

Enact a little scene before a class of students who do not suspect that their memory of the affair is later to be tested, and you will find that their memory for many facts that were before their eyes is hazy, absent, or positively false.¹⁶

We attempted to test this factor of learning as we analyzed some of the questionnaires used in this thesis.

The time element in an adequate teaching situation is important. There must be sufficient time for a clear presentation of the lesson material and sufficient periods for

14. Robert Gault, Op. Cit., pp. 229-230.

15. Robert T. Oliver, The Psychology of Persuasive Speech, p. 214.

16. Robert S. Woodworth, Op. Cit., p. 347.

the repetition and review necessary to insure proper retention of the material and for testing the ability of the learner to exercise judgments based on what he has learned.

Environment ought to be suitable for learning. Classrooms ought to be cheerful, clean, and well lighted. There should be nothing that would make the learner feel unhappy, crowded-in, or uncomfortable while he is in his class. This is most important if the teacher wishes to secure the attention of his learners and to maintain it without a great deal of unnecessary effort.

Teacher and learner must have a feeling of friendliness toward one another. Any sort of tension caused by feelings of unfriendliness, strangeness, or misunderstanding will be distracting and create unnecessary barriers which will prevent a teacher from making a live contact with the thinking of his pupils.

Our final thought in connection with the requirements of a good teaching situation concerns the teacher. He must have a very clear understanding of his aim in teaching any specific lesson. If an instructor wishes to teach the class the importance of a certain industry in the lives of American people, this aim will guide the teacher in the selection of his facts, illustrations, questions and teaching aids. This aim will help him to cull out all material that will not contribute toward this and even though it might be interesting in itself, in this particular lesson such material would do no more than to distract from the central point of the instruction and lead only to confusion.

These principles which we have been discussing in the previous paragraphs apply to any form of religious instruction, including the teaching of Christian doctrine in the weekly sermon. At this point of the thesis we do not consider the particular problems that go with the teaching of Christian doctrine in the preaching situation. These problems are reserved for a later discussion.

There are certain difficulties inherent in the preaching situation. The first of these is the fact that the preacher has a mixed group of people facing him every Sunday morning. People of every age group and of every walk of life are listening to his sermon. Some of them have had much religious experience, others are newly confirmed adults, or perhaps they are in a church for the first time in their lives. We said that to do a good job of teaching one must proceed from the known to the unknown. The preacher's audience on a Sunday morning is made up of people who have had such a variety of experiences that not everything he says will be known to all without going into extremely elementary matters nor will everything be unknown to all without discussing matters entirely beyond the experiences of many.

The situation is not a hopeless one by any means. If the preacher attempts to make his message vital and personal it will find many eager listeners. The fact that his audience is such a mixed group of people will force the preacher to be very careful not to slight any of his hearers.

The time element in a preaching situation is a grave problem. People today have difficulty listening to a sermon over 25 minutes. The problem lies in the fact that for

many people this is the only time that they get any religious instruction at all and then they do not come to get this instruction regularly. Any planned program of preaching is weakened for the individual hearer as long as he does not make a point of attending these services regularly. The only solution to this problem is the development of an adequate program of education for adults.

Preaching is set into a service of worship in which the people are not always set for a learning experience. They are busy with their singing and praying and hearing often not expecting to learn anything from their listening to the sermon. It is true that we hear people constantly talking about whether or not they "got something out of the sermon." What this something is, is hard to tell. Perhaps its just an emotional thrill or the satisfaction of hearing some one else being scolded or some pleasant diversion from their usual forms of thinking during the week. The desire to "get something out of the sermon" does not necessarily mean the desire to learn something. Here the preacher must have a general program of teaching in which his people will actually learn to look for something useful in the sermon. He must teach his people to listen. In any given sermon he must create in the minds of the people the will to learn, the mental set necessary for the hearer to select from the sermon those things that fit his own life, and the wants that will make a sermon vital and important so that the hearer will simply want to get it and use it.

In any teaching situation the teacher is very apt to

become the center of attraction. He controls the entire program. This is certainly not good for teaching. The instructor should be only a guide to lead his learners to knowledge and understanding. The center of any teaching situation should be the life of the learner and everything else must contribute to its development. A preacher finds himself in this position much more than any instructor. He is set off from the people. No one dare talk to him during the sermon. He wears a special garb. The people watch him to see how he conducts himself at the altar and in the pulpit. They listen to his preaching and admire his oratory and learning. Because preachers know that people want their preacher to be a dignified man who can conduct himself properly at the altar and they want him to be a fluent and persuasive speaker, preachers soon find themselves worrying about themselves and not about the lives of the people whom they are to serve. The solution to this lies in the preacher himself. He must have in his mind a clearly defined aim. In general it must be to create and nourish spiritual life in his hearers. Specific aims will be determined by his sermon. If this becomes the power behind his preaching he will soon be able to convince his hearers that he and his actions are not the important thing but rather what he has to say and what it is supposed to do to those who are listening to him.

Another difficulty applies to religious education in general. Our people are living in a world in which people are trying to impress upon them new ideas of every kind and by every possible method. The radio, news paper, and moving

picture are filled with new ideas, all trying to be different and original.

The competition of ideas that results from this situation brings about grotesque forms of presentation and advertising, by means of which people try to catch our attention and to entice our will. You have to be original at any price, if you wish to be sure not to be overlooked or to be listened to.¹⁷

The preacher must compete with these things on Sunday morning. The minds of his hearers are dulled to anything except what is startling, new or original. Piper complains that our preachers have tried to hold their people by the same means of attracting attention used by the world. They have tried to show how the Gospel fits into modern psychology, how it has been constantly supported by historical research. These are apologetic efforts, and actually declare to the people that Christianity is unable to subsist on its own grounds.¹⁸ Our preachers must never forget that they are handling a tool that gets its power from the operation of the Holy Spirit. It needs no apology, only a vital and personal presentation.

Doctrine as a subject for teaching has its own pitfalls. It seems that both people and preachers have taken for granted that doctrine is dry. As a result people nerve themselves for a session of dull dissertation as soon as they hear that some doctrine is going to be discussed and the preachers resort to findings of archaeology texts and sermon illustrations in order to make their doctrinal sermons more interesting. Or they go into the detail that fits only into a class in dogmatics or history of dogma. Academic discussions involving scientific definition and find distinction certainly are

¹⁷. Otto A. Piper, Op. Cit., p. 62.

necessary for a complete system of dogmatics. But they cannot be used to create life in spiritually dead people.

We take heed lest theology turn into a disinterring of the dead past instead of the living expression of the science of God for a present world, and lest the exposition of the text should become a lifeless resort to commentary repetitions instead of the opening of windows into the meaning of God's Word for today. ¹⁸

Probably the greatest difficulty in presenting doctrine to people is the fact that we must use language that is sometimes foreign to the experiences of people. Words like sin, repentance, justification, wrath of God, the devil, all carry a tremendous amount of spiritual meaning, meaning that must some how or the other be conveyed to the mind of the hearer.

Our primary difficulty is getting people to understand what we are talking about. This is a real problem, for our modern generation has practically no religious vocabulary at all, which permits us to take little for granted. We are constantly defeating ourselves by using terms which to us are commonplace, but to our hearers are so much Greek. When we use theological words, we get nowhere unless we stop to define them, not once but over and over again. Here a little, there a little; precept upon precept. ¹⁹

Our church audiences are familiar with many of the words which we use in our sermons but they are not among the words used by the laymen in their every day lives. A Catholic layman has expressed his thoughts on this matter very well.

There is a body of prayer-book words, many of which push their way into sermons, words which help the man who uses a prayer book feel that religion belongs especially to Sunday, words that are sometimes referred to as the language of devotion. . . Yet here are words taken from the book, (Mass Book of the Paulists) when

18. Paul Lindberg, "Improving Your Preaching Technique", Op. Cit., p. 12.

19. Oscar F. Green, "The Three Factors in Preaching", Religion in Life, Vol. XIII, No. 4, (Autumn, 1944) p. 578.

they get into the mind of the layman, are promptly stored in his Sunday vocabulary. (Here follows a long list of such words.) The most unlearned person that seats himself in a pew knows many of those words, but no ordinary layman adopts them for his every day use.²⁰

In attempting to solve the problem we might first remember the fact that as far as the listener is concerned, "religious words do not make a sermon". That is at least the case with most people. Some people and probably many preachers feel that they are mishandling holy things when they use the language and life of the street to express the truths of the Word of God. They become a slave to the religious words which actually mean nothing to them or to their hearer. Atkinson gives good advice when he suggests that "in his own field, the lay speaker, after considering the difficulties, adopts a simple rule: Use the words with which the listener thinks."²¹

Looking at the sermon, the question may be asked, "If the discourse is understood, what difference does it make whether the ordinary layman would use such words in his everyday speech?" The difference is that you make listening more difficult. When you use, as far as possible, the words with which we think, we follow you easily. When you throw in words that we understand but do not use, we follow you less easily. And when you give us a heavy dose of the words which we merely understand, we get tired and stop listening.²²

It is true that there are certain spiritual ideas that simply are not expressed in the words used in our everyday language. Piper has a helpful suggestion on this score.

The remedy for this evil (words which people do not

20. O'Brien Atkinson, How to Make Us Waster Hour Sermon, p.60.

21. Ibid. p.63.

22. Ibid. p.63.

understand.) cannot be found in the Church's giving up these terms. The only cure that I can see will be a vivid description of the facts which are denoted by these words. We have to show that these great terms are not mere portions of a system of thought, but indications of realities which we all experience in our lives. We can learn a lot about this manner of presentation when we study the sermons and writings of the reformers.²³

In the same connection Piper condemns the "recommendation of a 'modern terminology' as a disguised attempt to get rid of the disquieting presence of the divine reality."

Closely connected with the thoughts of the previous paragraphs is the fact that in general people have a very limited experience with certain doctrinal concepts. The ideas of the power and love of God, the atoning work of Jesus, the fact that the Bible is the Word of God, are constantly brought to the minds of the listeners and they probably do a good bit of thinking about these ideas. However, on the doctrines like that of the angels, the second coming of Christ, and similar topics their experience is limited. To preach these doctrines effectively the preacher must be sure to make them vital and show his hearers that these things have real meaning to the man of God.

The theology of the Bible moves about a few simple, fundamental facts. These facts must be emphasized over and over again. Because preachers think them to be stale, they resort to every sort of trick to dress them up for a new and original appearance. The result is that preachers hide the doctrine so that it cannot possibly accomplish its

23. Otto Piper, Op. Cit., p. 62.

purposes because they have forgotten what doctrine is supposed to do. Christian doctrine is literally the "bread of life" and as such it is food for which there is a craving and need in the lives of hearers. This need can be supplied only if the preacher uses "plain talk". Language does not have to be garnished but simply kept alive.

A final thought in this chapter on the difficulties of doctrinal preaching concerns the preacher himself. Luccock tells us that

Another cause of obscurity is that the writer is himself not quite sure of his meaning. He has a vague impression of what he wants to say, but has not, either from the lack of mental power or from laziness, exactly formulated it in his mind and it is natural enough that he should not find a precise expression for a confused idea. This is due largely to the fact that many writers think not before, but after they write.²⁴

This lack of understanding goes down to the basic concepts of Christian doctrine. Preachers can often quote the proof texts and the dogmatic statements involving Christian doctrine but fail to see that they are living, dynamic truths. They fail to see their implications for every day living. The only solution to this problem is study of the Scriptures themselves and literally living with the people whom the preacher wants to serve. The preacher can then begin to do a good job of teaching doctrine in his sermons.

All preaching must some how bring Christ to the people. Failure to remember this has caused preachers to become too much concerned about their sermon as such and how he is going to make his people listen to it. In order

24. Halford E. Luccock, Op. Cit., p. 187.

to give life and meaning to his discourse the preacher resorts to relating personal experiences. In order to make his sermon stand up before scholarly criticism, he employs all the art of fine writing and exposition that he knows. He uses all the tricks of persuasive oratory. The result is that the sermon and the preacher have become the big thing.

The more passionately we speak of ourselves, the greater will be the danger of inducing our hearers to follow us and to imitate our method of witnessing rather than to embrace Christ. Yet this wrong view is adopted not only when we point constantly to our spiritual experiences, but also when we try to win people by the artificial devices of our sermons. I do not mean thereby that our witness can be effective without personal experience, nor do I want to advocate carelessness in the preparation and negligence in the presentation of our witness. But everything must be subordinated to the object itself, which is our Lord Jesus Christ.²⁵

As a concluding suggestion to this chapter Atkinson gives us an excellent bit of advice.

The members of your congregation have not the trained minds of seminarians or clergymen, and when you preach, you would do better probably to assume that clearness is rather difficult. You can test the matter, if you wish by handing one of your sermons to your barber, or your news vender, or your letter carrier. When he has had ample time to read it and think it over, as him what he gets out of it. Many a time the author, after writing an advertisement that seemed to him perfectly clear,²⁶ has had that impression corrected by the office boy.

25. Otto A. Piper, Op. Cit., p. 62.

26. O'Brien Atkinson, Op. Cit., p. 55.

Chapter III

Measuring the Effectiveness of Doctrinal Preaching

Teachers have resorted to measuring devices in order to determine the effectiveness of their teaching program. The tests used as measuring devices are intended to uncover the weaknesses in teaching methods, short-comings in the subject chosen for teaching, and improper study habits of the pupils. Probably the most valuable use of testing devices is for the purpose of review and as an aid in guidance programs. A good testing program is very helpful in making a teacher aware of the tremendous problems that he must solve if he wishes to do a good job of teaching. Preachers would do well to adopt a system of measurement to determine the effectiveness of their preaching. They will readily admit that preaching is no simple job, but without actually going through the experience of seeing how and why a certain preaching job has actually failed to register with certain hearers on a Sunday morning, preachers will hardly be moved to action in seeking more effective preaching methods.

Measurement is a highly scientific skill requiring experience and technical knowledge. It is the purpose of this chapter to set down a few of the commonly accepted principles of testing and measurement which apply to the preaching of Christian doctrine.

Our first problem in developing a good testing program of this nature is that of finding a representative group of people. If any general conclusions are to be drawn from the results of a questionnaire they must reflect a reasonably representative section of the people to whom these principles

are to be applied. In this experiment we have sought to cover as many people as possible. Therefore we have included people of the age groups ranging from 12 to 65 years. We have people with varying educational backgrounds, family backgrounds, and with varying degrees of experience in religious education, congregational activity, and years of church membership. Although these categories do not include the people who are not yet members of the congregation but who do come to hear us preach, the conclusions and problems uncovered in the experiment will also apply to these people.

For our principles of testing we shall follow the suggestions found in the book, Measurement and Evaluation in the Elementary School, by Harry A. Green, Albert N. Jorgensen, and J. Raymond Gerberich.

Validity is the first criterion of a good test. "The validity of an examination depends upon the efficiency with which it measures what it attempts to measure."¹ In this experiment the questionnaire is intended to measure the effectiveness of a specific preaching job. It is not intended that the questionnaire reveal the understanding that people have of certain doctrines although this will naturally be revealed. The point in this experiment is simply, "Did the hearer understand and remember what was said in this specific sermon?" The validity of the questionnaire depends upon how well it supplies an answer to this question.

1. Harry A. Green, Op. Cit. p. 53.

"A test must be used with pupils who possess the proper intellectual maturity and background of experience for taking the test if it is to possess validity."² All of the people who were asked to answer the questionnaires heard the sermon upon which they were based.

"Tests cannot correctly be described as valid in general terms, but only in connection with their intended use and at the intended ability level of pupils."³

A second consideration is that of the reliability of a test. "A test is said to be reliable when it functions consistently. The reliability of an examination depends upon the efficiency with which a test measures what it does measure."⁴ This factor of reliability is a part of the validity of the test. A test that is valid is certainly reliable because to be valid it must measure what it does measure. However, a test may be a very efficient measurement of what it does measure and still not measure what it intends to measure. Such a test would be reliable but would not be valid. Applied to this experiment the questionnaires used might be reliable in so far as they test the people's understanding of the doctrines covered in the test. They are valid only if they also test the people's understanding of the doctrines preached in the sermon and thus reveal the effectiveness of the preaching in bringing them across to the hearers. Actually this is what the tests "attempted

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid. p. 61.

to measure" and to the extent that they measured efficiently, they are not only reliable but also valid.

"Adequacy is the degree to which a test samples sufficiently widely that the resulting scores are representative of the relative total performance in the areas measured."⁵ In this particular experiment adequacy of the tests will be determined by the extent to which they sample the hearer's understanding and memory of the doctrinal elements of the sermon which make up the "areas measured". An adequate test would also have to include a sufficiently large number of people representing a single category so that the results would actually be indicative of the trends of the category tested. The importance of adequacy in the experiment of this thesis lies in the fact that the more adequately the questionnaires have covered the areas measured, the more complete and useful will be the results.

Objectivity facilitates the scoring of tests and makes the scoring more reliable because it eliminates the opinion, bias, or judgment of the person scoring it.⁶ Objectivity is not altogether without its weaknesses. The fact that only one answer can be given to a certain question makes it easier for the teacher to decide whether or not the writer of the test has gotten the answer to this question right or not since it is a simple case of either-or. However, unless the writer of the test has a chance to explain the reason for his answer when he is in doubt about the choice which he knows will be counted as right, he will probably give the

5. Ibid. p.64.

6. Ibid. p.66.

"right" answer without really understanding why he does so or without really feeling that he has given what in his own mind is the right answer. It is also possible in an objective test that the simple fact that the writer of the test has given an "incorrect" answer, the corrector of the test will get the impression that the one who took the test is completely wrong in his thinking on the given item when actually if the proposition had been placed before him in an essay type question, he might have revealed much more knowledge of the subject than is evidenced by his "wrong" answer on the objective test. This criticism applies only where the questions involved an exercise of judgment or application of a principle and not simple facts that require no mental activity other than remembering a few data.

The last general qualification of a good test as suggested by Greene is that of utility. "A test possesses utility to the degree that it satisfactorily serves a definite need in the situation in which it is used."⁷ The utility of the tests used in this thesis will be determined by the extent to which they contribute to the purposes of the thesis which is to make the experimenter aware of the problems involved in good doctrinal preaching.

In general, tests may be classified as being of the recall or recognition types. Recall tests are those which demand that the writer depend entirely upon himself for furnishing the correct answer. Fill-in, completion, and simple recall tests are of this variety. Recognition forms are

7. Ibid., p. 71.

those which expect the writer to recognize the proper answer from two or more alternatives. Basic forms of this type of test are the alternate-response, multiple-choice and matching tests.

The recognition type of test is usually the more appealing to those who are not accustomed to taking tests because it eliminates the necessity of searching for words to express their ideas and is therefore probably less likely to consume much time on the part of the one taking the test. Because of the fact that the questionnaires are rather long and also that most of the people would probably have had difficulty in finding words to express their thinking in a recall type of test, the recognition form has been used exclusively. Recognition forms also economize on the amount of space necessary for a complete test.

Alternate-response tests are not without their shortcomings. The fact that it seems quite an easy thing to construct them is frequently delusive. The popular complaint of those taking this type of test is that "the question can be answered both ways." And the more intelligent the person is who takes the test and the more conversant he is with the subject involved, the more apt is he to see all the implications of giving an either-or answer. Thus he is apt to either miss the question altogether because he has been led away from the central point of the question by his thinking or else he will answer the question with serious doubts in his mind about whether he has answered it correctly or not. This possibility of ambiguity has been considered an inherent

weakness of this type of test.⁸ Another criticism of the alternate-response questions is the fact that often the statements are direct quotations from the text book with a single word added or deleted to make the question right or wrong. Writers of the test might be tempted to rely on a "photographic memory" of this item in the text book and answer the question on the basis of this memory without considering the implications of their answer.

If alternate-response tests are constructed to avoid ambiguity as much as possible, they are very useful. "They can be used in testing popular misconceptions and unfounded beliefs in the science and social studies areas."⁹ This is exactly the use to which these questions have been put in this study.

We find suggestions for constructing objective tests and for constructing alternate-response tests in the volume quoted throughout this chapter. In general these suggestions are self-explanatory so we shall present them in a body and follow them by any explanation that might be necessary in applying them to the problems under consideration in this study.

General Suggestions for Constructing Objective Items ¹⁰

1. Rules governing good language expression should be observed.
2. Difficult words should be avoided.
3. Textbook wording should be avoided.
4. Ambiguities should be avoided.
5. Items having obvious answers should not be used.

8. Ibid. p. 174.

9. Ibid. p. 175.

10. Ibid. pp. 188 - 189.

6. Clues and suggestions should be avoided.
7. Items which can be answered by intelligence alone should not be included.
8. Quantitative rather than qualitative words should be used.
9. Catch words should not be employed.
10. Items should not be inter-related.
11. Response positions should preferably be aligned.

Suggestion seven about "items which can be answered by intelligence alone should be avoided", bears explanation. Such a question would be one which any one with normal experiences could answer without having any knowledge of the subject area being tested. In the setting of this thesis a question such as "Does God want people to do good work?" would be an example. Any one with average religious experience could answer this question. It would require a knowledge of the information discussed in the second sermon to answer the question, "What does God call a good work?"

In suggestion ten the "inter-related items" are such as depend upon the correct answer of one single item for their own correctness. That is to say, if there are a number of questions so closely related that if the writer of the test gets the first in the series correct, he need only make the rest of his answers consistent with the first answer to make them all correct.

Suggestions for Constructing Alternate-Response Items¹¹

1. Double negatives should be avoided.
2. Statements which are part true and part false should not be used.
3. "Specific determiners" should be used sparingly and carefully.
4. Answers should be required in a highly objective form.

11. Ibid. pp. 192-193.

5. Approximately an equal number of true and false statements should be used.
6. Random occurrence of true and false statements should be employed.

The "specific determiners" mentioned in the third suggestion are such words as always, never, etc. Usually such words make a statement false and make the question of less value for diagnostic purposes. If properly used, these words can be helpful. When the insertion of such a determiner makes of a statement the popular misconception held by most people, it has much value. The specific determiner has been used this way in some of the questions used in this study.

Chapter IV

The Pilot Test

A. History of Experiment

We called the first sermon and questionnaire a pilot test. Its first purpose was to determine whether it is at all possible to measure the effectiveness of preaching by a testing program of this nature. Other than the sermon notes some pastors have asked of their classes for confirmation, the experimenter is unaware of any attempt to measure the effectiveness of preaching by means of tests.

Assuming that it is possible to set up such a testing program, the second purpose of this pilot test is to uncover some of the pit-falls in constructing and administering such tests. The results were used in setting up the questionnaire which made up the chief test administered at a later date.

As far as possible this pilot test was also to contribute to the discussion of the general problem of this thesis, the effectiveness of preaching for the purpose of teaching Christian doctrine.

The sermon was a discussion of a very general theme, "Jesus, the Water of Life." It was intended to present to the hearers a clearer understanding of such questions as, "What is spiritual life?" "What does it mean to be spiritually dead?" "How does a man remain spiritually alive?" The sermon was based on the account of Jesus and the Samaritan woman found in the Gospel of John, chapter 4.

The sermon was preached on the third Sunday after Epiphany, January 26, 1947. It was preached at the 8:00 o'clock

and 9:30 O'Clock services of the congregation which had been served by the experimenter as an assistant pastor for the past nine months. The sermon reached audiences totaling about 350 people.

The senior choir sang at the early service. Each member received a copy of a questionnaire before the service. Those members of the choir who had other members of the family present in the service or who would be present in the second service also took questionnaires for these people. Fifty-five questionnaires were distributed of which 34 were returned.

The questionnaire was made up in two sections. The first asked for general background information on the person taking the test. It included questions on the age, sex, education, religious education, activity in congregational programs, and family background. This information was used in looking for correlations between the success in writing the test on the sermon and the background of the person answering the questions.

Opportunity was also given for the people to express their opinions on preaching in the church in general, on their own reactions to the specific sermon in question, and criticisms that they had to make on the sermon. The final section of the questionnaire included nine questions based on the sermon. They were multiple-choice questions. In the options after the statements to be completed, a number of popular misconceptions were included. This was done to determine whether or not the preacher had been

successful in correcting these ideas.

B. Sermon for the Pilot Test

Jesus, the Water of Life

John 4, 5 - 14

- A. As we go through our Catechisms and read our Bibles and hear the sermons preached in church on Sundays, we hear many words that we only hear when we speak of religious things. There are words like righteousness, holiness, the omnipotence of God, sin, and many others. To a man who hasn't studied them, these words mean nothing. Sometimes we forget ourselves what they mean. There are some words that we use in our prayers and hear about in sermons that are even rather strange to us. One of these words is "spiritual life". How many of us really know what we are talking about when we use the words "spiritual life"? We say that it is the life of a Christian. But what is different about spiritual life and just plain ordinary life that every one has, whether he is a Christian or not?
- B. Spiritual life is really the life of a man's soul. It has to do with a man and God. You recall the story of creation. God made man out of the dust of the ground. And then God breathed into man's body the breath of life. Now that was something very special. God didn't do that to the animals and birds. But God took man and breathed into him the breath of life. The breath of life was the spirit of God. God placed Himself into man. He began living in man.
- C. As long as God was living in man and was causing man to act, man had what the Bible calls the image of God. Some of us have learned to say that the image of God was perfect righteousness and true holiness. Man knew what God wanted him to do and man did it. Man did it actually because God was in him doing it. When Adam said anything to Eve he said it in the way that God wanted him to say it. There was never any unkindness in his words, there was never any sort of jealousy or thoughtlessness. When Adam and Eve did their work in the garden of Eden they didn't complain. They didn't even think of work as being anything unpleasant. They worked hard. They worked efficiently. They worked cheerfully. So actually man was made in the image of God because everything man did was done by God and God is holy.
- D. Now this spiritual life, this living of the spirit of God in man, doesn't just keep on living by itself. It has to be kept going. Just like a little baby has to have food. It is very much alive when it comes into the world but he won't stay alive all the time without nourishment. It's the same way with flowers. The seeds can sprout and the plant can grow only as long as it has water to keep it alive.

E. Adam and Eve had to keep this spiritual life going in themselves too. It wouldn't stay by itself. They kept God in their lives by sticking close to Him. They had to say constantly, "God, stay close to us. Stay in our lives. Work in us so that we do our work and our talking and even our thinking as you would have it done." As long as they were willing to keep God in themselves, everything was all right. They kept themselves spiritually alive.

F. One day Satan came to see Adam and Eve. He approached Eve and asked, "Did God say that you shouldn't eat of every tree in the garden?" Eve told him, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden but of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, God told us, 'You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, or you will die.'" And then Satan very slyly tells Eve, "You surely won't die." "God knows that when you eat of that tree you will have your eyes opened, you will be like gods, knowing good and evil."

G. With these words Satan had done his work. Eve looked at the tree and it looked good to her. And then the idea of being like gods sounded very tempting to her. The very minute she began to think those words, God was gone. God didn't make her think that way. She had decided that she could divorce herself from God. She could go out on her own. Adam did the same thing. He knew that God didn't want them to eat of that tree. But they did. Now they were both dead. God wasn't living in them any more. When God said that they would die if they ate of that tree, He meant that He wouldn't stay with them anymore. He would leave them and would be gone out of their lives forever.

H. This spiritual life that was lost by Adam and Eve was lost to their children too. From that time on not one single person was born that had the spirit of God dwelling in him. All men were dead. And so we come to the story of our text. The Samaritan woman was also dead. She didn't even know that she was dead. That's what Jesus was referring to when He came to her and said, "If you knew what the gift of God was, you would ask me for living water." The gift of God is simply this spiritual life, this living of God in people's hearts and lives. If she had had this life in her she would have asked Jesus for something to keep it alive. She would have asked for living water. But she was dead.

I. How do we know that she was dead? All we have to do is look at what she had been doing. Right after the words of our text we hear Jesus talking to her about her husbands. Yes, she had had five different husbands and now she was living with a man who wasn't her husband at all. She was living in the worst kind of adultery. That was a sign that God wasn't living in her. When men are spiritually alive, they can't do things like that. There was something else that shows that she wasn't spiritually alive. When

Adam and Eve lost their holiness, they didn't lose their awareness of God. This has been transmitted to all people. Everyone has in his heart the idea that there is a god of some kind, unless, of course, he has talked himself into believing there is no god. And people also have the feeling that something has to be done to please this god. The Samaritan woman thought so too. She thought that she could please God by doing something. There had been a long quarrel between the Jews and Samaritans about where they ought to have their church services. The Jews insisted that it had to be in Jerusalem. The Samaritans felt that they could worship on Mount Gerizim. She thought that if she could find out which was really the right place for worship and if she would go there and give alms, and so forth, she would be all right with God and that God wouldn't punish her. She didn't even have the right idea about how to worship God. God was gone from her. She was dead.

J. People all over the world are dead. They are living all around us. They are living without God. We can see it in the way they act. People are selfish. They do things only because they can get something out of it for themselves. People aren't concerned about God. They simply leave Him out of their thinking. It doesn't concern them at all what God might be thinking of the things they are doing. People are concerned about getting together a lot of material wealth. When they have enough of that, they are satisfied. When things go wrong with them, they try to find some one else to blame or they look for some sort of natural cause, some mistake that they made or something that someone did. They never stop to think that it really comes about because they have been living without God. They don't know that they are spiritually dead.

K. God didn't create people so they would be dead. He didn't want it that way at all. God wanted people to have spiritual life. He wanted to be in them and to cause them to live holy lives, lives that would have been a credit to the glory and honor of the God who created them. But now that men had cut themselves off from God, something else had to be done. Men couldn't revive themselves. God couldn't reach them when they were cut off from Him. So Jesus had to be sent to make right this situation. God made Jesus available to people so they could come back to God and God could come back into their lives.

L. Jesus made men at one with God again by His work of redemption. Jesus came to earth and lived just like men should have lived. He kept close to God. He didn't do or say or think anything that God didn't want Him to. But even though Jesus did live that way, He had to suffer just as if He had done just as men had done. Jesus had to take on the weakness of the body. He had to be hated by people. That's a result of living without God. He had to be treated unjustly in court, he had to suffer the pain and discomfort of being on the cross with people all about Him laughing at Him and being nasty. But worse than that, in the middle of

all, He had to suffer without God. God forsook him. God left Him all alone. No matter how much Jesus would have prayed, God wouldn't have listened. In these moments of intense agony when body and soul were in their deepest anguish and God was gone, Jesus was redeeming the world. He was paying the price of hell. He was literally suffering the pains of the damned. For hell is the simple and tragic realization that God is gone out of life and nothing in the world can bring Him back anymore.

M. Actually this process is going on all over the world right now. Men are living without God. God isn't in them. But men don't know it. They pray to God. But God doesn't hear. Someday they will realize what is wrong. They will find out that they are cut off from God. And they will know that it was their own fault. Then they will have to say with Jesus, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The only difference is that men will then know that it is too late. That God is gone is their own fault. When God left Jesus, it wasn't Jesus' fault. Jesus had to spend these moments without God because of us. He did it for us, so that we wouldn't have to be without God. He did it so that God would come back into our lives and so that we could come back to God. When Jesus finished His suffering on the cross He cried, "It is finished". Salvation was finished. Now God could come back into men's hearts and make men alive again. Spiritual life could at last be restored.

N. When do men get the life of God back into their hearts? They get it back as soon as they recognize Jesus for what He is and they are willing to take hold of Him and accept Him as their way of salvation. As soon as men have discovered that they are actually dead and that they cannot do anything by themselves to restore their spiritual life, then Jesus is ready to say to them, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by Me." That is a wonderful day in the life of Christians, when they take hold of Jesus. It is really their second birthday because that is the day that God comes back into their lives and they are made spiritually alive. For some people that day comes very late in their earthly life. The thief on the cross next to Jesus wasn't born anew until just a few minutes before he died. But the minute he took Jesus as his Savior, he was really alive again.

O. This spiritual life that Jesus puts back into the hearts of Christians has to be kept going. It isn't something that just starts out and keeps on living by itself. Remember, there is still much of the old, dead, sinful flesh left in us. We have learned that the new man, this new life that is in us, must daily come forth and arise in our lives so that the old sinful part of us can be pushed out and drowned so that it will die with all its temptations to sin. This life can be kept going only by the use of what Jesus called living water. By using Him in our lives. He told the Samaritan woman to ask Him for living water. He wanted her

to earnestly desire to keep the life of God in her and it couldn't be done without Jesus.

P. What happens when men get the new life back into their hearts? This new life begins to act. It cause men to move, to live. When the new life begins to throb in a man's soul, he begins doing the will of God. He begins to love God and to love his neighbor. He begins to be like God intended him to be, like God wanted Adam and Eve to be.

Q. Now that we are again the temple of the Holy Spirit because God is living in us again, we want to keep it that way. We want the food and water that it takes to keep this life going in us. To do that we must have daily communion with God. It takes prayer. It takes keeping in touch with the Gospel of Jesus because that is what creates life and that is what can keep it going.

R. Jesus was talking to the Samaritan woman about this very thing. He was talking to her about her soul, about her being away from God. But more than that Jesus was telling her about Himself, that everything depended upon Him, that He was the living water that she needed. Today it is just the same. St. Peter tells us that we are born again, not of corruptable seed, but of incorruptable, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. That's the only way we can keep alive.

S. Someday this life is going to go on by itself. We won't have to worry about the old sinful flesh anymore. When we get to heaven God will rule our lives completely. He will be living in us and cause us to act just like he wants us to and there will be nothing to take this life out of our hearts again.

T. Spiritual life, wonderful, words aren't they? They are quite mysterious in a way. We don't understand them just now or how they can be true. But we know that they are true. We know that we have spiritual life and we are glad. May God live in our hearts abundantly so that we produce the fruits that must come from people in whom God is restoring His image of holiness and righteousness.

If there was anything in the sermon you did not like, what was it:

- It was too long. It was too short.
 It was too hard to understand.
 It was too uninteresting (You have heard all that was said before.)
 It didn't seem to fit any place in your life at all.
 List anything else that didn't appeal to you:

Did you talk to any one about the sermon? To whom? When?

What are some of the things that you would like to hear discussed more often in sermons:

- More about the doctrines and teachings of the Bible.
 More about social, economic, and political problems.
 List any other subjects on which you would like to hear sermons:

On the back of this sheet make any other comments you care to about your ideas on preaching as it is done in our Lutheran church.

II.

Of the choices that follow the statements, please check the ONE which you feel completes the statement most correctly. Please do not discuss these questions with any one until after you have checked each one and then please do not make any changes.

1. When God breathed into Adam's body the "breath of life,"
 - He caused the clay body to breathe and have life.
 - He made man to be an image of Himself.
 - He actually put His own Spirit into man's living body.
2. The "image of God"
 - means that Adam's body looked like God.
 - means that Adam had a good mind.
 - means that Adam had God's character because God was living in him.
3. A man's soul is alive
 - as long as he obeys the Ten Commandments.
 - as long as he at least tries to do the will of God.
 - only as long as he has the Spirit of God living in him.
4. God said that Adam and Eve would die
 - the moment they took the fruit of the tree and actually ate it.
 - when God drove them out of the Garden of Eden and they couldn't come back.
 - when they died and were buried.

5. God sent Jesus into the world
 - to show men how to live so that they would be holy.
 - to suffer the consequences of sin in order that God
 - might begin to live again in the lives of men.

6. The part of Jesus' work that really made it possible for man and God to get together again
 - was the fact that God actually forsook and left Jesus
 - alone in the midst of all His misery.
 - was the fact that Jesus actually permitted life to
 - leave His body and was buried as a dead man.

7. A man has spiritual life in him again
 - when he sees that he has been living as a sinner and
 - now tries to change his ways of living.
 - when he finally admits that there is a God and seriously
 - follows some sort of religion in an effort to find God.
 - when he realizes that he himself can do nothing to
 - come back to God and then accepts the atoning work
 - of Jesus.

8. A man who is spiritually alive does good works(the will of God):
 - because he thinks it will keep God from punishing him.
 - because he realizes that that is the only way he can
 - get along with the people here on earth.
 - because the Spirit of God is in him and it is actual-
 - ly God that is doing the good works.

9. This spiritual life in a man is kept alive
 - by trying hard to do what Christians ought to do.
 - by simply going to church and doing the work of the
 - church.
 - by earnestly desiring to keep God close to himself and
 - keeping in close communion with God by reminding him-
 - self of Jesus' work of redemption.

D. Predictable Short-comings of the Test

It was quite evident from the start that this test would have many short-comings which would naturally limit the value of its results. First of all, the general problem of testing and measurement requires a great deal of technical skill and experience which most pastors would not have. There is little or no literature available relative to the problems of testing in the field of preaching, so this particular attempt must be considered as the first attempt of a novice in a new field of endeavor. Because of these short-comings, the experiment is was expected to fall short in terms of complete and accurate testing standards and the conclusions based upon the experiment will be limited to rather general statements.

It was possible to reach only a very small number of people and consequently the results of this questionnaire cannot be considered as a complete picture of the entire listening congregation. The results should indicate a trend, however, and to the extent that they do, the experiment will be useful.

Because the people who received the questionnaire had a widely varied background in education, religious experience, and family, it was very difficult to set up questions that all would be able to answer with equal ease. The single common denominator for the entire group was that they all heard the sermon. Since it was the purpose of the questionnaire to determine how well they heard the sermon, we could expect useful results inspite of these handicaps.

In the preceding chapter we said that a weakness of

the objective test was the fact that even though a question received a wrong answer, this could not be used as proof that the person who took the test completely failed to understand the issue involved. Though this limits the extent to which we can draw conclusions about the individual people who took the test, it does not make the experiment useless since more than one person is involved and consistent error on a certain question would certainly indicate something.

We must also remember that it is impossible to cover every area of doctrine in a short test of this type. It can hardly cover every area of the sermon to the extent that one could say nothing was missed. It is entirely possible that in the case of individuals the areas covered might have been the very ones in which the writer of the test failed to understand or remember what was said while the rest of the items in the sermon might have been understood quite well.

A test purporting to test the learning acquired during a specific period of time would have to take into consideration the amount of knowledge possessed before the learning of this particular period began. It was impossible to test the amount of knowledge and information possessed by the people before they heard the sermon on which they were tested. It is therefore impossible to say, on the basis of these test results, just how much of the learning evidenced was a result of hearing this particular sermon. The usefulness of the test will then have to be found in its revealing what they do not know and what they did not get from

the sermon. On the basis of this information the experimenter was to expose weaknesses in the sermon as an agency for teaching doctrine.

E. An Analysis of Individual Questions

The paragraphs of the sermon have been designated as 'A', 'B', 'C', etc. The questions on the second section of the questionnaire have been numbered consecutively. In the discussions to follow we shall refer only to the number or letter in question. They will always refer to the question and paragraph of the questionnaire and sermon used in this thesis.

Question one covers the material discussed in paragraph 'B'. It pertains to the "breath of life" which God breathed into the living body which He had previously formed out of the dust of the ground. In this question we come to the first weakness of the questionnaire. In forming the questions we intended that only one of the options should correctly complete the statement. However, in the instructions given on the question sheet we said that the person should choose the item that would complete the statement "most correctly". As a result nine people said that when God placed the "breath of life" into Adam's body, He made man to be an image of Himself, and five people said that by putting the breath of life into Adam's body, God caused the clay body to breath and have life. The rest of the people said that by doing this God put His own spirit into man's living body. It was the intention that only the last answer should be counted as being correct. But because of the instructions we also had to

consider as correct the answer of the nine people who made the second choice because in a certain sense it is really true that by placing into man's body the breath of life, God did place into man His own image. The result of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the holiness, righteousness, and knowledge that make up the image of God. Actually the question was ambiguous. Because of this fact the results are less satisfying than they might have been.

Five of the people said that placing the breath of life into the body of Adam meant causing the clay body to breathe and have life. This is obviously a wrong answer. Yet it is a very popular opinion. The experimenter held this opinion himself until a few years ago. Why did these five people miss this question? Looking at the sermon, it seems that the matter was stated quite clearly. If these five people understood what the preacher was saying, they should not have missed the question.

There are a number of reasons why these people may have failed to get the point. First we do notice that the subject was mentioned only in this one short paragraph. There was really very little emphasis on the subject from the point of view of time. Since the answers of these people were probably the opinion they had held on this matter all their lives, it takes quite a bit of "unlearning" to displace their misunderstanding with a more accurate concept of the truth. It is also possible that having their own ideas on the matter, and feeling that their understanding was correct, it simply did not register with them that this was something new.

For the preacher the results on this first question are significant. Out of thirty-four people five chose an answer that was absolutely wrong and nine people selected an answer that was really less accurate than the third choice. That means that of those people tested more than one third failed to recognize the real point that the preacher was trying to get across to the people. This fact becomes more significant when we remember that it is probable that these 34 people represent a class of people that certainly should have been able to understand doctrinal concepts more clearly than the average hearer since two-thirds of the 34 were active in Sunday School work. This means that if every person in the audience could have been reached for questioning, it is possible that even more than one third of the audience would have failed to recognize the point the preacher was trying to get across, namely that the breath of life was not simply a process of creating physical life but that it was the placing of the Spirit of God into a living human being. This is highly important because it tells the preacher that many of his people are not aware of the real facts behind the story of creation. Their concepts are warped and some how they ought to be straightened out. This experience also tells the experimenter that it is not a simple matter to get this idea across to his hearers.

The preacher did not keep in mind certain laws of learning while trying to teach this concept to the congregation. First, the laws of emphasis were not given due attention. More should have been said about this particular concept

so that the hearer would have been impressed with the idea "this is something important, in fact, this is something that might be different from what I thought it was." One of the Sunday School teachers made a note on the questionnaire that she was particularly glad to hear this section of the sermon because it helped her understand certain aspects of the creation that she had not been able to grasp previously. This is a case where the person really was aware of what the preacher was trying to do. She was ready to learn and she knew just what she wanted to find out. The mentioning of the creation story evidently attracted her attention immediately because she was concerned about it. In the case of those who failed to catch on to what the preacher said, perhaps there was no attention or interest. The subject matter failed to possess vitality or meaningfulness, a second law of learning that might have demanded more attention from the preacher in this particular instance.

It is interesting to note that the second question on the image of God covered in 'C' evidently was quite clear in the minds of the hearers. It would indicate that either they had previously gained a good understanding of the concept or that the sermon in this instance, was adequate from a teaching view-point. The concept is less difficult to understand because it deals with the functioning of the mind and body of man. The image consists in a man's thinking and doing things exactly the way God would think and act, making these actions holy, and the thoughts guided by a perfect knowledge of God.

Question three also received a majority of correct answers. Only one person failed. It involves the material in 'E' about what it is that makes a man's soul alive. This was major point in the sermon and received considerable attention. The one person who missed this question also missed five other questions. We will have a few lines on this particular case at the end of the chapter.

Of the three choices possible to complete the statement in question four, the first is the most correct and accordingly 32 of the 34 people answered this question correctly. However, the statement with this choice is still not as accurate as it might have been answered on the basis of what was said in the sermon. In paragraph 'G' it is stated that at the very moment Eve thought of acting contrary to the will of God, God went out of her and she was at that moment spiritually dead because she had cut herself off from God. It is interesting to note that one of the persons made this comment on the sheet as he answered this question, "when they thought of it already." Of course, on the basis of the quotation from Genesis 2:17 where God tells Adam about the tree saying, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," the statement completed with the first choice would have to be considered completely accurate.

The atonement is discussed in 'K' and 'L'. Question five covers one aspect of this, the purpose of Jesus' coming into the world. Only one person failed to answer this question properly. In the second choice the word 'suffer' is used in connection with the purpose of Jesus' coming into the world.

The emphasis that has been placed upon the physical aspects of Jesus' work may have made this an easy choice for most people.

Question six is the most interesting question in the whole set. Fifteen of the 34 people failed to answer it correctly and it has caused quite a bit of discussion between one of the people who took the test and the experimenter. The question involves the material in the last part of 'L' where the preacher said, "In these moments of intense agony when body and soul were in their deepest anguish and God was gone, Jesus was redeeming the world."

It was the intention of the preacher to place the proper emphasis on an aspect of the suffering of Jesus that seems to have been much neglected, that of the spiritual torment involving being forsaken by God. Actually Jesus had been enduring a degree of physical suffering during His entire stay on earth. The physical aspects of the Passion were relatively more intense in pain and suffering but the unique and important factor in the Passion was the fact that in the midst of it all, Jesus was completely cut off from God. With this thought in mind the question was formulated to bring out whether or not the people had caught on to the significance of the whole discussion.

Fifteen of the 34 people failed to sense what the preacher was driving at. There may be a number of reasons for this. First of all it is true that we have heard the physical aspects of the suffering of Jesus emphasized almost exclusively in the teaching and preaching of our church.

Preachers have waxed intensely dramatic as they described the scourging, the driving of the crown of thorns on Jesus' head, the pounding of the nails into His flesh, and the tearing of flesh as the cross was dropped into the hole. These things could not have escaped the attention of our hearers.

It is also true that the Bible seems to emphasize these aspects as it talks about the shedding of blood and of the stricken, smitten, and afflicted Lamb of God. People do not stop to think that the Bible always includes the entire suffering of Jesus when it speaks of the suffering at all.

These elements of physical pain register in the minds of people because they are understood to a certain degree since people know what it is to be in physical pain. To be forsaken by God does not register with the unbeliever and even with the Christian it is not as meaningful as it should be. Therefore people simply fail to think about this aspect of the suffering of Jesus. Therefore the efforts of the preacher to change this evidently did not register with many of his hearers.

In this connection we report another experience. One of the persons who heard the sermon and filled out a questionnaire understood what the preacher was driving at but did not feel that it was an accurate statement of the truth to set up a question with a choice between the physical and spiritual aspects of Jesus' suffering as was done in the questionnaire. This grew into a discussion after a Sunday

School teachers' meeting and into some correspondence. Because of the Biblical use of terms such as blood and death in connection with redemption, the person felt that the Bible was intending to emphasize the physical aspects of suffering. She failed to realize that when the Bible speaks of death in connection with sin and redemption, spiritual death is always implied and that when speaking of being "redeemed by the blood of the Lamb" the Bible is using a figure of speech called metonymy, part for the whole.

As for the preaching of this particular Biblical doctrine, the preacher would learn from this experience that much more emphasis must be placed on certain aspects of doctrine in order to root out certain popular misconceptions and misplaced emphases.

The form of this question is not without fault. To say that "the part of Jesus' work that really made it possible for man and God to get together again was the fact that Jesus actually permitted life to leave His body and was buried as a dead man," is certainly wrong. This places a premium on the physical death of Jesus that Scripture does not expect. However, to make a choice, and to exclude this aspect of the suffering of Jesus from the plan of salvation saying that only the fact that Jesus was forsaken by God was necessary to redeem man, is also not true. The atonement as planned by God includes all. And this must be kept in mind when answering this question. Both elements must be there, but that part of Jesus' suffering which was unique, that part which no man need ever do anymore, was the enduring

of the pangs that come upon a man who knows that God has forsaken him completely because of sin. This is the redemptive element in the whole story. And it needs re-emphasis in our preaching today as is evidenced by the experiences brought about by this questionnaire.

Regeneration is covered by question seven and in paragraph 'N'. Three people failed to get this question. It is a very important question and if the answers reflect the real faith of those who answered them wrongly, they would have to be called non-Christian because the first two choices are pure synergism or work righteousness. However, we must remember a caution which we have repeated often, that these questions need not reflect the real meaning of the one who answers them and in these cases in particular, it is quite possible that a more detailed investigation would show that the people involved probably mean something quite different from what their answers seem to indicate.

The pastor should learn from the results of such a question that he should give a good share of time and effort to teaching his people how to express their Christian faith. If these people were to give testimony in the words with which they answered this question they could not tell anyone how to get back to God. Their statements would be entirely misleading even though in their own hearts they might be harboring a good Christian faith.

Question eight involves sanctification, the life of the Christian man. Only one person failed to get this question and this case will be mentioned later in this chapter because of the unusually large number of errors involved.

All 34 people answered the last question correctly. Looking at the question we notice that the correct choice is nearly twice as long as the incorrect statements and includes a repetition of statements commonly heard in sermons. It is possible that these two factors made some difference in the accuracy with which people answered this question.

F. General Indications of Pilot Test

An attempt was made to establish correlations between the results of the tests and the backgrounds of those people who took the tests. Because of the fact that there were so few people involved, any conclusions based on these comparisons would be misleading. However it would be interesting to note a few of the results of this attempt.

Questions one and six involved the most errors and they will be used as a basis for comparison. Fifteen people who took the test were aware of the examination before they heard the sermon. Nineteen knew nothing of the test. On question six, 20% of those who were aware of the test made mistakes while nearly 48% of those who knew nothing of the test made errors. On question one it is interesting to note that all five people who chose the wrong answer were among those who were not aware of the test. This would seem to indicate that if people are told that they will be tested on a sermon they will be more apt to remember what is being said. This awareness adds a certain form of interest or vitality to the teaching situation that is useful if properly directed. We, of course, do not want our people to listen to sermons just to pass tests. The fact that there were

only a few cases involved lessens the usefulness of this discovery. It will be tested again in the final test.

On question six we tried to compare the Sunday School activity with the results on the test. Of those who are active in Sunday School 39% missed the question. Of those who were not active nearly 59% missed the question. We would ordinarily say that that is quite reasonable since those who are in Sunday School work would quite naturally have a better chance of understanding a doctrinal sermon. However, in this case the conclusion is hardly justified because of the small number of cases involved and also because of these cases only eleven were not in Sunday School work of some kind, so the sampling from this class of people was certainly not large enough to formulate an valid conclusions for the category as a whole.

On the questionnaires we asked those who filled out the test to make any personal comments on the sermon or on preaching in general on the back of the sheet. It is interesting to note that five people wrote special notes to the effect that they desired more practical application in the sermons. One teacher particularly mentioned the fact that many sermons seemed to be stereotyped repetitions of the same general truths without any effort to reduce them to concrete examples of every day living.

Six different people made special comments to the effect that they felt that the sermon was very clear and understandable. They were of the opinion that most people in the congregation should have been able to understand what the preacher

was talking about. Of these six people three had all of the questions answered correctly and the other three had one question wrong. For the preacher it is significant that people do appreciate clarity and simplicity in sermons.

Two people remarked that they felt the sermon was too long and was a repetition of old, oft-repeated facts. These criticisms cannot be taken too seriously since the sermon was no longer than 22 minutes at the very most and for the purposes intended, the subject matter could hardly have been any different. On the presentation and application there is always room for improvement.

There are two special cases that deserve a few lines of comment. One is the case of a woman, 37 years old. She was confirmed at the age of 14 years but she did not attend a Lutheran Day school nor does she take an interest in Sunday School, Bible Class, or any other organized church activity. Out of the nine questions she answered only three of them correctly. They were numbers two, five, and nine. All of these questions except number two are of a very fundamental nature and are an expression of the bare fundamentals of Christian faith. It seems that this woman must have had particular difficulty in comprehending the more difficult concepts presented in the sermon. For the preacher it is important to know that there are such people in his audience. They are people that absolutely must have spiritual food. Some how the pastor ought to find out who these people are and in a very natural and unimbarassing way seek to provide them with the necessary understanding both in his private

and public ministrations.

A case that is almost the exact opposite of the one just mentioned also comes out of this experiment. A lady who is a member of the Presbyterian Church but who is planning to join a class for membership in the church filled out one of the questionnaires and answered every question correctly. She has been singing in the choir and seems very enthusiastic about church work. It so happened that her sister had been confirmed at the 11:00 O'Clock service on the same morning on which the test was administered. This is a demonstration of the power of a vital, personal interest in making a sermon effective. It seems quite obvious that she was intensely interested in what was being said and she saw to it that she remembered it. It is the preacher's job to create as much vitality and personal interest in his preaching activities as possible.

The three objectives set up for this pilot test seemed to have been met quite well. It has shown that within certain limits it is possible to measure the effectiveness of preaching by means of a testing program. The limitations have already been mentioned. They included such things as the small number of people available for testing, the small area of material that can be covered in a single test, and the general problems imposed by the highly technical nature of scientific testing and measurement.

The pilot test uncovered certain pitfalls in the testing procedure. In the chief test, which is to follow immediately, three things ought to be observed more carefully.

First, more care in the formation of questions so that there can be no question in the mind of the one who takes the test as to which choice expresses his own opinion. Questions must not be ambiguous as was the first question in the pilot test. Second, there should be more questions. The first nine questions used in the pilot test were hardly adequate to form a real opinion about the effectiveness of the particular preaching job involved. Finally, the questions should cover every area included in the sermon. The pilot tested omitted very important areas such as paragraphs 'H', 'I', 'J', 'M', and 'S'.

Finally the pilot test did contribute to the purpose of the thesis. The thesis has its main objective in making the experimenter aware of the many problems involved in doing an effective job of doctrinal preaching. This particular experiment emphasized the fact that people are not as well informed on certain very fundamental doctrines as they or their pastors think they are. It is possible for even the clearest of language to be misunderstood if it is not repeated and emphasized sufficiently. Personal interest in the sermon is very important for making the information stick in the minds of the hearer. People do appreciate simple, understandable language and are very anxious to hear sermons on Christian doctrine if they are made to live and have meaning in their own day by day living.

Chapter V

The Final Experiment

A. History of the Experiment

The second sermon used in this thesis was preached on March 9, 1947 and on March 16, 1947. The first Sunday it was preached at the 8:00 O'Clock service of the congregation which the experimenter had served as an assistant pastor during the past nine months. The second Sunday the experimenter preached to a congregation which he had served for nine months as a vicar. The childrens' choir sang at the first service. Each person received a questionnaire for himself and one for each person of his family that was in that particular service. Since many of the children were ill, the number of people contacted was smaller than expected. About 46 people received questionnaires and about 26 of them were returned. The senior choir sang at the second service. Here the same procedure was followed in distributing about 70 questionnaires. Forty-six of them were returned. This total of 67 questionnaires returned was not large enough for a thorough experiment but they were sufficient for the purpose of this thesis.

The sermon involved the general theme of sanctification in Christian living. Other fundamental areas of Christian doctrine were also included for the sake of completeness and also to give an occasion for testing whether or not they were retained by the hearers.

The questionnaire was made up in two sections. Section one included information on the general background of those taking the test and their general reactions to the sermon.

Section two included twenty questions based on the sermon of which 14 were alternate-response items and six were of the multiple-choice variety.

In order to eliminate as much as possible the problem of guessing on the alternate-response items, those who took the test were asked to mark with the letter 'M' any item on which they felt they could not make up their mind. Forty-six items were marked with 'M'. Since this indicates that people were well aware that they did not have to guess at any of the items, it would seem reasonable to conclude that those items marked 'T' and 'O' would indicate the real opinion of those taking the test.

It was the purpose of this questionnaire to determine how effective the preacher had been in getting his ideas across to the hearers. Those people who used 'M' to mark some of the items thereby showed that the sermon failed to make a clear impression on their minds. It is, of course, possible that the question might not have been clear to them. However, in checking the questions involved, it seemed that none of them were so ambiguous as to make this an important factor. Only those items marked 'T' were considered as being correct since they are the only cases in which the sermon could possibly have done an effective job of teaching the particular doctrine involved. The use of the letter 'M' to indicate uncertainty in the mind of the hearer is still very important since without it the people would have had to resort to guessing at or missing certain questions thus rendering the entire experiment less reliable.

Fifteen of the questions used in the second section of the questionnaire involve only a knowledge of doctrinal facts. Five questions were intended to test the ability of the people to exercise judgment in the practical application of these facts to life situations.

The sermon contained a paragraph of factual material not necessarily usable in applying the sermon to life situations or even necessary for understanding the sermon itself. A question was asked on this material to determine whether or not people would remember factual material not related to human need. The results will appear later in this chapter.

The number of questions in this experiment is larger than the number used in the pilot test because it was evident that in the pilot test the questions did not cover a number of items included in the sermon. An effort was made in this final test to cover nearly all of the material discussed in the sermon.

The objectives in this final test are really no different than those of the first test. We intended to examine further the possibility of measuring the effectiveness of doctrinal preaching by means of a testing program. The experiment is also to reveal some of the problems involved in conducting such a program. In line with the purpose of the entire thesis, the main objective of the test is by actual experience to make the experimenter aware of the problems of doctrinal preaching.

The paragraphs in the sermon which follows have all

been assigned a number. Each question in the second section of the questionnaire has been lettered alphabetically. Here after in this chapter any reference to a number will indicate the corresponding paragraph in the sermon and reference to letters will mean the corresponding question on the questionnaire.

B. Sermon Used in the Final Experiment

A Christian's Holy Life

1 Peter 1, 13-16

1. Why do we do the things we do? We like to ask that question because it is supposed to help us understand ourselves if we are able to explain our actions. We might ask the question, "Why do we do good?" "Why is it that in spite of the many opportunities that we have for doing bad things that we still do what at least appears to be the things that are good?" We can probably find several answers. Some of us are good because we are afraid to be bad. An example would be the store keeper who really doesn't care whether he is honest or not but because he's afraid he might be caught, he conducts his business honestly. Some people are good just because some how or the other they feel that they ought to. Perhaps it is their conscience and the unwritten law that is in their hearts that the Apostle Paul talks about. Other people are good because they are inclined to be kind to people in distress. It would be unusual for any man to refuse to help his neighbor to a doctor after he has seen him fall off the steps of his back porch and break his leg. Even if this fellow had the reputation of being a scoundrel we would be inclined to say that he was at least being good when he helped his neighbor.

2. A Christian would probably tell you that he does good things because God said that he should be good. And he could find a lot of Bible passages to prove it. He would probably remind us of the words of our text, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." That is certainly true. Christians are holy because God says that they should be holy. But it is not quite as simple as that. We would like to talk about the Christian's holy life. There are three important thoughts we would like to emphasize. First of all, a man's actions, the things he does, are not holy just because they conform to a set of rules. A man's actions are holy only when they are the result of the indwelling of the Spirit of God. This indwelling and rule of the Spirit of God in a man requires

that a man keep it in him, that is, it requires maintenance.

3. Actions are not holy just because they conform to a set of rules. This should be rather easy to see. During the times of Jesus there were people who were very faithful church goers. They kept the third commandment in a way. They also were very careful about providing funds for the poor people. They gave their alms. They were at least observing the seventh Commandment in its more obvious implications and also the fifth Commandment. In fact, we might say that they were rather diligent in trying to observe all the commandments. Yet Jesus called them hypocrites. They were Scribes and Pharisees. Just because they were doing some of the things that seemed to fit under the ten commandments didn't make these things holy. Their life wasn't holy at all.
4. We look about us and see the same thing. We observe the people of our communities, many of whom actually spend a lot of money to take care of the poor people and to help the sick. They are very serious about it too. They want to be helpful. They feel that they ought to do these things. Yet Jesus would not call their actions holy. Their lives wouldn't be called holy just because they were conforming to the command of God that people should share their goods with their unfortunate neighbors.
5. Now we can come down to our own life. We are Christians. We are members of a Christian congregation. Even here we cannot say that because a man does the things God wants him to do that he is holy. We can illustrate this quite easily. We know a man who goes to church every Sunday; he comes to Bible class; he is very faithful in attending voters' meetings and being active in them; he is careful about his personal conduct while living with his business associates; and in general leads what one would call a very good life. Now we ask ourselves, "Is this man holy because he is doing all of these things?" We may not like the answer, but we must admit that even a man who isn't a Christian could do every one of these things. It isn't what a man does that makes him holy. Nor are the things that he does holy in themselves. They aren't holy because they conform to a set of rules, the Ten Commandments.
6. A man's actions are holy only when they are the result of the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit. Our text tells us, "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." Our answer lies in the word "obedient". Christians are obedient children. That means they have accepted the rulership of God in their lives. They have God's kingdom, His reign in them. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" Those are the words which the Apostle Paul uses to express this idea. God is living in the bodies of Christian men. Their bodies are the temples of the Spirit of God. God is living in them and making them act and live just as He would live himself.

7. How does a man get the Spirit of God in him? Here we come to the whole story of Jesus. During these weeks we have heard a lot about the suffering of Jesus and on Good Friday we are going to hear about Jesus' death. As we think on these things we wonder, "Why did He do it? Why did Jesus permit all of those things to happen to Him?" Jesus did it to bring men back to God again and to bring God back to men. God wanted to get His spirit back into the lives of the people. That's why Jesus died. We call it the atonement, the process by which Jesus Himself made man and God at-one again.

8. The story of the atonement is an amazing thing. People had pushed God out of their lives. Adam and Eve decided to get along without God. They divorced themselves from God. But God didn't want it that way. God wanted to live in people and make them act like the sons of God. Now that men had pushed God out of their lives they were dead. They were so dead that they couldn't ever get God back again. God wanted to come back but the barrier of sin kept Him out. God hates sin in every form. It is revolting to Him. It is foreign to his very nature. God and sin are like oil and water, they simply don't mix. So the sin had to be taken away. Then God looked at His own Son, Jesus. Jesus could do it. He could come to earth and suffer all the consequences of sin. He could take all the punishment even if He didn't deserve it. So Jesus came and suffered and in the midst of His suffering, God turned His back on Jesus, just as if Jesus were a sinner, filled with the oil sin which could not mix with God. Jesus felt very bad. He felt that He was actually guilty because His own Father was treating Him just as if He was guilty. But soon it was finished. Sin was gone and now God could come back into the lives of people. The atonement was made.

9. St. Peter tells us that God has called us. He says "As He which hath called you is holy." God has asked us to come back to Him. He uses the Gospel as His invitation. We hear it preached to us every Sunday and every time we hear something of the Gospel of Jesus. God's call comes to man every time man hears the words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." These words are God's invitation to take hold of Jesus as the way by which man comes back to God. And that's the only way that God can come back to man.

10. When God gets back into man He makes man act. He causes man to live. Every single act that is performed by God living in man is a good work. Every act is holy. "Be ye holy in all manner of conversation." That means every thought, word, and deed. No matter where a Christian man is or what he does, if his actions are prompted by the Spirit of God, they are holy because God is holy. The Christian man who spends his entire life digging ditches and doing the humblest kind of manual labor, is doing good works if he is moved to do his job by the Spirit of God. The Christian man who is forced to lie at home in bed because he is an invalid is doing good works if God is living in him. Yes, every thing that a Christian man says, whether it be about his Sunday dinner, the baseball game, or about the Bible, Sunday School, work in the factory, or listening to the radio or taking a nap to refresh a body tired from a week's work, all of these things are really and truly good and holy works. They are holy acts. They are a part of a Christian's holy life, if they are done because of God's holy spirit living in him. No, you don't have to be a minister, or a teacher in a parochial school, or even a missionary to have a life that is filled with good works, a life that is holy. Everything that any Christian does is holy if it is God's spirit that is causing him to act.
11. Is not this perhaps too simple? Isn't there a lot more to holy living than just saying that a man must have the spirit of God living in him? As we look at our own lives we see things that don't seem to fit into the picture. We see actions that certainly cannot be called holy. We catch ourselves becoming angry. We are thoughtless in our dealings with the members of our family or with the people with whom we work. We catch ourselves becoming careless with our language. We find ourselves being uncharitable. We begin finding fault and complaining about people when we ought to be forgiving and forgetting the little things that men do which irk us. All of these things remind us that all is not yet well with us. Even the best of Christians must admit that things which they do are not altogether prompted by the Spirit of God which is living in them. They are prompted by the spirit of satan. They still have their own flesh with them.
12. It is the peculiar nature of things with the Christian man as he lives here on earth that he is constantly being pushed into action by two forces. One is the spirit of God. The other is the flesh. This will always be the case with people. It was that way with those people to whom Peter was writing this letter. Peter wrote this letter to gentile Christians who were scattered about in the Roman provinces of Asia Minor because of persecutions. The letter was probably written about the year 60 or 61.
13. The very fact that Peter makes a special point of the issue indicates that it is a serious problem. The

struggle that goes on between the flesh and the spirit does not end until a man dies. As long as a Christian lives here on this earth, he must be confronted with the problem of maintaining, of keeping alive this spirit of God in his life and the problem of putting down the flesh. Luther puts it this way, "The old Adam should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts."

14. How is a Christian man to fight down this flesh, this power for evil as it exists in his life? Peter here gives his readers an answer. He tells them to "hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." The margin in our Bibles suggests that we should read, "hope perfectly". The meaning of this passage is simply this: Peter tells his readers that they should hang on to the grace, the power of God, that is right now in the process of being revealed to them in the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The "revelation of Jesus Christ" referred to in our text doesn't mean only the second coming of Jesus but the revealing of Jesus Christ as it is done in the Gospel which is being preached to the people.

15. That is the solution to our problem. We know that as Christians we must have holy lives. In order to keep them holy we must make use of every means at our disposal. We look at the Ten Commandments, the Law of God. Then we look at ourselves. We see that we haven't been doing our duty toward the Kingdom of God. We notice that we haven't been taking any interest in the work of the Kingdom. We haven't come to a Bible class when we know that there is absolutely no reason in the world why we shouldn't. We haven't loved people the way we should. We haven't had hope. We haven't trusted God the way Christians ought to. All of these things show us that there is still a good deal of the flesh with us in our lives. We've got to get rid of it. We get rid of it by the spirit of God working in us. We do away with our past weakness by exercising our spiritual life. That's how we gird up the loins of our mind. We look at our lives and take them for what they are and then do something about them. We don't gird up the loins of our mind by saying, "The Bible doesn't say that I have to do such and such a thing." Nor do we gird up the loins of our mind by saying, "The Bible doesn't say that I can't enjoy this sort of pleasure or be engaged in that kind of a business." No, we look at every situation in life, whether it be an occasion of doing something or of thinking something, we look upon it as a moment where we can either use the power of God in our lives and make of them occasions of doing the holy things of God or make of them works of Satan, works which eat away at our soul and can even destroy our spiritual lives.

16. All of this requires power. That power is the Gospel. We have to keep replenishing the supply of divine grace and power which is announced to men in the Gospel of God.

That's hoping perfectly to the end. That's hanging on to the grace that is being revealed to us.

17. A Christian's life is the most wonderful thing on earth. It is really a miracle. For it is a sign of God working among men. And when God works among men the results are holy, glorious, beautiful lives. May God fill us with an abundance of His power and grace that our lives might be holy and without blame, filled to the brim with the works of God.

C. Questionnaire for the Final Experiment

Please fill out this questionnaire as completely as you can.

DO NOT write your name on any of these sheets!

Age ___ Sex ___ Occupation _____

Have you been confirmed as a member of the Lutheran Church? ___
How old were you when you were confirmed? _____

Did you go to a Lutheran Day School? ___ How long? _____

How long did you go to High School? ___ college? _____

Are there any other people in your home who are Lutherans? ___
 ___ Father ___ Brothers ___ Husband
 ___ Mother ___ Sisters ___ Wife
 ___ Children ___ Other people: _____

DOUBLE CHECK any of these people who were confirmed as adults.

Do you attend Sunday School or Bible Class regularly? _____

Do you attend church services regularly? _____

Check any of these organizations in which you are active:

___ Choir ___ Young Married Peoples' Society
 ___ Men's Club ___ Voting member of congregation
 ___ Women's Guild ___ Teacher in Sunday School or Bible
 ___ Class.
 ___ Walther League Other organizations _____

Did you know before you heard the sermon that you would be asked to fill out this questionnaire? _____

Did you talk to any one about the sermon? ___ To whom _____

What did you like about the sermon you heard Sunday?

___ An interesting story or illustration.

A clear explanation of some difficult teaching or passage.

 It seemed to fit your own life and helped you in your Christianity.

Write any other comments you care to make on the back of this sheet.

Did you find it difficult to listen to the sermon? Why?

 You were tired.

 The sermon seemed too long.

 The sermon was too hard to understand.

 The sermon was uninteresting and seemed like a repetition of old things you had already heard.

 There was something in the way the preacher talked that made it hard to listen to him.

 The sermon didn't really seem to fit you at all.

Write any other comments of this nature on the back of this sheet.

What are some of the things that you would like to hear discussed more often in sermons:

 more about doctrines of the church.

 more on social economic, and political problems.

Write any subjects in which you are interested on the back.

II

Please check the following questions carefully. PLEASE DO NOT DISCUSS ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS WITH ANYONE UNTIL AFTER YOU HAVE CHECKED YOUR ANSWERS AND THEN PLEASE DO NOT MAKE ANY CHANGES AT ALL!

Check the following statements with 'T' if true, with 'O' if false, and with 'M' if you are in doubt. Please check all questions.

- A. Going to church, reading the Bible and praying are good works no matter who does them, and God calls them holy.
- B. Only a Christian can do works that are good in God's sight.
- C. A man who is NOT a Christian is not doing good works even when he gives food and clothing to poor people.
- D. God is actually living in the bodies of Christian people with His Spirit.
- E. All men have at least a little of the Spirit of God in them.
- F. If a man refuses to steal because it will hurt his business, he is really doing a good work because he is obeying the seventh commandment.

- G. It is the Spirit of God in man that is actually doing the good works which a Christian performs.
- H. If a man tries to obey the Ten Commandments, God will give him His holy spirit.
- I. If God's Spirit is living in man, then even going to a ball game can be a good work.
- J. It is impossible for a man to sin if God's Spirit is in him.
- K. In a Christian the Spirit of God is opposed by the sinful flesh which often causes him to sin.
- L. The Gospel is the only way by which a man can get God's Spirit.

Check ONLY ONE of the choices following each statement which you feel completes the sentence most correctly.

- M. A Christian does good works
 because he knows that God will punish him if he sins.
 because the Spirit of God is causing him to do these things.
- N. Jesus died on the cross
 to show men how terrible sin is and how men should live to avoid it.
 to make it possible for God to come back into men's lives with His Holy Spirit.
- O. God's Spirit will come back into a man's life
 if a man tries to live the way Jesus lived, following the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount.
 if a man believes the Gospel that Jesus died for him and if he uses this power of God to drive out the works of the flesh.
- P. Even Christians sin many times though God is living in them with His Holy Spirit
 because they still have their sinful flesh with them and Satan is still trying to get them away from God.
 because they do not yet know all of God's will.
 because they don't always try hard enough to do what is right.
- Q. Christian people will be able to live perfectly holy lives
 when they know all the laws of God.
 when they have lived long enough to kill their flesh and Satan.
 only in heaven when Satan, the flesh and the power of the world will have been completely destroyed and God will rule their hearts altogether.

- R. The Christian is doing good works
 — only when he does missionary work, talks about religious things, prays, and loves his neighbor.
 — even when he eats, plays a game, or takes a nap, if
 — the Spirit of God is living in him and he uses this Spirit in his living.
- S. The only way for a Christian to keep the spirit of God in his heart and thus to keep on improving in his holy living is to
 — faithfully try to overcome the temptations of the
 — flesh by studying the Ten Commandments to see where he is sinning.
 — keep replenishing the supply of God's grace and power
 — which he must use to overcome temptations by constantly hearing, reading, and thinking about the Gospel of Jesus which brings him this power.
- T. Peter is addressing his epistle to
 — a Jewish congregation in Jerusalem.
 — gentile Christians living in various parts of Asia
 — Minor.

D. Analysis of Individual Questions

In studying the results of this test we shall first spend some time on individual questions and try to find out why they were answered as they were and to draw from them any information that might contribute to the understanding of the general problem of the thesis. Individual cases that prove interesting because of background, test results, or comments attached to the returned question sheet, will be given special study. A number of graphs will be used to study the correlations between groups of people and the results of the questionnaires turned in by these groups without special reference to individual questions or cases. This should prove the most fruitful part of the study since it will bring out any generalizations that can be made on the basis of this study. Opinions and comments of those who

filled out the questionnaires will be included in this chapter.

Eleven of the 67 people answering questionnaires failed to understand the implications of question 'A' which was discussed in paragraph five. It represents a popular form of judgment. People are of the opinion that good works are such because of the nature of the act and so they presume that any action involving the use of the Bible or going to church is of itself a good thing in the sight of God. Question 'B', also missed by 11 people, covers another aspect of the same proposition as does 'C'. Although all three questions are based upon the same premise that only a Christian, a man in whom God dwells, can do good works, 'C' was missed by twenty people. That is a percentage of 28.4 of all those who answered the question. This indicates that people simply fail to be consistent in their thinking. In this particular case it shows that many Christians are ready to say that only a Christian can do good works but hesitate to say that a non-Christian cannot do good works.

One of the people who answered 'C' with the letter 'M', indicating that he was not sure about the problem added this statement to the sheet in writing, "In keeping with your sermon this answer should be 'T'. In my opinion it is rather questionable." This man was an active church member and answered all the other questions correctly. He understood the sermon very well. Paragraphs three, four, and five were devoted to illustrations intended to point up this matter

in the minds of the hearers. To this particular man it was evidently not very convincing. The other 19 people who failed on 'C' evidently did not comprehend what was being taught.

It is also interesting to note that of the 20 people who failed on this particular question, 16 had parochial school backgrounds. To the preacher this means that even the very elementary phases of Christian doctrine must be repeated over and over again. They must be presented in very clean cut and concrete language, the language of the man of the street or else people will not be able to apply doctrine to life at all.

Only one person failed to answer 'D' correctly. It involved the material in paragraph six. In the discussion the preacher used two very well known Bible passages that express the truth in words very similar to the statement of the question itself. It is possible that this question received favorable response simply because people recognized in it words similar to the Bible passages and therefore concluded it to be right without really understanding the full implications of their answer. This might be classed as a weakness in the question since a "photographic" or word-memory of this passage could have determined the answer for some people.

'E' is a factual question answerable by a very simple deduction from the materials in paragraphs six and seven. Twenty-two people failed on this question. The "specific determiner", 'all' makes of this statement a very popular point of view. It is the basis of most popular religious

beliefs that all men have something good in them. This question really goes at the very heart of the sermon and the fact that so many people failed to handle it properly is somewhat discouraging. This case points up the fact again that the preacher must say doctrine in very explicit terms and use only the most lucid illustrations possible. Even then he must not expect that all are going to understand him. He must not hesitate to do the job again, applying more time and thought than ever before.

'F' involves a judgment identical with that used in 'C'. Eleven people did not answer the question correctly. The implications are the same as those discussed in connection with 'A', 'B', and 'C'.

Another doctrinal fact is involved in 'G' and 'M'. Only eight people responded incorrectly on 'G' and only two on 'M'. The subject was very clearly stated in the sermon and a simple memory of words might have helped people to answer the questions properly.

Synergism is involved in the discussion of 'H'. It is a statement of a very popular belief among many people who consider themselves Christians. Twenty-eight people failed to answer this question correctly. Of all the questions in the entire examination, this received the most discouraging response. Preachers in our church have waxed long, loud, and eloquent on the theme that a man can do nothing to save himself. This was also said in the sermon in a positive way and yet 41.7 % of the people taking this test failed on this question.

It is interesting to note that of the 32 people who knew before the sermon that they would be asked to fill out this questionnaire only ten people failed on 'H' while of the 35 people who knew nothing of the test, 18 people failed. The percentages were 51.3% and 32.1% wrong. In four other questions, 'C', 'E', 'L', and 'T', involving a high percentage of error, it is also to be noted that those people who were aware of the test showed a higher percentage of correct answers than those people who did not know about the test. Evidently a question of attention and interest is involved. Those who knew that they would be tested on the sermon paid more careful attention to the sermon and had a greater interest in it. The result was that they more readily retained what the preacher was trying to say to them than those who knew nothing of the test. This did not hold true in all cases, but as a general rule it did. The general implications of this factor will be discussed later in this chapter.

Regarding certain elements of the sermon that the preacher wants to drive home and which he knows are misunderstood by many people, it would follow that he could afford to give attention to special means of securing the interest and attention of his hearers on these points. Probably the most effective way to get this attention would be simply to say, "This is important. You must understand what I am now going to say." This would avoid the danger of becoming monotonous by over-repetition or similar forms of securing emphasis and attention.

'I' and 'R' express the same thought. Both of these questions were answered correctly by the majority of people. Only seven people failed on 'I' and only three on 'R'. It will be noticed that paragraph ten discusses this matter at considerable length and has ample illustration. The fact that the questions used the same examples found in the sermon might have helped the memory and thus influenced the persons taking the test to make the proper choice on these questions.

The problem of evil in the lives of Christian men is the basis for 'J', 'K', 'P', and 'Q'. These questions also received a very high percentage of correct answers. They were answered incorrectly by only four, five, three, and two persons respectively. Paragraphs 11, 12, and 13 handle the problem with particular reference to personal sin. The average Christian man is very much aware of sin. These are two factors that may have contributed to the results on these four questions.

'L', 'O', and 'S' are based on paragraph 14. It is interesting to note that the multiple-choice questions, 'O' and 'S' were handled very nicely with only two people missing each of them while 'L' was missed by 12 people. Actually the three questions are very much alike. It is possible that the choices offered in the multiple-choice questions were of the nature that the correct answer was too obvious. In both cases the 'wrong' answers were statements that spiritual life depended upon human effort, an

element of doctrine that preachers in our church have emphasized greatly. Knowing that one of the two must be correct, people might have found it quite simple to check the right answer by eliminating the one that was obviously wrong. 'L' offered no such opportunity and required an understanding without the prompting of any clues. For purposes of testing 'L' is more valid than either 'O' or 'S' since it really tests "what it attempts to test", the extent to which people understood and retained this specific doctrinal concept. The popular concept that man must do something to save himself probably influenced the answering of 'L' just as it did in the case of 'H'.

'N' was missed by only two people. This positive aspect of the atonement is not always expressed in the words used in the sermon or in this question and might by itself have caused some difficulty. The statement that was placed with it was formed in words very commonly used to express the incorrect view of the atonement. This is another case where the obviously wrong nature of one statement caused people to choose the other as correct whether they understood the implications involved or not. This does not mean that people did not understand the statement as presented by the preacher but it does mean that the results of this particular question cannot be used to determine whether or not they did.

Question 'T' was inserted for experimental purposes. It is a question on factual material presented in paragraph twelve. There was no attempt to make these facts appear

important or necessary for the proper understanding of the sermon. The question was intended to determine whether or not people would remember facts that were not somehow connected with personal need or associated with the sermon as being essential for its proper understanding. Although a single question can by no means prove anything it does have a chance of indicating a trend. The results indicate that people have more difficulty remembering facts unrelated to life than more vital material. Sixteen of the sixty-seven people failed on this question. Of the twenty questions only three, 'C', 'E', and 'H', received more incorrect replies than 'T'.

E. Study of Individual Cases

There were two questionnaires that were particularly interesting. The first one was that of a man, 41 years old, very active in Sunday School work and a voting member of the congregation. Of the twenty questions he had eight wrong and three of the alternate-response items he answered with 'M', indicating that he did not know the answers. He has been a member of the Lutheran Church since his confirmation at the age of fourteen. It is certainly strange that he should have such a high percentage of error on the test. It would seem that his interest in Sunday School work and his long church membership would have been more helpful to him. There seems to be no explanation for the unusual results in this case. There are several possible sources of weakness. He may not have been properly instructed when he was confirmed and the misconceptions resulting may

still be held without his realizing that they are wrong. That would of course indicate a failure on the part of the preacher to correct the weakness. It is also possible that there were circumstances that made it difficult for him to listen to the sermon, although he did not indicate them on the questionnaire. Otherwise there seems to be nothing that would explain his failure to answer more of the questions correctly. We might add that he might simply be weak in natural intelligence. It is also possible that the language of the sermon was strange to him because of having learned these particular concepts in the German language. Since he was 41 years old, it is possible that the language barrier might have been quite important.

The most interesting case of the entire study was that of a 23 year old man who has been with the Lutheran Church all his life. He attended a parochial school and has had four years of college training. His parents are very active in church work and especially in Sunday School. He was also aware of the test. All of these factors would place him in the group of people that were most successful in answering the questions and yet his record is among the poorest. He failed to answer eight of the questions correctly. Evidently there was something in the teaching situation that produced these unusual results.

He indicated that he had difficulty listening to the sermon because "the sermon was uninteresting and seemed like a repetition of old things he had already heard", and "the sermon didn't really seem to fit him at all". He

attempted to explain these difficulties by a lengthy comment on the back of the questionnaire which follows in full.

The anthropomorphism suggested by this (referring to the first choice under question 16) and like statements seems to me to be a prime pitfall for ministers. Perhaps in Christ's times the parables were the most efficient method of getting His message across. Perhaps they're effective today. To me it is confusing. For I cannot concretize the examples into sufficient models for living. As worthy as their endeavors are, as clear as their exhortations may appear to them, I feel that ministers deal too extensively with metaphysics which are left too abstract to be translated to efficient modern living. The minister's training as it is constituted today is fundamental in that I assume he is learning to know Christ. Ideally the Christ-dictated minister is the greatest of all teachers. Actually the man-in-the-pulpit is neither completely Christ-dictated or the greatest of teachers. The power of Christ within him is probably sufficient for his own individual needs, but not sufficient for the task to which he has devoted his life. Secondary techniques, despite the fact that they are mundane, base, human, &c., are essential. These are; Modern pedagogics, abnormal psychology, mental hygiene. The most important single method in sermon-building is probably the syllogism (taking for granted the above is accounted for). There must be a concretization of Christian doctrines for modern 1947 St. Louis living. The responses listed under difficulties on the other sheet were made in the light of this idea. The efficacy of Christianity is never more immediately evident than in an observation of a Sunday morning congregation as it listlessly, spiritlessly, thoughtlessly, prayerlessly drones its way through a Lutheran service. If you look for a-priori relationship in this, you cannot find it. It isn't the fault of the minister or the congregation--or the Holy Ghost. It is a matter of very complex relationships, the solution of which, I believe, is suggested by the above.

These comments indicate that the listener in this particular case had long been harboring certain misgivings about the value and effectiveness of preaching in his church. It is entirely possible that having received the questionnaire before he heard the sermon, he had set his mind to find material to support the brief to which he seems to be writing in his comments. The result is a "mental set" directed toward the selection of stimuli in the preaching

situation that would produce a negative effect. It seems that he did not intend to learn anything from the sermon because of his pre-occupation with making the best of his opportunity to say something that may have been disturbing him for a long time. It is possible that this attitude has been with him for a long time and has consequently cut down on the efficiency of his hearing of sermons for an equally long period of time. This is a possible explanation for the large number of errors found in his questionnaire.

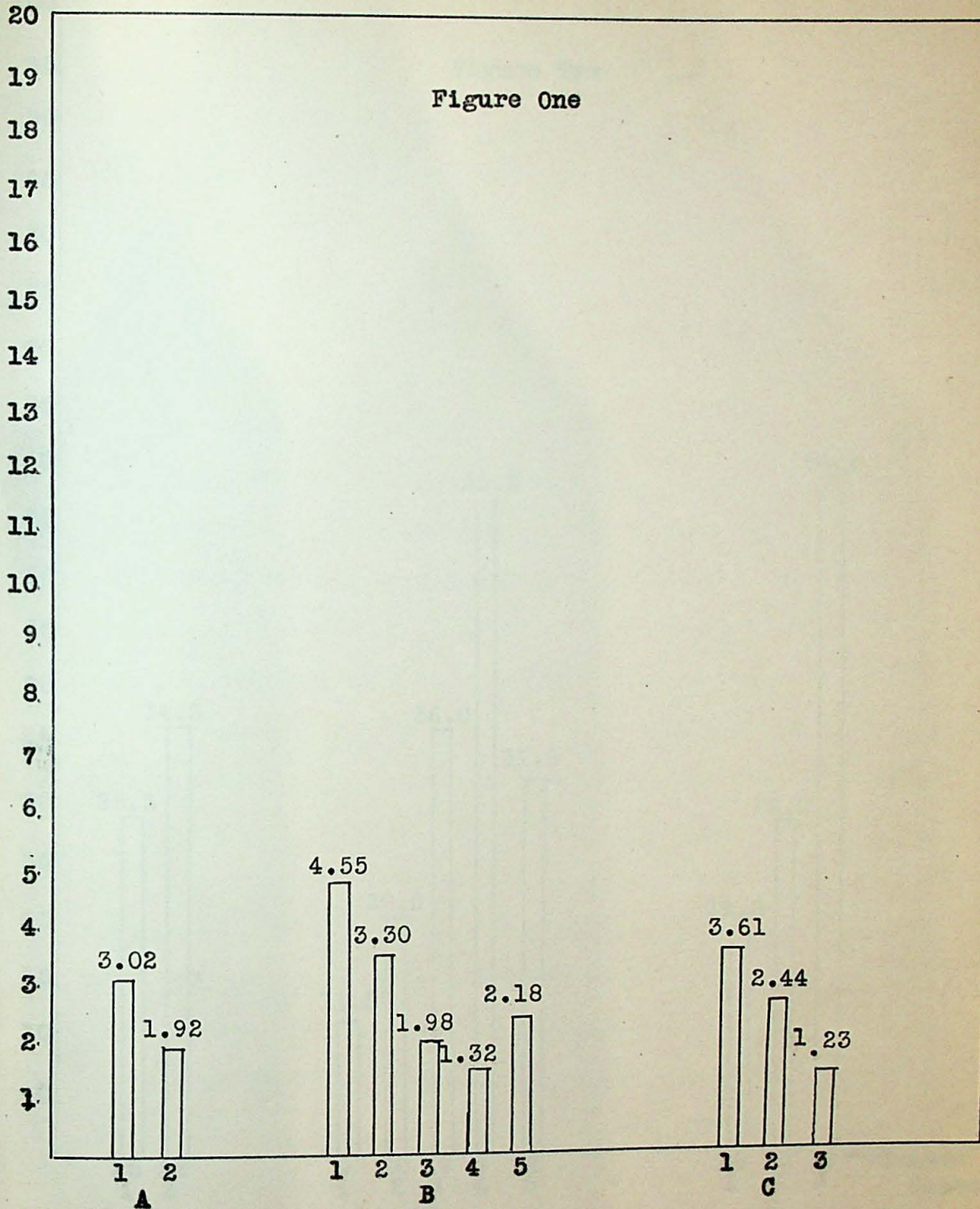
Some of the ideas suggested in his comments are certainly worth observing and would be helpful to a preacher if properly observed. We will discuss most of these ideas in the concluding section of this thesis.

F. General Observations on the Experiment

Certain general trends are evident from the results of this questionnaire. These results are plotted in graph form in the two figures below. Figure one pictures the average error per person for the groups classified according to age, educational background, and awareness or non-awareness of the test. We computed the averages by dividing the total number of errors for a given classification by the number of cases involved.

Figure two pictures simple percentage comparisons which we computed by dividing the number of persons having answered all questions correctly by the total number of persons involved in each classification.

Average Number of Errors Per Case

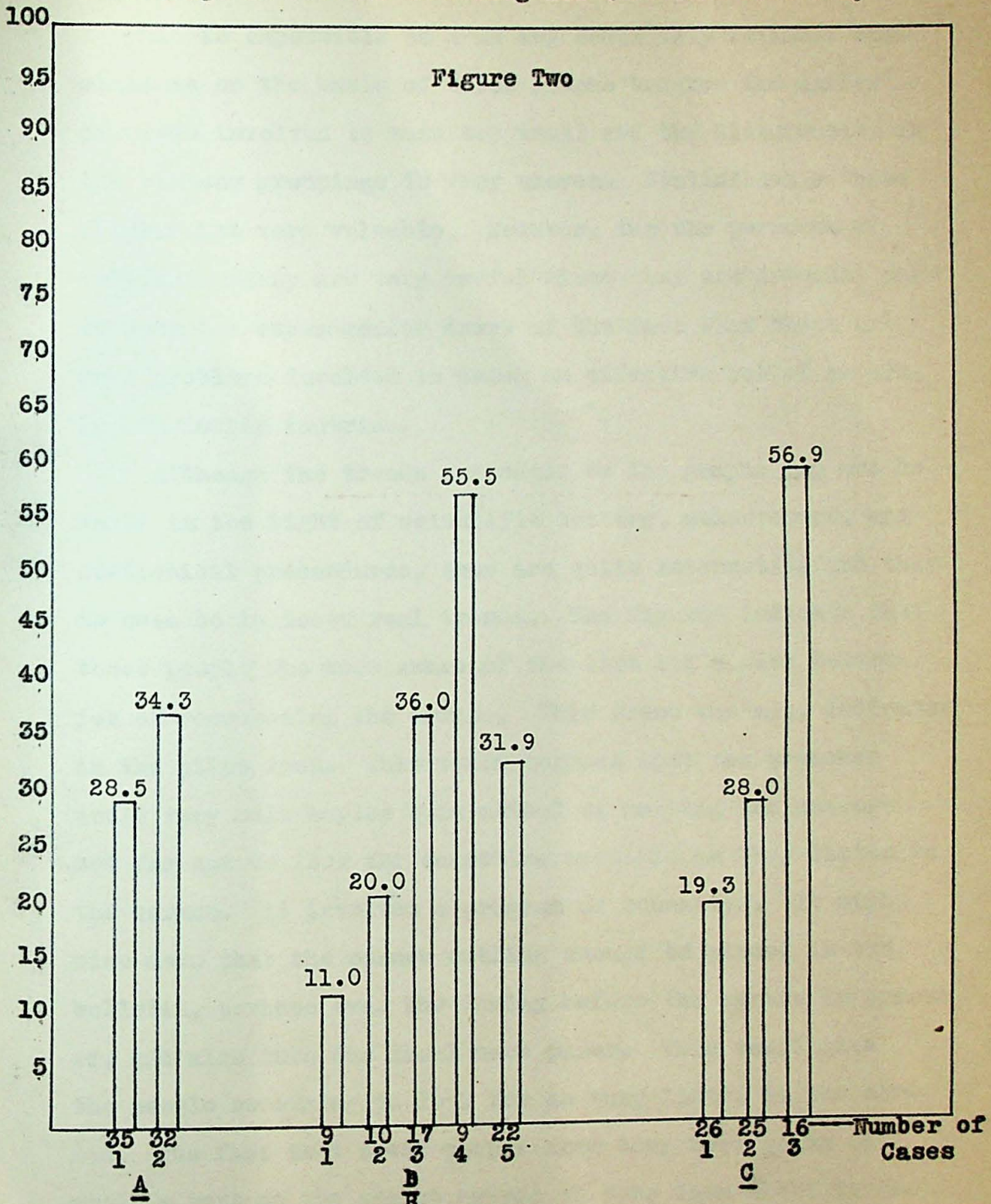


- A**
1. Aware of test
 2. Not aware of test

- B**
Age
1. 12 - 14
 2. 15 - 20
 3. 21 - 30
 4. 31 - 40
 5. Over 40

- C**
Education
1. Less than 1 yr. High School
 2. 2 - 4 years of High School
 3. 1 or more years of college

Percentage of Persons Answering All Questions Correctly



- A**
1. Aware of test
 2. Not aware of test

- B**
Age
1. 12 - 14
 2. 15 - 20
 3. 21 - 30
 4. 31 - 40
 5. Over 40

- C**
Education
1. Less than 1 yr. high school
 2. 2 - 4 years of high school
 3. 1 or more years of college

It is impossible to draw any completely reliable conclusions on the basis of these graphs because the number of cases involved is much too small and the distribution in the various groupings is very uneven. Statistically these figures not very valuable. However, for the purposes of this study they are very useful since they are intended only to make the experimenter aware of the fact that there are many problems involved in doing an effective job of preaching Christian doctrine.

Although the trends indicated by the graphs may not be valid in the light of scientific testing, measurement, and statistical procedures, they are quite interesting and they do seem to indicate real trends. The figures indicate that those people who were aware of the test did a much better job of remembering the sermon. This trend was also indicated in the pilot test. This would suggest that the preacher could very well employ some method of getting the hearers set for set to look for something specific as they listen to the sermon. It involves a program of education. It might also mean that the sermon outline should be placed in the bulletin, perhaps even the Sunday before the sermon is preached, and also into the local news paper. This would give the people something to look for as they listen to the sermon. The fact that these people knew they were going to write a test on the sermon helped to keep them alert to the preaching. It is certainly possible that using a method of advertising the contents of the sermon would also help the

People keep their minds on the sermon because they would be trained to look for something in the sermon rather than to simply sit in the pew and wait for something to happen.

The figures indicate that those people with one or more years of college had the lowest average error per case and the highest percentage of cases with all questions answered correctly. This group is followed by those having two to four years of high school. The lowest group is made up of those having less than two years of high school education. It is true that many of the people in the last group have not as yet finished their education and are not as old as those of the two other groups, yet the figures do indicate that the preaching some how seemed to be directed more to those who had a higher educational background. Preachers have always held, in theory at least, that sermons should employ language and content suitable for every hearer in the congregation. This experiment indicates that an honest effort in this direction has evidently fallen short of this ideal.

The results indicated by the last section of Figure one are comparable to those discussed in the preceding paragraph. The percentage of cases having all questions correct was much higher for the older age groups than for the younger groups and the average error per person was lower for the former and higher for the latter. The only exception to the trend was the last group of people ranging from 41 to 65 years of age. This group dropped below the 21 to 31 age

group in percentage of cases with all correct answers and above them in the average error per case. The results in the older age group are hard to explain. There are a number of factors that may have contributed to the lower rating of the group. Seventy-seven percent of the group did not know that they would receive the questionnaire and 63% of the group had less than two years of high school and none of them had any college training. Both of these factors would tend to pull down the standard of the group. It is also possible that some of these older people were trained in the German language and that the nature of the instruction they received might not have been as sound pedagogically as that received by the younger groups. The terms used in the discussion might have been quite strange to these people even though they had been hearing them for the past few years in the sermons of their pastor.

The general comments of the people taking the test were about the same as those taking the pilot test. Many of the people remarked that they would like to hear more sermons on Christian doctrine with special application to daily living. A few stated that they felt the sermon was quite clear and to the point and that they did appreciate sermons with simple, concrete, understandable language. It is interesting to note that three people of high school age remarked that they were tired when they heard the sermon. In every instance the number of errors was at least one full point above the average for the whole group. One

high school boy said that the sermon was hard to understand. He had four errors while the average for his age group was 3.3 errors per case.

The results of this final test agree with those of the pilot test. Both indicate the possibility of using this type of test for measuring the effectiveness of preaching even though the method has its shortcomings. Both tests have revealed a few of the problems of doctrinal preaching and have been very helpful in making the experimenter aware of these problems.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

The findings of this thesis are by no means revolutionary. The value of the thesis lies in the usefulness of the personal experience gained by the experimenter and to a limited extent, in the general conclusions that are drawn from the study of the questionnaires.

The results of this thesis can be classified as being specific and general. Specific results are those findings revealed by a simple tabulation of the results of the questionnaires. General results are those findings based on the evaluation of these specific results and an evaluation of the project as a whole.

Specific results based on the tabulation of figures of the questionnaires are both positive and negative.

Positive results are those findings of the compiled figures of the questionnaires that seem to agree with accepted theory. These results are found in the correlations revealed between effective preaching and the age, educational background, and awareness or non-awareness of the testing program on the part of the hearer.

The average error per case was largest for people between the ages of 12 and 14 years. The lowest average error per case was found in the age group ranging from 31 to 41 years. Those cases over 40 years of age showed a higher percentage of error than the cases in the 21 to 30 or 31 to 40 age groups. This would seem to indicate that older people might have less difficulty in understanding the

preaching done in our church. This might be due to previous experience or other factors which could not be checked in this experiment. The sermon used in this thesis seems to have been directed to this older group of people. The fact that those people who were over 40 years of age had a higher average error than those between 20 and 40 years may be due to a number of factors which we could not investigate in this experiment.

In the previous chapter we suggested a number of possibilities. Investigation showed that none of the people in this group had any college education and 63% of the group had less than two years of high school. Seventy-seven percent of the people did not know they would receive the questionnaire. Some of these people were probably confirmed in the German language. This means that they might have a great deal of difficulty in finding meaning in some of the more or less technical religious terms as they are used in the English language. It is also probable that these people were not accustomed to think in terms analysis and personal application. They would probably have understood very well if everything were put to them in the form of illustrations or specific cases from which they were to make their own applications. This tendency on the part of people should remind the preacher that it is very necessary to reduce his theory to specific practical cases if he wishes all of his people to catch the importance of these factors in their own lives.

The preaching of this particular sermon also proved more effective among those people who had a background of higher education. Those people who had one or more years of college had the lowest average error per case and the highest percentage of cases with no errors at all. Those having less than two years of high school had the highest average error and the lowest percentage of cases with no errors.

The presence of varied age groups and varied educational backgrounds in a preaching situation cannot be avoided. Yet it is the job of the preacher to reach all people to the best of his ability.

People who were aware of the test while they heard the sermon answered the questions more accurately than those who knew nothing of the test until they received their copies after hearing the sermon. Knowing that they would be tested on the sermon gave these people particular interest in the sermon and probably created better attention and consequently better hearing and understanding. Devices for creating such interest would be very useful in developing an effective preaching situation. This might be done in the introduction of the sermon by posing problems for solution or questions to be answered. Sermon themes for the month or year might be published so that people get the habit of looking for something particular in the sermon. The theme or even the entire outline of the sermon might be published in the local paper or bulletin of the preceding Sunday.

Recently people in a rural congregation complained because their new pastor did not publish his theme and text in the weekly newspaper the week before the sermon was preached. The people had gotten into the habit of reading the text for the sermon before they came to the service. Certainly a very useful device for creating the interest so necessary for an effective job of preaching.

Specific negative results are those which one might have expected but actually failed to materialize as the questionnaires were analyzed and tabulated.

One would expect that those people who have had additional experience in religious education by way of Lutheran day school or by way of the Sunday School, would have done a better job of handling the test questions. Actually the results of this particular experiment showed the opposite to be true. Conclusions based on these results are precarious, however, because of the small number of cases involved. There were only 16 people who had only public school training while 51 had parochial school training. The conclusions based on Sunday School activity are limited in value because of the 31 people active in Sunday School, nine were children under 14 years of age while none of the 36 people not active in Sunday School were under fifteen years of age. This places the age group with the highest average error per case entirely within the group of people who were active in Sunday School. An equal distribution of this age group between the two classes under discussion would have done much

to minimize the difference now appearing in the results of the groups as they are compared and also such an equal distribution might have reversed the ration and made it conform to what one would ordinarily have expected. It is also possible that the experience and learning these people gained from their parochial school and Sunday School experiences might have been expressed in a vocabulary different from that used by the preacher in his sermon. If these people failed to make a transfer of ideas from their old terminology to that used by the teacher or preacher, the learning would be less efficient. It is even possible that the newness of the preacher's vocabulary completely blocked the thinking of the hearers to the extent that they simply did not think any more when the new terms were used and consequently they failed to register at all.

General results are those based on the testing procedure viewed as a whole. Some of these results are limited in their validity by the inadequacy of the testing procedure as used in this study. The study was limited in its scope by the small number of people available for testing, the lack of opportunity for testing the people for previous knowledge of the materials presented in the sermon, and by the fact that only two experiments could be conducted in the time available for testing. The validity of the testing procedure was also limited by the lack of experience and information on the part of the experimenter in the field of scientific testing and measurement techniques. These

shortcomings limit the usefulness of the experiment they do not by any means destroy it.

The exercise of preparing a test on the basis of a sermon was a most wholesome experience for the experimenter. If a preacher expects his people to successfully complete a test sheet on the basis of his sermon, the preacher must be sure that he has given them something on which he can test them. He must have said something worth while. He must also be sure that he has said it in a way that his people will have no difficulty in understanding and remembering what he has said. While preparing the test on the sermon, the experimenter was forced to rethink many of his ideas and to express them in different words. This resulted in the elimination of many long, wordy sentences. He had to throw out some would-be analogies and illustrations that simply cluttered up the thinking of the sermon rather than helping to make its ideas stand out clearly. This process of reworking the sermon did not stop until the sermon had been preached. Even while in the pulpit the preacher was forced to change a statement, to repeat an idea, even to bring in an illustration not found in the manuscript because he could some how sense that what he had said on paper was not sufficiently clear or complete to enable his hearers to answer the questions on the test. A frequent repetition of such an exercise on the part of preachers would do much to improve the preaching in our church. It would force preachers to say something worth while and it would make them say

it in a way that there would be no misunderstanding about what he had said.

By actual experience the experimenter became sensitive to the problems of preaching doctrine. This was the main purpose of the entire thesis as far as the experimenter was concerned. The concreteness of this experience brought out a number of specific problems relative to the preaching of Christian doctrine.

Preachers must preach doctrine. Doctrine alone has the power to convert and the power to make people grow in grace.

The strength of Lutheran preaching has always been in doctrinal sermons. We should not be afraid that doctrinal sermons are outmoded and old fashioned. In fact, exactly the opposite is true. The truths by which men must live and die are today more important than ever. The Lutheran preacher must give his people what they can get nowhere else in the mass of conflicting media which press upon their souls from Monday to Saturday. The ringing of all the changes on the Law and the Gospel is still the heart of good Lutheran preaching.¹

People want to hear sermons on doctrine. A number of people on both sets of questionnaires made special notes on the back of their sheets to the effect that they wanted to hear more sermons about Christian doctrine.²

1. O. P. Kretzmann, The American Lutheran, Vol. XXIII, No. 5, p. 128.

2. This agrees with a statement made by Otto A. Piper. "Conversations with laymen as well as the success of doctrinal sermons reveal a real desire for doctrine on the part of our congregations. People who are unwilling to listen more than twenty minutes to the ordinary sermon will be fascinated and will listen for an hour or more when doctrine is presented to them." Otto A. Piper, Op. Cit., p. 44.

Effective preaching is actually effective teaching. A good teacher can be expected to do a reasonably good job of preaching. A poor teacher can never be an effective preacher. A preacher must be aware of the general laws of learning and the principles of education. He must know how people learn, why they learn, what they learn, and the many things that keep them from learning.

Doctrine must be related to need. People will not remember anything that does not attach itself to their own personal life in a way that they feel a need of it.

There is not much value in preaching that is unrelated to needs, to the actual needs of contemporary men, to the actual needs of those very people who are present to receive the preaching message. Needs--let this be kept in mind--needs determine what one shall preach. But not all human needs, no matter how real and pressing, come within the scope of the preacher's helpfulness; there are many needs of men that simply cannot be met by preaching; But those needs that are genuinely fundamental to the real and abiding life of men, they can be met by preaching; for the real and abiding life of men is spiritual, and spiritual needs can be met by preaching, which is, with all its human elements, a spiritual transaction.³

The importance of awareness of need was brought out in a number of questionnaires by the written comments of several people. They wanted "plenty of application of the text to every day life!" They wanted to hear more sermons that would help them in their daily living and "would give them a lift after a long weak of disappointments." They asked for "teachings of the Bible applied to every day life."

People do not remember what is not related to life or need. In question 20 of the last questionnaire the experimenter

3. Paul J. Hoh. "What Shall I Preach?" Lutheran Church Quarterly, Vol. XVIII, p. 119. (April, 1945)

attempted to test this truth. The question was based on a paragraph in the sermon containing factual material on the history of the first epistle of Peter. The material was not necessary for understanding the text and was not helpful in solving the particular needs of the people. The results of the question were in conformity with what one should have expected. Over 25% of the people failed to remember what was said very clearly in the sermon on this subject.

Doctrine must never be presented in the technical jargon of systematic theology. Such language has absolutely no meaning for people who spend their lives in the pursuits of secular business and therefore cannot carry any live significance to their minds. People might not object to it because they would not want to show their lack of information or perhaps because they think that religious things must be said with religious words even if they do not understand what they mean. Doctrine spoken in technical language cannot produce spiritual life and cannot nourish spiritual life in the Christian man.

The preacher must have in his mind a very clearly defined aim. Every teacher knows that he must have some kind of aim in teaching his lesson. This aim will serve as a guide in selecting language, illustrative material, and in organizing the lesson. For the preacher an aim will eliminate the use of illustrations and stories for their own sake. It will give his hearers something to which they can attach their thinking. Perhaps the most valuable use of a clearly

defined aim is that it can keep the preacher from simply rambling on and on for the sake of filling out a twenty-minute talking period.

Factors of attention play an important part in the preaching of a sermon. Having gained the good will and interest of his hearers, the preacher must still secure the attention of his listeners as he emphasizes certain big ideas in his sermon. This can be done by repetition, inflection of the voice, or illustration. An effective way for securing the necessary attention of his hearers is emphasizing his point with very deliberate statements like, "This is important, you must remember what I am now going to say."

A testing program of the nature used in this thesis might be used to good advantage by a preacher as he develops his own program of teaching and preaching. It will keep him aware of his problems and alert to new methods and procedures for solving them. One test will never be sufficient.⁴

Questionnaires and testing programs are very limited in their usefulness. They can test knowledge and to a certain extent they can be used to test judgments. However, effective preaching goes much farther than simply providing people with knowledge and the ability to exercise judgments. Preaching is intended to create and to sustain spiritual life. Any really usable testing program will not overlook these facts.

4. An example of such a questionnaire was used by the Rev. H. W. Hallerberg in his congregation at Clayton, Ill. With his permission we include the questionnaire as an appendix to this thesis.

Personal ministration is the only really effective means of testing the effectiveness of preaching. The pastor must get down into the lives of his people. He must find out what their spiritual needs are. He must see where their newly created spiritual life is not breaking through into their day by day living. He must find out if his Sunday sermon is being used during the week by the people as they live their lives among the people of the world. As the pastor sees a member of his flock falling short in the exercise of his spiritual life, the pastor immediately applies the necessary power for making the change. He gives the man doctrine, some times right on the spot, always in his Sunday preaching. This is a second value in personal ministration. The preacher finds out just what his people need. Then he prepares his Sunday sermon so that it cannot but touch the hearts and lives of his people. Such preaching will be most effective. Under God it will be a most blessed and soul-satisfying ministry.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE POWER OF PREACHING

Dear Friends:

It has been three years since I answered your call to serve you as your pastor. The main duty of a pastor is to feed the flock with God's Word. This is done chiefly by means of the sermon on Sunday morning. We are wondering about those weekly sermons. If anything good is accomplished by our preaching, we know it is all due to the power of God's Word; it alone can show us the way to salvation and teach us to live a godly life. However, it is possible to hinder the power of God's Word by the way in which we preach. Therefore we are asking you who hear us every Sunday to answer a few simple questions. We are not asking merely to be flattered; but in an honest endeavor to find out if our sermons are effective, or if they can be improved in any way. We are not asking you to sign your name to the questionnaire. Just answer each question as honestly as you can. We are sending enough for each communicant to answer for himself. You will be helping your pastor, yourself, and the entire congregation. Please put your answers in a box at church, or mail them in to me.

Sincerely,

Pastor H. W. Hallerberg

THE PHYSICAL PART OF PREACHING

1. Can you always hear your pastor when he is preaching?____
(Is he loud enough?)
2. Can you understand all of his words as he speaks? _____
(Are his words distinct enough?)
3. Does your pastor speak too slowly or too quickly for you? _____
4. Are the sermons interesting enough to keep you awake? _____
5. Are the sermons too long or too short? _____

THE SPIRITUAL PART OF PREACHING

6. After the sermon is over did you get the meaning of the
text? _____
(Did the pastor explain it clearly enough?)
7. After the sermon, can you remember the main thought of
the text? _____

8. In every sermon do you understand you are still a sinner?
(Does it make you realize you have sinned?)
9. In every sermon are you reminded that Jesus is your Savior?
(Do you turn to Jesus in faith for forgiveness?)
10. In every sermon are you somehow encouraged to do better?
(Do you want to lead a more godly life?)

THE PRACTICAL RESULTS OF PREACHING

11. Are you attending church more often than you did three years ago?
(Provided of course you are not sick or bedfast.)
12. Are you attending the Lord's Supper more frequently than a year ago?
13. Are you happier and more at peace than a few years ago?
14. Are you giving more to your church for Home Expenses than one year ago?
15. Are you giving more to Missions and Synod than you did a year ago?
16. Are you giving more to charity than you did two years ago?
17. Are you getting along better with your friends, neighbors (and enemies) than before?
18. Are you doing more personal mission work than formerly?