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Abstract

A critical evaluation of the late rev. William Jay of Bath as a preacher

William Jay was a Congregational pastor whose main period of ministry was completed during a span of sixty two years from the 30th January 1791 to 30th January 1853 at Argyle Chapel in Bath. Jay's preaching is of particular significance because of the way that it takes and blends the method of Puritan preaching, as passed on through the dissenters, with the passion of Methodist preaching as it was shaped and moulded by the great awakening. Because of this and the way that Jay was used of God, he is considered to be one of the best English Congregationalist preachers of his time. Jay, therefore, stands as a milestone for us in the development of preaching and he proves to be an excellent homiletical model.

This dissertation seeks to gain a better understanding of the characteristics of Jay as a preacher by critical evaluation. The dissertation is a perfect example for the students; being at the same time the writing of quality and standard, that is of great help to the students with their dissertation. It does this by first offering an evaluative framework by which we understand the term 'preacher'. The term 'preacher' is considered a somewhat elastic term that covers both the private characteristics of the man and the public work of the pulpit. This framework is then used as a comparative model for an evaluation of Jay.

It is suggested that Jay not only stands up to the rigors of this evaluation but in fact proves himself to actually excel the high standards set by the framework. Jay sought to be the best preacher that he possible could and in order to do this his desire was that his preaching would strike and stick. In order to achieve this he sought to be as interesting, understandable and convicting as he possibly could. In the light of this, certain strengths and weaknesses are drawn out from which the modern preacher can learn.

1) Introduction

The downfall of many reasoned arguments is the fallacy of building on assumptions rather than established facts. This paper should therefore start with an essential building block, the understanding of what we mean by the expression "preacher". This is the controlling framework and any misunderstanding at this point could prove fatal to any cognition we aim to reach concerning the Rev. William Jayi.

This paper's aim is to work towards an understanding of the term 'preacher' and to bring about knowledge of how this relates to preaching. This will cover the call of God to be a preacher and will consist of two parts. The first

will cover those aspects that generally make up the preacher's character outside the pulpit, the second will then look at what it is the preacher does in the pulpit, namely the act of preaching.

This paper, second, will consist of a critical examination of Jay in the light of all the conclusions concerning the make up of a preacher's character outside the pulpit.

Third, this paper will continue this critical examination by considering Jay in the act of preaching, what the nature of his preaching was, how his sermons were structured and delivered, and the effect that they had upon his hearers. Lastly, we will draw some conclusions.

2) The Preacher & Preaching

It has been said that, "Mr. Jay's whole character as a public man may be summed up in that one word, the preacher; and it is in this view he must be contemplated by all who would conceive of him aright."

If this is correct then one must understand that one expression "the preacher" and there is no better way than to ask the question 'What is a preacher?' The problem with the term 'preacher' is its inclusiveness. We could highlight this by saying that a preacher is like an iceberg. He has a visible public part noticeable to all, yet this is only a small part of the sum total, the greatest and most significant part being that which lies beneath the surface. This is the difference between the person and the act. We will go on to consider this in some depth in the next two chapters.

Where this initial observation is strong is that it highlights the fallacy of many attempts to understand "the preacher". These, either often look solely at the act of preaching, or only understand the preacher as a part of the act of preaching. Yet, the act of preaching is only the smaller part of what constitutes a preacher. As Bishop Quayle says, "Preaching is the art of making a preacher and delivering that".

2.1) The preacher is human

Spiritual character in a preacher should be private and hence unseen. Although it is paramount in the act of preaching, the preparation that a man goes through in order to preach is outside the pulpit. "Behind our public life there needs to be a hidden life where our roots are firmly fixed in God Himself."

It is also true to say that much of this spiritual character has to do with the different aspects of a human being like his nature, his emotion, his intellect, his moral being. As a fundamental principle, we are saying that a preacher is human. The things, which are the aggregate of a person are constitutional and cannot be, by the act of preaching, picked up and put down.

However, before we go on to consider what goes into the make up of the different aspects of 'the preacher' there is one characteristic that is essential to the appropriateness of a person to preach, but that is wholly outside him, namely 'the call'. Being a preacher is not something a Christian just decides to do, even as a calling the resolution is not the Christian's to make.

God's call is something the Christian becomes conscious of, there is disquiet within his spirit and he finds himself pointed towards the notion of becoming a preacher. God, by the Holy Spirit, has acted by thrusting this thought upon the man and in such a way that he feels very compelled by it. It is something that is subjective, but not without external tests. One being that it is confirmed or intensified by the influence of other Christians, especially those in authority over the man in the Lord.

This subjective consideration of being a preacher should lead to a concern and interest in people. All preachers must realise the lost position and spiritual depravity of all humanity, and desire to do something about this by proclaiming to them the gospel and showing them the way to salvation.

There should also be a sense of the irresistibility to becoming a preacher. Many preachers testify to the fact that they could do nothing else. Although they do their utmost to resist the call, it almost becomes an obsession.

The reason why often the preacher resists the call is that he feels diffident towards it. He feels a sense of incompetence and unworthiness. Indeed, this is a sure sign that God is calling him to preach (1 Corinthians 2).

Lloyd-Jones asserts that "The greater the preacher the more hesitant he has generally been to preach".

Having asserted that a preacher is a person who is called we now turn to the qualities that generally mark his personality. We turn to the question of what makes up the spiritual character, which we should consider as the larger part of a preacher.

2.1.1) The personal piety of a preacher

Certain aspects, related to the moral or personal piety of a person make up an individual's holiness. Where these, in all men, are truly corrupted, the Christian knows ability in this area that flows from the redemption attained through grace. As this is true to the forming of Christian character, it is especially true of those who would be true to the call of God to be a preacher.

A preacher should be a person who enjoys an extra ordinary depth of personal piety and intercourse with God.

Preachers should be living examples of a prayerful ethos (Acts 6: 4) which is demonstrable particularly by a great

enabling in prayer. When the preacher prays to God for help with his work, he usually feels the influence of it and sees the effects in the lives of his congregation. One example of this is that of Rev. Michael Roberts when he preached powerfully to an assembly in Llanidloes after a night of prayer. It is sheer folly to expect to be able to preach with great effectiveness if our effectiveness rests solely on what we do in the pulpit. A preacher should pray over his sermon preparation so that each sermon is a sword sheathed in prayer. This is something he should do often and always when he feels the prompting of the Holy Spirit to do so. It is said of all the great preachers that, "They depended upon the power of prayer, and depended upon it for any real, vital effect upon their hearers; this was pre-eminently the case with every one of them."

When a man ceases praying, he ceases to be a public minister. Prayer should make up half of our ministry and be the part that gives the other half all its force and achievement. Prayer is our fundamental principle and has priority over the ministry of the Word because it must come first. It is only by prayer that the Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit, is satisfactorily wielded. This often can come from periods spent alone with God especially whilst walking.

We must realise that, as prayer is the priority in preaching, so there is a priority in the life of a preacher. A preacher is a son of God who has a spiritual life that needs to grow and develop and spiritual needs that need to be satiated. The preacher's relationship with God is more important than the service he renders for God and therefore there should be devotional aspect to such a person. The preacher is characterised by a godly life (Titus 2: 6-8). We are to be devoted to God and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. This means incorporating that close and intimate friendship and fellowship that should accompany walking with God (Hebrews 11: 5, 6). This highlights the necessity that the preacher is a man of integrity and consistency. There should never be any deceitfulness about the preacher; rather he should be a man of transparency, reliability and an unblemished reputation.

"Now, if even men of the world judge trifling preachers to be unfit for their work, depend upon it the Holy Ghost has not a better opinion of them, and He must be sorely vexed with unspiritual, unholy intruders into the sacred office. If we can lie, if we can be unkind to our families, if we do not pay our debts, if we are notorious for levity, and little given to devotion, how can we expect a blessing?"

The preacher is a person called to represent God. Several words used in the New Testament for preachers and preaching make this clear. The first is *kh/rux* that can be translated 'herald'.

"In New Testament times heralds proclaimed publicly the message that was given to them by their master. It is important to note that the message did not originate with the heralds but with their master. In delivering their master's message, therefore, heralds represented their master."

Another word often used is *presbeuw* which is translated 'ambassador' (Eph. 6: 20). This also has the same connotation of speaking on behalf of somebody else. So the preacher must recognise this and act accordingly. To do so requires a certain amount of humility and submissiveness on the part of the preacher. This should show itself in the preacher possessing no confidence in his own ability, hence it is said, 'all God's giants have been weak men' (1 Co. 1: 27; 1 Co. 4: 10). Now we need to be careful here to explain this weakness. It should be a weakness that leads to strength, rather than a continual inability that comes from feebleness in our communion with God, or a deficiency in faith or love. Weakness drives us to call upon God for help and strength.

"We gain our strength by prayer, and our weakness is our best argument in supplication... when we preach in conscious weakness, it adds a wonderful force to the words we utter."

Humility and weakness are God's most used means of equipping preachers.

2.1.2) The intellectual aspects of a preacher

Due to the intellectual rigors of preaching, a preacher should exhibit certain intellectual features. The preacher should be a man who has a mind matured and trained through preparation. The particular form of training is not that important as long as it gives him mental discipline.

The preacher should be a diligent student of the scriptures (Acts 6: 4; 2 Tim. 3: 14-17). As the Bible forms our normative source of revelation the preacher should be captive to it and seek to be faithful to its true message. We are faithful to the true message when we allow true contextual exegesis to govern the content and function of the sermon. This really demands that the preacher have a love for the Word of God. However, it is more than just being a diligent student who loves the Word, rather he must attain a thorough biblical theology and be able to grasp this in a systematic manner. This must control and flow through his preaching like blood through the veins and not be like a statue upon which to drape a covering of application.

This assumes that the preacher has an aptitude for theology and a certain degree of catholicity. There should be nothing small, parochial or intolerant about a preacher, much less peevish or harsh. The preacher fails when he allows his own prejudice to colour his pulpit administrations because he puts up a barrier between the congregation and the message. To hinder people coming to knowledge of the truth is to disbar you from the practise of preaching. A quality in any preacher is that he does not call for the annihilation of all other denominations by

putting all Christians under the same banner. On the contrary, he should recognise various denominations as having some important uses and legitimate purposes.

“Whilst we are willing that each denomination holding the great truths of the gospel in their purity, should have a being, and exert its appropriate influence in its own way, we are not willing that any denomination should make its unimportant peculiarities the practical test of discipleship; we are not willing that those sectarian principles should have currency, which go to unchristianize a large part of the professed followers of Christ. The true principle on this subject, it seems to us, is something like this, let each evangelical denomination enjoy its peculiarities of faith, and worship, and church government, without being molested by others, and without attempting to force them upon others.”

There is a necessity for the preacher to have an aspect of originality in dealing with the scriptures and theology. That is not to say that he should be a slave to novelties but that he can think for himself and articulate his thoughts and judgements in a unique and racy fashion.

Baxter said, “Nothing is more indecent, than a dead preacher speaking to dead sinners the living truth of the living God”. There is something seriously defective with dreary, blunt and humdrum preachers. Indeed as Lloyd-Jones says when the two come together, you have a contradiction in terms. You can stand from a pulpit and spout forth but you will never be a preacher.

This assumes that a preacher ought to have a mind characterised by individuality of thought. You cannot do this unless you have the aptitude to penetrate the subject with which you are going to preach. The preacher should be a mental and moral dissector.

A handmaid of individuality is imagination. Imagination is the picture-creating faculty of your brain and is like an artist’s studio in which you are ceaselessly devising, hewing out, depicting and changing concepts. This is not hard as the Bible lends itself to this because it is a most imaginative book. It therefore seems right to assert that a preacher must be able both to deal with the imagery of the Bible and to use his own imagination in bringing familiar truths in interesting ways. From the history and biography of preachers, such as Jay, we see that the most used preachers have been those gifted with imagination. This is because when combined with oratory and the power of the Spirit it is a powerful influence upon the soul.

Alongside these mental features of the preacher should be a desire to progress. As a preacher grows familiar with his work so he should grow in knowledge of the joy, desire and sacredness of what he is doing. If you fail in this then its familiarity will numb and cake over you, instead of vitalising and launching your powers. This will depend on your motives for preaching, whether they flow from selfishness or a genuine submission to Jesus and the saints. The former slowly destroys, but the latter is the way of liveliness.

Another aspect that makes up the mental agility necessary to be a preacher is a good memory. A preacher is a man who has to think whilst standing in the pulpit. If he is not to suffer from saying things falteringly, hesitantly, or worse yet inaccurately then he must be able to recollect the time spent in the study preparing. He must be able to bring to mind and quote extensively pertinent passages of scripture. He must bring to mind the relevant great truths of theology that he has read and studied.

A preacher needs to understand the subject to whom he is addressing, he needs to be a student of humanity.

“To apprehend in all their intensity the wants and woes of men, to see the problems and dangers of this life, then to know all through us that nothing but Christ and His Redemption can thoroughly satisfy these wants, that is what makes a man a preacher.”

2.1.3) The experimental nature of a preacher

A preacher should know personally a depth of conviction about the truths of God. This conviction should be something that moves him to strong emotion. A description of this is a man holistically on fire, resulting from the touch of the very coals of heaven's altarxxxii. The preacher should wake up on the morning before a speaking engagement and be able to “... smell the smoke of hell on one side and the breezes of heaven on the other.” To proclaim the message of the gospel with effect it has to have entered our own experience so that we can testify to its spiritual power. The preacher must always convict his hearers of the grip that what he is saying has upon him, that he is wrapped up and engrossed in his work, or else nobody in the congregation will be. This is not always apparent to the preacher, whilst in the act of preaching, but often is noticed by those present in the congregation. “The Word must become flesh again; the preacher must become the vehicle of the Holy Spirit, his mind inspired and his heart inflamed by the truth he preaches.”

This is what Bullinger meant when he made the creedal statement ‘praedicatio verbi Dei est verbum Dei’.

A preacher also needs a certain amount of wide-ranging knowledge and experience of life. A preacher should have spent some time in a vocation outside of the church whereby he has been able to learn by seeing the joys and hardships of life that are the normal encounter of the congregation.

2.1.4) The personality of the preacher

Part of the natural character or personality of the preacher is that he must have the gift of speech. You may be a gifted theologian, able to pick your way through the finer points of millenarian eschatology. You can have a deeply caring nature, with much talent in the area of giving private advice and counselling. Nevertheless, if you do not have the gift of speech then you are poorly qualified to be a preacher.

You cannot teach a person this, as it is a gift. Sometimes this gift of speaking can lead to eloquence. By eloquence, we mean that a man speaks to persuade, or we could use the explanation used by Dr. Lyman Beecher who said that eloquence is 'logic on fire'. When it is something that comes naturally, and is not contrived, God can use it to good effect. This is why we say that 'preachers are born, not made'. If a man does not already have what it takes to be a preacher before you start, you can never teach it to him.

Another aspect of the preachers character should be hopefulness (Rom. 15:4). The preaching of the word ought to edify God's people, it should offer them hope in times of desperation and despondency, and somebody whose character tends to despair will naturally lean towards heaviness and morbidity. A partner to this is satisfaction in the act of preaching. A preacher needs to enjoy his work in order to do it properly.

The man who desires to be a good preacher should not be timid. If he is fearful of men and a slave to their opinions then he cannot function properly for he will not be able to stand against their vagaries when necessary. Of necessity, part of this courageous countenance should be a lack of self-consciousness. If you are continually concerned in the act of preaching to make sure that what you are doing is a credit to you then you will never experience real unction in the pulpit. You will always be casting your own shadow upon the preaching.

A vital quality that relates to the character of a preacher is a strong and deep appreciation for the people to whom he preaches. This strong and deep appreciation should lead us to recognise the potential that the people to whom we preach have, when God works in them, and a sense that they are not our property but rather we are theirs. This often is one of the hardest things for a minister, and his family, to come to terms with, but this he must if he is to avoid resenting his people's demands. In order to achieve this the preacher should be a man of patience and forbearance (2 Tim. 2: 24).

There is a necessity that a preacher when dealing with serious issues should not make them trite by an over compensation towards joviality. There is nothing more capable of stirring man's indignation than this. Rather a preacher is a man who knows how to give due awe, and reverence to God, especially on serious and solemn occasions. Yet, conversely we are not saying that there is no place for humour or wit. Often the spirit of God can use these very powerfully to make the truth striking

2.2) The preacher preaches

If you were to turn to an English dictionary, you would find the helpful comment that a preacher is "a person who preaches"^{xliv}. This forces us therefore to ask the question, what then is the work of the preacher inside the pulpit that we commonly call preaching? What is it that defines true preaching?

2.2.1) Towards a definition of true preaching

We could reply with Phillips Brooks' eloquent answer:

"Preaching is the communication of truth by man to men. It has in it two essential elements, truth and personality. Neither of those can it spare and still be preaching."

This is making the assertion that there are two aspects to preaching. First, there is the personality: the preacher. Second, there is the truth: which is the Word of God.

However, what is absent is the great deficiency with this statement. For one thing, it forgets to mention the occasion (time & place), but most significantly, Brooks fails to mention God altogether, especially "... the presence and work of the Holy Spirit, apart from whom preaching is worthless, indeed, injurious".

2.2.2) The nature of true preaching

It is necessary that we state early on that preaching should have a purpose and this is something of which the preacher should be aware. To be aware of the purpose is important because this must always decree its character^{xlvii}. When the aim of true preaching is before you, you are then able to consider what is the best means to that end. The primary function of preaching is to put men in a right relationship with God.

"The New Testament ... views preaching as "God in action." Preaching is not merely a word about God and his redemptive acts but a word of God and as such is itself a redemptive event."

The intention of preaching is to influence transposition among the members of the church that builds them up and builds up the whole body.

2.2.3) The means for change

What are the means we are to use to effect change? Here we must introduce another distinction to help in the understanding of the two elements of preaching. First, a part of preaching is the content of that which is being delivered, the sermon. Second, there is the act of delivering the sermon. Whilst it is good to recognise the distinction, as this helps us to be clear in our definition, it has also to be asserted that one flows out of the other. It

is rather like preaching and the preacher, one flows out of the other under the superintendency of God the Holy Spirit.

2.2.4) What is the make-up of a sermon?

So first then we turn to the content of the sermon. What is it that makes a sermon what it is? The first and essential thing to say about a true sermon is that it is born out of exposition. We have no authority, especially from God, to just spout out our own notions and opinions. It is the Word of God, once faithfully delivered by the apostles, which we are to proclaim. When we depart from the context, and our exegetical statements depart from the purpose and intent of the passage then we loose our moorings and our authority vanishes.

Apostolicity is also a true test of an authentic sermon.

“Today we have no Word to preach other than the inspired written record of that Word that the apostles preached.

To be sure of the apostolicity of what we say, we must ground all of our teaching on the written Word.”

This leads us to conclude that a genuine sermon should be Christocentric.

“This is ministry distinctive to the new covenant people of God: Christ is our message, preaching Christ from all the scriptures is our method, and the attending power of the purchased Spirit of God is our means”

This is because our fundamental purpose is not the preaching of Judaism, but Christ. Christ is our object, both concerning obedience and example and it is to these that we should travel from each portion even if it means crossing a few ditches in the process.

2.2.5) What is the make-up of the act of preaching?

It is at this point of Christocentricity that we must move to the second aspect: the act of preaching. This is because Christocentricity belongs to both the sermon and the act of preaching. Here we have to say that the distinction between the sermon and the act of preaching becomes a little blurred.

Christocentric preaching enjoys the vitality of the Holy Spirit. The vitality of the Spirit is His effective occupation of glorifying Christ through men who, though fallible, conscientiously proclaim the Christocentric scriptures.

Concerning the Holy Spirit Owen says that;

“This is the design that He is sent upon, this is the work that he comes to do; even as it was the design and work of Jesus Christ to glorify the father, by whom he was sent. And this are they always to bear in mind who stand in need of or pray for his assistance in their work or office in the church of God: He is given unto them, that through him they may give and bring glory to Jesus Christ.”

The New Testament uses various terms to exemplify that Christian preaching is more than just recounting salvation history as it is found in Jesus Christ. In Christian preaching it is not just the word, but the Word Himself not only comes to the listeners. Preaching is no mere conveying of facts, rather it is an incident when what is declared takes place.

In the act of preaching the saving power of the gospel (Rom. 1: 16) causes the righteousness of God to be brought to bear upon man in his sin and ruined state (Rom. 1: 17). You cannot have a true act of preaching and not have a response. It hardens, causes indifference or through faith brings salvation. This is because God Himself, with His saving grace, is present and involved (Matt. 10: 40, John 13: 20). Preaching is a transaction between the preacher and the listener and makes such a difference on the person listening that he is never the same again.

“... He does not only, or principally fulfil His vocation, in calling men by the reading of scriptures, but chiefly by the preaching of the Word a living address from man to men ... by this God chose to save them that believe.”

When considering the act of preaching there is an element which we might call the sacred anointing. We could explain it as being that occurrence when the preacher with great excitement carries the people with him.

Alternatively, we could explain it as the unction or inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is what Whitefield called the ‘thunder and lightning’.

“It is the preacher gliding on eagle’s wings, soaring high, swooping low, carrying and being carried along by a dynamic other than his own. His consciousness of what is happening is not obliterated. He is not in a trance... The words are his but the facility with which they come compels him to realise that the source is beyond himself.”

3) William Jay outside the Pulpit

Some may consider it churlish to question the call of God upon a man who exercised such a ministry as Jay.

However, it is not the results at the end of a life long ministry, however useful, by which we judge the appropriateness of the person to preach. The call of God at the beginning of a life of service to God is what must be tested.

Jay, at little more than 14 years of age, under the preaching of Cornelius Winteri at Mr. Turner’s house in Tisbury on a Saturday evening was converted. The punctual arrival of Jay at the service attracted the attention of Mrs. Turner and his pious demeanour caught the attention of Winter. This was an impression that neither was able to shake.

From soon after this he began to lead family worship at his home and not long after was called upon to pray in the chapel, which he was willing to do, and proved himself to be very capable. Ministers as a barometer have often used the effectiveness of a person's prayers by which to consider the suitability of a person for ministry. This was often the case with the Elizabethan Puritans. They developed what was called 'prophesying meetings' which were mainly meetings where men were expected to preach but it was also expected that each man should pray for at least 20 minutes and with anointing. This is something that we also find in the biographies of Christmas Evan. From these two considerations, Jay was considered as a boy on whom the hand of God was placed.

A year or so later Winter was again to preach at Tisbury. Winter called at Mrs. Turner's and mentioned to her the fact that the impression of a boy in the congregation a year ago had not left him and that he wanted to inquire of the lad for his academy. Mrs. Turner, not knowing of whom he referred, told him of a boy that she knew at Tisbury who she believed to be suited for the ministry called William Jay. When Winter realised it was one and the same he was moved to tears and to prayer. Winter inquired of Jay concerning his religious views and feelings. Satisfied by what Jay answered, Winter asked Jay if he would like to communicate to others what he felt and if so would he be willing to join his academy. To Jay, the idea of becoming a preacher came by the influence of those in authority over him in the church. Far from rushing into anything, William Jay took some time to consider this before he accepted. This no doubt was due to the fact that he felt discouraged because he was unpromising and had many deficiencies. This was indeed a sure sign that God was calling him.

A test of the call of God is that the preacher feels he can do and be satisfied by nothing else. We see this from early on in William Jay's ministry when he determined that preaching was to be the one thing in life that he focused on and spent all his energy upon perfecting. We will reflect further upon this later.

3.1) His personal piety

Having considered the call of Jay, we turn now to the personal piety, which characterised him as a Christian. The secret to his outstanding and enduring productiveness, his renown and accomplishment, was his devotional spirit. Spirituality was the rudimentary atmosphere, to which he was accustomed, and which supplied the air he delighted to breathe. Jay is often described as a man of whom when you heard him praying it was like listening to somebody who had accustomed communion with heaven, a man whose heart resided in paradise with God.

Jay's love for prayer was established and exquisite. Part of William Jay's daily routine, that was compulsively adhered to, was an early morning walk spent in prayer and spiritual reflection before his morning work in the study. Wallace comments that "his fondness for retirement and meditation was undeviating, ardent, and proverbial".

It was no doubt due to a prayerful ethos that Jay had a great enabling in prayer. Jay's prayers were real, impassioned and effectual and this is an indispensable guide to what he sought to achieve. When Jay prayed his heart welled with devotion and his words were full of explicit doctrine. Jay's prayers were so full, varied and scriptural that they met a Christian consciousness at all points. Jay's voice was

"... mellowed with holy feelings, and no affection of beauty or quaintness, rotundity or curtness, marred the fitness of his language. He seemed to think only of God, and of his people's wants, and rarely, we fancy, drew the devout soul from the saviour to himself."

Jay knew a great enabling in public prayer, and his recitals of the Lord's prayer were so moving and singularly resplendent that people often desired that all ministers shared the same blessing that he did. It is legitimate to assert that a competence in leading the extemporaneous prayers in church is so requisite a gift, that as a principle, only the preacher who owns it should aspire to the ministry.

Another aspect of Jay's practical and personal piety was his uncompromising practice of domestic worship with his family and servants. Jay was of the firm belief that what you did in private with your family was a reflection on your aptitude for public ministry. Jay feared some preachers' zeal for God, whilst it blazed brightly in public, yet it burnt dimly in their homes.

"In a day like the present, there will be many occasional calls of public duty; but it will be a sad exclamation to make at a dying hour; 'My own vineyard have I not kept.' In the spiritual still more than in the temporal neglect, 'He that provideth not for his own, especially those of his own household, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.'"

As a man devoted to Jesus Christ Jay was characterised by a godly life. There was an eminent godliness about Jay in his private disposition that was conspicuous in his conversation and in all his pulpit achievements and gave them direction, chastity and nobility.

Such a testimony is impossible unless the stamp of integrity derived from an unblemished reputation is upon a man. It is a creditable testimony that in all the years from Jay's conversion to his death no controversy regarding his conduct as a Christian and a preacher ever marked him. Jay was a preacher who was reliable. Cyrus testifies to this when he describes his father as a consistent man who was "devoid of affectation" who disliked fickle

mindfulness. Jay's advice was always according to his principles and doctrinal beliefs.

This speaks also of the fact that Jay sought to be transparent in his nature, a preacher without pretence, duplicity or deliberate mannerisms.

"Trickery he despised, all affectation, whether of mind or of character, excited his unmitigated abhorrence... "I hate a puppy, whether one of mind or character".

As a preacher, he represented God before men and this was something that he took seriously, humbly and submissively. Hence, Jay was distinguished for sincere reserve rather than the false modesty that is often the handmaid of a desire to cover over an egotistical spirit. Another aspect that engenders this humble submissiveness in a preacher is that of recognition of his own inability outside of God's help, namely the preachers total reliance upon God.

"As Paul determined to know nothing at commercial, fashionable Corinth, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified, so he determined to do the same at Bath."

3.2) His intellect

As we noticed earlier, Winter trained Jay in his academy. During this time it soon became apparent to Winter that Jay was of extraordinary character, having an unusual mind that was eminently suited to practical preaching.

"It was in the union of this gift of nature with diligent application, and an earnest thirst for knowledge, that he acquired his fame as a preacher and writer."

It is reasonably certain that during this time Jay's mind matured and acquired greater mental discipline.

Jay was an abundant and industrious student of the scriptures, who gained great benefit from them, especially the devotional parts. This is an attestation to a love for the Word of God, his soul was keenly and habitually permeated with a love for all that unfolded and was directed by the word of God.

Jay was obviously a well read man who had a great thirst for reading books on almost every topic pertinent to theology. He quotes in his sermons from the early church fathers, Calvin and contemporary theologians like Bunyan and Young. Jay had read biography, general literature like Greek philosophy and his contemporary ethicists like Hobbes and Mill, and all the best books of theology, as soon as they came out. Because Jay had developed the ability to speed-read, he could dispatch a reasonable sized book at two readings, and therefore there were very few important works that he had not read either partially or wholly. This underlines the fact that an aspect of the intellectual capacity of a preacher is an aptitude and gratification that comes from reading. Jay, being widely read, did however have his favourites. He was particularly fond of the Puritan divines, and studied them a lot. He also had an extensive and deep knowledge of English theological literature especially the poetry of men such as Newton and Watts that has come down to us in the form of hymnology. Similar to other great preachers like John Elias or Dr. M. Lloyd-Jones, Jay owed much of his theological robustness to Calvinistic theologians, especially the Puritans. He was of the school of Bates, Charnock, Doddridge, Flavel, Henry, Howe, and Owen, and it was hard to draw away from his predilections.

As far as his theological position Jay was for the most part very catholic in his views. Jay was a man of such undiminished impartiality

"... that his loving, fraternal spirit yearned in its affection to God's people of all sections. He felt a part of the Church, but not a party; he had his preference, but not his prejudice. If any man of staunch and fixed principles, like those of Mr. Jay, ever had a catholic heart, a universal love, it was himself."

However concerning the doctrine of election Jay was a "moderate Calvinist" and quite averse to Hyper-Calvinism. Hyper-Calvinism is an "exaggerated or imbalanced type of reformed theology" that does not clearly distinguish between the secret and revealed will of God. It emphasises irresistible grace to such a degree that the need to evangelise the unconverted is seriously diminished. Because of these two beliefs it is argued that the preacher cannot 'offer' the gospel to all mankind irrespective of their position regarding election but only to the elect because it is only for them that Christ died. Jay refuted this believing that it was not the preachers job to arrogantly frame the limit concerning to whom salvation is to be offered, but its exercise he left to the medium of the Holy Spirit.

As we have noticed, Jay was for the most part very catholic in his approach to theological matters and engenders all that is right and true of this aptitude.

An unnamed American states that "We have found many who had been long conversed with his writings, who yet had never been able to discover to what denomination he belongs, and some who had always had the impression that, instead of being an independent, as he actually is, he is a (low church) Episcopalian."

It is interesting that with all his catholicity of spirit he tended to be a little reluctant to support his denomination. He was a reluctant member of his association and never attempted to spread Congregationalism in his area through the planting of new churches, despite the fact that his congregation was a sizeable one, and he was not able to do sufficient visitation amongst his people because of his commitment to preaching and writing.

Another great strength of Jay's mind was his ability to look at things in a fresh and original way. Jay had very little time for dull preaching and his approach was that to fasten and clench the attention, to create understanding and benefit the soul, preaching must "strike and stick".

Dullness in preaching is always offensive and it is to Jay's credit that he was such a master at infusing a lively vitality into an arid body of investigation.

It is the responsibility of any preacher to "... both gain the attention of his hearers and deliver the truth to them in forms, which will stick and abide when his preaching has concluded." Jay's crowning glory and steadfast design was to express what would strike, and thus invariably endure in the remembrance. This is something that is often lacking in the preaching of God's word and is possibly the greatest contribution that Jay can make to homiletics today. The sad fact is that there is much preaching today that, whilst it lacks little by the way of exact exegesis and biblical theology, often has little or no bite to it. In a day where we are losing ground to the trivialisation of all aspects of modern life any preacher who wants to make himself heard needs to get the attention of a supine lethargic society. We will consider the effects of this aspect of Jay's preaching in more detail later.

Being so widely read Jay was able to think through different theological issues. Hence, "... he gained something from every quarter; still he was no mere copyist or borrower. He did not derive his strength from others, or depend on them for support". This individuality of thought was something that characterised much of his convictions and this is something that we will expand upon later. Jay's potency was as natural as it is for many to be ordinary and thus his descriptions, his representations, his suppositions and illustrations were mostly his own.

Alongside this originality and individuality great imagination was an endowment of Jay's mind. Many of the portrayals in his discourses exhibited the picturesque and impressive resplendence of his imagination.

It is a credit to Jay that with all the vividness of his imagination and his natural bend towards originality that he very rarely, in his surviving sermons, breaks the bounds of good exegesis and the plain meaning of the text. This is something that is often the case when lesser men try to follow his style.

Another feature of the intellect of Jay was its practicality. At all points what marks his thinking is that it is very practically minded.

"He possessed a strong and shrewd mind, and his early popularity was not the popularity of extraordinary genius, but arose from a good natural elocution, and what might be termed the premature common sense that ran through his discourses." xliii

Jay's biographers put it down to his very temperament when they comment that practicalities were most congenial with the nature of his mind xliv.

Another of the great strengths of Jay's mental features was the fact that he was not satisfied just to do what he needed. He was keen to advance and had a strong repudiation of anything resembling slothfulness or lack of progress xlv. His motto was "I will, by the help of God, improve". This is why he determined to read daily, to always be thinking through a theological subject to enlarge his mind. Indeed even up to his death he was still increasing his intellectual stores with theological benefits.

One of the remarkable aspects of Jay's mental features was his memory. He read nothing that was not committed to memory.

"He read continually, and what he read he made his own... he was perfectly familiar with our giants in theology, and general literature, and that he vividly remembered a great portion of that which he had perused."

This is no doubt the reason why he was so able and gifted at quoting volumes of different scriptures in his sermons. So great was his memory of scripture that in a later point we will see a fine example of how he could quote the length and breath of the Bible in one sermon xlix. An excellent example of his ability to quote scripture is furnished from some sermons that he preached at Surrey Chapel in April 1838. From the Sunday, evening, dated April 1, to Sunday evening, dated April 8, he preached five sermons and in those sermons, he quoted 568 different scriptures l with very little overlap. It is of little surprise that people commented that "It would seem as if the whole bible were in his memory".

In order to be a good surgeon you must understand the human body. In a similar way in order to rightly apply the scriptures you must understand human nature.

"Human nature has to be studied and the act of preaching means that we so understand men that our preaching proceeds upon the lines most likely to do them the maximum of good."

Jay was not satisfied with superficialities and sought to penetrate far beneath the extraneous front of humanity. This was probably because he understood himself, and obviously thought much about his own experience of life. No doubt Jay gained some of this knowledge from the work he did as a stone masons apprentice. Jay's was a heart that was familiar with the common woes that ail mankind, but also touched by the common experiences of Christianity. He knew what it was to be marked and hurt by sin and to rejoice in a present felt salvation liv. Hence,

he was able to sympathise as well as teach. This ability to penetrate is a much needed and excellent quality in a preacher that, not only greatly aids a man's thoughts to strike and stick, but enables perceptive application. Greatly enabled in this Jay was able to read character with great speed, and with extraordinary exactitude.

"He saw into a person's mind, and ascertained what was his intellectual or moral bias, in a very short period. Mr. Jay we often used to term a mental and moral dissector. The knowledge, which he discovered of the human mind in all its peculiarities, often struck us with a certain degree of astonishment. He read a man almost intuitively."

Another aspect of Jay's mind, that we might deem important to notice, but not an absolute necessity in order to be a preacher, is humour. As you read his sermons you quickly become aware that a striking feature of them is that they are exceedingly lively and vivacious and imbibed with a witty dry humour, that whilst playful is instructive. Wallace describes Jay's sermons as "sententious, aphoristic, pungent, vivid" and that they "... lodged themselves in the memory, and could not be displaced"^{lix}. However, his dry humour could at times be almost sarcastic and cutting. An example of this is found in the sermon entitled 'The young admonished', which is upon the text 'I fear the Lord from my youth' (1 Kings 18: 12). Jay first, makes the point that youth is the most favourable time to turn to Christianity. Second, that an early conversion has a positive influence on the rest of your life. Jay then moves on to the point that, concerning the need for early conversion, there are serious consequences resulting from procrastination. In this point Jay, first, takes the presupposition that after leaving making a decision for Christ until late in life you obtain repentance. Jay examines how it will make you feel and observes that it will make you miserable for four reasons. In the first, 'your abuse of divine grace' we find the following:

"What then, when you go to God, will be the language of your negligence? "Lord, I have been evil, because thou wast good! It was not because I considered thee a hard master, that I did not serve thee, but because I believed thee to be a kind one. Persuaded of thy compassion, and readiness to pardon, I have peaceably sinned against thee for sixty years. If thou hadst not been so infinitely worthy of my affection and devotion, I had long ago loved and obeyed thee."

It is a necessity that a preacher knows a depth of feeling concerning his convictions. A particularly good example is his farewell sermon at Christian Malford. In this sermon, we have a lovely window onto his views concerning his ministry there with them. In the extract we see his ability to enter into the fears and concerns of a congregation that has had a difficult time with its minister and is now about to lose him to another pastorate. It wells with deep emotion and feeling about his fears and hopes for them after his departure. Jay was a man of deep sensibility, of tender and intense emotion. Neither was this just emotion, or even emotive doctrine, but what distinguished his preaching was the consistent fusion of practise and doctrine. At this point Jay's preaching follows a model, prominent in the Puritan period.

"Puritans preached the Bible systematically and thoroughly, with sustained application to personal life, preaching it as those who believed it, and who sought by their manner to make their matter credible and convincing, convicting and converting."

3.3) His personality

Jay's ability to speak is something that is quite noteworthy. Wilson describes his speech as calm and steady and despite the fact that it was mostly extemporaneous, nobody ever came away with the feeling he had said too much or not enough.

This was something that was not feigned but rather his speech and resonance were all natural and elegant. Here was a man who obviously was able to speak with freedom, with the gift of communication, able and articulate.

"The expression with which he reads is wonderful his words distil as the dew; so softly and yet so effectually do they fall. His manner of emphasising some passages gives you an entirely new view of them."

This articulation often spilled over naturally into eloquence. It is said of the eloquence of Jay that it was a combination of feeling, imagination, and reason that all blended together; and that this was one of the elements of his popularity and usefulness in the hands of God. The pastor's heart gives birth to such eloquence.

As we noticed in the first part, one aspect of a preacher's nature should be hopefulness. Jay was always a man who tried to be positive. He once commented that he would rather "be a preacher of the gospel, than the archangel who shall blow the trumpet on the last day!" A particular aid to this is the fact that he enjoyed his work so much.

"Goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life. My duties have not been burdening and irksome... I have relished the bounties of providence, using them with moderation and thankfulness. Preaching has been the element of my heart and head. The seat of my residence was of all others the place of my preference."

One thing that Jay was not is timid. Indeed, there was the time when a member of his congregation attacked a series of sermons he was preaching on 'The Christian Contemplated' as being 'Christ-less' because they did not meet approval with his Hyper-Calvinistic views. To this, Jay on the final one of the series responded to this with a very confrontational rebuke that was enough to convince the man of his error.

Jay's character was acute, direct even to the point of being blunt and robust, but Jay was for the most part full of tenderness towards his congregation, and often spoke very winsomely of those who had passed away during his ministry. He was a man who had time for people and this is important for a preacher.

A final aspect of Jay's character was his single minded determination. He made it his aim, because of an incident early on in his ministry, for the glory of God, to be the best preacher he could. This resolve flowered into a philosophy that "... if he would do one great thing well, he must concentrate his powers on that; and make everything else give place, or become subservient to it". Thus when he settled in Bath, he determined to be one of the most advantageous and proficient preachers in the city.

It is worthy of note here that one of the drawbacks of Jay's great personality was that it made him difficult to work with. The fact that Jay had a fixed aversion to sharing his pastorate with another made this even more difficult. He was of the opinion that in a church situation two could not work together amiably and that it would result in favouritism. In addition, he could not get on with a minister who was too similar to him.

4) William Jay in the Pulpit

4.1) The nature of his preaching

Due to tremendous insight into what constituted true preaching, the nature of Jay's preaching had many fascinating aspects. He lived through a time in the history of the church where two very different styles of preaching were common and was in the unique position to utilise the strength of both. Jay took the style of the Dissenter and the Methodist, combined them and adopted a style that was stimulating in its spirit and, in formula, arranged to achieve maximum advantage. Here Jay was clearly building on a Puritan model, and believed "... as the Puritans believed that the work of the pulpit involves an art to be learned". As we come to focus more specifically in the next chapter on the actual form of his sermons we will develop this point further.

Another prominent aspect of the constitution of Jay's preaching was his own naturalness, which aptly syncopated him as a preacher. Hence, the distinct pitch and tone of Jay's speech, his pulpit apparatus, was all without connivance and disclosed the elegance of his temperament. There was nothing false or forced about Jay's manner in the pulpit.

Another strong impression that arises from the preaching of Jay was its tenderness. Hence Wallace states that it was full of thoughtfulness and "... breathed the very soul of compassion. Its pathos often was exquisite. The sensibilities of Mr. Jay were very delicate and powerful."

This can be illustrated by the fact that so many of the surviving sermons of Jay cover issues related to the benefits of faith to the Christian. An example of this, and there are many others, is the sermon 'The Triumphs of Patience' on Rev. 14: 12. Here Jay deals with the issue of the saint in affliction.

As we noticed earlier, part of Jay's intellectual furniture was the desire that all his preaching should strike and stick. Those who listened to him preach got the strong opinion that "he aimed in every sermon to strike his hearers' emotions and imaginations as well as their minds". A large aspect of this was the fact that often there was much that was innovative in his thinking. Jay was in the habit of approaching every subject in his own style, thinking for himself on every subject and giving cautious scrutiny to the reflection of others.

It was this desire to strike and stick that made his preaching so practical, and why he believed that preaching which is very intellectual and deals only in abstruse concepts and drawn out debate is severely incompetent. In Jay's opinion sermons that did not strike and stick failed because they were usually lacking portraiture, elucidation, similes and anecdotes. This is why his well-stocked sermons have ample to aid the understanding. The broad property of Jay's preaching was pertinent and uncomplicated gospel truth. Because he preached to an audience that had a high proportion of visitors, he knew that with some in the congregation this might be his one and only chance to explain the gospel to them. Jay would not allow a sinner to go by neglected or allow him or her to rest in their sins without being told of their evil nature and the awful results of a life of sin. Therefore, he always allowed this to influence his choice of text and sermon matter. In this way Jay avoided the intemperateness of inflexible narrow-mindedness on the one hand, and on the other hand stale metaphysics and ethics.

This led some to the conclusion that he was not a doctrinal preacher. That is not to say that he never preached on doctrine, for one of his better known sermons is on the doctrine of election. Rather he believed that creedal statements, the proving and defence of doctrine, were for the printing press and not the pulpit. Despite this, which some might deem a weakness, Jay was still a strong preacher whose potency was in a more puritan style of preaching that was more interested in the application of doctrine than in defending its mechanics. In Jay's sermons, theology and doctrine flowed as a vitalising power within veins of Christian experience. In this he matched the Puritans, and stood in opposition to theology and doctrine being a statue with experience draped over or a pedestal supporting it.

"He was more experimental, practical and hortatory in the uniform style of his ministry, than doctrinal. He was

very evangelical; his sermons abounded in great principles; still he rarely preached a series of discourses on the leading doctrines of Christianity.”

Jay sought to make his sermons a composite of evangelical doctrine, creative feeling, and Orthodox application. Another possible reason why Jay was so practical was that he saw clearly the purpose of true preaching was to effect change. Jay sought to achieve this by conveying the eternal power of God to the daily life of his congregation. Jay did this by administering the strongest justifications for daily obligation to the great truths of Christianity. The supreme aim and endeavour, which Jay aspired to, was to effect a change in all men, either from depravity to the new life of the gospel, or from babes in Christ to adult believers.

“No man perceived more clearly the obligations of the Christian life, and no man urged them more earnestly or more attractively. It was his happy art to make men feel, that wisdom’s ways are ways of pleasantness, and that all her paths are peace.”

Jay’s style of language had refined simplicity and unaffected charm. His style was salient, understandable, simple and elegant. There is no doubt that in making his language plain Jay was seeking to make what he said accessible to his hearers. Many preachers baffle their people with the unnecessary use of pretentious theological language, sometimes it is unconscious, but mostly it is due to laziness and a failure to articulate clearly what they are trying to communicate. Happily, Jay to be intelligible, employed language plain and penetrating; his style was not ornate and flowery.

Another great aspect that we see in Jay’s preaching was its consistency. Although he makes minor changes, it is usually only variations on a theme. In a time where many preachers chop and change their frothy messages to suit the whims and fancies of the day this makes a refreshing change.

“It was most accurate, most enlightened, most discriminating: there was no approach to error; there was no trimming, no tampering, no paring away, no fluctuation; you could depend on it; it was the same from first to last, Solid, Scriptural, weighty.”

This dependability is even more marked when you consider the fact that his sermons are always instructive. It is impossible to read his sermons, without acquiring much thoughtful, scriptural, evangelical teaching. During sixty-two years at Argyle Chapel, he never wearied his people with repetition.

What is also very refreshing about the nature of Jay’s preaching is the fact that it has bite to it. There is no compromise, its challenge is clear and puissant. Neither is there anything inexact about its challenge. Jay’s nature in the pulpit was audacious, forthright and rigorous. Jay feared nobody, whether with position or influence, but valiantly taught, cautioned, and reprimanded, when needed.

What was so great about the nature of Jay’s pulpit eloquence was that it was extraordinary used by the Spirit to bring conviction to the individual.

“There was an individualizing effect produced by Mr. Jay’s preaching. He not only preached before his congregation, but to them; and not only the multitude, but to the individuals who composed it. His sermons formed a kind of mirror, which reflected the image of those who approached it, and in which every one saw himself as distinguished from others. Each of his hearers felt as if the preacher’s eye were fixed on him, and his discourse addressed to him.”

Perhaps one of the things that is slightly unusual and perhaps a little unnatural was his lack of use of body language.

(Chart showing Jay’s usual Sermon structures with certain variables added for effect in the attachment herewith)

“To much action in the pulpit, in the use of the hands and arms, he was strongly opposed, and seldom used any, except an occasional elevation of the hand. Here we think he was somewhat deficient, for nature prompts in strong emotion to bodily action.”

However, too much bodily movement can be distracting, especially when it is feigned to get effect.

4.2) The character of his sermons

In this chapter, we will look more closely at the content of Jay’s sermons. We will consider first the content of that which is being delivered, namely such aspects as exposition and apostolicity. Then secondly we will consider the prevailing form and structure of Jay’s sermons.

Concerning exegesis, Jay’s sermons are always very faithful to the text. There is only one sermon, out of over 150 that have survived, where one gets the impression that Jay has lost sight of the exegetical thrust of the text.

Another test of true preaching is its apostolicity, its basis upon the Word of God. It is at this point that it is difficult to fault Jay, for his desire always was to preach the scriptures. It is hard to find anything in Jay’s sermons that contradicts an evangelical reading of the Bible. Jay’s preaching was always expository and textual. Jay never preached through a book of the bible consecutively and preached few sermon series, the only one remaining being his series on ‘The Christian Contemplated’. There are certain weaknesses about this approach to preaching. Lesser men than Jay who have tried to follow his example have tended to lose sight of the context. It is also a possibility,

as Jay does once, to lose sight of the exegetical thrust by overdeveloping the theme and bringing out points, that whilst pertinent to the subject are not actually in the text.

What is also noteworthy about Jay's preaching was its Christocentric nature. "His sermons were full of Christ, and his whole ministry was emphatically a gospel one". It is argued that the motto of his teaching was 'Christ in you, the hope of glory' (Col. 1:27).

"It was his object, during his entire history, to exalt the Lord Jesus, and to magnify his great salvation." This was one of the greatest charms of his discourses, and one important reason of his abiding popularity."

This is something that should never be trivialised or overlooked. It is only Christocentric preaching that enjoys the vitality of the Spirit.

Another marked feature of the character of Jay's sermons was the fact that they abounded with scripture. If you take two sermons of approximately the same length, you can get anywhere between a modest 48 quotes, as in 'The Wife's Advocate', or a gargantuan 182, as in 'A Christian Contemplated'. This gives body to Silvester's statement that "Mr. Jay... spoke much in the language of inspiration". That he was able to quote so much of the Bible with little repetition can be seen from the following chart of 'A Christian Contemplated'.

(Table to show how and what scriptures Jay used in "A Christian Contemplated" attached herewith)

The quotation of scripture was something that Jay was able to use to great effect. Jay's sermons reflect the beauty of the Bible, in the easy and natural ways its imagery, incidents and phraseology glide naturally into his own speech^{liii}. His son Cyrus gives an example of this^{liv}, but a far better example is his sermon, 'Believers rejoicing', based upon 1 Peter 1:8. After noticing first, the Christian's rejoicing, second the source of this joy, Jay moves on to the medium of this joy.

"In the Christian economy, every thing is by faith; we read of "the proportion of faith" of "the measure of faith", "the unity of faith", "the law of faith", "the word of faith", "the righteousness of faith", "the shield of faith", "the strength of faith", "the household of faith", "the full assurance of faith", "the profession of faith;" and yet there are some, who think that we say too much about faith. Everything is by faith; we are saved "through faith", "we are "justified by faith.", we are "sanctified by faith that is in Christ" ³/₄ our hearts are "purified by faith;" and yet some wonder that we so extol and commend faith. Everything is by faith; "the life, which we live in the flesh, is by faith of the Son of God;" "by faith we walk", "by faith we stand", "by faith" we "overcome;" and yet some persons are afraid, lest we lay too much stress on faith. Why everything is by faith; we read of "the fight of faith", of "the work of faith", of "the prayer of faith", of "the joy of faith."

When done properly this is something that adds remarkable competence and effect to a sermon. Jay's preaching bristles with prime, relevant, splendid, scripture quotations, which influence you in a most striking and poignant fashion. It is something that few preachers can do well without tediousness and repetition. However this was something that Jay was surprisingly free from, although he did have certain 'favourites' that he often quoted, (e.g. Ex. 8: 19; Job 2: 4; Job 5: 7; Pro. 27: 6; Is. 65: 5; Hab. 3: 17; Zec. 8: 23; Mark 2: 28; 2 Co. 6: 7; Jam. 4: 14). Some, no doubt, will wonder whether in his usage of scripture in this way he is not 'making texts into pretexts by ignoring their context. It is no doubt true that this could be argued in Jay's case, if he was 'proof-texting' in the way we normally think of. However, I would suggest that Jay's usage of texts is slightly different to that. Take an example from his sermon on 'Preparation to meet God' on the text: 'Prepare to meet thy God' (Amos 4: 12). He has made two points, 1) God is coming, and 2) We ought to be prepared for his coming; and is making his third point that there is a preparation that we can make that will enable us to meet Him in safety and peace. In this point, he is making his fifth of five sub-points, 'with Christ at your side' and says: "You remember that Joseph said to the sons of Jacob, "Except your brother be brought, you shall not see my face in Peace." This is no more than God says of us. To think of going to meet God without Christ, is to plunge into "a consuming fire."

The way Jay uses this quotation from Genesis is very telling and apt, and is something that is characteristic of certain Puritans. It would be wholly wrong of Jay if, and it is a big if, he is saying that the exegetical statement of this quoted text is 'without Christ you won't meet God in peace'. Rather what Jay is doing is taking the language of the Bible and using it to articulate his point. There is a danger in this that people might get the impression that Jay is making a statement about the meaning of his quoted text but it is only a small danger.

Another point concerning his use of verse, that is worthy of consideration due to its unusual nature is his constant application of the idea that Christians should make use of the pleas of scripture. Some of the examples that he's fond of are;

- 1) God be merciful to me a sinner (Luke 18:13)
- 2) Lord, save us: we perish (Matthew 8:25)
- 3) Enter not into judgement with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified (Psalm 143:2).
- 4) Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips (Hosea 14:2).

What made all this possible was his tremendous memory, which enabled him to have an exceptionally stored mind that could quote the length and breath of the bible from memory. This gave Jay the capability and great advantage on every occasion of selecting the most apt scripture for his purpose^{xl}. This is a fine and challenging example to preachers today who would not set a premium on committing the scriptures to memory. Where there was a weakness with this, it is the fact that Jay almost always quoted scripture without reference to the book, chapter and verse from which it had originated. This Jay did because “he imagined that the hearers would be diverted from the subject, and disturb their neighbours by turning over the leaves of their Bibles, and by the rustling noise, if many did so, which this would occasion.”

There is a grain of truth in this, because of the sheer density and frequency of the quotation. However, it would have helped to have a few less passages with more of them expressly reviewed and repeated to bring out and enamour their complete significance. This “... must do more good than so many passages interwoven, without reference or remark, into the texture of the sermon.”

Jay’s choice of text was often deemed so unusual that the congregation was sometimes so shocked that it took them some minutes to regain their composure. Although this may well be due to a Victorian English sense of propriety, there is no doubt that sometimes his texts, whilst very fitting, are somewhat unusual. Some good examples are:

1) The text he picked for the funeral service of Rowland Hill, ‘Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen’ (Zec. 11:2).

2) The text he preached for the funeral of Samuel Hallett, ‘Let us also go, that we may die with him.’ (John 11:9).

3) The text he was due to preach at a ministers ordination service, ‘A prudent wife is from the Lord’ (Pro. 19: 14). Whilst William Jay never preached without lengthy and proper preparation, he often wrote out his sermons in skeleton form^{lii} and he never until late on in life used any notes in the pulpit, and then only the main headings, and this was something he sorely regretted doing afterwards.

Jay sometimes does not bother with an introduction in his sermons, as in ‘Reconciliation with God’^{liii} and ‘Alpha and Omega’^{liv}. In the latter he starts with the words:

“Allow me this morning without preface or introduction to call your serious attention to the two parts contained in our text the description and the promise.”

This is helpful because it enables us to notice a characteristic of the beginning of Jay’s sermons, namely that he nearly always announces his divisions, even to the point of announcing the sub-points when he comes to each division.

For the most part, however, Jay does have very engaging introductions to his sermons. These introductions are often as unique and striking as his texts. They are nearly always succinct, marked, unique and lead artlessly to the subject on which he was to expand.

“We remember once hearing him, when preaching on Pilate’s question put to Jesus Christ, ”What is Truth?”, commence his sermon thus: - “It is A truth, Pilate, that thou art a cowardly, guilty wretch, in surrendering Christ to be crucified, when thou wert convinced he was an innocent man.”

An example of this is found in a sermon called ‘Trust and Love’^{lix}, on ‘I will love thee, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.’ (Psalm 18: 1-2). Jay introduced it with the following words:

“There are three modes of Speaking in regard to God; there is a speaking for God, there is a speaking of God, and there is a speaking to God. There is a speaking for God; and it becomes us to espouse his cause, to defend is truth, and to commend his people, as we have opportunity, and not, in the presence of his enemies, to sit, as David says, “as those in whose mouths there is no reproof.”

Or again we could turn to the sermon entitled ‘The Christian’s trust in God’, on ‘The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.’ (Nah. 1: 7) which was introduced thus: “The desire of knowledge; my brethren, is natural. Hence the eagerness of curiosity; hence the constancy of inquiry; hence the “eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing.”

However as has been rightly noticed this sort of ex abrupto method of introduction has its penalties since it is considerably difficult to sustain the attentiveness at the elevation attained by such an introduction^l.

Moving on from the introduction, we come to the main body of the text. As we have seen Jay’s sermons are usually divided and arranged in a very specific way^l. Often he used the text as his guide for the points of the sermon, which were mostly succinct, orderly and marked by singularity and comeliness^l. These sermons are among the best of those that have survived. There are many examples that could be given of this. One comes from the sermon ‘The privileges of the righteous’, based on the text: ‘For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.’ (Psalm 84:11), which Jay divides thus:

“Let us consider what he is - “A sun and Shield.” What he gives - “Grace and Glory.” What he withholds “no good thing.” And whom he regards “Them that walk uprightly.”

Another example comes from a sermon called ‘The sufferings of our Saviour necessary’, based upon: ‘For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings’ (Heb. 2: 10), which Jay divides thus:

“I. Behold the character of the Supreme Being: - “For whom are all things, and by whom are all things...

II. Observe the end which the God of all grace keeps in view. It is to “Bring many sons unto glory”...

III. Observe the means by which he executes his design. He constitutes Jesus Christ “The captain of their salvation”...

IV. Reminds us of the manner in which he obtains his distinction, and is prepared for the discharge of his office “is made perfect through sufferings”...

V. By examining the reasonableness and expediency of such a dispensation “It became him”

However, it was as equally common for Jay to make his headings flow out of the exegetical thrust of the verse.

Take for example ‘The Christian, in heaven’, based on ‘Who hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.’ (2 Tim. 1: 10). Here Jay divides his message into the following heads:

“I. Regards the degree of our present knowledge of the heavenly world. The[Sic.]

II. The manner in which the scripture aids us in conceiving of a subject so vast and difficult. The [Sic.]

III. Its principal constituents. And

IV. The instructions and impressions we should derive from the contemplation of the Christian in the possession of it.”

We take for granted today the traditional structured sermon, but in Jay’s context it was somewhat of a novelty and it is due to such great preachers as Jay and later Spurgeon that it has the wide spread acceptance it does. All Jay did was to follow in the footsteps of the Puritans. Where this is especially telling is the way that he tends to sub-divide his main points and even sub-divide the sub-divisions. There are many examples we can give of this, but we will restrict ourselves to a few of the more pertinent ones.

First, we have the sermon ‘Lot’s wife’, on ‘Remember Lot’s wife’ (Luke 17: 32), that found its way into ‘Lectures on Female Scripture Characters’.

1) *The Sin*

1.1) Idle and wanton curiosity.

1.2) Unbelief.

1.3) Disobedience.

1.4) Ingratitude.

1.5) Attachment to a place, wicked and devoted to destruction.

1.6) The Image of an apostate.

1.7) The sin was enhanced by her resisting the force of example.

1.8) She employed artifice and hypocrisy in aid of her design.

2) *The Punishment*

2.1) It was sudden.

2.2) The punishment was strange.

2.3) The punishment was ignominious.

2.4) Her punishment was inevitable.

3) *The Admonition*

3.1) It is well to instruct by example.

3.2) Bad examples may be profitable.

3.3) The use and important of memory.

3.4) The meaning exceeds the expression.

Second we have the sermon, ‘The sacred oracles’, on ‘Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words’ (Jer. 36:32).

1) The importance of having the word of God committed to writing.

1.1) Because the knowledge of them must be preserved and extended.

1.2) Because there was no way of preserving and extending this knowledge to be compared

to this.

2) Taking some views of those who would destroy the scriptures.

2.1) The taste of those who deny its authenticity.

- 2.2) Their regard to public good.
- 2.3) Their charity and compassion.
- 2.4) Their guilt.
- 3) Some things which seem likely to injure revelation, and which yet prove its advantage.
 - 3.1) The attacks of the infidel on its divinity.
 - 3.2) The suffering of its followers by persecution.
 - 3.3) The divisions and parties that have sprung up among its professors.
 - 3.4) The failings of its members.

Three concluding admonitions

- 1) Be persuaded of the stability of the cause of revelation.
- 2) Apply scripture to your own use, and apply it to purposes for which it has been given.
- 3) Be concerned for the spread and diffusion of it.

Third, the sermon 'The Christian, in the family', on 'That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. (1 Tim. 3: 15).

- 1) The condition our subject supposes.
 - 1.1) All the redeemed and sanctified people of God.
 - 1.2) A particular community, or company of believers associated together for religious purposes.

2) The obligations we are under to enter it.

- 2.1) Suitability.
- 2.2) Consolation.
- 2.3) Safety.
- 2.4) Usefulness.
- 3) The duties which arise out of it.
 - 3.1) Concerning worship.
 - 3.2) Concerning the minister.
 - 3.3) Concerning your fellow members.
 - 3.4) Concerning the welfare and prosperity of the whole interest.

Three concluding remarks.

- 1) There are those who are yet without, whose condition we lament.
- 2) Being part of the church demands that we be found in the performance of every part of our relevant duties.
- 3) Coming to the communion table does not make us a Christian, neither does membership in the visible church guarantee a membership in the invisible church.

The reason why Jay took this style of dividing up his sermons into what was in those days considered to be easily remembered points is that he believed that it helped people to retain the message. Jay believed that this helped to expand the retention of the uneducated. For the furtherance of this Jay tried to make these points as short and memorable as possible. Although in today's terms they would not be considered as short and memorable, it is the principle that is important and which we need to translate into our 20th century context.

Jay felt that sermon arrangement must enable the hearer to grasp the points easily. Because of this, he was criticised for making the skeleton of the sermon too prominent.

"Assuredly the art, frequently, was very ingenious and beautiful; still, it was not sufficiently concealed the mechanism was too apparent."

Possibly the reason why he was so keen to make the structure of his sermons so obvious was that he wanted people to take note of it. Designing them to help the memory, and then to not make them prominent would be to act in contradiction to their design.

Now Jay's sermons were not only structured this way in order to help the hearer to retain what was said but also to help the preacher to remember what he had prepared. It was Jay's testimony that this helped him to remember what he wanted to say, but also meant that he was able to be independent of notes in the pulpit, which he found crippling for a preacher. This is a good thing for us to consider because as Jay says, "if we cannot remember our own message how can we expect our hearers to remember it?"

Each of the composite parts of Jay's sermons had ample illustration. There is much elucidation of important truths in his addresses, which were extraordinarily explicit, sumptuous, racy, and striking. Jay often would make use of many different sources to illustrate his sermons. Take for instance the two following examples:

- 1) "It is a good observation of Paley's, that we should not suffer what we know, to be disturbed by what we do not know."
- 2) "We have not all thought alike in respect to religion; but "here," as Cowper said, "the dipped and sprinkled have

lived together in peace.”

3) “I remember once being in the company with the excellent Mr. Newton, when a forward young divine asked him expressly, “Pray, Sir, what do you think of the entrance of moral evil?” “Sir, I never think about it,” he said; “I know nothing about it. I know there is such a thing as moral evil, and I know there is a remedy for it; and there, Sir, all my knowledge begins, and all my knowledge ends.”

Jay made use also of apt historical allusions, he quoted from the poets and from theologians of various religious affiliations. Jay also was accustomed to much use of the common aspects of life. He was able to look at these and by familiarising him-self with them, could introduce them into his sermons and make his speech more intelligible. A good example of this is found in the sermon ‘The Christian’s trust in God’, based on ‘The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in Him’ (Nahum 1: 7). Jay illustrates the point that whilst it is easy to trust in the good times, it is the hard times that are the real test of faith by using the following illustration:

“Birds build their nests in the time of foliage; but their nests are discovered when the leaves fall off. Precisely so it is with regards to us and God.”

As we have noticed, an aspect of Jay’s preaching was the fact that he often quoted scripture and much of this quotation was used to illustrate his points. Hence, “the passages were not so much selected for proof as for illustration.” Jay often used Old Testament characters like Moses, Noah, Job and especially David. Jay justified this by arguing that reasoning in the pulpit is nothing, unless it is succinct and depicted with comparisons. No experimentalism is achieved without biblical examples and imagery, brought to life with passionate imaginative strokes. Jay goes on to say:

“Is not one sentiment, though it may be quaintly expressed, which is remembered and repeated by numbers twenty years afterwards, better than a whole sermon of tame smoothness, which slides off the mind like oil or mercury down a slant marble, and is forgotten before the admiring audience have even reached their own house?”

Jay would often throughout his points give practical direction. Sometimes he would say things in such a distinguished way that you often pick up pithy sentences that are so succinct they are almost proverbial, containing a whole sermon in a few words. This is something that you often find with puritans like Thomas Watson and Sibbes.

“Mr. Jay’s practical directions possessed much of the terseness, the wisdom, and the force of proverbs. In a single sentence, he often expressed what others would expand into a paragraph or a page. Few ever had, in such perfection, the happy art of saying much in few words.”

We can see this in the following examples:

1) “If religion were a human production, it would wear the resemblance of man; it would not be the reverse of all that he now is.”

2) “Here you talk of a dark night: remember there is a day without a cloud.”

3) “Let it, then, appear that the best principles produce the best practise.”

Jay always wound up his sermons with a brief exhortation that was often very direct and challenging. Some of the most faithful and fearless entreaty’s and warnings to the careless, the undecided, the ungodly are to be found in the concluding remarks of Jay’s sermons. They are direct, frank, and applied to both believers and unbelievers.

Jay’s appeals were directed towards effecting the heart of his listeners so they were changed by God. In these ending appeals, he often laid siege to the consciences of men.

“The conscience was powerfully appealed to, and he commended himself to the understanding, the judgement, to the feelings of every person, as in the sight of God.”

Jay was very strict concerning the length of his sermons, believing that “If it be good it need not be long, and of it be bad it ought not to be long.” His sermons were generally about fifty-five minutes; though, sometimes Jay would go past an hour, but rarely advancing past an hour and ten minutes.

4.3) The effects of his preaching

We should not be surprised to notice that it is said that Jay’s abilities in bringing about affectation in the heart were finely displayed. Those in the congregation testify that their hearts and wills were often dissolved by Jay’s appeals and testify to having “... seen the largest congregations most deeply affected, numbers being dissolved in tears”.

Such was the power of his preaching. This is the power of the Spirit of God working through a man whose whole being was fashioned and heated by God. It was not due to any power the preacher used to manipulate his audience. Jay did not rant and rave, or shout, to produce effect.

“There was no external, no physical force - no vehemence - no violent gesticulation. It was quiet, natural, tender, yet melting, pathos. You were quietly, quickly subdued. Deep emotion would start into your eye, almost before you were aware, and you could not check - you could not repress it neither had you any wish.”

It is only by the still small voice of God that we can explain this.

“It may be surprising for some to discover that when the Spirit of God powerfully attends the preaching of the word, one of the common indicators is a heightened sense of quiet; not shouts and ecstasies, but rather unnatural silence... the incessant movement of people is overcome by a dramatic stillness.”

Many who sat under his ministry testify to the fact that often when he preached a strange quietness would come over the congregation, as they were arrested by the words descending from his lips. This is nothing more than a powerful demonstration of the power of the Spirit showering the congregation in an extraordinary light such as is often seen in the history of revivals. Sherman, in a sermon on ministerial success, relates how there was a time when he heard Jay preach in an extraordinary manner at Reading on ‘remembering Jesus Christ’.

“On that interesting evening, he seemed to realize his actual presence, and to be carried away by the visions of glory that burst upon him from the celestial paradise. In that sermon he abandoned his usual calm, unexcited manner, and gave wings to his faith and love, so that he appeared to triumph in Christ, and to overcome by his own convictions of His ineffable glory.”

This is nothing other than the sacred anointing and is what often accompanies spiritually revived preaching. When this happens there seems to be an added emphasis on the voice and words of the preacher, so much so they seem sometimes to have come straight from heaven. Jay had a voice that was naturally quite extraordinarily “rich, deep, and musical” and had remarkable dignity and an extraordinary deep toned solemnity.

Jay often struck people in these moments with his emphasis upon certain words, with the way he said things.

“The expression with which he reads is wonderful his words distil as the dew; so softly and yet so effectually do they fall. His manner of emphasising some passages gives you an entirely new view of them.”

The slow deliberate manner of his speech helped this.

One of the notable effects of Jay's preaching was the fact that it is so gripping and enthralling. Jay possessed an extraordinary ability that would immediately captivate a congregation. Right from the start your heart, your mind and emotions would be caught up with the speaker as he expounded his subject. This gave the preacher the ability to carry people along with all that he introduced in his sermons. “No other preacher but one possessing his tact could dare to introduce into his discourses occasional sallies of wit, humour, quaint expressions, and anecdotes”.

This is no doubt due primarily to the unction of the Spirit that was upon his ministry. There were however, other factors to take into consideration. One factor that often had a profound effect upon people and adds to the effect of his preaching was his very features, especially his face. Strenuous passion, artful sarcasm, pungent satire, authentic witticism, and boundless charity all were given expression so masterfully by his face that, it is said that a deaf person could almost understand what he was talking about just by looking at him.

Another factor that contributed to the effect of his practical preaching was the way that, because the challenge of the text had first reached his heart, his pleas were enabled to penetrate the hearts of his listeners. Jay's sermons were excellent examples of practical pastoral theology that was disinterested in lofty dry abstractions. Jay's pastoral theology was biblical to the core, always dealing with issues as they appeared in the text, and always considering them in connection to the circumstances and behaviour of mankind.

“... They are uncommonly adapted to make men acquainted with their own hearts; to convey them back to the very spring of their actions; and to impress them with the conviction that the whole nature of religion is a practical reality.”

This ability to speak to people's hearts often surprised his hearers and made them feel that he was looking within them at their very hearts.

“He seemed to read every man. He appeared to judge all to be acquainted with all. This communicated peculiar beauty, as well as force, to his ministry, for when character is accurately and nicely discriminated, preaching cannot be flat cannot be ineffective.”

Another feature that contributes to Jay's effect in the pulpit is his use of scripture. We should not be surprised that God added the blessing He did to the quoting of His word. The frequent introduction of scripture language into a sermon imparts an unction that cannot be derived from any other source. Scripture has this quality about it because its author the Holy Spirit attends it and gives it convicting authority. Jay's ability to give a very telling and pertinent quote at the right moment to pierce the soul, was no doubt a combination of his natural intellect, as well as the prompting of the Spirit. Such was the force of this that his hearers were riveted and amazed by the quoting of the passage especially as often the passage was unfamiliar and yet so apt.

Jay was in his preaching style a forceful man, who spoke mightily, and with some degree of boldness. Jay himself was unrepentant about this.

“I like force in connexion with a man's mind and character: it rivets me. I like the energy of Johnson the force of Franklin the strength of Barrow. I much prefer power and impressiveness to mere elegance. Perhaps I have erred here, not having paid sufficient attention to elegance; but what I value, and what I have aimed at, is impression, energy, power. I like a sermon... to strike, to penetrate, to come home.”

However, as is often the case with forceful biting preaching there is a danger that, unless you are careful, ideas can be handled in too strong a manner, as was sometimes the case with Jay. His 19th century audience considered some of the things that he said as somewhat lacking in good taste.

“Mr. Jay was often very coarse in his observations. There was frequently a want of delicacy, refinement, and true polish. There was a bluntness, sometimes, almost amounting to rudeness... many observations, uncalled for, and undesirable, not only grated on the ear, but pained and offended... it was, unquestionably a great drawback.”

A pertinent example of this is found in ‘The young admonished’ where he says the following about parents who do not give their children spiritual direction.

“You would not have your love for your children to be suspected but... What is it to dispose of them advantageously in life, and leave them unprepared for death, unprovided for a new, a never-ending, period of existence? Are you the barbarous instruments of bringing these hapless beings into life, only to sacrifice them? Such parents are more cruel than Herod. He slew the children of others - these slay their own. He only destroyed the body $\frac{3}{4}$ they destroy the soul. His victims died innocent, and were doubtless saved these parents will not suffer their offspring to die innocent: by their unkind care, they guard them till the season of safety is elapsed; till they become accountable and criminal”

Another aspect that no doubt added to Jay's effect in the pulpit was the punchy forceful way in which he laid siege to the heart and conscience.

“The vanity, the emptiness of the world, was felt; the evil of sin was perceived, the preciousness of Christ was realized, the incomparable excellence of religion was, in some degree, appreciated; the happiness of heaven, by the devout followers of the saviour, was vividly and still more joyously anticipated.”

Another effect that Jay's preaching has is seen in the influence its example has and is setting to other preachers. Spurgeon is the best 19th century example of this. Hearing Jay preach at Cambridge was a great aid to the young Spurgeon, who was so struck by the sermon that he remembered its theme and some of the more pertinent parts long afterwards.

“I remember with what dignity he preached, and yet how simply... My recollections of Jay were such as I would not like to lose.”

This accounts for the reason why Spurgeon took Jay as one of his models upon which to base his preaching style. Spurgeon's style is said to contain Jay's “plan and method” the ‘pith of . Any modern day preacher who takes the time to study Jay as a preacher cannot but be greatly helped by this great master in Israel.

5) Conclusions

It is concluded that the term ‘preacher’ is one that has a certain elasticity to it that demands clear definition. The call of God is primary in the making of a man into a preacher. The preacher whom God has called is a person who has certain attributes which enable him to preach. The person called to be a preacher has certain qualities that generally make themselves apparent outside the pulpit. These attributes of a preacher are split three ways, there is first the personal piety, second certain intellectual aspects, third an experimental aspect, and lastly certain things which are best described as the personality of the preacher. Second, there is the work of the pulpit that falls under the description of true preaching. True preaching is that which effects change and this is normally guaranteed by two aspects, first the content or sermon and secondly the act of preaching.

We have also in this paper ascertained what it was that gave Jay his great ability as a preacher. The main thrust of this has consisted in a consideration of aspects relating to his devotional life, such as his prayer life and his unblemished walk before God. It is difficult to ascertain how Jay compares, in this area, to other great preachers like Christmas Evans of whom the biographers paid great attention to their praying habits. There is certainly less material like this relating to Jay and it is impossible to ascertain whether or not this is due in part to a reticence on Jay to share his private prayer life with others, or whether it was something his biographers failed to comprehend the importance of.

Secondly, this has led to a consideration of the furniture of his mind. Here we noted many noteworthy aspects that made him a naturally gifted preacher, such as his ability to make things strike and stick. This has to be his crowning glory and the greatest attribute which contemporary preachers can learn from. This is the single greatest need in 20th Century preaching that seeks a hearing from a society that has successfully managed to trivialise religion, a society that is becoming more and more sanguine. We will find it difficult to reach people if our preaching is dull and boring and deals with the great doctrines of the faith in a disinterested lifeless way that trivialises doctrine with woolly phrases and a lack of practical application.

Jay was a man who had a wonderful ability to speak whose words were permeated by a general hopefulness. Jay often speaks with much tenderness and is able to bring to great encouragement to believers especially those who are suffering under trials and losses and difficulties.

Jay's character was strong and robust and he had a single-minded determination to excel as a preacher. This led him to work hard to make sure that he was continually reading and learning and improving. This is a good challenge to preachers who often think that once they have done their theological training that is it, they can put their books away and their feet up. Such an attitude would have reaped the rebuke of Jay. It is concluded that the general features of Jay's preaching style resemble later Puritan preaching, in that it follows a very definite philosophy and form. His philosophy was to try to be as natural, plain and applicable as is required to make the sermon strike and stick. Obviously in today's terms his style would be considered quite difficult to understand and comprehend and we in order to follow his example would have to employ much simpler language and be even more plain and applicable. This is because Jay needs to be understood in context and this demands that we realise that Jay was as natural, plain and applicable as he needed to be without being simplistic. The form of Jay's sermons is always helpful and stresses the necessity of articulate expression and clarity in the pulpit. His sermons were straightforward and easy to follow and yet the more you dwell on them the more you realise you cannot plumb their depths either. This is a wonderful gift that all preachers should prayerfully seek and diligently cultivate.

Jay was always textual, faithful to the context and exegetically sound. His preaching was challenging and relevant without compromising to trends in the church. Where Jay perhaps could be criticised is the fact that he was perhaps a little too reluctant in expanding upon doctrine in his sermons. It could also be considered a marked weakness that he never preached systematically through a book or considered the value of doing overviews of books of the Bible. Neither, did he consider doing more series on subjects in the Bible despite the fact that some of the sermons in 'A Christian Contemplated' are among his finest that have survived. Jay's particular emphasis was that preaching is concerned with the gospel message of salvation and it was this and this alone that marked all his preaching style.

Jay's sermons abounded with pertinent scripture quotations that were used to great effect. Jay obviously worked hard at committing much of the Bible to memory and this is a great challenge to preachers today who rarely are able to do this and yet it is so important to delivering biblical theology.

Jay's introductions were always *ex abrupto* and caught the imagination immediately. This is something that is important to preaching that will strike and stick. The introduction to a sermon is as important as the first lines of a book. It must attract and draw the person in. His plan of division usually followed one of two paths. It was either based upon the words and structure of the text, or it was developed around an exegetical statement based upon the thrust of the text. The dangers with the former of these is that if not careful you can either miss the context, or tend to have particular themes that you preach on and you tend to bypass the whole counsel of the Bible. The danger with the latter is that you can tend to overdevelop your exegetical statement so that you tend to expound things that are pertinent but are not obvious in the text. Jay has a susceptibility to all of these dangers.

Jay followed the Puritans in the way that he developed his headings with sub-points which were always adaptations of the thrust of the heading. Jay tried to make these headings as simple and easy to understand as possible. There was always plenty of illustration, from scripture figures, theology, and nature, weaved throughout the sermon. Jay had a way also of making telling and proverbial statements that arrest the mind. This is an unusual quality that communicates his great personal and pastoral wisdom and is something that modern preachers cannot easily avoid without detriment to their preaching.

Jay's concluding exhortations were pungent and powerful remarks that laid siege upon the heart. Here was preaching that has bite to it and the challenge of this is obvious to his contemporaries who often speak peace when there is no peace.

The conclusion drawn from this is that Jay's preaching was very effective. We noticed that the Spirit of God would often fall from heaven heightening the powers of Jay and bringing about a supernatural stillness over the congregation. Jay used practical application and apt scripture quotation in a forceful way that must have had great effect upon his congregation. A last and lasting effect of Jay's preaching is the example it sets to other ministers. Jay was the patriarch and crowning glory of 19th century English Congregational preaching. It is a testimony to Jay's humility, and to the deprivation of the church today, that he is unknown by most Christians and his sermons go unread, uncherished and remain inaccessible to all but the most diligent of enquirers after him.

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