

you can step in a stride from the street to the fireside—and useful dwellings many of them are.

The idea of some preachers that all sermons must have an 'introduction' is nonsense. If the subject demands it, it must have it, but be glad when it is quite unnecessary and you can step swiftly in. Years ago I used to pass on my way to my church a wee house with an enormous porch. I see it in my mind's eye as I write. Great Corinthian pillars complete with acanthus leaves supported a baroque portico which would have given shelter from the rain for half a platoon of soldiers. On the other side of this enormous porch was something like the cheapest kind of council house. I always smiled as I went by. It reminded me of two things: the man who began to build and had not wherewith to finish . . . and, also, certain sermons I have heard. All introduction! Ornate splendour round the door . . . and next to nothing on the other side. The little house by itself could be warm and welcoming and snug. But after that ridiculous porch . . .!

It is a parable. There are small sermons. Minor duties must receive pulpit emphasis at times. But they do not remain small when they are related to God. Sweeping a room for Him and His laws, George Herbert tells us, 'makes . . . the action fine'. But those sermons do not call for elaborate porches. Just get in!

The way in which structural type and psychological method determine the start is clear on a moment's reflection. If the sermon argues a case and is persuasive in method, the thesis must be quickly announced and some indication given of the road which is to be travelled. One need not give a detailed map of the whole route at the beginning. Some surprises can be left to the journey itself, but the main route must be plain. 'We are going *there!* I want you all to come with me.'