

Now you are in the rural brother's church. Don't assume that no person of any consequence ever preached there before. Dr. Bayne, Dr. Burns, Dr. Willis, Dr. Irvine, Dr. Inglis, Dr. Ormiston, or Dr. Donald Fraser may have been there—may have preached some of their best sermons there. You are not so much greater than these men that you can assume that *anything from YOU is good enough for these plain country people*. The average of intelligence among these people may be higher than the average in your own congregation. They may know less about the last novel or the last play; they may never have seen a roller skating rink; but they positively do know their Bibles better, and are better judges of a good sermon than most of the people you preach to at home. They have seen your name in the daily papers, because you know one element of your greatness—perhaps the principal one—is that you live in a place where daily papers are published, and they expect something good—something very extra in the way of preaching. *They don't always get it*. Sometimes they leave church saying to themselves: "*Is that all?*"

Some years ago one of the most scholarly, accomplished and deservedly influential ministers in our Church happened to be in a city that need not be named. He fell in with a very young clerical gentleman who was noted for his insolent, patronizing airs. They dropped into a book store. Addressing the bookseller, the youth said in a marvellously patronizing manner: "Aw, here is our friend Mr. So-and-so from the country. I brought him in to see the books."

CONCERNING INNOVATIONS.

"That is an innovation," says our conservative friend, when any change is proposed, and he generally says it with the air of a man who feels certain he has settled the matter. Well, supposing it is. Your first baby was an innovation. Webster defines an innovation to be: "Change made by the introduction of something new." Every law, custom, rite and practice in existence was an innovation when first introduced. The very customs that extremely conservative people cling to so tenaciously were at one time innovations. That which they fight *for* now because it is old, was fought *against* years ago by the same kind of people because it was new. The innovations of one century become the good old things of the next. It is a little perplexing that the same class of people should denounce a change when made and not very long afterwards fight for the thing changed. Such a procedure would almost lead one to believe that the merits of the question are not taken into account and that mere age is the only thing considered. Now a custom is not necessarily good, simply because it is old. Drinking customs are old. Profane swearing is an old custom. It is a long time since men began to cheat. Lying began soon after the creation. Sin in

a hundred forms is old. Satan is old. An old custom is not necessarily good any more than an old man is necessarily good. Some old men are terribly wicked.

Every man that ever did anything conspicuously good for God or humanity might be charged with introducing innovations. The Priests of Baal might have accused Elijah for introducing innovations on Mount Carmel. The fire test was certainly a new thing. Daniel figured as an innovator in Babylon. Every prophet or priest or king that broke up a system of idolatry might have been charged with innovation. Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost was a decided innovation. No preacher in Jerusalem ever delivered a sermon like that before. The Twelve introduced an innovation when they asked the Church to elect deacons. The cry against the founders of Christianity everywhere and always was that they were overturning established rites and customs. That cry was put in a condensed form when they were charged with turning the world upside down. Turning the world upside down is an extensive and rather startling innovation.

Martin Luther was an innovator. So was John Knox. So was John Wesley. Dr. George Leslie Mackay introduced some innovations in Formosa.

Now we think we hear some good man say: "Oh there is no analogy between these cases and the case of a man who wishes to make changes in these modern times." Well, we admit the comparison does not go on all fours, but we do most emphatically assert that it is good in one particular: it shows that to shout "innovation" proves nothing in regard to any given question. Any proposed change should be considered on its merits and merely to say "innovation" is to say nothing.

The utter emptiness of the cry about innovations may be seen in another way. Railways are innovations, steamboats are innovations, telegraph lines are innovations, printing presses and reaping machines are innovations, coal oil lamps are innovations, the electric light is an innovation, daily newspapers are an innovation, improvements of all kinds are innovations when introduced. We live among innovations, work with innovations, make money out of innovations, enjoy innovations, and would feel that many of the comforts of life were withdrawn if the innovations were removed and we were forced back to the old state of things. Of course people who are pinched a little by any improvement are apt to cry out against the innovation. The proprietor of a line of stage coaches never likes to hear the whistle of the locomotive. A manufacturer of tallow candles is of course opposed to gas, and the gas companies are not in love with the electric light. A man who sells whiskey thinks the Scott Act a most outrageous innovation. Riel may come to the conclusion one of these days that the Gatling gun is a very dangerous Yankee innova-