

10 History of Brantford Congregational Church

One witty writer quoted by Charles Dickens in "The Chimes" summarizes this interpretation of the Ten Commandments as

"God bless the Squire and his relations
"And keep us in our proper stations."

Carlyle's friend, John Sterling, a curate of the Church of England himself, and son of Captain Sterling, a famous editor of "The Times," said that the Church of England kept a Black Dragoon in every parish to support the existing order of things—which was government of England by the English aristocracy.

This interpretation of the Ten Commandments is not one that the English Nonconformist or Canadian Free Churchman would reach for himself, nor would he infer that his spiritual teachers and pastors were only those appointed by the King and that his own clergymen were guilty of teaching the false doctrine, heresy and schism from which Anglican Church people prayed the good Lord to deliver them every Sunday; but it was pointedly explained in thousands of Anglican Church sermons that these were the heretical and schismatical doctrines taught and held by all outside the Church of England, which is after all by law established in part of the southern portion of the island of Great Britain only, and not in the rest of the huge British Empire. In Scotland Anglicans are Dissenters from the Established Church. The disestablishment of the Irish Church and the English Church in Wales has reduced the realm of the Anglican Church since Dickens wrote "The Chimes."

It is difficult for Canadians born in the last half century to realize that in England and Wales no Dissenters, Nonconformists or Free Churchmen were entitled to be buried by their own ministers in their parish churchyard, usually the only graveyard, until 1880. They would probably be surprised that a Wesleyan Methodist minister's tombstone in the churchyard was defaced by the order of a Lincolnshire rector about that time, and that his Bishop supported his action in cutting off the word Reverend, because a Methodist could not be a spiritual pastor or teacher, as he did not belong to the Established Church. It would surprise them that a medical man, a graduate in Arts of Aberdeen and in Medicine of Glasgow, London, Liege (Belgium), and Montpellier (France), afterwards F.R.C.S. of England, the medical attendant of the mother of Admiral Weymss and the Haigs of Pen Ithon (Lady Rhondda's people), was asked to resign his position in a Welsh border town because he would not promise to cease preaching in the pulpit of the local Independent Church and the Church patients of his employer had insisted that he should be discharged; but I remember this being done to an old friend of mine who had come into Wales from Scotland. Canadians have never paid tithes or Church rates to a Church they never attended; they were never in recent years excluded from all public office or power because they were Dissenters. To them it would not appear surprising that Mr. Asquith's Cabinet contained a large number of Nonconformists or that the Prime Minister of Britain with the power of nomination of Bishops and Archbishops of the Established Church of England in his hands should be a Baptist lay preacher or Nonconformist instead of a member of the Church of England; therefore they do not realize that one large source of Mr. Lloyd George's popularity is that he is the first Nonconformist to occupy the position of Prime Minister of Great Britain and Ireland, for Nonconformists are more than one-half of the people of the United Kingdom.

It was much more usual to English people to see men of an old Independent ancestry, like Mr. Asquith himself, sign the Thirty-Nine