

# **A PRIMER OF FREE CHURCH HISTORY**

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A primer of Free Church history by A. Johnson Evans

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**A. JOHNSON EVANS**

**A PRIMER OF FREE  
CHURCH HISTORY**



Nonconformists

**A Primer of  
Free Church  
History . . .**

By **A. JOHNSON**  
**EVANS,**  
" "  
**M.A.**

1899

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## PREFACE.

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THIS little book has been written mainly with the object of interesting the young people of all ages who are connected with the Evangelical Free Churches, and of setting them on the right course of study in order to arrive at a proper knowledge of the history of their spiritual forefathers. For this purpose, great care has been taken to make the story historically accurate, or as nearly so as is possible within the limits assigned. The author has attempted to be strictly fair to men of all parties, and has avoided all assumptions that, in the conflicts of past times, one side was right and the other necessarily wrong. This method of writing, of course, deprives the reader of some of that glow which comes from the perusal of books that are more "partisan," but the loss is surely compensated by the increased historical sense which results from a more sober view of old controversies.

To those of us who are modestly, yet firmly, assured that we are holding to the highest truth that is possible for ourselves, there is no gain in refusing to grant that others may be right for themselves, though unable to agree with us on matters which, after all, transcend the powers of human finity.

The author may as well confess, once for all, that the treatment of the subject is unequal. Much more

## Preface.

space has been given to the older "Dissenting" bodies than to those which originated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This was necessary to the purpose of the book, which aims at illustrating and elucidating, by historical narrative, our present position. But he wishes to guard against a misunderstanding which might arise among Baptist friends. He therefore would take this opportunity of saying (what will be found in the text), that as Baptist Churches are Congregational in their forms of government, and as the main interest of seventeenth century controversy was concerned with such questions, the word "Congregational" must please be taken as including both "Congregational" Churches, commonly so-called, and those who, because of the dogma which still to a certain extent divides them from their brethren have come to be called, by themselves and others, Baptists.

There will be found at the end of the book a short Bibliography. That list reveals the fact that there is a great need for much scientific work on this subject. Many of the defects of this Primer must be attributed to the lack of good standard histories of the various denominations. But, above all, the author looks forward to the advent of a sound history of the Free Churches as a whole, written by a scholar imbued with the modern historical spirit, yet enthusiastic enough to present to the world the inner meaning of British Nonconformity. If this Primer can do anything towards this consummation, the hopes of its author will be fully satisfied.



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