

THE APOSTLES OF FYLDE METHODISM

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649485031

The Apostles of Fylde Methodism by John Taylor

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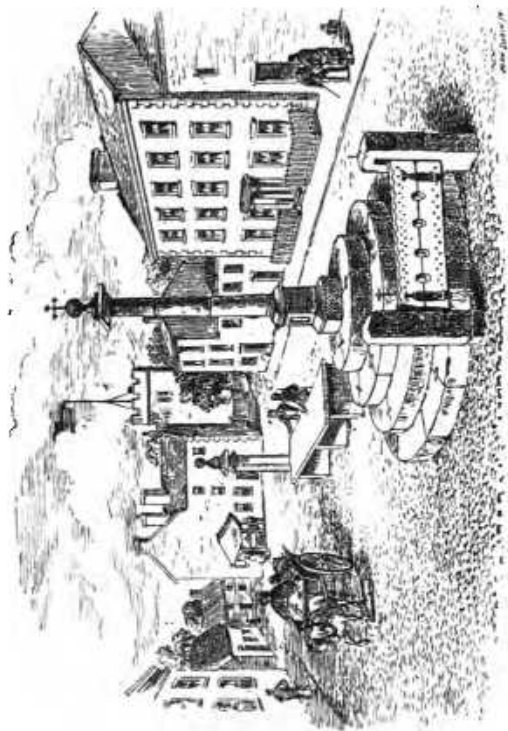
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JOHN TAYLOR

**THE APOSTLES OF
FYLDE METHODISM**



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THE APOSTLES
OF
FYLDE METHODISM.



BY

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AUTHOR OF

"REMINISCENCES OF ISAAC MARSDEN," "PICTURE TRUTHS,"
"GREAT LESSONS FROM LITTLE THINGS," ETC.

LONDON:

T. WOOLMER, 2, CASTLE STREET, CITY ROAD, E.C.
AND 66, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

1885.

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PREFACE.

WHILE preparing a lecture for our young people on the "Introduction of Methodism to Blackpool," I was astonished to find how little the Fylde people knew of their own history. Lives of self-denial, and deeds of heroism, had laid the foundations of the Church as it is to-day, and the noble men and women who had toiled, and suffered, and died for the truth, were in danger of being forgotten.

What is true of the Fylde country is true of every Circuit and Church in the land. The Gospel lifts men and women from obscurity and weakness, and makes them powerful for good. It transforms some of them into the grandest heroes the world has ever seen; and if half the time and talent spent in writing works of fiction were devoted to the facts of Church history, it would soon be acknowledged that "fact is stranger than fiction."

This book is not a history of Fylde Methodism. It is a series of biographical sketches of the men and women who made the Church what it is, and who were themselves transformed and sanctified by the Gospel they believed and taught. I have gathered my facts from official documents and Circuit records, and from the lips of old people who knew the parties I have named. So far as I could, I have verified every statement I have made, and the reader may rely on its absolute truthfulness.

And so long as the bright succession of holy men and women runs, the "Acts of the Apostles" will have to be written. We need to realise that the power of the Gospel is the same in every age and place, and that wherever it is faithfully preached and consistently lived, it must and will bring forth fruit.

If the reading of this book strengthens any man's faith in God, or intensifies his love and devotion to the cause, it will have served its purpose nobly.

JOHN TAYLOR.



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THE
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I.

THE FYLDE COUNTRY.

THE "Fylde," or "Garden," is the name given to that tract of country which lies between the rivers Ribble and Wyre, in North-West Lancashire. The name is sometimes applied to the district beyond the Wyre as far as the mouth of the Lune.

It is a level, fertile country, about twenty-four miles long by eighteen broad, extending from Lytham and Freckleton on the south to Scorton and Pilling on the north, and from Preston on the east to Blackpool and Fleetwood on the west.

In the summer season excursion steamers sail from Preston occasionally on a coasting trip, and this is a very enjoyable method of surveying the Fylde country. We leave "Proud Preston" for a sail down the Ribble early in the morning, as the tide serves us only at that hour. The tall smoky chimneys cause a dark cloud to hang over the town, but the sky is clear and the prospect bright as we leave the town behind. For a few miles we sail along the edge of Preston Marsh, that was once a bog and morass, but is now drained and rendered fertile. Soon we approach a bluff, overlooking the

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river, on which stands Freckleton, the most southerly village in the Fylde. Through an intricate channel and over shifting sands we plough our way to Lytham, twelve miles from Preston.

Lytham is a clean, quiet, respectable town, of about 5000 inhabitants, that for years has been under a paternal government. The Clifton family, of Lytham Hall, being landowners of the entire parish, and spending most of their time in the town, have preserved a form of local government closely approaching to the feudal system of the olden time. The town has thus acquired a reputation for order and quietness and respectability, and this reputation has attracted to the place visitors and residents who desire to escape from the bustle and strife of our large towns. It has an extensive promenade and pier, and during the summer steamers run daily to Southport, which is only eight miles distant across the sands.

Resuming our journey from Lytham, we sail through a narrow, intricate channel, near the lighthouse at the mouth of the Ribble, and steering northward, we are soon at St. Annes, about two and a half miles from Lytham.

St. Annes is the youngest of the Fylde towns. It was only born about ten or a dozen years ago. A number of enterprising capitalists leased the land from J. T. Clifton, Esq., of Lytham Hall, and transformed a lonely rabbit warren into a town. It has now all the attractions of a watering-place, and is largely patronised by visitors seeking repose and quietness. It affords a fine view of Southport, and the distant hills of North Wales, from its promenade and pier.

Steaming again north-west through the channel known on the charts as "North Hollow," we soon come abreast of South Shore and Blackpool, and land at one of the piers. We find ourselves on a magnificent promenade nearly three miles long, and in a town that out of season has a population of about 15,000, while during the season it is crowded with visitors from every part of the country. The charm of the place is its magnificent sweep of sea. Like St. Annes, it is