

## On the Work of God in Sunderland and Stockton Union Circuit.

“Hear ye deaf, and look ye blind that ye may see” Isa.

Dear Brethren.

Stockton, Oct. 15, 1823.

At the September Quarter Day, 1823, Sunderland and Stockton Branches were made into a Circuit, called “SUNDERLAND AND STOCKTON UNION CIRCUIT.

Scarcely a year has elapsed since our cause was introduced into the northern part of this circuit. And, although the period is short, yet abundant fruit has appeared: a very blessed and glorious work has gone on for some time in Sunderland and the neighbouring collieries. In Sunderland and Monk Wearmouth, (which is a village on the opposite side the river from Sunderland) we have nearly four hundred members. In Lord Steward’s and Esquire Lambton’s Collieries, we have near four hundred more! Some of the most abandoned characters have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Indeed the Lord and the poor colliers are doing wondrously. Our congregations are immensely large and well-behaved. It would do any of the lovers of Jesus good to see the dear colliers sometimes under the word. On some occasions, (for want of time to wash themselves,) they are constrained to come “BLACK” to the preaching or else miss the sermon, and when the Lord warms their hearts with his dying love, and they feel him present in his word, the large and silent tears rolling down their black cheeks, and leaving the white streaks behind, conspicuously portrays what their hearts feel. Their hearty and zealous exertions in the cause of God would make almost any one love them. We have five preachers employed in this circuit, and a blessed prospect. May the Lord so continue his work, that the “North may completely give up, and the south keep not back,” until the ends of the earth are converted to the Lord, Isa. xliii. 6. N. WEST. Sunderland and Stockton Circuit.

5 Sunderland, December 8, 1823.

Dear Brother Bourne,

It is generally pleasant work to write to a friend when the subject treated of, conveys “Good News.” We had our first Quarter Day on the 2nd Instant, in the Sunderland and Stockton Circuit. All things went on well. Our number of members at Quarter Day amounted to nine hundred and sixty-two, leaving out South Shields and her towns, which are a circuit of themselves. Since the commencement of the last new plans, our increase for the quarter past (taking in Stockton and her few towns,) amounts to four hundred, or upwards. Our business lasted two days. About thirty-six of our brethren attended the first day; also our brother Simpson, (Travelling Preacher) from the Hexham Branch, favoured us with a little of his company and counsel, as he made Sunderland in his way going to Hull Quarter Day. All the brethren were and are hearty in the cause. Lord continue them so. Love and unanimity prevailed amongst us; and gratitude to the Father of Mercies seemed portrayed on every countenance.

We have a blessed prospect; the work is still going on. We have got our large chapel in Sunderland covered in. Glory be to God, he is still with us, and that is best of all. We have sixteen classes in Sunderland Town; and all of them, in general, in a prosperous state. Some useful men have lately joined us, and we expect the Lord will raise up many more, we are in great need of labourers. Whoever wants plenty of work in the Lord’s vineyard, plenty of the honour of bearing hardships, persecutions, losses and crosses, and plenty of glory hereafter, may come amongst us, (as a people.) But let all those, whether preachers, leaders, or people who mean to be lazy, indolent, and formal; or want the honour of men, more than of God; or who want to bear rule, or appear conspicuous: I say, let all these keep away. God is not confined to any one of us, nor to any individual in the world, for the performing of his work. This should teach us genuine humility. Well, blessed be God, I feel as determined as ever; I feel my duty to be my delight, and I don’t know that any thing pleases me better than to be getting good and doing good. Lord make me humble, zealous, and watchful, and then I may hope to be useful. I beg an interest in your prayers, that both my own soul and the work wherein I am engaged, may prosper. And if we live till another quarter, I hope still to have better news to tell you. In the mean time, I subscribe myself, your affectionate, though unworthy fellow-labourer in the gospel of our Common Lord.

N. WEST.

---

Reference

Primitive Methodist Magazine 1824/10; 1824/34