

us, when it is a little creditable, when it is the conventional or fashionable thing; not that, but "abounding" in it, always abounding in it, whether it is popular or unpopular, whether it is fashionable or unfashionable, whether it is agreeable or irksome, whether it pleases us or does not please us, always abounding in it, with all the powers that we have, influences, words, works, means, examples; everything that we can set in motion in obedience to God's will we are to set in motion that He may be glorified. "Always abounding in the work of the Lord." Now, it is quite true (I thank God that it is true), any services in our most ordinary walks of life can be transformed into service of God. To sell in the store; to make an agreement; to carry a message; to transact a piece of business: anything, thank God, you can do in such a way that it shall be of service to God. But this means more; it means going out of the way; it means being aggressive; it means taking pains, it means denying ourselves; it means if need be, to be offering sacrifices in the matter; abounding always in the work of the Lord. Well, why? For a thousand reasons; but He only gives one here, and that one is sufficient—"Knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

I would like to know what other kind of work there is regarding which you can have that assurance. How much money has been invested in hope and all lost; how much energy have men put into enterprises, and they fell to the ground, and there was nothing but mortification and humiliation; they are ashamed to talk of them. How many things have men entered into and given them time and energy and means; but nothing came of them! But it is not so here. This labour is not in vain; and they who are counselled to engage in it are authorized to know that it shall not be in vain: "Knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." What does that mean? It means what it says. It cannot be, it never will be, in vain. "What," you say, "will there always be results?" Why, yes, visible to the eye of Him to whom the work is done: visible to the eye of the employer, and that is enough for the employed. It shall not be in vain in Him for He has seen it, and the motive that inspires it, and the results that He will bring about by it, and it shall not be in vain. Does that seem hard to any of you? Then let me give you a crude illustration that may make it a little clearer. There are two great armies in battle array, the one is in numbers much weaker than the other, and the general of the weaker host sees the difficulty, his stronger enemy has a powerful detachment there on his right, and he must provide against that. He summons a subordinate officer to his side; he says, "you shall take so many men"—a bare handful—"and you shall attack these troops to my right;" and the battle begins, and the subordinate obeys. Does this subordinate, with his handful, vanquish and drive from the field this crowd upon the right? Why, no. What does he do? He keeps them occupied so that the hosts marshalled face to face have it all to themselves, and it is not in the power of those troops on the right to take the flank or rear of the weaker army, and the weaker carries the day; and when the subordinate presents himself before the general-in-chief in the evening hour (his handful of men greatly reduced), is he reproached that he did not drive them off the field? No; but the general says: "Well done, well done; you did all that I expected; I did not mean, I did not suppose, that you could drive them from the field, but you kept them from standing in my way while I dealt with those directly in front of me; well done, good and faithful!" The subordinate did not know, perhaps, what was in his commander's mind; he knew what he was told to do, and he went and did it. And it is so here, my beloved, with the Captain of Salvation. When He gives you work to do, go and do it, go and do it, "Always abounding in the work of the Lord." It will not be in vain; there will be results seen by the eye of Him who gives you the order; and when the great and final review comes, and all stand before Him who administers the kingdom to the glory of the Father, He will say, "Well done, good and faithful, ye were faithful over few things, I will make you rulers over many things,