

THE PREPARATION TO RUN SUCCESSFULLY

HEBREWS xii. 1.

“Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us.”

THE struggle involved in the Christian race is expressed in Scripture by various terms, all of which, however, convey the idea of our strength being taxed to the utmost. It is called “a conflict” (Phil. i. 30), “a fight” (1 Tim. vi. 12), “a wrestling” (Eph. vi. 12); and as the stake for which we run is eternal life, we are urged to put forth all our power.

As, for instance, we are exhorted to “strive” (Luke xiii. 14), as one contending for his life; to “labour” (Heb. iv. 11), to “be vigilant” (1 Pet. v. 8), to “give all diligence” (2 Pet. i. 5); and the secret is, being “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might” (Eph. vi. 10). In preparing for the Christian race, a man should not only have a clear view of the object to be attained—eternal life; and of the way in which it is to be attained, through faith in Christ; but he should also have counted the cost of contending.

This is the course our Lord recommends (Luke xiv. 28, & c.). He should first have satisfied himself of the value of the prize, and then made up his mind to win it. This should be established within him, as his guiding, governing purpose. His language should be, “By God’s grace, I will so run as to obtain. This is my one object, to which all other things shall yield and be made subservient.

For this, I live; for this, I run; and for this, I have made up my mind to ‘lay aside’ everything that may hinder.” The idea to be illustrated is not the actually running the race, but the giving up all that hinders our running to the greatest advantage. And this we must do cheerfully and willingly as cheerfully and unhesitatingly as a man would put off such articles of heavy clothing as would be likely to hamper him in running a foot race.

(The Titles of Jehovah: A Series of Lectures by J. W. Reeve, London: James Nisbet and Co., M.DCCC.LVIII, ebook, 215-217, Text & Paragraph Structure Modified)