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THE DISCIPLINE OF LIFE AND CHARACTER.

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PART II.

BEFORE proceeding to speak of the features or elements of character, it may be as well that something should be said on our starting point. We all begin with certain postulates, certain assumptions. If these are disallowed, they must be argued elsewhere. So far as they enter into our judgments respecting character and its formation, so far we can expect agreement with our conclusions only among those who begin as we begin.

Briefly, then, let us note these postulates. In the first place, we assume that man is not a mere animal, nor merely a superior kind of animal. Man has a rational and a moral nature which is not found in the brute. Man is made in the image of God in a sense which could not be attributed to the lower animals. Very few will deny this altogether.

But further, man is not in a normal condition. We prefer to state the matter in this form rather than speak of man as a fallen creature. It is not that we deny the doctrine of the Fall; but it is not necessary here to assume any particular theory of man's proba-

tion and failure. The general truth that man is in an abnormal condition hardly admits of dispute. When we examine man's constitution, we see that it is not universally or generally acting as it was intended to act. We see that the principle whose nature marks it out as the master principle is continually cast down and made to serve. We see that the human race, generally, is blighted by selfishness. We might perhaps say that herein is the essence of original sin. Moreover, we all inherit tendencies from our forefathers—tendencies for which we are in no way responsible, but which color our whole character and life. Of this we have spoken already.

Now, if we are to consider our subject under a Christian light, we must take account not merely of human sinfulness, but also of Divine redemption and regeneration. We are a redeemed race and if we are not regenerate, it is because we refuse to enter upon our birthright. It is in Christ and in the family of God that we obtain a clear view of the true nature of human life, and of the