

of all the virtues. Let a man give the reins to his impulses and passions, and from that moment he yields up his moral freedom. He is carried along the current of life, and becomes the slave of his strongest desire for the time being.

3. **Resist Instinctive Impulse.**—To be morally free—to be more than an animal—man must be able to resist instinctive impulse, and this can only be done by exercise of self-control. Thus it is this power which constitutes the real distinction between a physical and a moral life, and that forms the primary basis of individual character.

4. **A Strong Man Ruleth His Own Spirit.**—In the Bible praise is given, not to a strong man who "taketh a city," but to the stronger man who "ruleth his own spirit." This stronger man is he who, by discipline, exercises a constant control over his thoughts, his speech, and his acts. Ninetenths of the vicious desires that degrade society, and which, when indulged, swell into the crimes that disgrace it, would shrink into insignificance before the advance of valiant self-discipline, self-respect, and self-control. By the watchful exercise of these virtues, purity of heart and mind become habitual, and the character is built up in chastity, virtue, and temperance.

5. **The Best Support.**—The best support of character will always be found in habit, which, according as the will is directed rightly or wrongly, as the case may be, will prove either a benignant ruler, or a cruel despot. We may be its willing subject on the one hand, or its servile slave on the other. It may help us on the road to good, or it may hurry us on the road to ruin.

6. **The Ideal Man.**—"In the supremacy of self-control," says Herbert Spencer, "consists one of the perfections of the ideal man. Not to be impulsive, not to be spurred hither and thither by each desire that in turn comes uppermost, but to be self-restrained, self-balanced, governed by the joint decision of the feelings in council assembled, before whom every action shall have been fully debated, and calmly determined—that it is which education, moral education at least, strives to produce.

7. **The Best Regulated Home.**—The best regulated home is always that in which the discipline is the most perfect, and yet where it is the least felt. Moral discipline acts with the force of a law of nature. Those subject to it yield themselves to it unconsciously; and though it shapes and forms the whole character, until the life becomes crystallized in habit, the influence thus exercised is for the most part unseen, and almost unfelt.