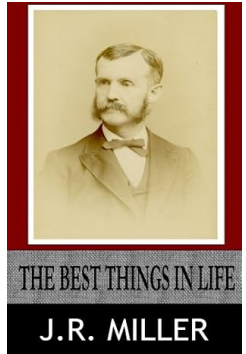


Excerpt from:
The Best Things In Life
James Russell Miller (1840-1912)

*Excerpts selected by Bob Evelyn
Wilmore, Kentucky; 2026.*



The Best Things

We should seek the best things in life.

There is a way. It may not be easy – the easy course is just to let ourselves drift – but we know too well what the end of this will be. We should be brave enough to take ourselves vigorously in hand and to get our faces turned toward the *best* things. Nothing will drift *upstream*; we shall have to use the oars if we want our boat to go that way. But that is the way to the *best* things.

We are to accept our place in life, contentedly and cheerfully, whatever the limitations, whatever the hardness, and set about living in such a way that we shall make our one little spot of the world, as much as possible like heaven.

Think On These Things

The habit of *cheerfulness* ... is said to be of great worth to a person. The habit of being always an *encourager*, never a discourager, gives incalculable value to one's personality and influence.

There is another habit of life, which if it were to become universal would change many things. The habit of always seeing the good in people, in conditions, in circumstances, and in experiences.

"If there is any virtue, and if there are any things praiseworthy – think on these things" (Philippians 4:8). The emphasis seems to be on 'any' – if there is any virtue, even the least, in another, if there is in a life which seems almost wholly bad, even the smallest things that is good – we are to find that and to think upon that mere *speck of beauty*, rather than on the much that is evil and unbeautiful.

We can help others to become great only by being patient with them. Men and women everywhere need nothing so much as gentleness.

The teaching applies to our own personal experience of sorrow. We should seek the line of brightness in any dark picture and think of that. And there always are breaks in the clouds through which we can see the blue and the stars.

Rule of Peace

Our disposition should be sweet, and our conduct in all things so beautiful, that all who know us, or do business with us, or are associated with us in any capacity will testify to our Christ-likeness and will receive from their contacts with us – touches of blessing and of beauty. The way to have such a character, such a disposition, is to let the peace of Christ have sway in our hearts.

The trouble with us is that we do not let this peace rule in us. Instead, we let a thousand other things – cares, disappointments, discontents, anxieties, fears, doubts – rule and mutiny against peace, the rightful heart ruler. No wonder we have so little of the reign of quietness and calmness in us. If we would let peace take its place on the throne and control all our life it would soon grow into beauty. Then joy would sing its sweet songs wherever we go.

Christ In Our Every Days

All who bear Christ's name should live so carefully in their business affairs that no reproach ever shall come back to the name of the church from anything any of them may do during the week in their common work. It never should be said of any of them, "He is an enthusiastic Christian on Sunday – but on Monday he drives hard bargains, he takes advantage of others, he does not pay his debts, he is not honest, he oppressed the poor, he does not live a clean, pure life."

Note: Excerpts are provided as they appear in the book. The author uses the masculine "he" or "him" in the broader sense for humanity – male and female. Rather than take liberties with his writing, I have retained the text as used by the author – and offer this note of explanation.

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