

EGW Counsels on Church Buildings

1. It's about People not about the Building

The first temple's magnificence had been a source of pride to Israel before their captivity; but the glory of the first temple could not recommend them to God, for they did not bring Him the sacrifice of a humble and contrite spirit. When people lose sight of the vital principles of God's kingdom, ceremonies multiply and become extravagant. When they despise the simplicity of godliness, their pride and love of display demand magnificent church buildings, splendid adornings, and impressive ceremonies.

But God values His church for the sincere piety that distinguishes it from the world. He judges its worth by how much its members have grown in the knowledge of Christ and in spiritual experience. He looks for love and goodness. Beauty of art cannot compare with beauty of character revealed in Christ's representatives. A congregation may be the poorest in the land, but if the members possess the principles of Christ's character, angels will unite in their worship. —[Royalty and Ruin pg 198](#)

2. The Importance of a Church Building

- 2.1 Truth loses much of its influence if the church meets in an undesirable place—**
We feel the need of a church very much. Had we moved out in faith, and started to build a church before now, it would have better, far better, for the success of the work. Such a movement would have given importance and character to our work. Having to come so great a distance from the road into the bush to get to the place of meeting, and then climb the stairs to the mill—often exposed to cold, and again to heat—and with surroundings of every conceivable kind of furniture and utensils, did not honor God or inspire the people with sacred ideas. The force of truth loses much of its influence on the mind because of the surroundings. I have seen this and deplored it, but the dearth of means has left us in perplexity.—[Manuscript Releases 13:407](#).
- 2.2 Our work in a new place is not perceived as permanent until a church is built—**
Now we must have a meeting house. The people are saying, "These people will soon go away and you have no church building, and then you will be scattered." We want to see a building before we leave for America. I have carried the church in Maitland in my soul.—[Manuscript Releases 7:90](#).
- 2.3 Memorials for the Truth—**When an interest is aroused in any town or city, that interest should be followed up. The place should be thoroughly worked, until a humble house of worship stands as a sign, a memorial of God's Sabbath, a light amid the moral darkness. These memorials are to stand in many places as witnesses to the truth. God in His mercy has provided that the messengers of the gospel shall go to all countries, tongues, and peoples, until the standard of truth shall be established in all parts of the inhabited world.—[Testimonies For The Church 6:100 \(1900\)](#).

2.4 It Assures a Stable Work—Wherever a company of believers is raised up, a house of worship should be built. Let not the workers leave the place without accomplishing this.

In many places where the message has been preached and souls have accepted it, they are in limited circumstances, and can do but little toward securing advantages that would give character to the work. Often this renders it difficult to extend the work. As persons become interested in the truth, they are told by the ministers of other churches,—and these words are echoed by the church members,—“These people have no church, and you have no place of worship. You are a small company, poor and unlearned. In a short time the ministers will go away, and then the interest will die down. Then you will give up all these new ideas which you have received.”

Can we suppose that this will not bring strong temptation to those who see the reasons of our faith and are convicted by the Spirit of God in regard to present truth? It has to be often repeated, that from a small beginning large interests may grow. If wisdom and sanctified judgment and skillful generalship are manifested by us in building up the interests of our Redeemer’s kingdom, we shall do all in our power to assure the people of the stability of our work. Humble sanctuaries will be erected where those who accept the truth may find a place to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience.—[Testimonies For The Church 6:100, 101 \(1900\)](#).

2.5 Securing City Properties—In every city where the truth is proclaimed, churches are to be raised up. In some large cities there must be churches in various parts of the city. In some places, meetinghouses will be offered for sale at reasonable rates, which can be purchased advantageously.—[Letter 168, 1909](#).

2.6 Go Forward—When we open up the work in one field, and gather out a company, we consecrate them to God and then draw them to unite with us in building a humble house of worship. Then when the church is finished, and dedicated to the Master, we pass on to other fields. Distinct and plain the word has come to us, “Go forward,” and just as soon as the warning message has been given in one place, and men and women raised up to continue the work there, we pass to the unworked parts of the Lord’s vineyard.—[Letter 154, 1899](#).

3. Leasing

3.1 Renting a church is an acceptable, but temporary, arrangement—As the large tent had been taken down, our people secured the use of the Congregational church, corner Eighteenth and Market Streets, for our Sabbath services. A few months ago our own church building in Oakland was sold, and our brethren and sisters are meeting in this rented church until some more permanent arrangement can be made.—[The Review and Herald, November 29, 1906](#).

4. Location

4.1 Secure land that is favorably situated—It is right that there should be a commodious house of worship in the city of Portland. Our brethren there have done well in securing a piece of land favorably situated between the business part of the city and the great park called “The Deerings’ Oaks.”—[The Review and Herald, May 18, 1911](#).

- 4.2 Transportation should be considered when choosing a building site**—I must write to you regarding your proposed church building. I am pleased with the site you have selected. It is near to the street-railway, and thus very convenient for those who come from a distance.—[Manuscript Releases 21:93](#).
- 4.3 Do not build on too small a lot**—Sunday we addressed the people again. Our meeting lasted over three hours, because the plans and designs for building the new chapel were fully discussed. We went to see the land chosen upon which to erect the church building. A small lot had been purchased, but this gave those who should purchase the adjoining lot the privilege to build close against the walls of the chapel, and thus shut out the very light and sunshine which they so much needed. We advised that the adjoining lot, also, be purchased, which situates them on a corner lot, and where no building can be erected anywhere near them.—[The Review and Herald, September 27, 1887](#).

5. Design

- 5.1 The church building should be simple and inexpensive, rather than stylish and costly**—In Oakland we need a church building. Soon a simple and inexpensive place of worship should be erected. In this the brethren and sisters in Oakland are to show that they fear the Lord by refusing to build a stylish and costly church. We are living in perilous times; judgment is to follow judgment. Let us now reveal in our works that we believe that the time of God's judgments is come, that we are approaching the day when there will be no certainty regarding anything in this world. By our works as well as our testimony we are to tell that the end of all things is at hand.—[Manuscript Releases 6:320, 321](#).
- 5.2 Three things to be commended in a church building: beauty, Sabbath school facilities, and potential for enlargement**—We were taken to have a hasty look at the church. Its appearance is good, with frontage of stone. Within is a pleasant auditorium for the people to assemble. The windows and front doors are ornamented with stained glass, beautiful in appearance. Four chairs, such as are used in churches, are on the platform, which was well proportioned. The pulpit and highbacked chairs harmonized. Seats and arms are covered with red velvet of the material generally used. I did not spend much time taking in all the advantages of that church building, but I praise the Lord that every debt is paid. Much means have been invested besides the sum of the building as it stood, to make it what it should be—complete in repairs. It is now all finished. There are several rooms. One opens from the auditorium and is seated with chairs for Sabbath school. If the house should need enlarging, the partitions could be removed and thus the extension easily made. Washington within a short distance of the Capitol is a victory gained, and it comes to us in the order of the Lord, who has looked upon the necessities that must be supplied. I wanted to praise God aloud for this nice building, all ready now to be rededicated to the Lord, in which His people shall serve Him.—[Manuscript Releases 5:119](#).

5.3 Church buildings should be plain, neat, commodious, and of proper dimensions—The influence of a house of worship is greatly needed, not only in Melbourne, but in our other churches. A plain, neat, commodious building, of proper dimensions, would fill their hearts with gratitude, and would give those not of our faith an opportunity to come into our assemblies, and hear the words of life. There need be no costly organ, nothing for mere display; what is wanted is a house that can be dedicated to God, to which the people can come as their home, where there would be extempore preaching and prayer, and singing in which all the congregation would join, and where the surroundings would be entirely in harmony with the faith we profess.—[General Conference Daily Bulletin, January 28, 1893.](#)

5.4 Ventilation – Schoolrooms are often death traps, as also are ill-ventilated bedchambers. If buildings are constructed in such a way that they can not have a constant supply of fresh air, the health of their inmates will surely be impaired. Ministers are often forced to pay a severe penalty for speaking in close, ill-ventilated buildings. The preacher marvels that he has not power to impress the people, when they, as well as himself, are suffering from lack of vitalizing air, and are thus rendered incapable of appreciating the subject upon which he is speaking. The want of the circulation of pure air in a church makes many a meeting of no effect; for labor is expended for naught, because the people can not keep awake. —[Signs of the Times 30 September 1897](#)

Ventilation Given Consideration—Sabbath afternoon the beautiful and commodious meetinghouse in _____ was crowded to its utmost capacity. The day was warm, and abundant ventilation was needed. But the beautiful colored windows were not built to open. As a result, the congregation suffered intensely, and the speaker was so poisoned that she experienced great suffering for a week, and was barely able to fill one of her three appointments in New York City. Why will a people having abundance of information on health, sanitation, and ventilation, allow wrongly built meetinghouses to stand year after year as closed reservoirs for poison air?—W. C. White in [The Review and Herald, November 25, 1909.](#)

5.5 No Less Humble Than Our Homes—There have been times when it seemed necessary to worship God in very humble places; but the Lord did not withhold His Spirit nor refuse His presence because of this. It was the best His people could do at the time, and if they worshiped Him in spirit and in truth, He never reproved or condemned their efforts. But He has blessed us with means, and we expend that means in making our houses attractive, in planning and executing to please, to honor, and to glorify ourselves; if we are content to thus leave the Lord out of our plans and to worship Him in a much poorer and more inconvenient place than we are willing to live in ourselves; if, I say, our selfish purposes are thus made supreme and God and His worship secondary, He will not bestow upon us His blessing.—[Manuscript 23, 1886.](#)

5.6 Plain, Neat, and Perfect in Design—We have no command from God to erect a building which will compare for richness and splendor with the temple. But we are to build a humble house of worship, plain and simple, neat and perfect in its design.

Then let those who have means look to it that they are as liberal and tasteful in erecting a temple wherein we may worship God as they have been in locating and building and furnishing their own houses. Let them manifest a willingness and a desire to show greater honor to God than to themselves. Let them build with nicety but not with extravagance. Let the house be built conveniently and thoroughly so that when it

is presented to God He can accept it and let His Spirit rest upon the worshipers who have an eye single to His glory. Nothing must interfere between God's glory and us; no selfish plans, no selfish schemes, no selfish purposes. There must be an agreement.—[Manuscript 23, 1886](#).

5.7 Substantial Buildings—Some may ask, Why does Sister White always use the words, “plain, neat, and substantial,” when speaking of buildings? It is because I wish our buildings to represent the perfection God requires from His people.

“But,” some say, “if the Lord is so soon to come, why do you urge our builders to put the best material into the buildings they erect?” Would we dare to dedicate to God a house made of cheap material, and put together so faultily as to be almost lifted from its foundation when struck by a strong wind? We would be ashamed to put worthless material into a building for the Lord. And I would not advise anyone to put worthless material into a house. It does not pay. The floors of our houses should be made of well-seasoned wood. This will cost a little more, but will in the end save a great deal of vexation. The frame of a building should be well matched and well put together. Christ is our example in all things. He worked at the carpenter's trade with His father Joseph, and every article He made was well made, the different parts fitting exactly, the whole able to bear test.

Whatever you do, let it be done as well as upright principles and your strength and skill can do it. Let your work be like the pattern shown you in the mount. The buildings erected will soon be severely tried.—[Manuscript 127, 1901](#).

5.8 Different Styles of Architecture—Churches are built in many places, but they need not all be built in precisely the same style. Different styles of building may be appropriate to different locations.

In the breastplate of the high priest there were many stones, but each stone had its special light, adding to the beauty of the whole. Every stone had its special significance, bearing its important message from God. There were many stones, but one breastplate. So there are many minds, but one Mind. In the church there are many members, each having his peculiar characteristics, but they form one family.—[Letter 53, 1900](#).

6. Construction

6.1 In building a church, money should not be spent unnecessarily, but neither should second-class work be done—While not one penny should be expended unnecessarily in the erection of this church building, no second-class work should be done. It is planned to use the basement of the church for church-school purposes. This is right, that provision may be made by which our children can be guarded from the evils that prevail in the public schools. If this plan is carried out, the basement will have to be well finished; and this cannot be done without means.—[The Review and Herald, May 18, 1911](#).

6.2 Sometimes community members can be successfully solicited to donate materials and labor to erect a house of worship—Before this work was finished, the problem of providing a meeting-house at Cooranbong arose. This problem proved to be a perplexing one. It seemed that we had done about all we could, and that it would be impossible to raise means sufficient for erecting a suitable house of worship.

Finally, during a council meeting in which the matter was receiving consideration, I offered to go through our settlement, and try to secure gifts of labor and material. Accompanied by my secretary, I visited the workmen living for miles around, and solicited help. Just at this time it happened that several of the carpenters who had been laboring on the school buildings, were temporarily out of employment; and these men generously responded, offering to work on the proposed meeting-house at a very low wage,—less than one half the usual rate. Several worked for nothing a portion of the time.—[The Review and Herald, May 26, 1904.](#)

- 6.3 Members to Help Build**—When a church is raised up, the members are to arise and build. Let the newly converted ones, under the direction of a minister who is guided by the advice of his fellow ministers, work with their own hands, saying, We need a church and we must have a church and we will each do our best in helping in the building....

Let us reveal Christ by making advancement. God calls upon those who claim to follow Jesus to make cheerful, united efforts in His cause. Let this be done and soon will be heard the voice of thanksgiving, “See what the Lord hath wrought.”—[Letter 65, 1900.](#)

- 6.4 Solid and Well Constructed – Statement and Appeal pg 16**

No haphazard work is to be done. The buildings are to be thoroughly presentable, but no extravagance is to be seen. We are not to make it possible for worldlings to say that we do not believe what we preach—that the end of all things is at hand.

“The buildings should be put up at as little cost as possible. No money is to be spent on them merely for show. We are living in a time of fearful depravity. The whole world has thrown off the restraints of religion. Worldlings and church members are making void the law of God. We are to bend every energy to the proclamation of the message of warning.”—[Mrs. E. G. White, in a Letter of Instruction dated February 15, 1904.](#)

7. Financing

- 7.1 It is best to build a church building without debt**—In Hamilton, where the camp meeting was held, we contemplate building a meetinghouse. The ground is purchased but there must be no debt on the place. Therefore we wait for the Lord to open the way. He will do this. His promise is as good as a deed. A portion of the money is already raised. I gave fifty pounds to the Brisbane church and another fifty to the church in Hamilton. When we receive money we will commence to build a humble house of worship.—[Manuscript Releases 17:126.](#)
- 7.2 Members should be willing to work with their own hands to provide a church building**—Whenever it is possible, let our church buildings be dedicated to God free of debt. When a church is raised up, let the members arise and build. Under the direction of a minister who is guided by the advice of his fellow-ministers, let the newly converted ones work with their own hands, saying, “We need a meeting-house, and we must have it.” God calls upon His people to make cheerful, united efforts in His cause. Let this be done, and soon will be heard the voice of thanksgiving, “See what the Lord hath wrought!”—[Gospel Workers, 432.](#)

7.3 In some cases it may be better to borrow than not to build—There are some cases, however, in which a young church may not be able at once to bear the whole burden of erecting a house of worship. In these cases let the brethren in other churches help them. In some cases it may be better to hire some money than not to build. If a man has money, and, after giving what he can, will make a loan, either without interest or at a low rate, it would be right to use the money until the indebtedness can be lifted. But I repeat: If possible, church buildings should be dedicated free of debt.—[Testimonies for the Church 6:101](#).

“In laying plans for building, we need the wisdom of God. We should not needlessly incur debt, but I would say that in every case all the money required to complete a building need not be in hand before the work is begun. We must often move forward by faith, working as expeditiously as possible. It is though a lack of faith that we fail of receiving the fulfilment of God’s promises. We must work and pray and believe. We are to move forward steadily and earnestly, trusting the Lord and saying, “we will not fail not become discouraged.” —[Review and Herald, September 7, 1905 – {CS280.1}](#)

Let no one cling to the idea that unless money is in hand, no move should be made that calls for the investment of means. If in our past experience we had always followed this method, we would often have lost special advantages, such as*1909, [Testimonies for the Church 9:270-276](#).

7.4 Financial Help From the Outside—We all need to be wide awake, that, as the way opens, we may advance the work in the large cities. We are far behind in following the instruction to enter these cities and erect memorials for God. Step by step we are to lead souls into the full light of truth. We are to continue working until a church is organized, and a humble house of worship built. I am greatly encouraged to believe that many persons not of our faith will help considerably by their means. The light given me is that in many places, especially in the great cities of America, help will be given by such persons.—[The Review and Herald, September 30, 1902](#).

8. Maintenance

8.1 The house of worship should be scrupulously cared for—but not from tithe—The Lord instructed Moses, for Israel: “Thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always.” This was to be a continual offering, that the house of God might be properly supplied with that which was necessary for His service. His people today are to remember that the house of worship is the Lord’s property and that it is to be scrupulously cared for. But the funds for this work are not to come from the tithe.—[Testimonies for the Church 9:248](#).

But there are ministers who have been robbed of their wages. God’s provision for them has not been respected. Those who have charge of our church buildings are to be supplied with the means that is necessary to keep these buildings in good repair. But this money is not to come from the tithe. —[Testimonies for the Church 9:248-251](#)

9. Debt

9.1 Shall Our Churches Be Weighed Down With Debt?

It is dishonoring to God for our churches to be burdened with debt. This state of things need not exist. It shows wrong management from beginning to end, and it is a dishonor to the God of heaven. Read and study prayerfully the fourth chapter of Zechariah. Then read the first chapter of Haggai, and see if this representation does not apply to you. While you have thought much of your own selves, of your own selfish interests, you have either neglected to arise and build, or have built on hired money, and have not made donations to free the church buildings from debt. Will you consider what it is your duty to do? Year after year passes by, and very little sacrifice is made to lessen the debt. The interest swallows up the means that should be used to pay off the principal.

“Slothful servants” is the charge that God makes of those in the churches. His will is not done when sacred things are left to remain in a withered, neglected condition. Self-sacrifice, self-denial in every church would change the order of things. “The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts” ([Haggai 2:8](#)). When that gold and silver is used for selfish purposes, to gratify ambition or pride or selfish indulgence, as had been done, God is dishonored. Can those who are representative men be so sound asleep that they do not comprehend that the state of things that exists is a result of neglect on their part? When the people chosen by God embellish their own houses, and invest God’s money in bicycles and various things for selfish gratification, knowing that the very means thus used should be used to keep the house of God in the very best condition, that no means may be taken from the treasury to defray running expenses, they cannot be blessed.

I have a message from the Lord. The churches must awaken from their torpor, and think of these things. “The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.” Are we as families appropriating the Lord’s silver and gold to selfish purposes, and doing nothing to lighten the debt on His house? The churches are burdened with debt, not because it is impossible for them to be freed, but because of selfish indulgence on the part of the members. By this neglect God is dishonored, and if He binds about your resources, be not blind as to the cause.

When you place the Lord first, and realize that the Lord’s house is dishonored by debt, God will bless you. Every debt upon every house of worship might now have been paid if the members had not been in a state of torpor, unable to devise and plan with the most earnest, zealous effort to cancel the debt. When this is done, rededicate the church, without a debt upon it, to God as His house.

“Now therefore saith the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.... Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man to his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit” ([Haggai 1:5, 6, 9, 10](#)).

Let those that have work bringing the highest wages come forward and act a part proportionate to the wages they receive. Let the men who have limited wages have an interest in this matter also. Do what you can, and lay aside something besides your

tithe money. Have you a box for this purpose? Explain to your children that it is the self-denial box, in which you lay aside every penny, every shilling, that you can obtain and do not need to spend for actual necessities. It is for the Lord's house. It is sacred self-denial money. It is a gift to the Lord, to lift the God-dishonoring debt from the meeting house. Doing this, every member of the family will be blessed.—[Manuscript 116, 1897, pp. 8, 9, 12-15](#). (“The Building of the Lord's House,” no date.)

White Estate

Washington, D. C.,

July 22, 1980.

9.2 Lifting Debts from Church Buildings (Counsels on Stewardship pg 259-260)

I rejoice with you in the prospect of clearing the church buildings from debt. How much might have been saved if extra efforts had been made every year to do this. There is no necessity for our meetinghouses to continue year after year in debt. If every member of the church will do his duty, practicing self-denial and self-sacrifice, for the Lord Jesus, whose purchased possession he is, that His church may be free from debt, he will do honor to God.

The Lord's great centers, His own instrumentalities, should be free from all debt. Every year many pounds [Written from Australia.] are being swallowed up by the interest paid on debts. If this money was all appropriated to settle the principal, the debt would not be eating, eating, and ever eating. It is a poor, wretched policy to go into debt. If the money that is needed to build could be first accumulated, by strenuous efforts, and the church dedicated free from debt, how much better it would be. O, shall we not make it a rule when building a house for the Lord, to put forth earnest, persevering efforts, that it may be dedicated to Him free from debt....

The Lord has shown me that debts need not be left on our meetinghouses in Australia or New Zealand. A debt in every case means a neglect of God's special, sacred things; for selfish, common things are made first and all-absorbing.... The very highest honor is to be shown to God's tabernacle. Every other consideration should be second to this. Our ideas must be elevated, ennobled, and sanctified. Worldliness and covetousness have been indulged by parents for their children and for relatives and friends. Money has been appropriated when and where it could not honor God, where it has done positive harm. Gifts have been liberally bestowed on children and relatives and friends, while the gifts that have been made to that which the Lord honors, have been stinted and limited in value and in recurrence....

9.3 Self-Denial and the Church Mortgage

The test question for every Christian to ask himself is, Have I, in my innermost soul, a love for Jesus? Do I love His tabernacle?... Is my love for God and my Redeemer strong enough to lead me to deny self? When temptations come to indulge in pleasure and selfish enjoyment, shall I not say, No, I will not spend one shilling or even sixpence for my own gratification while the house of God is under mortgage, or bearing the pressure of debt?

Should not Christ have our first and highest consideration? Should He not demand this token of our respect and loyalty? These very things underlie our heart life, in the home circle, and in the church life. If the heart, the soul, the strength, the life, is surrendered wholly to God, if the affection is given wholly to Him, you will make God supreme in all your service. The result will be that you will have a sense of what it means to be a partner with Jesus Christ in the sacred firm. The building erected for the worship of God will not be left crippled with debt. It will appear almost like a denial of your faith to allow such a thing.—[Letter 52, 1897](#).

- 9.4 Lift the Debts**—God designs that we shall learn lessons from the failures of the past. It is not pleasing to Him to have debts rest upon His institutions. We have reached the time when we must give character to the work by refusing to erect large and costly buildings. We are not to copy the mistakes of the past and become more and more involved in debt. We are rather to endeavor to clear off the indebtedness that still remains on our institutions. Our churches can help in this matter if they will. Those members to whom the Lord has given means can invest their money in the cause without interest or at a low rate of interest, and by their freewill offerings they can help to support the work. The Lord asks you to return cheerfully to Him a portion of the goods He has lent you, and thus become His almoners.—[Testimonies for the Church 9:71](#).

10. Case Study – Redevelopment of Battle Creek Sanitarium

The statements below were penned by Ellen G. White during a traumatic time associated with the church's reorganization (1901), the fire that destroyed the Battle Creek Sanitarium (1902) and the extravagant plans proposed by Dr John Harvey Kellogg to rebuild the Sanitarium. "While arrangements were soon made for re-establishing the plant, the experience of the fire together with the spirit of prophecy counsels which reached the hands of the workers within the next few month, led many to see more clearly the true place of medical missionary work as a distinctive but integral part of the work of the denomination." Note the next important point. "*There was a call to spread out and establish many medical missionary centers, not too large or ambitious in scope.*" (Testimonies to the Church, Volume 7, 5. Emphasis added) – Dr John Skrzypaszek (2012)

10.1 Consideration in Buildings – Testimonies for the Church Vol 7 pg 90-94

As the chosen people of God we cannot copy the habits, aims, practices, or fashions of the world. We are not left in darkness to pattern after worldly models and to depend on outward appearance for success. The Lord has told us whence comes our strength. "This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." [Zechariah 4:6](#). As the Lord sees fit, He imparts to those who keep His way, power that enables them to exert a strong influence for good. On God they are dependent, and to Him they must give an account of the way in which they use the talents He has entrusted to them. They are to realize that they are God's stewards and are to seek to magnify His name.

Those whose affections are set on God will succeed. They will lose sight of self in Christ, and worldly attractions will have no power to allure them from their allegiance. They will realize that outward display does not give strength. It is not ostentation, outward show, that gives a correct representation of the work that we, as God's chosen people, are to do. Those who are connected with our sanitarium work should be adorned with the grace of Christ. This will give them the greatest influence for good.

The Lord is in earnest with us. His promises are given on condition that we faithfully do His will; therefore in the building of sanitariums He is to be made first and last and best in everything.

Let all who are connected with the service of God be guarded, lest by desire for display they lead others into indulgence and self-glorification. God does not want any of His servants to enter into unnecessary, expensive undertakings, which bring heavy burdens of debt upon the people, thus depriving them of means that would provide facilities for the work of the Lord. So long as those who claim to believe the truth for this time walk in the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, they may expect that the Lord will give them prosperity. But when they choose to wander from the narrow way, they bring ruin upon themselves and upon those who look to them for guidance.

Those who lead out in the establishment of medical institutions must set a right example. Even if the money is in sight, they should not use more than is absolutely needed. The Lord's work should be conducted with reference to the necessities of every part of His vineyard. We are all members of one family, children of one Father, and the Lord's revenue must be used with reference to the interests of His cause throughout the world. The Lord looks upon all parts of the field, and His vineyard is to be cultivated as a whole.

We must not absorb in a few places all the money in the treasury, but must labor to build up the work in many places. New territory is to be added to the Lord's kingdom. Other parts of His vineyard are to be furnished with facilities that will give character to the work. The Lord forbids us to use selfish schemes in His service. He forbids us to adopt plans that will rob our neighbor of facilities that would enable him to act his part in representing the truth. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves.

We must also remember that our work is to correspond with our faith. We believe that the Lord is soon to come, and should not our faith be represented in the buildings we erect? Shall we put a large outlay of money into a building that will soon be consumed in the great conflagration? Our money means souls, and it is to be used to bring a knowledge of the truth to those who, because of sin, are under the condemnation of God. Then let us bind about our ambitious plans; let us guard against extravagance or improvidence, lest the Lord's treasury become empty and the builders have not means to do their appointed work.

Much more money than was necessary has been expended on our older institutions. Those who have done this have supposed that this outlay would give character to the work. But this plea is no excuse for unnecessary expenditure.

God desires that the humble, meek, and lowly spirit of the Master, who is the Majesty of heaven, the King of glory, shall ever be revealed in our institutions. Christ's first advent is not studied as it should be. He came to be our example in all things. His life was one of strict self-denial. If we follow His example, we shall never expend means unnecessarily. Never are we to seek for outward show. Let our showing be such that the light of truth can shine through our good works, so that God will be glorified by the use of the very best methods to restore the sick and to relieve the suffering. Character is given to the work, not by investing means in large buildings, but by maintaining the true standard of religious principles, with noble Christlikeness of character.

The mistakes that have been made in the erection of buildings in the past should be salutary admonitions to us in the future. We are to observe where others have failed,

and, instead of copying their mistakes, make improvements. In all our advance work we must regard the necessity of economy. There must be no needless expense. The Lord is soon to come, and our outlay in buildings is to be in harmony with our faith. Our means is to be used in providing cheerful rooms, healthful surroundings, and wholesome food.

Our ideas of building and furnishing our institutions are to be molded and fashioned by a true, practical knowledge of what it means to walk humbly with God. Never should it be thought necessary to give an appearance of wealth. Never should appearance be depended on as a means of success. This is a delusion. The desire to make an appearance that is not in every way appropriate to the work that God has given us to do, an appearance that could be kept up only by expending a large sum of money, is a merciless tyrant. It is like a canker that is ever eating into the vitals.

Men of common sense appreciate comfort above elegance and display. It is a mistake to suppose that, by keeping up an appearance, more patients, and therefore more means, would be gained. But even if this course would bring an increase of patronage, we could not consent to have our sanitariums furnished according to the luxurious ideas of the age. Christian influence is too valuable to be sacrificed in this way. All the surroundings, inside and outside our institutions, must be in harmony with the teachings of Christ and the expression of our faith. Our work in all its departments should be an illustration, not of display and extravagance, but of sanctified judgment.

It is not large, expensive buildings; it is not rich furniture; it is not tables loaded with delicacies, that will give our work influence and success. It is the faith that works by love and purifies the soul; it is the atmosphere of grace that surrounds the believer, the Holy Spirit working upon mind and heart, that makes him a savor of life unto life, and enables God to bless his work.

God can communicate with His people today and give them wisdom to do His will, even as He communicated with His people of old and gave them wisdom in building the tabernacle. In the construction of this building He gave a representation of His power and majesty; and His name is to be honored in the buildings that are erected for Him today. Faithfulness, stability, and fitness are to be seen in every part.

Those who have in hand the erecting of a sanitarium are to represent the truth by working in the spirit and love of God. As Noah in his day warned the world in the building of the ark, so, by the faithful work that is done today in erecting the Lord's institutions, sermons will be preached, and the hearts of some will be convicted and converted. Then let the workers feel the greatest anxiety for the constant help of Christ, that the institutions which are established may not be in vain. While the work of building is going forward, let them remember that, as in the days of Noah and of Moses God arranged every detail of the ark and of the tabernacle, so in the building of His institutions today He Himself is watching the work done. Let them remember that the great Master Builder, by His word, by His Spirit, and by His providence, designs to direct His work. They should take time to ask counsel of Him. The voice of prayer and the melody of holy song should ascend as sweet incense. All should realize their entire dependence upon God; they should remember that they are erecting an institution in which is to be carried forward a work of eternal consequence, and that, in doing this work, they are to be laborers together with God. "Looking unto Jesus" is ever to be our motto. And the assurance is: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye." [Psalm 32:8](#).