

# The Fence



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*Here is the patience of the saints: here are they  
that keep the commandments of God, and the faith  
of Jesus.*

*Revelation 14:12*

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## MY DREAM

Last night I dreamed of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and was surprised to see a fence running right down the middle. Actually, it looked more like a wall, but people referred to it as a fence.

Many church members were seated on this fence, and they were quite comfortable – it had been padded with soft foam cushions for the convenience of the sitters. More cushions were being added all the time, as many appeared to enjoy the company of this group. They seemed very happy and were prospering quite nicely.

One advantage of being on the fence was that they had a good view of all that went on below, without having to become involved. Theological discussions and controversies were being waged by those on either side of the fence, and although the sitters could hear the arguments, they didn't have to make a decision.

As I dreamed, I thought of the two pathways in the Bible – one narrow, the other wide, and wondered why the Adventist Church had three groups.

Then I heard a voice: 'There are only two.'

It was interesting to notice that those on one side of the fence were very different from those on the other. Both were interested in doctrine, except for some on the left side who said it didn't matter, but those who thought it did, were intent on discussing it with all who would listen.

One difference between the two groups was that those on the left side seemed much happier than those on the right side, who were often in tears.

As I looked in my dream, I noticed further differences between those on the left side and those on the right side of the fence.

One group was very zealous for the denomination, the other for the spiritual body of Christ. One advocated holding to the doctrines of the pioneers, while the other spoke of a maturing of belief and a constant receiving of new light.

Message after message went from one side to the other, and I wondered how the church could ever be united. The left group was determined not to budge from their liberal stand, while the group on the right said they would not take their eyes from the "faith once delivered to the saints".

Those living on both sides of the fence often sent messages to their brethren sitting on the foam cushions, but the response that wafted down from above was always the same.

'We like it up here -- its not hot and its not cold.'

In my dream, I seemed to be an observer, not belonging to any group, when I heard the voice again: 'You are in one of these groups.'

As I considered the matter, I thought.....

The left group looks very happy doing as they please, but they have so many differences. They are constantly arguing and debating over doctrine, or over no doctrine. They have many teachers coming up with new ideas said to be truth, and then there are more arguments over which conflicting interpretation is new light. If I belonged to this group, I am sure I would be confused.

Then I looked at the group on the right. They seem content in a quiet way, but don't laugh much. Their whole attitude is one of seriousness – prayer, study, rebuke, counsel. They are constantly sending out messages, but have difficulty finding people who will read them or

listen to their entreaties. Instead, they suffer much abuse and ridicule for their efforts. If I belonged to this group, I am sure I would become depressed.

Then I saw the fence sitters....

They were laughing at the problems going on down below, and didn't seem to have a care in the world. As they lay back on their padded cushion seats, their conversation turned to the beautiful, balmy weather – not too hot and not too cold.

Ah yes, this is the group to which I belong –

Then I awoke from my dream of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with the fence running down the middle.

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Maybe you are wondering where you are sitting.

Do not jump to hasty conclusions. First hear a description of each group from the Spirit of Prophecy. You may want to change your position.

## RIGHT SIDE OF THE FENCE

Those in this small company are overcomers. They do not have one spot or stain upon their characters. They will receive the seal of God and be fitted for translation.

They have implicit trust in God's power to save them from sinning, and by a life of holy endeavour, have resisted temptation rather than break God's sacred law. Their souls have been cleansed from every defilement and they stand before God as overcomers.

They diligently search the Scriptures seeking truth, but reject every new idea that conflicts with that which has been sealed by the Holy Spirit during the days of the pioneers, and does not meet with the requirements of the law and the testimony.

As they see signs of approaching peril, they do not sit in waiting expectancy, believing God will deliver them, but labour to save others.

They hold forth the words of life to those who know it not, reproving, counselling, entreating others to accept the truth of the everlasting gospel and the righteousness of Christ.

Their prayers rise for the church and the world, for men and women are following Satan's deceptions. They are distinguished by their lamentations; they often weep in anguish, and their righteous souls are vexed by the sins being committed by those who profess to be God's people. They mourn before God, afflicting their souls with sighing and crying over the abominations done in the church. They will not hold their peace to obtain favour of any man, but exalt the standard, zealous for God's honour.

This little remnant have their eyes on Christ; they draw nearer to Him with meekness and lowliness of heart, willing to share the truth with all who will listen.

Not only do they uplift their Saviour in word and deed, but they call sin by its right name, drawing attention to the testimonies of God's Spirit and the counsel of the True Witness. Taken from 1 Testimonies p179-184. 5 Testimonies 207-216.

## LEFT SIDE OF THE FENCE

Those in this group have deceitful hearts and are doing the work of Satan. They must repent or they will receive the mark of the beast and be lost.

They are secure in their deceptions and are hypocrites. They are not living according to the light; they love the world and are linked with its sympathies. They lack devotion and piety, covering impurity and corruption with garments of deception. As they fail to reach a high standard, they lead others into error and deception.

As ministers and leaders, they preach self and heresy, and are ring leaders in apostasy.

Their voice doubt in God's testimonies, and when faithful ones pour forth the straight testimony, they turn from it as idle tales, telling their congregations, 'Do not get excited. There is no cause for alarm.'

'Peace and safety' is their message. They are unfaithful watchmen asleep on the walls, neglecting their duty.

As church members in the pews, they follow the example of their ministers and disbelieve the testimonies. They rely on the pastor for their spiritual food, leaving the Spirit of Prophecy unread and unappreciated. They murmur in their hearts against those who reprove, and not a few rise up with their leaders, and persecute those God is using to sound the alarm. Taken from 1 Testimonies p179-184. 5 Testimonies p207-215.

## FENCE SITTERS

Those in this large group are living in false security. They lack faith and love and are absorbed in selfish interests. They are not hypocrites, but are totally deceived as to their condition.

They are attracted to earthly treasures, and their efforts are too feeble and self-indulgent to have lasting influence upon them for God. They are indifferent and careless, having little faith and understanding of the repulsiveness of sin. They see danger as a long way off.

Full of doubts, their words constantly strengthen their unbelief. They do not have the Spirit of Christ, and are willing to believe the apostate ministers that the testimonies cannot be trusted. They are too afraid to read the Spirit of Prophecy at length, lest they are brought to the place of decision against their special idols.

Some manage to rouse themselves to speak against those who bear the messages of God, for their peace is disturbed. Thus they repeat the 'Peace and safety' message of their Laodicean and hypocritical pastors.

They flatter themselves that they are good Christians, but have not a single ray of light from Jesus. They are not renewed by divine grace, and having no living experience with God, Christ is not in their midst.

They are foolish virgins, and unless they repent, they will receive the mark of the beast and be lost. Taken from 1 Testimonies p185-195. 5 Testimonies p217-235.

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Where are you sitting?

Well, that's for you to decide.

Our prophet says, "If you wait for louder calls or better opportunities, the light will be withdrawn, and you will be left in darkness." 5 Testimonies p720.

"Every warning, reproof, and entreaty in the Word of God or through His messengers is a knock at the door of the heart. It is the voice of Jesus asking for entrance. With every knock unheeded, the disposition to open becomes weaker. The impressions of the Holy Spirit, if disregarded today, will not be as strong tomorrow." Desire of Ages p489.

When we read the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, we find the divine standard incredibly high, and the testing becoming harder and harder, closer and closer. Often we feel the way is too hard for our feeble faith.

"When we have a realisation of our weakness, we learn to depend upon a power not inherent. Nothing reaches so fully down to the deepest motives of conduct as a sense of the pardoning love of Christ. The less you cherish self, the more distinct and full will be your comprehension of the excellence of your Saviour.

The more closely you connect yourself with the source of light and power, the greater light will be shed upon you, and the greater power will be yours to work for God." Desire of Ages p493.

"Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord." Psalm 31:24.

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## Where are you sitting?

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