



# A Remnant in Crisis

A Book Review by Desmond Ford

**A Remnant in Crisis**, by Jack W. Provonsha.  
[1993: Review and Herald Publishing Association,  
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740. 173 pages, \$14.95.]

*A sensitive, sympathetic, and experienced denominational thought leader examines modern Adventism. Uniquely, he teaches that Adventism is best understood as a prophetic movement, not as "the True Church." All who are in Christ are the true church.*

Dr. Jack Provonsha, friend and trusted confidant of many (and worthily so) has written this latest book, *A Remnant in Crisis*.

After reading it, one SDA conference president said, "I no longer know who I am."

## True Ecclesiology

Don't misunderstand the conference president's outcry. The conference president appreciated Dr. Provonsha's book. His comment was probably because this is one of those very rare books from denominational presses that has a true ecclesiology. (Ecclesiology is the study of the doctrine of the church.)

Dr. Provonsha says,

We are a prophetic movement and not God's "true church" in this sense. God's true church is bigger than anything human beings can turn into an exclusive institution. (Page 167)

## Courage on the Investigative Judgment

Throughout the world there are still over one hundred people living who heard Dr. Provonsha speak courageously at Glacier View, Colorado, in August 1980. He told the assembled delegates that he did not believe the traditional doctrine of the Investigative Judgment.

In this book, he does not speak so boldly. Nevertheless, here are some of his valuable insights:

The date 1844, marking the end of the 2300-day/year prophecy, is one of the features of Adventism currently under threat. There is a very real possibility that the movement's continuity with the past may be broken because of this issue, at least for some. I have to admit that I do not find our traditional reading of Daniel's prophecy to be all that unambiguous. There are exegetical problems. . . . (Page 133)

## Day of Atonement and Incarnation

On page 132, Dr. Provonsha suggests that the antitypical day of atonement should not be limited to 1844 onwards. Rather, it should be seen "as covering the entire sweep of chronological history from the Fall to the final restoration."

It would have been better to say "from the **incarnation** to the final restoration." There could be no antitypical day of atonement **before** the incarnation, before Christ took humanity. He did this to become our Saviour and our High Priest.

Still, I applaud his comment. It shows a willingness to unravel traditional swaddling clothes in search of the Baby of truth.

## Until the Gospel Shines

Admittedly, this book is more philosophy than theology. But who can refrain from cheering a denominational thought leader who clearly sees that Adventism is in crisis and in great need of looking closely at its traditions?

May God bless such books and their authors. May they keep examining Adventism closely until the everlasting gospel shines forth in brilliance! ❖