

His Name is Wonderful

By W. Race

This article first appeared in our church paper, *The Messenger of Living Righteousness*, June 1967. Brother Bill Race was a friend of Fred Wright, and fellow-believer in the message at least as early as 1962, when they were both involved in the Brinsmead Awakening.

Isaiah 9

⁶ For unto us a Child is born; unto us a Son is given and the government shall be upon His shoulder and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

How many of Christ's titles are given in this verse? Are there four or are there five? In *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, page 147, the SDA theologians have written as follows:

Wonderful, Counselor: That is "wonderful Counselor" (see *Isaiah* 11:2, 3; *Isaiah* 25:1; *Isaiah* 28:29). This name embodies the thought of wisdom, kindness, and consideration—a name that would call forth the rapture, adoration, and praise of all beings in heaven and earth, and in all the universe (see *Philippians* 2:9-11; *Revelation* 5:12, 13).

This differs from the Bible text in two ways. In the Bible the word "Wonderful" begins with a capital letter as well as the word "Counselor". In the Commentary the word "Wonderful" is introduced with a lower case letter as if it was only an adjective describing "Counselor". In the Bible the words are separated by a comma thus indicating that they are two separate titles.

So if we are going to take the view of the commentary we will answer the question above with the answer, "Four titles," but if we look at the construction in the Bible then we will say "Five titles."

Now it is quite true that Jesus is a wonderful Counselor, and in the Spirit of Prophecy there are several instances

where He is so described.

It is also to be noted that there are ten occasions where this Scripture is actually quoted in the Spirit of Prophecy and in each case the text is written exactly as in the Bible so, “Wonderful, Counselor..”

Those ten references are: *The Desire of Ages*, p. 25, 578; *Education*, p. 73; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 34, 755; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 729; *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 222; *Prophets and Kings*, p. 688; *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 243; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 145, 146.

Is there justification then on the part of the *Commentary* for taking out the comma and the capital letter to “Wonderful”? If not is there then some significance in their action?

It is the position of this writer that there is a very great significance in the title “Wonderful”, as applied to Christ; and that it is a title that is distinct from the title “Counselor”. Christ is both “Wonderful” with all that this title means and “Counselor” with all that it means too.

There are five titles of the Saviour in this verse. We note that five is the symbol number for Grace in the Bible and in harmony with this every one of these five titles is needful in Christ to accomplish the salvation of humanity.

Following as they are in the footsteps of ancient Israel, doing what they have done and failing where they have failed, they have polluted the Lord’s secret. Thus has the Lord spoken:

Ezekiel 7

²² My face will I turn also from them and they shall pollute my secret...for the robbers shall enter into it, and defile it.

(Note that the word “place” as found in the *King James Version* is a supplied word and is not found in the original text so we have omitted it here.)

What is the Lord’s Secret and how is it defiled? Let us turn

now to *Judges* 13:17-18, and read, “And Manoah said unto the Angel of the Lord...” What is thy name?

To catch the importance of that question we must know to whom it was addressed. The text tells us that it was the Angel of the Lord. There is not space to trace it through here but you will find that the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament is none other than Christ Himself. He is the One that wrestled with Jacob, that appeared to Abraham before the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, who appeared to Gideon, and He is the one in person that appeared to Manoah and his wife. This is revealed to us in the plainest of words by the pen of Inspiration as follows:

Signs of the Times, September 15, 1881:

Manoah and his wife knew not that the One thus addressing them was Jesus Christ.

Therefore, although he did not know it, he was asking Christ to give His name. Therefore the answer that the Angel of the Lord gave to Manoah is a name of Christ.

Let us read on now to find the answer that was given:

Judges 13

¹⁸ And the Angel of the Lord said unto him, Why do you ask thus after my name, seeing it is Secret?

Now the marginal reading for “Secret” is “Wonderful”, and it is a fact that the same Hebrew word that is translated “Secret” in *Judges* is translated “Wonderful” in *Isaiah* 9:6.

It follows then that the answer that was given to Manoah was that His name was “Secret” or “Wonderful”. It must also follow then that to pollute the Lord’s “Secret” is to pollute His name “Wonderful”, for they are evidently the same thing.

What then is the meaning of this word “Wonderful” or “Secret”? Let us trace it through the Word of God to discover something of this. In doing this let us ever bear in mind that the titles of Christ are not mere names that are given to Him

but every title is a description of what He *is*. Therefore when He is called Secret then that is a description of what He is.

1 Timothy 3

¹⁶ And without controversy great is the mystery (or secret) of Godliness....

Anything that is mysterious is something that is unknown or secret, and in this verse Paul goes on to say what that was. He says that it is that “God was manifest in the flesh...” or that He became the Incarnated One. This truth is further revealed in:

Colossians 1

²⁶ Even the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints,

²⁷ To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of glory.

The Incarnation of Christ is indeed a mystery, a secret, a wonder that is hidden from the mind and the heart of man unless that man has received the revelation of truth by the Spirit.

In *Matthew* 16:13, when Jesus asked the question regarding this mystery, of His disciples, He phrased it this way, “Whom do men say that I, the Son of man am?” So truly and fully did the Saviour take our humanity that the men of that age and generation saw in Him only a man. They knew that He was a man and there was no debate nor question about that. They admitted that He was an extraordinary man but nothing more than a man.

This is made clear by the reply that the disciples of the Saviour gave.

Matthew 16

¹⁴ ...Some say that You are John the Baptist: some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.

It was impossible for the men of that age that had not re-

ceived the Saviour to see any more than that of Him for the great truth of the Incarnation is a secret, or a mystery that none but the spiritually enlightened mind can possibly understand. Then the name “Secret”, or “Wonderful” is a description of what Jesus is, for Christ the Incarnate One is the Hidden One to all but those to whom the Father has revealed Him.

Jesus Himself made this clear by pursuing the question with the disciples that very day:

Matthew 16

¹⁵ ...But whom do you say that I am?

To this pointed and testing question Peter replied for the rest,

¹⁶ ...You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

Peter could not see then nor can we see now all that is included in that reply. Peter was saying in effect that He had begun to know Christ by His name “Secret” or “Wonderful”. To others, as Peter had just stated, there was no such name whereby to know Christ. They were unaware that He was more than a mere man, they missed altogether the secret and the wonder that was the Incarnation, God tabernacled in human flesh. Therefore they could not say,

“Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called *Wonderful* or *Secret*...”

But Peter could and he did, for in saying

“You, [the Son of Man] are the Christ, the Son of the Living God,”

...he was but saying in other words,

“Unto us a Child is given, unto us a Son is born and His name shall be called *Wonderful*...”

It is most important that we remember here that this mystery is God manifest in the flesh. There are some that recog-

nize the fullness of the Divinity of Christ and there are some that recognize the fullness of His humanity, but to recognize the one or the other is not to discover the mystery of Godliness. The secret and the wonder of it all is that God could and would be made manifest in the flesh.

And this is not to be understood as saying that mystery lies in the physical or mechanical union of the two. To see only *that* as the supposed mystery is to see nothing. The mystery and the wonder of it all lies in the fact that herein is the outworking of the principle that governs the whole of the kingdom of God as the law of life therein.

And that principle is the law of self-sacrificing love. It was a secret and a mystery indeed that Jesus the Son of God, and thus God, could and would step down to become man and to taste death for every man. To the mind of self-seeking man this is all so incomprehensible, for to him the way that Jesus took is the way of death and oblivion, while the way of self-advancement is the only way to life. Thus to man the way of life is the way of death and the way of death is the way of life and so entirely opposite is his thinking to the truth that the way of truth is hidden from him, a secret that he cannot see nor understand.

But when there is placed in the life of man the mind of Christ, a mind that did not cause Him to strive to hold that which was His in the kingdom of heaven, but which mind led Him to renounce all that, and step down and down till He had reached the lowest depths, and all of that not as an actor in a play playing out a part, but as the only possible outworking of the nature that was in Him; when *that* mind is in man then the incarnation has been repeated in that man, and to him the Child is born and unto him Son is given whom he will know as Wonderful and Secret.

It is indeed an evil thing that the world lies in wickedness, a wickedness that is the outworking of the entirely opposite

principle of the law of self-renunciation even to the death, but how much more desperately worse it is for the people whom the Lord has called, and to whom He had revealed that secret in the implanting of the new life principle in them, to depart from that way and turn to their own ways again. Not only have they chosen the way of death for themselves, but they testify to the world that they have tried the way of life and will have nothing of it but will choose the way of death.

And Israel of old had done that very thing, and in doing that very thing they had polluted the secret of the Lord. There had been unfolded to them the way of everlasting life in the law and the prophets, and while they were yet to see the demonstration of it in the life of Christ, the principle of the Incarnation was not a new thing to the gospel of that day.

The principle of the gospel of Christ is the principle of the incarnation. They are one. For the Gospel to come to this earth Jesus must come down to humanity in a descent of condescension to the very death. He must cast His life into the furrow of this world's need and die. And all who would receive Him and His life in that Gospel must likewise follow the outworking of the same mind as was in Him. And that was exactly as true for those who lived before the cross as any who lived after the cross. The law of life has never changed.

But the Israel of old had so completely lost sight of that principle and so completely adopted the exactly opposite principle that they had truly polluted the secret of the Lord. The great truth of the Incarnation, Christ in you the Hope of Glory, was an utterly hidden thing to them; so hidden that in the very act of putting the Son of God and man to death, they did not know what they were doing.

On the Israel of these last days has shone the glory of the everlasting gospel in the special light of the *Third Angel's Message*. In the early days of her history, the principles of that gospel were the foundation and stay and prop of that people.

In those days the teaching of the Incarnation was sound and true, and the secret of the Lord was with His people. To them indeed a Son was born a Child was given, and the world looked on to see what this would all mean to such a people. But with the passing of the years that has all changed.

The very principle of the gospel that separates those who hold and have it, from those in the world, has been lost by this people and in its place the exactly opposite principle is present. The great Wonder, the Secret, the Mystery is all a hidden thing to them and as the modern writings indicate, the truth of the Incarnation is now just as it is in the worldly churches. Between the two, there is just no practical difference beyond perhaps a few technical terms.

And in this, *The SDA Bible Commentary* statement quoted at the beginning of the article, there is this thing again, the hiding of the Wonder that is in the name and the work of Jesus. And it is hidden here by taking the name Wonderful or Secret and reducing it from a proper name to a mere adjective, and thus stating that the real meaning and intent of the verse is not Wonderful, Counselor, but wonderful Counselor.

And just as truly as ancient Israel did not know what they were doing then, just so surely modern Israel does not know what she has done. But just so surely as Ancient Israel did it, and in the doing of it she reaped the full consequences of that awful doing, then just so surely has modern Israel done it and will reap the full consequences of her doing.

Matthew 6

²³ If the light that is in you be darkness, then how great is that darkness:

Amos 3

⁷ Surely the Lord God will do nothing but He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.

Nothing catches the Lord by surprise and He was perfectly well aware of the coming of this thing.

Years ago He directed His prophet to write these words:

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 1162:

I ask our people to study the 28th chapter of Ezekiel. The representation here made while it refers primarily to Lucifer the fallen angel, has yet a broader significance. Not one being, but a general movement is here described, and one that we shall witness. A faithful study of this chapter should lead those who are seeking for truth to walk in all the light that God has given to His people, lest they be deceived by the deceptions of these last days.

This movement, still to be witnessed subsequent to the writing of this statement, would fulfill the specifications of *Ezekiel 28*. Here is a picture then of a people that would begin as a holy people, faithful to all that they had received of God to that time, but which would become wholly apostate. Bear this in mind, that any people who did begin in that way and ends in this way must fulfill the specifications of this prophecy in its broader application as here given by the pen of inspiration.

Think of it Dear Reader. Think of this prediction in the light of the pollution of the Secret of the Lord, the removing from Him of the name Wonderful, the hiding of the Mystery of the Gospel, Christ in you the hope of glory. Jesus said, "He that has an ear to hear, let him hear."

Isaiah 9

⁶ For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

He shall be called...

Wonderful

Because He took the sinner's place

And died to save a guilty race;

Because He stooped to bear the shame:

Forever WONDERFUL His name.

Counsellor

Because He bids me come and ask
For guidance in my daily task.
In Him alone all wisdom's found;
So be His tam, with honor crowned.

The Mighty God

Because, though veiled in lowly guise,
He came from far beyond the skies.
To all the world the tidings tell.
His name is blest Immanuel.

The Everlasting Father

Because He lived a life below
That men might thus His Father know;
The Spirit thence bears witness plain
Now "Abba, Father, born again."

The Prince of Peace

Because, as once by shepherds heard,
"Goodwill to men." This blessed word,
Proclaimed while angel chorus sang
Till all the hills of Judah rang,
Will be proclaimed the world around
Till He as King of kings is crowned.
Then all earth's wars and strife shall cease;
The world shall own Him PRINCE OF PEACE.

- *Francis M. Burg*