FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS QUICK, AND POWERFUL,
AND SHARPER THAN ANY TWOEDGED SWORD...

THE CHRISTIAN COURIER

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I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO READ THIS ARTICLE

In the study of Genesis, the first chapter, we understand from the 24th and 25th verses that each creature God made was made after his own kind. Each creature had certain characteristics and abilities of their own which made them a certain kind. Reading farther, verses 26 through 28, we learn that God created man in his own image, to have dominion or power or authority over the other creatures. Man was to subdue the earth, or tame and make it for his own use.

As we compare man to the other creatures of the earth, we find definite differences which are well apparent. When we observe the wonders man has produced, as well as the destruction, we conclude that man is indeed superior to the other creatures that dwell in sea, on land, and fly in the air. The primary difference between man and animal, which includes all differences, is that man is rational. This means that he is able to reason logically. By reasoning, a man is able to solve problems (as well as create them). Man is also capable of complex communication, learning and storing information, and transferring knowledge from one situation to another. No other creature on this planet can claim these abilities.

None of this is new to anyone who has lived a decade or two upon the earth. What is worth noting, however, is the way most of mankind uses his rational mind. We can look about us and see the results of his thought. Most of it is vanity and evil. Even ideas that were intended to be good were adopted by men with evil in their hearts and gain in their eyes.

Now we would expect that mankind who have been baptized into Christ and put on Christ, would have this rational mind in control, subject to the wishes of Christ. A look at the lives of brothers and sisters in Christ supports our expectation--almost.

There is one characteristic of this rational mind that is extremely difficult to tame; even for a Christian. Stretch out the word 'rational' and you get the word 'rationalize'. Rationalizing come from a rational mind. When a person rationalizes, he makes himself comfortable by creating logical reasons for why he did something that is not right or good, or why he neglected to do something that was right or good. Just listen some time to these rational excuses, or as some prefer, reasons. Do not, however, be too quick to point your finger because these same excuses pour out of all of our mouths.

Allow me to offer a few examples, just so you fully understand my point.

1. Question: Can you come over to the church building and help us with some work?
Answer: No, I have some work here at home to do.
Comment: Yes, I am sure you do have work to do at home, but is that what you will be doing?

2. Question: Would you pick up Sister Brown for Church services this Sunday?
Answer: I would sure like to but I can just barely make it there myself on time.
Comment: Why can you just barely make it? How many times have you made a special effort to leave early for vacation, hunting, fishing, or a good seat at the ballgame?

3. Question: Could you come over for Bible study Thursday night?
Answer: No, I have something else planned.
Comment: Busy with what? What could be more important than fellowship and study?

Every answer given was a rational answer. What's more, each answer was rationalized. The answer made the person comfortable because it created for him a logical reason why he did not or was unable to perform a certain task. A rationalized excuse is acceptable to a child's understanding because their powers to rationalize are not fully developed. But a rationalized excuse is not and should not be acceptable to an adult; it insults our intelligence. What a rationalized excuse really says to a person is: "You are so naive that you will believe anything I say, as long as it sounds logical." So there we are, rationalizing ourselves in and out of situations whenever it pleases us.

Brothers and sisters, let us face the facts; rationalization is deceit. It is intended to deceive the listener into thingking that conditions pre-

ventus from doing good, when the real reason is that we are too lazy or do not wish to do good. Let us look at a quotation that was meant for a slightly more offensive individual, but how close it is to the intention of many who rationalize: Romans 16:17-18 *"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."* We try to pass our rationalizing actions off as innocent, but the intention is almost identical, is it not? When we do this, we do not serve the Lord, but our own lusts, our bellies.

The most offensive rationalization to me, I saved for last. How many times have you heard or said this one: "I just didn't have time"? This is the silliest phrase invented by man's rational mind, and usually the first one we grab for. How easy it is for us to answer for our laziness by rolling those golden words off our gilded tongues: "I just didn't have time." We think it is the cure for all misuse of time. Let's look at the facts! There are 24 hours in a day. Most people work professionally for 8 hours (whether housewife or gainfully employed). Most people spend 2 hours eating. I would hope that most people choose at least 2 hours to spend with their families. Most people require 8 hours of sleep. Although these times are generous, it still leaves us with 4 hours of unused time. Now I am not going to tell you that this is a lot of time, because I do not believe that it is. But I will ask, How do we spend these "extra" hours? How do we account for them from day to day?

We all assign to our extra time priorities. There are things that are most important to do first. There are other things that would be the most fun to do first. They are not always the same ones that are important and fun. So which do you do first? Christ told us in Matt. 6:33. The problem is that we begin rationalizing again and deceive ourselves into thinking that it is best to do the things that are most fun, first, and then attend to the others. And when someone aske why we failed to do the important things? Well, I just did not have the time!

Brothers and sisters, let us stop deceiving one another. God has given each of us a brain that is unequaled by any machine devised by man. It is capable of good and evil. Let us then put all of our effort into thinking for good so there is no time for evil. Let us not cover up our true feelings by devising speeches that deceive the hearts of others. If these feelings are in the open, others can help us to see the right way. But if nothing else, we are being honest with others and with ourselves. Let us make a special effort not to use the lack of time as an excuse. Let us not just hope to have time, but make time for the Lord.

Man is the finest of earth's creation. He is more intelligent and more capable than any other creature on earth. Let us put our rational mind to good use. Rom. 15:5,6 "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus. That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In Christian love and love of the truth,
Brother Dan Ross, Yakima Congregation

Greetings from the Church at Chico to all that are in Christ Jesus:

Do we appreciate the privilege of being in Christ to the extent we should? IPet. 1:17-19 says, "If ye call on him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear: knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers: but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even, the blood of Christ".

It would be well for each of us to meditate on these verses every day. The price that was paid for our salvation is beyond our comprehension. Just what did Jesus gain for himself in the way of earthly pleasure or possessions? "A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised: and we esteemed him not." Isaiah 53. "_____the birds of the heavens have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Matt.8:20. At his trial he was falsely accused, convicted when Pilate knew he was innocent, and turned over to the soldiers to mock. They dressed him in royal apparel, put a mock crown of thorns on his head, smote it, to add to the humiliation and pain, and spat in his face. Matt. 27:27-31. At this time he had at his request twelve legions of angels to deliver him. Matt. 26:53,67,68. Then while on the cross in agony, pain, and shame, they taunted him walking before him shooting out their tongues and saying, "_____he saved others: himself he cannot save." Matt. 27:38-44

Why did he endure all this without a mremre? --for our redemption. What did he gain? Phil. 2:5-11, verses 9-11. "Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that J sus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

If Jesus suffered the shame and pain to redeem us, what should we be willing to do to please him? Mark 8:38. "For whosoever shall

be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." So let us be faithful to him and his word so we can join in that great day that awaits the faithful. Jesus said, "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecure you, and say all ma-ner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.: Matt. 5:11.

In the Love of Christ from the Church
at Chico,
C.M. Brockman

"As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country."
Prov. 25:25

Brethren,

We just received the Courier and we enjoyed reading it.

I am writing with extra happiness and thanks to God--on January 1,1978, at a first Sunday Meeting my daughter, Karen Taylor, was baptised. We are all happy and know that the wonderful fellowship and teachings we have had at the invitational meetings and camp meetings were a definate help in her obeying the Gospel. It is also a great help to the rest of us.

We are all doing fine from here. We just had our ice and snow storm.

In Christian Love,
Don Taylor
Lugert Congregation

Hello Christians,

We here at Bellflower send our greetings to all. Some of us here haven't been to well this past season. Bro Dayton Clouse entered the City of Hope Hospital this month (Jan.). We sincerely do hope they can help him back to better health.

The Church here is doing ok. Bro. Jerry Brockman lives near here now, we really enjoy him and his good lessons.

We want to thank all of our visitors for stopping by, both in our homes and church services, and do come again. We want to thank all our friends and relatives for the beautiful cards, letters and phone calls during my resent illness. I"m doing just fine.

Our meeting starts July 2 thru 9. Bro. Howard McCay is our speaker. We know we will all enjoy hearing him again.

Sis. Burdette Taylor had minor surgery. She's doing fine. Everyone is invited to our meeting.

With Love to all, Claud and Eunice Perigen

Brethren:

I wish to report on a very enjoyable and profitable meeting which a number of us from the Yakima congregation attended on the long Thanksgiving holidays. The church at Glenwood had a four day meeting with Bros. Jerry McCay and Bob Farley of the Yakima congregation doing the speaking. They brought some very good lessons but this is only a small part of these short meetings. The fellowship and discussions before and after services are what strengthens individuals and congregations, as congregations are only as strong as the individual members. If brethren in different states would have more of these long weekend meetings, I am sure the church would grow stronger. If we (members) lose our first love, our zeal, to work for the Lord, we are in danger of having our candlestick removed. We are commanded to preach the word, to teach others, to study to obtain the knowledge to fulfill this command that we might not be unprofitable servants. But have fruit for Him and oil in our lanps when He comes again. What better way is there to do this than with brethren.

I believe if each congregation would spend some services studying the 2nd and 3rd chapters of Rev. then apply the letters to the seven churches to our own congregation, listing and studying the strengths and weaknesses as listed in these scriptures with an open mind and heart. Then make a united effort to overcome our faults and strengthen our good points. We will indeed grow and not have our candlestick removed. In closing, let us all get the dates of any meetings for next year in as soon as possible, even if your speaker is not known as yet. Many of the brethren have to put in for their vacations by the first of the year or shortly thereafter. Many would like to come and be with you at your meetings so make them known as soon as possible. Let us not be slothful in the Lord's business, but fervent in Spirit as faithful servants of the Lord. Written in love of the Lord and all the brethren

Howard McCay
Yakima, Wa.

Dear Brethren,

A happy new year to you all from Yakima. We have been very blessed here this winter, no serious illnesses. Sis Edge was in the hospital for eye surgery but is home now. Bro and Sis Roger Sauve's new baby boy had to return to the hospital for a few days. Our prayers are with them.

We had a nice trip to southern Calif. Got to visit with two congregations and see loved ones from other congregations in different areas.

Our thanks to you all for your wonderful hospitality. While on our stay with Bro. and Sis. Al Burtis in Modesto, they became the proud grandparents of a new baby girl. Melissa Kay, born to their daughter, Sis Connie Williams. Sis Nora Loveland went to Modesto and spent two weeks with Sis Jewel Cadwell. We didn't make it to Ariz. but cold weather and situations at home shortened our trip. Our love to you all anyway.

The young people in Yakima have had many activities through the winter, much fellowship between the ones here. This Friday nite and Sat. a snow party at White Pass was held at the cabin of Bro. Bob Farley. About 30 people from the Glenwood Congregation and about that many from Yakima came. Sledding for the young at heart, games, food, good fellowship and fun was enjoyed.

We still have basket dinners the 1st Sunday of the month and singing or just fellowship for the day. Anyone passing this way please stop in. All are welcome.

In Christian Love
Bill and Veda McCay

The congregations at Lugert, Oklahoma and Lorenzo, Texas, are sponsering a camp meeting at the Quartz Mt. State Park which is close to Lugert July 8 at 2 p.m. through July 16 at noon. There are accommadations for about 80 people at the group camp and abundance of hook ups for Rec. vehicles within a hundred yards or so.

This is not a yearly meeting but they hope to have this periodically as with the meeting last year at Yakima. We heartily encourage these meetings in many areas of the country and hope the zeal of these brethren will provoke others. (II Cor. 9:2)

There will be more information later as to exact location and who to contact.

WORD SCRAMBLE GAME

1. John the Baptist's distant cousin----------USEJS RCTISH
2. He led the children of Isreal----------SSOME
3. He caused a rift between Paul and Barnabus----------NOJH AKMR
4. He took Judas' place----------TIMATAHS
5. Paul called his his son----------YTTIOMH
6. These were more noble-
   because they searched the scriptures----------SNEBARE
7. An Apostle, but not one of the twelve----------UALP
8. Christ told him "Feed my sheep"----------MINSO REPET

9. This church was lukewarm----------AADLOCEI
10. The Disciples met upon the first day of the week to do this----------KREBA DRABE
11. First Apostle to be killed----------SMAEJ
12. Peter's brother----------DARWEN
13. Jacob's favorite son----------POEJHS
14. Type of tree Zacheus climbed----------COMRESYA
15. Type of bird that fed Elijah----------VENAR

BAPTISMS

Karen Taylor-Lugert, Oklahoma Congregation

OBITUARY

Bro. Earl Arnett of the Waterford, Calif. Congregation passed away Jan. 22, 1978, at the age of 84. He is survived by his wife, Sis. Hope Arnett, a son Lawrence, daughter, Zelna Hillier, and a sister, Verna Harmon. Bro. Arnett was laid to rest Jan. 25 in Lakewood Cemetery in Hughson.

BIRTHS

Roger Evan Sauve-Jan. 22-9 lbs. 3 oz.-parents are Roger & Janis Sauve Yakima Congregation
Charles Erin Cutler-Dec. 9,'77-parent-Diane Henderson Cutler Modesto Congregation
Melissa Kay Williams-Jan. 5,'77-parents are Ken & Connie Williams Modesto Congregation

MEETINGS

Yakima, Washington-March 12-19-Speaker to be announced
Chesterton, Ind.-June 11-18-Claude Perigen speaking
Bellflower, Calif.-July 2-9-Howard McCay speaking
Lugert, Okla-July8-16-Guest Speakers
Port Orchard, Wash.-Aug. 20-27-J.D. Logan speaking