

**32963 Faith Column, by Drs. Casey and Bob Baggott
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Telescopic Possibilities

How good is your distance vision? Fortunately, no matter how near-sighted we may be, modern optics allows us to see far beyond our personal visual limitations. Here's the legend of how vastly improved distance vision was first developed.

It seems that Hans Lippershey, Junior liked to play in the workshop of his father, an optician in a small town in Holland. Hans enjoyed looking through the lenses and putting on the spectacles. One day he picked up two of the lenses and stood at the open door to peer at various objects outside. As he moved the lenses before his eyes he was suddenly startled. The village church, which stood quite a long way down the street from his father's optician's shop, suddenly seemed to leap toward him. In fact, little Hans could read the time on the clock of the bell tower. Everything seemed so close. How did that happen? Every time he managed to put the two lenses into the right position, the church tower miraculously appeared to jump forward. Again and again he adjusted the lenses and enjoyed the phenomenon of dramatically improved distance vision.

Hans' father immediately saw the possibilities of this discovery. Lippershey managed to mount two lenses in a tube, for ease of viewing and focusing. In 1608 he applied for a patent for this invention which he called an "instrument for seeing things far away as if they were nearby." The much simpler and catchier name, "telescope" was not coined for three more years. By that time lens makers across the globe were busily improving on the invention of the telescope. Now even those of us who squint to read the newspaper are capable, because of the telescope, of enjoying a thrilling view of the stars.

Intriguingly, Father Arthur Tonne likens the telescope to faith. What the telescope does for our visual capabilities, he says, faith does for our spiritual capabilities. By faith, God appears nearer. By faith, life's puzzles look less formidable. By faith, our vision of things, now confused and unfocussed, becomes clearer.

Perhaps the two lenses of the telescope, so useful for enhanced vision, could be compared to two aspects of faith. The first lens of faith is God's will. The second lens of faith is our own will. When we place these two lenses – two ways of viewing the world – into proper relation to one another, the vistas before us are astonishing. Suddenly, we see beyond ordinary limits. We see the things of God and our own place within a broader, greater, eternal scheme.

Have you discovered your own, personal faith-scope yet? If not, try adjusting the lenses you have on hand, as Hans Lippershey did. Try peering into the mystery of God's will for you. Then hold your own will up to the will of God and allow the lens of God's will to focus your own. Now, what do you see?