

When I Have Doubts and Changing Perspective

DOUBT

Let me meet you on the mountain, Lord,
Just once.
You wouldn't have to burn a whole bush.
Just a few smoking branches
And I would surely be ...your Moses.

Let me meet you on the water, Lord,
Just once.
It wouldn't have to be on White Rock Lake.
Just on a puddle after the annual Dallas rain
And I would surely be...your Peter.

Let me meet you on the road, Lord,
Just once.
You wouldn't have to blind me on North Central Expressway.
Just a few bright lights on the way to chapel
And I would surely be...your Paul.

Let me meet you, Lord,
Just once.
Anywhere. Anytime.
Just meeting you in the Word is so hard sometimes
Must I always be...your Thomas?

Norman Shirk, April 10, 1981, KQ (Dallas Seminary)

Lord Halifax, a former foreign secretary of Great Britain, once shared a railway compartment with two prim-looking spinsters. A few moments before reaching his destination the train passed through a tunnel. In the utter darkness Halifax kissed the back of his hand noisily several times. When the train drew into the station, he rose, lifted his hat, and in a gentlemanly way said:

"May I thank whichever one of you two ladies I am indebted to for the charming incident in the tunnel." He then beat a hasty retreat, leaving the two ladies glaring at each other.

Bits & Pieces, May 27, 1993, p. 22.

G. Campbell Morgan had already enjoyed some success as a preacher by the time he was 19 years old. But then he was attacked by doubts about the Bible. The writings of various scientists and agnostics disturbed him (e.g., Charles Darwin, John Tyndall, Thomas Huxley, and Herbert Spencer). As he read their books and listened to debates, Morgan became more and more perplexed. What did he do? He cancelled all preaching engagements, put all the books in a cupboard and locked the door, and went to the bookstore and bought a new Bible. He said to himself, "I am no longer sure that this is what my father claims it to be--the Word of God. But of this I am sure. If it be the Word of God, and if I come to it with an unprejudiced and open mind, it will bring assurance to my soul of itself." The result? "That Bible found me!" said Morgan. The new assurance in 1883 gave him the motivation for his preaching and teaching ministry. He devoted himself to the study and preaching of God's Word.

Wycliffe Handbook of Preaching & Preachers, Moody, 1984, p. 211.

Carl Rogers, the U.S. psychologist, was 22 years old when he entered Union Theological Seminary in New York in 1924. While there, he participated in a seminar organized to explore religious doubts. Rogers later said of the group, "The majority of members...in thinking their way through questions they had raised, thought themselves right out of religious work. I was one."

Book of Lists, p. 20.

Give me the benefit of your convictions, if you have any; but keep your doubts to yourself, for I have enough of my own.

Goethe.

Perspective

PERSPECTIVE

An airline pilot flying over the southeastern U.S. called the local tower and said, "We are passing over at 35,000--give us a time check." The tower said, "What airline are you?" "What difference does it make? I just want the time." replied the pilot. The tower responded, "Oh, it makes a lot of difference. If you are TransWorld Airline or Pan Am, it is 1600. If you are United or Delta, it is 4 o'clock. If you are Southern Airways, the little hand is on the 4 and the big hand is on the 12. If you are Skyway Airlines--it's Thursday."

Peter Dieson, The Priority of Knowing God, p.91.

If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail.

Abraham Maslow quoted in Eating Problems for Breakfast by Tim Hansel, Word Publishing, 1988, p. 54.

"It is a popular conception that to make rapid fundamental progress it is only necessary to concentrate large quantities of men and money on a problem," said Charles Kettering.

"Years ago when we were developing the first electrically operated cash register I ran into this type of thinking. My boss was going to Europe and wanted the job finished before he took off. 'Give Kettering twice as many men so he can finish it up in half the time.' When I objected to this idea, he asked, 'Why can't you? If 10 men can dig 10 rods of ditch in a day, then surely 20 men can dig 20 rods.'

"I replied, 'Do you think if one hen can hatch a setting of eggs in three weeks, two hens can hatch a setting in a week and a half? This is more a job of hatching eggs than digging ditches.

Bits & Pieces, April 28, 1994, p. 16.

Baseball pitcher Tug McGraw had a wonderful philosophy of pitching. He called it his "frozen snowball" theory. "If I come in to pitch with the bases loaded," Tug explained, "and heavy hitter Willie Stargell is at bat, there's no reason I want to throw the ball. But eventually I have to pitch. So I remind myself that in a few billion years the earth will become a frozen snowball hurtling through space, and nobody's going to care what Willie Stargell did with the bases loaded!"

Our Daily Bread, July 26, 1994.

It's something like what Coach John McKay of USC said to his team after they had been humiliated 51-0 by Notre Dame. McKay came into the locker room and saw a group of beaten worn-out and thoroughly depressed young football players who were not accustomed to losing. He stood up on a bench and said, "Men, let's keep this in perspective. There are 800 million Chinese who don't even know this game was played." That's what you call perspective.

Steve Farrar, Family Survival in the American Jungle, 1991, Multnomah Press, p. 40.

A Different View

After all - it's just how you look at things. A man was driving in the country one day and he saw an old man sitting on a fence rail watching the cars go by. Stopping to pass the time of day, the traveler said, "I never could stand living out here. You don't see anything, and I'm sure you don't travel like I do. I'm on the go all the time."

The old man on the fence looked down at the stranger and drawled, "I can't see much difference in what I'm doing and what you're doing. I sit on the fence and watch the autos go by and you sit in your auto and watch the fences go by. It's just the way you look at things."

Source Unknown.

Wherever you may be in the Northern Hemisphere, bathtub water will form a vortex as it goes down the drain -- almost always spinning in a counterclockwise direction. But in the Southern Hemisphere, the bath water will spin in a clockwise direction as it runs away. One in a few centers of population where the tub's plughole is directly on the equator, such as Nanuki in Kenya, will the water run away twisting as often one way as the other or forming no vortex at all.

Magnus Pyke, Butter Side Up!, Sterling.

Dear Abby: Our son was married January. Five months later his wife had a ten-pound baby girl. They said the baby was premature. Tell me, can a baby this big be that early? -- Wondering

Dear Wondering: The baby was on time, the wedding was late. Forget it.

From Dear Abby.

Get the right perspective. When Goliath came against the Israelites, the soldiers all thought, "He's so big we can never kill him." David looked at the same giant and thought, "He's so big I can't miss."

God Can Make It Happen (Victor).

How Do You Look at It?

A shoe manufacturer who decided to open the Congo market sent two salesmen to the undeveloped territory. One salesman cabled back: "Prospect here nil. No one wears shoes." The other salesman reported enthusiastically, "Market potential terrific! Everyone is barefooted."

Source Unknown.

Dear Mom and Dad,

Just thought I'd drop you a note to clue you in on my plans. I've fallen in love with a guy called Jim. He quit high school after grade eleven to get married. About a year ago he got a divorce.

We've been going steady for two months and plan to get married in the fall. Until then, I've decided to move into his apartment (I think I might be pregnant).

At any rate, I dropped out of school last week, although I'd like to finish college sometime in the future. (On the next page the letter continued)

Mom and Dad, I just want you to know that everything I've written so far in this letter is false. NONE of it is true. But, Mom and Dad, it IS true that I got a C- in French and flunked my math class... and it IS true that I'm going to need some more money for my tuition payments.

Failure can sound like success. It just depends on the perspective. The measuring device we use to evaluate our success or failure is often more important than the success or failure, for to a large extent, it determines that success or failure.

Source Unknown.

Once the Devil was walking along with one of his cohorts. They saw a man ahead of them pick up something shiny. "What did he find?" asked the cohort.

"A piece of the truth," the Devil replied.

"Doesn't it bother you that he found a piece of the truth?" asked the cohort.

"No," said the Devil, "I will see to it that he makes a religion out of it."

Klyne Snodgrass, *Between Two Truths - Living with Biblical Tensions*, 1990, Zondervan Publishing House, p. 35.

To please his father a freshman went out for track. He had no athletic ability, though the father had been a good miler in his day. His first race was a two-man race in which he ran against the school miler. He was badly beaten. Not wanting to disappoint his father, the boy wrote home as follows: "You will be happy to know that I ran against Bill Williams, the best miler in school. He came in next to last, while I came in second."

Bits & Pieces, September 17, 1992, p. 12.

When the other person acts that way, he's ugly...
When you do it, it's nerves.
When she's set in her ways she's obstinate...
When you are, it's just firmness.
When he doesn't like your friends, he's prejudiced...
When you don't like his, you're showing good judgment.
When she tries to be accommodating, she's apple-polishing..
When you do it, you're using tact.
When he takes time to do things, he's dead slow...
When you take ages, you are deliberate.
When she picks flaws, she's cranky...
When you do it, you're discriminating.

Anonymous, *Christopher News Notes*, June 1992.

A young couple rented a vacation cottage for a week. One afternoon the husband looked out a window at the swimming pool and exclaimed, "Let's change our clothes and go get some exercise!" His wife, who was washing the dishes in the kitchen and looking out the window watching some people play tennis, quickly agreed. While she dressed for a tennis match, he put on his swimming trunks. The window a person chooses to look out at the world often determines that individual's perception of reality.

Lyle Schaller, *Activating the Passive Church*, p. 19.

When I think of perspective I am often reminded of a conversation between me and my son in the summer he turned four. That spring Mark had asked for a spot in the family garden to call his own. He turned the soil, broke the clumps, and planted his favorite vegetable--corn. Toward the middle of July, Mark was concerned that his corn was not growing fast enough. I tried to reassure him that the corn was doing just fine by quoting him the familiar benchmark used by farmers, "...knee high by the fourth of July."

My lesson came with his retort: "My knees or yours?"

Nicholas Mokolke, *Bits and Pieces*, September 19, 1991, p. 2.
