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Introduction.

There is much to celebrate about the preaching and teaching that the Faith teachers have brought to the Church. Their relentless militancy against defeatist and anti-supernatural agendas among Evangelical Christians is laudable. The Faith teachers’ emphasis on the benefits of the substitutionary nature of the death of Christ is also to be welcomed (notwithstanding the severe difficulties in Copeland’s doctrine of the atonement). The inspiring triumphalism of their preaching, however, can easily disguise agendas that, on closer analysis, are no more helpful than those they are militating against. High-octane expectations are too easily followed by dashed hopes. The blame is then laid to rest firmly with the believer: No result? It was because he or she failed to persevere, failed to ‘hold fast the confession of their hope without wavering.’

It is not without good reason, never the less, that these teachings are popularly termed a ‘gospel’. Faith teaching does indeed represent a substitute gospel, an alternative good news. The true gospel of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life is replaced by an earthly gospel, a gospel of the here-and-now. This new gospel is, of course, very attractive. There are few people who would not love to be successful, rich and healthy all the time. Neither is there anything intrinsically wrong with these benefits or any of the other blessings that God is so often pleased to lavish upon His people. The danger is that what this pseudo-gospel offers, it offers at the expense of the true one. The true gospel is a gospel of grace. The Faith gospel is a DIY religion. It demands an extensive apparatus of works and conditions that must be met in order for the
blessings to flow. God’s grace, by contrast, has always been greeted by sinners down
the ages of Church history as something amazing, astounding, even ‘outrageous.’ It
flows to sinners with such a force as to oust all their self-made righteousness and
place them forever in the realm of God’s justifying favour. The true gospel is about
reconciliation to God. It is about restored fellowship with the Godhead. The Faith
gospel potentially leaves people in their alienation from God and offers them a self-
help package of laws and formulas instead. These cannot replace the dynamics of a
real relationship with God.

I offer the fruits of my research, then, as an attempt to defend the true gospel against
what is possibly its most subtle and pervasive modern-day threat. The ground gained
by Dan McConnell and others by the late eighties, in the wake of the great Faith
controversy of the late seventies and early eighties, has now been ceded to the able
defences offered by Joe McIntyre, and William DeArteaga, especially as regards to
the part played by E. W. Kenyon. Coupled with this, the vocabulary and spirituality of
the Faith message has now penetrated a great deal of mainstream Christian thinking.
People no longer simply ‘pray’; they ‘speak it into being’; they ‘speak healing’ to
bodies, they ‘speak’ to mountains and ‘declare victory.’ There seems to be almost no
part of charismatic Christendom that has not embraced the assumptions of the Faith
movement. This paper attempts to get back some of the ground that McConnell took
by drawing attention to the very heart of the Faith message, its understanding of faith
itself.

1 I am referring here to a recent worship song by Godfrey Birtill: Outrageous Grace, (Preston:
Whitefield Music, 2000), Track 3.
3 McIntyre, J., E. W. Kenyon and His Message of Faith: The True Story, (Lake Mary: Creation House,
1997).
4 DeArteaga, W., Quenching the Spirit: Examining Centuries of Opposition to the Moving of the Holy
For the purposes of this work, my definition of ‘Faith Teacher’ is anyone in Christian ministry who consciously derives the most important aspects of their teaching from Kenneth Hagin. I regard Oral Roberts and Benny Hinn, for instance, as rather unique individuals who cannot be classified as Faith Teachers in the strictest sense. Their ministries are in no way derived from Hagin. Whereas Kenneth Copeland and Charles Capps, whose teachings I analyse in this paper, openly acknowledge the profound affect that Hagin has had upon their beliefs.

In the interests of sensationalistic journalism, many critics have seized upon the outlandish statements made by Faith teachers in their recorded sermons and TV appearances. Such ‘heat-of-the-moment’ sayings have not been utilised in this study. In the interests of fairness to the ministries represented here, this written piece of work will use their written pieces of work as primary sources. I must also state that I consider the Faith teachers referred to in this work to be my brothers in Christ and that they are sincerely motivated. I share with them the wish to be of genuine benefit to the body of Christ.

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6 I have made one citation from a transcript of a tape on p35.
1. The History of the ‘Faith’ Concept.

1.1. American Metaphysics.

A link between the 19th Century metaphysical cults and the Faith movement, via the writings of E. W. Kenyon, has been notoriously difficult to prove. Of these cults, New Thought is identified by McConnell as being the one that had the most influence upon Kenyon. This cult strikes its roots into the German idealist philosophy of Transcendentalism. The philosophy of Transcendentalism, in turn, is traceable to Immanuel Kant. His rejection of reason alone for understanding observable phenomena led him to place the human consciousness, with its own inherent concepts, at the centre of the philosopher’s universe, no longer passively observing but actively...

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7 McConnell concedes: “…we do not have any written confession by Kenyon which admits to having formed his theology from cultic sources.” McConnell, Different Gospel, 25 (italics his). Some prefer to cite some contemporary influence such as the New Age movement: Smail, T., A. Walker & N. Wright, “Revelation Knowledge” and Knowledge of Revelation: The Faith Movement and the Question of Heresy”, in Smail, T., A. Walker & N. Wright (eds) Charismatic Renewal: The Search for a Theology, (London: SPCK, 1995), 135-6. Sarles believes he can point to the Positive Thinking and Positive Mental Attitude teachings of Norman Vincent Peale and Robert Schuller as direct influences upon the Faith movement: Sarles, K. L., “A Theological Evaluation of the Prosperity Gospel”, Bibliotheca Sacra Vol 143:152 (Oct-Dec 1986), 329-30, as does Williams, D. T., “Prosperity Teaching and Positive Thinking”, Evangelical Review of Theology 11:3 (July 1987), 197-208. Da Silva cites both the New Age movement and the positive thinking advocates: Da Silva, A. B., “The ‘Theology of Success’ Movement: A Comment”, Themelios 11:3 (April 1986), 91. Hunt & McMahon see the New Age as happening outside the Church. Their concern is with the influence today of New Thought within the Church: Hunt, D., & T. A. McMahon, The Seduction of Christianity, (Eugene: Harvest House, 1985), 151. All of these writers may be able to point out similarities with contemporary spiritualities but evidence of any dependence on them is lacking. The search for an historical influence at the movement’s point of inception, though certainly problematic, seems more promising.

providing the only means by which reality could be understood. Fichte went further than Kant by portraying the human consciousness as ‘positing’ its own reality. The Transcendentalists of New England likewise saw themselves as the creators of their own reality, the maximisers of their own divine potential. Transcendental beliefs focused on the importance of intuitive knowledge over against rational knowledge as well as on the divinity of man. One of the principal doctrines of the New England Transcendentalists was “the supremacy of mind over matter.” Transcendentalism and, in turn, New Thought, helped fuel the optimistic ‘can do’ mentality of New England expansionism. It was a belief in the unlimited potential of the individual.

New Thought applied Transcendentalist beliefs in practical terms towards the procurement of health, wealth and happiness. The following are the words of P. P. Quimby, founder of New Thought philosophy, and, via his influence on Mary Baker Eddy, effectively the founder of Christian Science:

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9 “I term all cognition transcendental which concerns itself not so much with objects, as with our mode of cognition of objects so far as this may be possible a priori. A system of such concepts would be called Transcendental Philosophy.” Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, cited in Frothingham, *Transcendentalism*, 13.


13 Speaking of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s influence on New England, Bolt & Lee eulogise: “His [Ralph Waldo Emerson’s] was the oracular voice of Transcendentalism, the shifting and often ethereal philosophy of human perfectability and belief in nature as the ideal and outward show of benign Divinity that dominated the ‘optative spirit of American culture.’” Bolt, C., & A. R. Lee, “New England in the Nation” in *Introduction to American Studies*, (London: Longman, 1981), 76.Cf. Oliver, M., *History of Philosophy*,(London: Hamlyn, 2000), 95: “For many philosophers America is much more than a country, it is an idea. It represents the ideals which spearheaded the Enlightenment, in their most acute form.” Judah makes the further observation that the tendency to see God as a utilitarian deity whose benefits may be accessed in a scientific way using laws, as well as the tendency to see man as divine have been endemic to American spirituality and culture ever since the separation of Church and State: Judah, J. S., *The History and Philosophy of the Metaphysical Movements in America*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), 21-23.
“Now when people are educated to understand that *what they believe they will create, they will cease believing what the medical men say, and try to account for their feelings in a more rational way.*”

Quimby’s main concern was with healing yet it was clear that his beliefs about the powerful effects of thinking positively had much wider ramifications. Quimby had already described his beliefs as the ‘Science of Life’ and the ‘Science of Happiness.’ The implications of his message were soon noticed. Warren F. Evans, Mary Baker Eddy, Annetta G. Seabury and Julius A. Dresser were the first to popularise the beliefs of Quimby. As a result, a holistic philosophy of life emerged that perceived that the secret not only of bodily healing, but also of prosperity and well-being of every kind was to exclude all negative thoughts and maintain a positive outlook on life. Others, taking their cue from Warren F. Evans, then took Quimby’s beliefs a stage further and began to include the idea of positive verbal affirmations. These ideas became highly influential.

New Thought had no doctrinal system. Never the less, two main elements of New Thought praxis may be observed. These were positivity and creativity. New Thought

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17 Braden, *Spirits*, 89.
20 The fact that by 1897 New Thought ideas had become pervasive is suggested in a comment made by Ralph Waldo Trine to a friend: “How beautiful if Emerson, the illumined one so far in advance of his time, who laboured so faithfully and so fearlessly to bring about these very conditions, how beautiful if he were here with us today to witness it all! How he would rejoice!” Trine, R. W., *In Tune With The Infinite*, (New Canaan: Keats Publishing, 1973, original, 1897), 17.
advocates equated the positive with the divine. Becoming a positive person was a step towards the “…recognition, realization and manifestation of God in man.” God was understood to be universal Mind, therefore, to get one’s own mind into harmony with the positive divine Mind was to achieve union with the divine. Within the second element, that of creativity, there were two components. Firstly, they taught that what people believe they will create. Secondly they taught that what is spoken out will be created. Henry Wood developed the teaching of Evans on positive affirmations, suggesting various affirmative statements to speak out in groups, to place on the walls or to meditate on in solitude. Here is a sample of some:

The Word which is within, I speak to externals…I am a sculptor, and thinking is my chisel…I rule my bodily conditions….I bury all negation, weakness, and fear. I enthrone and embody the positive, living truth. …I am strong in the Lord…I am full of faith….I heal and am healed…I am building the world in which I must live…”

New Thought praxis in its most developed form, therefore, could be encapsulated in a phrase that would sound something like this: ‘The positive things that you believe, if you speak them out, you will create.’

The idealist philosopher Jacobi had already referred to his particular brand of Transcendentalism as ‘faith’. Not surprisingly, New Thought writers were also fond
of this word. In both, ‘faith’ becomes something entirely subjective. It is no longer necessary that there be a God to have faith in, simply that there be ‘faith’. It is seen in Wood as a self-contained creative power.\textsuperscript{26} For Ralph Waldo Trine, faith is “…the operation of the \textit{thought forces} in the form of an earnest desire, coupled with the expectation as to its fulfilment.”\textsuperscript{27} In Quimby, the very same idea is given the term ‘Mind’, to which he gives the new meaning, “…matter held in solution…”\textsuperscript{28} Mind can materialise its own reality. The full harnessing of the power of Mind, however, is not possible for the ‘natural man’,\textsuperscript{29} who, according to Quimby, operates in the realm of his senses, for, “…mind and senses are as distinct as light and darkness.”\textsuperscript{30} With Charles Fillmore, the founder of Unity, ‘mind’ and ‘faith’ are brought together: “Faith is the perceiving power of the mind linked with a power to shape substance.”\textsuperscript{31}

American metaphysics, then, was a constellation of idealist beliefs that found their genesis in German Transcendental philosophy. New England Transcendentalism, New Thought, Christian Science, Unity, Science of the Mind and other metaphysical cults all shared a strong belief in the creative powers of the inner self. This creative force was able to control the world of the ‘not-self’\textsuperscript{32} by manipulating the laws of the universe.

\textsuperscript{26} “…Faith, far from being mere emotion, is really concentrated spiritual and psychical momentum, and this momentum has tremendous potential force.” Wood, \textit{New Thought}, 20.
\textsuperscript{27} Trine, \textit{In Tune}, 19 (italics his).
\textsuperscript{28} “Then what is it that is not Wisdom, God, or spirit, and not matter and yet can be changed? It is matter held in solution called Mind, which the power of Wisdom can condense into a solid so dense as to become the substance called ‘matter.’ Assume this theory and you can see how man can become sick and get well by a change of Mind.” Dresser, \textit{Quimby}, 234. Hanegraaff may well be right in his observation that, “…the distinction between the ‘mind’ of metaphysics and the ‘faith’ of Faith theology is little more than cosmetic.” Hanegraaff, \textit{Christianity}, 30.
\textsuperscript{29} Dresser, \textit{Quimby}, 237-244.
\textsuperscript{30} Dresser, \textit{Quimby}, 244.
\textsuperscript{31} Fillmore, C., \textit{Prosperity}, (Kansas: Unity School of Christianity, 1936),43.
\textsuperscript{32} A phrase of Fichte’s: \textit{Science of Knowledge}, 218.
1.2. E. W. Kenyon and Faith Cure.

McIntyre argues strenuously throughout his book that it was the Faith Cure advocates such as Charles Cullis, A. B. Simpson, John Alexander Dowie and Carrie Judd-Montgomery that were ‘documentably’ Kenyon’s ‘mentors’ rather than Charles Emerson, Ralph Waldo Trine or anyone else of New Thought inclinations.  

However, the documentation that McIntyre is able to cite in support of these Evangelical influences on Kenyon is somewhat meagre. The documentary evidence does not seem to be any more convincing than that offered by McConnell in favour of a New Thought and even a Christian Science influence. DeArteaga and Perriman believe that the Faith Cure movement and New Thought actually exchanged ideas and that Kenyon was a prime example of that confluence of ideas and terminology.  

What seems likely is that a pervasive antirational approach to life provided the

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33 McIntyre, Kenyon, 46, 242, 245-264, cf.19.
34 In his book, I found six documented instances of a possible relationship between Kenyon and the Holiness and Faith-Cure teachers: A sermon by A. T. Pierson about having resurrected life like Christ’s made a significant impact upon him; Kenyon once spoke in praise of Charles Cullis and of John Alexander Dowie; Kenyon once cited a certain F.L. House; Kenyon also recorded the influence of a little known preacher, John Norvell with regards to positive confession; and an advert for A.B. Simpson’s church, The Interdenominiational Gospel Tabernacle, features a billing of Kenyon as the guest speaker, McIntyre, Kenyon, 10, 67, 68, 227, 259, 273.
35 McConnell was able to obtain the following statement from one of Kenyon’s closest former acquaintances: “…I have come to realize that E. W. Kenyon has simply ‘baptized’ many concepts from Christian Science. In so doing, he became a source for a form of ‘Pentecostal Christian Science.’” McConnell, Different Gospel, 15, citing John Kenningham, unpublished written statement, Portland, Oregon, July 8, 1986. In a taped interview, Ern Baxter also records how Kenyon read Mary Baker Eddy’s Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures with approval. Baxter goes on to say that “…he was well-read in metaphysics, in the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson and in New England Transcendentalism.” McConnell, Different Gospel, 184.
36 “Kenyon’s system of faith idealism was a major codification of the idealist elements already present in both the Faith-Cure and Metaphysical movements.” DeArteaga, Quenching, 212. Cf. Perriman, A., Faith, Health and Prosperity, (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003),76, cf. 70. Similarly, A. J. Gordon was apparently influenced by Mary Baker Eddy: Dayton, D., Theological Roots of Pentecostalism, (Menchen & London: The Scarecrow Press, 1987), 122. As Cunningham rightly asserts, however, a clear distinction needs to be maintained between the beliefs of the metaphysical cults and those of Faith Cure: Cunningham, R. J., “From Holiness to Healing: Faith Cure in America 1872-1892”, Church History 43:3 (Dec 1974), 512.
cultural and intellectual environment that made possible the emergence of the Faith Cure teachers, the metaphysical cults and Kenyon’s idealism. America was in the throws of a reaction against Enlightenment materialism in both its Christian and non-Christian guises, which, according to Menzies, also provided the conditions for Pentecostalism to arise.\textsuperscript{37} The pervasive affects of rationalism were made the more acute by the American Civil War (1861-65). In the wake of the war, a widespread commercial as well as philosophic materialism swept through the devastated country in an all out pursuit of power and plenty. The Church was increasingly accommodating itself to the wealthy middle classes and swelling as a result.\textsuperscript{38} All of this produced a cultural Christianity largely devoid of any supernatural power. Indeed any signs of ‘enthusiasm’ or excess in so-called ‘revival’ meetings were increasingly suppressed.\textsuperscript{39} The Church was mostly cessationist in outlook.\textsuperscript{40} The metaphysical cults, by contrast, were gaining large numbers of disillusioned Christians owing to the tangible results they were able to show for their beliefs. This was especially the case in the realm of healing. Within the Church, both the Faith Cure preachers and E. W. Kenyon had the common aim of dealing decisively with this situation.

Among the Faith Cure teachers there can certainly be found the great emphasis on faith as total confidence in the Word of God that would later become one of the

\textsuperscript{37} "In retrospect, the quest for Christian holiness seems to have been a popular expression of the strivings which on a more sophisticated level produced the transcendentalist revolt of Emerson and Thoreau." Menzies, W. W., \textit{Anointed to Serve: The Story of the Assemblies of God}, (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1971), 24.


\textsuperscript{39} Anderson, \textit{Vision}, 38.

distinguishing marks of Faith teaching. This emphasis on the kind of faith that actually gets results can be traced as far back as Charles Finney (1792-1875). What was to become the unique element in Faith teaching, that of faith being the power to autonomously speak things into being, is not found in Christian writings in any developed form until Kenyon.

McIntyre believes that the doctrine of positive confession was taught by the Methodists. The need to give ‘testimony’ to what God had done was a prominent feature of Wesleyan Holiness gatherings. The Holiness tradition, however, out of which Faith Cure arose, was driven by different urgencies to those of Kenyon. Owing

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41 McIntyre also brings to light some teaching by A. B. Simpson on faith’s relationship to confession in his 1892 book, In Heavenly Places. McIntyre, Kenyon, 65-66. Simpson stressed, however, that faith had to be based on what God Himself has actually said: “Therefore, whenever faith can clearly know that God has spoken, all it has to do is lay the whole responsibility on Him and go forward.” Simpson, A. B., Standing on Faith, (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, n.d.), 23. Similarly, A. J. Gordon gives place to the sovereignty of God in his understanding of healing: “It is as true here as in any other field that God acts sovereignly and according to His own determinate counsel. He sees it best to recover one person at the instance of His people’s prayers, and He may see it best to withhold such recovery for the time from another.” Gordon, “Ministry of Healing”, 248. Carrie Judd-Montgomery’s doctrine of faith included the important element of dependence upon God to bring to realisation what faith has requested: “Our part is simply to reckon our prayer as answered, and God’s part is to make faith’s reckonings real.” (italics original) from “Faith’s Reckonings”, Triumphs of Faith 1 (Jan 1881), 2-3, cited by Dayton, Theological Roots, 126.
42 Ferriman, Faith, 59; Goff, J. R., “The Faith That Claims”, Christianity Today (Feb 19, 1990), 18-19 and Farah, C., ‘A Critical Analysis: the ‘Roots and Fruits’ of Faith-Formula Theology’, Pneuma 3 (Spring 1981), 5, all agree on this. Farah adds the insight that Finney arrived at his doctrine of prayer through the influence of the utilitarian philosopher, Jeremy Bentham: “He [Finney] wrote that it is our highest duty to will God’s highest good, whether God willed it so or not.” (italics his). However, this needs to be balanced against Finney’s own statement: “‘We want to know in what cases, for what persons, and places, and at what times, we are to make the prayer of faith.’ I answer, as I have already answered: ‘When you have evidence – from promises, or prophecies, or providences, or the leadings of the Spirit – that God will do the things for which you pray.’” Shelhamer, E. E., (ed) Finney on Revival, (Minneapolis: Bethany House, n.d.), 48.
43 Neuman, “Cultic Origins”, 48. Contra McIntyre who points out that as early as 1848 Phoebe Palmer could write, “But do not forget that believing with the heart, and confessing with the mouth, stand closely connected…To the degree that you rely on the faithfulness of God, O hasten to make confession with the mouth of your confidence.” McIntyre, Kenyon, 48, quoting from Palmer, P., Faith and Its Effects, 113. This, however, provides no evidence for any developed doctrine of positive confession. She is simply using the language of the passage she is expounding: Rom.10:9-10. There is no evidence, for instance, that Palmer believed that God is a Faith God and spoke the universe into being by faith and that those made in His image can and should do the same as Kenyon did: Kenyon, E. W., The Two Kinds of Faith: Faith’s Secrets Revealed, (Seattle: Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing Society, 1942), 19. cf. idem, The Two Kinds of Knowledge, (Seattle: Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing Society, 1942), 14.
44 McIntyre, Kenyon, 46. He claims that the “evidence” suggests that the cults learned affirmations from the Holiness movement and yet presents no evidence.
originally to John Wesley’s doctrine of entire sanctification, everything the Holiness churches stood for was gathered around a strong Perfectionist tendency.45 Their doctrine of faith, though dangerously close to making the ‘prayer of faith’ into a mechanistic process of cause and effect,46 was focused on the person of Christ.47 He was their Saviour, their Sanctifier and now, under the Faith Cure advocates, their Healer also. Yet, for them, this belief in healing was simply an extension of their belief in sanctification.48 The same Jesus who was the Sanctifier of the soul could also be the Healer of the body, in effect, sanctifying it from the affects of the Fall.

By contrast, Kenyon’s main concern was not sanctification but elevation. As will be seen in the following chapter, Kenyon wished to build confidence; he wanted to encourage self-actualisation.49 It should come as no surprise therefore, to find that what is found in Kenyon is a doctrine of faith and confession that goes significantly beyond anything taught by the Faith Curists. It is different in essence because it is different in orientation.

45 For the immense influence of John Wesley on 19th Century American Methodism see, Dayton, “Healing Movement”, 5, 7.
47 This may have been a factor in preventing their doctrine of healing from being reduced to a set of impersonal laws. Cullis’ stated aim in producing his magazine, Times of Refreshing, was “to present Jesus as a full and perfect saviour” Cunningham, “Holiness to Healing”, 500; Dayton, Theological Roots, 123.
49 e.g. Kenyon, E. W., The Two Kinds of Life, (Seattle: Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing Society, 2002), 152-153: “Another who has become the righteousness of God in Christ is confessing his unworthiness and lack of ability to stand in the Father’s presence without the sense of sin-consciousness…Think of the pathetic picture of one who has Christ as his wisdom living in poverty of spirit and continually confessing his lack of ability.”
1.3. The Writings of E. W. Kenyon: Faith is Creative.

Emerson College of Oratory, Boston, was a centre for the propagation of New Thought ideas. A notable student at this college during the academic year of 1892-3, and a fellow student of Ralph Waldo Trine’s was E. W. Kenyon himself. McConnell admits the difficulty of proving that Kenyon ever consciously embraced and endorsed New Thought philosophy while attending the college, although it is certain that he had already lapsed from his commitment to Christianity for some time. Once restored to faith, his stated desire was to equip Christianity with a new supernaturalism that would give it the edge on the ever-increasing popularity of the metaphysical cults. Kenyon’s motives appear to have been good. He wanted to encourage Christians to rise up out of their anti-supernatural, defeatist approach to life and become all that he felt they had a right to be in Christ.

While his intentions were laudable, he appears to have picked up a foreign element in his thinking along the way. His concept of faith in fact seems, in part at least, to have been a New Thought concept. Even one of his defenders, William DeArteaga, concedes as much but insists that Kenyon put idealist and New Thought ideas through

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50 The biographical details supplied by Geir Lie, “E. W. Kenyon: Cult Founder or Evangelical Minister?” Master’s Thesis for Lutheran School of Theology March 1998 (accessed online 3 June 03: http://home.no.net/geili/Kenyon_eng.htm, pp 6-15, were helpful and interesting.
51 McConnell, Different Gospel, 40-41.
52 Lie, Kenyon, 7-8.
53 We cannot ignore the amazing growth of Christian Science, Unity, New Thought, and Spiritism. The people who are flocking to them are not the ignorant masses, but the most cultured and wealthy of the land, and their strongest appeal is the supernatural element of their so-called religion.” Kenyon, E. W., The Wonderful Name of Jesus, (Seattle: Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing Society, nd),110.
a kind of biblical filtration that purified them of their potentially cultic elements. How effective any such biblical filtration was is open to question.

Kenyon uses the word ‘faith’ in a confusing assortment of different ways. A survey of just two of his books, *The Two Kinds of Knowledge*, and, *The Two Kinds of Faith*, revealed as many as seven distinct ways in which the word ‘faith’ is employed:

1) Intuition
2) Spiritual Perception
3) The ability to create
4) Trust or Confidence in things
5) The ability to take what God offers
6) Authority
7) ‘Unqualified Committal’

The core concept of faith in the Bible is ‘trust’ or ‘confidence’ based on having been ‘persuaded’ or ‘convinced’ of the truth of something or of the reliability of a person.

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55 DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit*, 163, 212.
62 Kenyon, *Faith*, 24: “‘And Abraham believed God and He reckoned it unto him for righteousness.’ This means that he had to make an ‘unqualified committal’ unto Jehovah…”
The concept is gathered around the two semantic fields of ‘trust’ and ‘trustworthiness’
(see especially Gen.15:6; Ps.119:160; Matt 6:30;1Cor.2:5; 2Cor.5:7; Gal.3:2; Col.2:5;
1Pet.1:21). All of Kenyon’s concepts of faith may, to a greater or lesser degree, be
made to fit this biblical idea apart from number 3: ‘the ability to create.’

The Bible nowhere unequivocally attributes this quality to faith. This is a very important
concept for Kenyon, but it is one that appears to have slipped into his writings from a
source foreign to the Bible.

Most crucial of all to Kenyon’s Creative Faith concept appears to be his doctrine of
regeneration. He defines the ‘New Creation’ as receiving the nature of God. In so
doing, he goes one step beyond the biblical idea: receiving a new origin,
becoming
the object of a new eschatological creative act of God,
even, “…the communication

203-205; Moberly, R. W. L., “/m*a*” in W. A. VanGemeren (ed) New International Dictionary of Old
64 A relationship between faith and ‘Authority’ is also very difficult to find in the Bible, the only
possible basis being Mark 11:22-24. This passage will be discussed in ch.2.2 of this paper. Kenyon
cites Jesus’ authority in Matt 8:26; Luke 5:1-11; Mark 1: 32-34; 11:14 and John 11:39-44, and, with the
help of 1John 4:4, and the doctrine of co-ascension (Eph.2:6; Col.3:1-3) assumes this to be a paradigm
for believers: Kenyon, Faith, 21, 22,36,55. There is a basis for believing that believers have come to
share in Christ’s authority (e.g.Luke 10:19) but Scripture does not clearly relate this to faith in the way
Kenyon does.

65 Kenyon’s Scriptural basis for believing that faith is creative rests on the creative power of God’s
ability is then said to have been imparted to His children also: Kenyon, Faith, 19, 20, 31, 73-74, 103-
105; Kenyon, Knowledge, 14-15, 31. This Scriptural basis is so insufficient as to render it unlikely that
Scripture was ever the source of this belief. “Thy faith hath made thee whole” (Matt 9:22, cf. Mark
10:52; Luke 7:50) has been used by the New Thought writer, Henry Wood, to advocate a creative,
healing quality to faith itself (Wood, New Thought, 21). The context of the passage makes clear,
however, that it cannot be faith itself that has achieved the healing but faith in Jesus’ power. As
Warrington points out, Jesus’ miracles were not always in response to faith, neither did they always
give rise to an expression of faith, which somewhat negates the idea that faith has its own creative
power: Warrington, K., Jesus the Healer: Paradigm or Unique Phenomenon? (Carlisle: Paternoster,

66 “So when we are Born Again, receive Eternal Life the nature of God, that nature begets in us faith,
and we build our faith by feeding on God’s Word.” Kenyon, E. W., In His Presence 29th Ed., (Seattle:
Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing Society, 1993, 120. Cf. idem, The Father and His Family, (Seattle:
KGPS, 1964), 150; idem, Two Kinds of Righteousness, 17, 20, 27; idem, The Hidden Man: An


of divine life to the soul,” into a New Thought idea: possessing the very nature of God Himself. Where Kenyon deviates from the New Testament is not in his assertion that believers are indwelt by God – they most certainly are (1Cor.6:19; Col.1:27). His fault is that he fails to preserve adequately the division between the human and the divine. He does not see regeneration as the transformation of human nature but as the implantation of divine nature. Man ceases in his very nature to be a sinner at all; he is now ‘the Righteousness of God.’ In this way he confuses regeneration with justification.

Arising out of this new nature comes faith. Out of faith comes the power to change reality by the use of positive confession. In effect, just as God creates by His spoken

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69 Thiessen, H. C., Lectures in Systematic Theology, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1979), 279.
70 He insists that born again believers do not have a sinful nature. Instead, by a literalistic interpretation of the word ‘flesh’ in Paul, he teaches that when Christians sin, this is merely the body being wrongly stimulated via the physical senses. His schema in which the spirit of a Christian is essentially divinised while everything weak and bad is relegated to another compartment, that of the body, is thus preserved: Kenyon, The Father, 153-160. In The Two Kinds of Righteousness, the intellect can be renewed and the body healed but it is specifically only the spirit that is “recreated” Kenyon, Righteousness, 26. For a full description of Kenyon’s soteriology see Lie, Geir, What Happened From the Cross to the Throne? A Descriptive Presentation of E. W. Kenyon’s Teachings on ‘Identification’ (Presented 27 Feb., 1996, accessed online 3 Jun., 03: http://home.co.net/geili/Kenyon_eng.htm).
71 Kenyon appears to be resting a lot of his doctrine of regeneration on 2Pet.1:4, which says that believers have become partakers of the divine nature: e.g. Kenyon, Two Kinds of Righteousness, 7; idem, Two Kinds of Life, 16-17; idem, Identification, 41. In the light of the rest of the verse, i.e. the fact that this partaking involves a prior escape from the moral corruption in the world, it is plainly a sharing in God’s moral character that Peter has in view, rather than an impartation of divine essence. So Bowman, R. M, “‘Ye Are Gods?’ Orthodox and Heretical Views on the Deification of Man”, Christian Research Institute Journal Instalment 1:0018 (accessed online 4 Jan 04: http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/cri/cri-jrnl/web/crj0018a.html), 10-11; Harder, G., “Nature” in C. Brown (ed) New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology Vol. 2 (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1976, 1986), 661.
72 See his teachings on imputed righteousness. Imputed righteousness was necessary for Abraham and for Elijah but not necessary for present day believers who have the nature of the Father Himself within them. Kenyon, Faith, 26, Kenyon, Righteousness, 20, cf. Kenyon, Faith, 41: “You have the Righteousness that is imparted to you in the Nature of the Father at the New Birth.” Cf., ibid, 61-62: “Our old sin nature has been put away and we have received the nature of God.”
73 McIntyre acknowledges, without critique, Kenyon’s conflation of the legal with the vital in his soteriology: McIntyre, Kenyon, 291.
74 “Our faith is measured by our confessions” Kenyon, Faith, 66; “Realization can only follow confession.”; Idem, What Happened from the Cross to the Throne 11 Ed., (Seattle: KGPS,1969),157; “Your body will obey your confession.” idem, Life, 67.
word, so, His children also create things by their spoken words. Faith’ in Kenyon, therefore, may be described as the activation of an inner divine life with regards to specific needs. It is the exercising of an inner divinity by which all things are possible.

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75 “We know that the ability of God has become ours. This may not dawn on us all at once, but as we study the Word and act upon it, live in it, and let it live in us, it becomes slowly perhaps, but surely a living reality. That reality is developed through our confession.” Kenyon, Faith, 67 “It was a great day in my own life when I discovered that God was a Faith God….When I found He was primarily a Faith God I saw that it was natural for us, as His children to walk by faith.” Kenyon, Faith, 19. Cf. idem, Presence, 115-118.

76 Kenyon sometimes refers to ‘Eternal Life’. This appears to be synonymous with ‘Faith’ as he describes it as the “creative ability” in man: Kenyon, Hidden Man, 73: Cf. idem, Identification: A Romance in Redemption,(Seattle: KGPS, 1998, 41.

77 “Who is in you? It is God! Then to the God who is in you, all things are possible. If you give that God within you liberty, let Him loose in you, you become limitless in your realm.” Kenyon, Presence, 115. Cf. idem, Hidden Man, 71-76.

Kenneth E. Hagin is sometimes referred to as ‘Daddy Hagin’ on account of his place in history as founder of the Faith movement. This place, however, does not truly belong to him but to E. W. Kenyon. McConnell has placed beyond doubt the word-for-word, paragraph-for paragraph and idea-for-idea plagiarism of Kenyon’s books that Kenneth Hagin has been repeatedly guilty of. McConnell has convincingly shown that all of Hagin’s major ideas came from the works of E. W. Kenyon.\(^{78}\)

Theologically, Hagin was not an innovator and was actually a good deal more conservative than Kenyon. His teaching is filled with stories and much of what he teaches seems quite helpful. Throughout many of his writings, what Hagin appears to have done with Kenyon’s ideas about faith is to take all his concepts of faith, the biblical and the less biblical, and then to anchor these more firmly into the every day needs of people. The main need that he focuses on is healing.\(^{79}\) This is not surprising, considering his own testimony of healing as a 16 year-old boy, as well as his involvement in the post World War II healing revival. He also draws out more of the implications of Faith teaching with regards to financial needs.\(^{80}\) Like Kenyon, Hagin

\(^{78}\) McConnell, *Different Gospel*, 3-13. Geir Lie mentions that Hagin would read out Kenyon’s books on his radio programme and then claim that it was a passage from one of his own books: Lie, *Kenyon*, 60-61.


states repeatedly that God is a ‘Faith God’ who imparts this same Faith to believers.\(^{81}\) He also develops the idea, not only of the imperative of positive confessions, but also of the perils of a negative, or ‘double’ confession.\(^ {82} \) He thus tempers Kenyon’s optimism about the power of faith by spelling out a little more clearly the limits imposed on Faith by fear and unbelief. Hagin shares with Kenyon his view of regeneration as involving an implantation of God’s nature, which Hagin describes as God’s Zoe, or “eternal life.”\(^ {83} \) He has a high anthropology in which the believer, as the custodian of delegated divine authority is totally responsible for spiritual victory or defeat.\(^ {84} \) In one place Jesus apparently admits to Hagin that He cannot intervene.\(^ {85} \)

The main achievement of Hagin has been to popularise Kenyon’s ideas. Through his emphasis on Mark 11:23, he has given Scriptural sanction to what may be described as the ‘logocratic’ aspect of Kenyon, that is, his belief in the power of spoken words to create reality.\(^ {86} \) Through this principle of word-power, the stage was set by Hagin for a progressively more formulaic and anthropocentric doctrine of faith. For it is in Hagin, that this doctrine of faith begins to take on the appearance of a DIY, or ‘Self-

\(^{81}\) “God believed that what He said would come to pass. He spoke the Word, and there was an earth...He said it and it was so! That is the God-kind of faith...Jesus demonstrated the God-kind of faith to His disciples, and then he told them that they, too, had that kind of faith.” Hagin, K., New Thresholds of Faith, (Tulsa: FLP, 1985), 81; cf. idem, Your Faith in God Will Work, (Tulsa: FLP, 1995), 3; idem, Bible Faith Study Course, (Tulsa: FLP, 1974), 88.

\(^{82}\) Hagin, How to Turn, 28: “Remember, your confession of Satan’s ability to keep you from success gives him dominion over you...You see, when you confess your doubts, fears, weakness, and disease, you are openly confessing that God’s Word is not true.” Cf. idem, Right and Wrong Thinking, (Tulsa: FLP, 1986), 22-30; idem, New Thresholds, 83-84; Bible Faith, 91, 93.

\(^{83}\) “Zoe, then, means eternal life, or God’s life. This new kind of life is God’s nature. It produces certain changes in man.” Hagin, Zoe, 9. Cf. 14, 16, 18, 19, 21.

\(^{84}\) “Defeat and failure do not belong to the child of God...We are created in Christ Jesus. Failures are man-made. They are made by wrong believing and wrong thinking.” Hagin, New Thresholds, 83.

\(^{85}\) “Then I told him [a demon] to get out of there. So he ran off. Jesus said then, ‘If you hadn’t done that, I couldn’t have.’” Hagin, K., The Authority of the Believer, (Tulsa: FLP, 1980), 18-19.

Help’ Christianity very similar to the ideas of Norman Vincent Peale or Robert Schuller. Hagin has thus bequeathed a pragmatic Christianity to a pragmatic age.  

The doctrine of positive confession is dependent on a notion of Faith as an indwelling creative power waiting to be released. To take on the one idea, namely, that ‘you can have what you say’ is, therefore, to take on board the other Kenyon distinctive, that of Faith being an indwelling creative power. The one idea pulls the other one with it wherever it is taken. As a result, this Kenyon distinctive of Creative Faith has automatically been adopted by all those who have taken up Hagin’s doctrine of having ‘whatever you say.’ The biblical elements in Kenyon’s and Hagin’s faith concept appear to have been largely left behind by Hagin’s followers.

Hagin has gone on to father every major preacher within the Faith movement today. Kenneth Copeland, Charles Capps, Frederick Price and many others, would all acknowledge the formative role that Hagin has had in their ministries. The most prominent of these is the man now recognised as the undisputed leader of the Faith movement, Kenneth Copeland.

1.5. The Teachings of Kenneth Copeland: Faith is a Force.

In the writings of Hagin, not everything is subsumed within a ‘Faith’ framework. He has taught on a number of subjects not directly related to the concerns of Faith and with seemingly no desire to make these subjects fit into his schema. Copeland is different. He has a powerful intellect capable of systematising a complete Faith theology. His retelling of salvation history from Creation, through to the Fall, the Abrahamic Covenant and the advent and work of Christ is mercilessly mocked in Hanegraaff’s *Christianity in Crisis.* Copeland’s style is also different. Hagin is winsome and entertaining; Copeland is impetuous and forceful. Copeland is a legalist. His concept of faith is one bound by unalterable cosmic laws that, if obeyed, guarantee an eventual outcome.

In Copeland we see some significant aspects of Hagin’s teachings brought to new extremes. He reads back from Hagin’s emphasis on the power of speaking faith-filled words to the thought of faith being the force behind those words. Faith is seen as...

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89 Hanegraaf, *Christianity,* 19-27.
90 E.g. Copeland, K., *The Laws of Prosperity,* (Fort Worth: Kenneth Copeland Publications, 1974), 18-19: “We must understand that there are laws governing every single thing in existence...It is the force of gravity which makes the law of gravity work. In the same way, spiritual law would be useless if the force of faith were not a real force...There are certain laws governing prosperity revealed in God’s Word. Faith causes them to function.” Cf. idem, *Giving and Receiving,* (Fort Worth: KCP, 1985), 22-23: “First, God promised it, so in order to establish His covenant, He has to give you the power to obtain wealth. Secondly, He gives you the seed in order for you to put the covenant into motion. Giving establishes or sets in motion God’s covenant.” (italics his).
something divine and powerful that is dropped into the recreated ‘spirit man’ of every believer at his or her new birth. God is a Faith God and believers can exercise the God-kind of faith. The flipside of this is that fear is also a force released in words that can bring about negative results. Copeland shares with Kenyon a high anthropology, and a conflation of regeneration with justification.

A contradiction that is more noticeable in his teaching than in Hagin’s is that, on the one hand, every word spoken, whether good or bad, whether driven by faith or fear, will bring an inevitable result. On the other hand, for a good result, it is necessary to employ the “power twins” of faith and patience. He thus sometimes speaks of a completely deterministic law of faith or fear and sometimes speaks of the need for personal exertion and commitment to bring a result. When determinism operates and when exertion is required appears to be purely arbitrary.

In defence of him, Perriman has described much Faith teaching as “folk religion”. Copeland seems to be appealing to a relatively uneducated audience and uses vivid imagery and almost silly terminology to describe how the spiritual laws of faith

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92 “Each time God spoke, He released His faith-creative power to bring His words to pass…Man was created from the faith-filled words of God – words of power, dominion and life…all of the power that it took to have dominion over the earth was a part of man from the very beginning.” Copeland, K., The Power of the Tongue, (Fort Worth: KCP, 1980), 5-7.

93 Copeland, Force of Faith, 14: “Fear activates Satan the way faith activates God.”


95 Copeland, Walking, 83-84: “The experience of the new birth is the most miraculous event that will ever occur in your life. You were reborn from a death of trespass and sin and made alive unto God. You were recreated and made to be a righteousness – a spotless child of the God of heaven and earth.”

96 Copeland, Force of Faith, 18: “Words bring things to pass. Your words work for you, or they work against you.”

97 Copeland, Force of Faith, 23-32.

98 Perriman, Faith, 16, 100-103, 143, 155.
govern the cosmos. Nevertheless, where his concept of faith is concerned, he has so majored on the concept of faith as a creative force that Kenyon’s and Hagin’s more biblical ideas of faith appear to recede somewhat into the background. This amounts to a lot more than mere Southern preacher’s rhetoric.

99 The whole plan of redemption is subsumed within a fantastically commercial rubric in Copeland, *Giving and Receiving*, passim.

Charles Capps takes his cue from Hagin’s book, *Right and Wrong Thinking*, which deals with the significance of the idea that ‘you can have what you say.’ Although Capps’ rise to fame has been more or less contemporaneous with that of Copeland, his thinking is a clear development on his. Like Copeland, he has radicalised many of Hagin’s ideas but appears to have gone a step further still. Charles Capps represents something of a logical terminus in Faith theology. It does not seem possible to take Kenyon’s original ideas to any greater extreme than Capps has. He is, therefore, useful as a means of analysing the Creative Faith concept since it is in him that it is taken to its logical conclusion.

Capps has specialised in the study of words. He has made a thorough search of all that the Scriptures teach about the tongue and has summarised his findings in a hugely popular book called, *The Tongue: A Creative Force*. In this book, Capps allows no exceptions to Hagin’s ‘You can have what you say’ remit. Everything in the universe, whether spiritual or physical, is governed by unalterable laws of cause and effect. And for Capps, the cause is always words, whether God’s or man’s. Nothing ever happens without words. God spoke the universe into being and since that time has never done anything without saying it first. This is described as God’s faith.

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101 “He said ‘THOSE THINGS WHICH HE SAITH’; everything you say, you must watch what you say. You have to believe that those things that you say – everything you say – will come to pass.” Capps, *The Tongue*, 24 (italics and capitalisation his, so throughout).
102 “In dealing with the natural law that governs electricity, we have learned that if we work with the law by obeying and enforcing it, that electrical force will work for us. But if we continually violate that law that governs or controls electricity we will get into a ‘heap of trouble’. . . . so are the words that come forth from out of your mouth.” Capps, *The Tongue*, 8-9.
103 Capps, *The Tongue*, 32.
Man, created in the image of God, has the same creative verbalising ability.  

Further, God seemingly cannot intervene into human lives without the spoken word of the person concerned. The devil, likewise, cannot do anything except by means of the negative words of Christians. Their negative speech ‘establishes’ the devil’s word in the earth, just as their positive speech can establish God’s word in the earth. Like Kenyon and Copeland, Capps also confuses justification with regeneration, leading to a similarly exalted anthropology. With Hagin and Copeland, he also affirms the power of fear as the flipside of faith.  

Capps uses a number of proof texts: Proverbs 6:2; Matthew 12: 33-37; 2Corinthians 4:13 and James 3:1-12. (Hagin and Copeland also cite Proverbs 18:21). Yet it is apparent that the main point that these texts are making is that the tongue is a powerful tool of communication. The literary context of Proverbs 6:2 refers to the binding power of financial pledges, not to any metaphysical power inherent in negative confessions. Matthew 12:33-35 teaches that words disclose, or communicate, what is in the heart of a person. Because of this, Matthew 12:36-37 teaches that this revelation of a person’s true nature, even if it involves idle quips, may be legitimate.

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104 Ibid. Cf. 132.
105 “There was creative power that flowed out of the mouth of God and you were created in the image of God. Then according to the Scriptures and what Jesus said, you have the same ability dwelling or residing inside of you.” Capps, The Tongue, 17.
106 “You have said, ‘Lord it’s getting worse – it’s not getting any better.’ You have stopped God’s ability immediately. Maybe it was just about to come to manifestation but you have established Satan’s word in the earth.” Capps, The Tongue, 79-80.
107 This teaching is derived from 2Cor.13:1 “By the word of two or three witnesses every word shall be established”, i.e. God’s word plus the believer’s word equals “established”. Satan’s word plus the believer’s equals the same. See Capps, The Tongue, 45, 56.
108 “You were once a sinner, but now YOU’RE BORN AGAIN, THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.” Capps, The Tongue, 15, cf.20.
109 “Fear is the reverse gear of faith...faith in the enemy’s ability.” Capps, The Tongue, 56-57.
110 Hagin, Words, 30
111 Copeland, Power of the Tongue, 3
grounds for divine judgment of that person’s character. The conclusion of James’ discourse on the tongue is similar. Only a pure heart can produce pure words (Jas.3:12). In the case of 2Corinthians 4:13, the context is Paul’s ministry of communicating the gospel. He believes that Christ was raised from the dead; therefore, he preaches it in spite of all the trials this has brought upon him. In Proverbs 18:21, the word “tongue”, /ovl*, is used in a way very common in the Old Testament as a metonym for speech. Proverbs uses this word in giving moral guidance. Speech can communicate malice and deceit and so bring destruction (Prov.6:17, 24; 10:31; 12:19; 17:4,20; 21:6,23; 25:23; 26:28; 28:23), or it can communicate wisdom, truth and kindness and so be of great benefit to people (Prov.10:20; 12:18; 15:12,4; 31:26). Biblically, Perriman is correct in saying:

“…there is no reason to attribute the ‘power of the tongue’ to some esoteric spiritual or metaphysical law; the tongue is powerful because it communicates and communication is powerful.”

Understood from a philosophical viewpoint, the developments seen in Capps are slightly ironic. Kenyon was an idealist. Indeed, DeArteaga lauds his ideas as an example of “Faith-Idealism”. In the light of the findings of quantum physics, argues DeArteaga, some form of Faith-Idealism is the only position a Christian should take. With Capps, however, we have arrived at an opposing philosophical position.

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113 See Barrett, Corinthians, 143: “What he believes is the gospel, and what he speaks is the gospel.”
115 Perriman, Faith, n.29 p276.
116 DeArteaga, Quenching, 131-132, 212.
117 DeArteaga, Quenching, 161-162: “…quantum physics has conclusively shown that the mind inherently has some tiny power, enough to cause light to act like a particle. The real question is how much more power the mind has naturally.” Using scientific evidence that the mind has “some tiny power” over matter to affirm a doctrine of ‘Faith-Idealism’ is problematic since the Bible, as will
No longer is the inner human consciousness (or any aspect of it) the centre of the universe as the idealists insisted. Now, in Capps, matters are somewhat out of our hands. The universe is created and sustained, and human lives are prospered or destroyed, entirely by words. It no longer matters so much whose words they are since other people have the power to limit one’s potential by their negative confessions. Capps states that words can be ‘idle’ and that only as the relevant laws are obeyed can the power of words be tapped into. Yet because negative speech has to be cited as the reason why Faith does not always accomplish anything, one is left with the same arbitrary determinism versus exertion conflict that Copeland displays. Capps’ cosmology, therefore, raises the same question as Copeland’s, that concerning when exactly words do ‘come to pass’ and when they do not.

shortly be demonstrated, does not attribute to faith any power at all save its ability to trust in a trustworthy God.

118 Capps, The Tongue, 85.
119 Capps, The Tongue, 9.
1.7. The Faith Teachers’ Concept of Faith: Some Initial Deductions.

I have hopefully demonstrated that Faith teaching bases itself on an idea about faith as a creative human power that, by means of human speech, brings to realisation a latent divine potential indwelling believers. This idea is questionable as to its origins, disturbing in its development, and self-defeating in its implied outcomes. These findings are summarised as follows.

With regards to the origins of the Faith teachers’ concept of Faith, I have traced a hundred year long line of thinking from Kenyon, in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} Centuries, to Capps in the late 20\textsuperscript{th} Century. To trace the line further back than Kenyon is problematic due to the lack of any references to other works in Kenyon’s books. Yet what is clear is that there are similarities between Kenyon’s ideas about faith and the teachings of New Thought, a philosophy whose ideas can be traced back a further one hundred years to Kant and the beginning of Transcendentalist philosophy. The similarities that can be identified between Kenyon and New Thought are greater than those that can be identified with the Faith Curists. So, what can be said is that some New Thought influence is at least likely. What is for sure is that something that does not appear on initial analysis to be biblical crept into Kenyon’s theology at some point. Kenyon then built a concept of faith around this foreign idea. This foreign element is a belief that man can possess a creative power above and beyond the natural creative abilities with which men and women are endowed by God. Every believer’s goal, therefore, should be to develop and actualise this power.
This belief in human potential is introduced to a wider public by Hagin, who, by emphasising Mark 11:23, develops and popularises Kenyon’s belief in the need for confession to release the creative power of indwelling Faith. Hagin also develops further the idea, already latent in Kenyon, that negative words have an equal and opposite power to Faith-filled words. Copeland then develops this belief in words as the means of releasing the God-Kind of Faith, seeing Faith as the operator of cosmic law. Copeland affirms, along with Hagin, that Faith can be obstructed by negative confessions. Capps then goes further still, deducing that words are the cause of everything in the universe. By harnessing the power of words, therefore, anything is possible in this universe, whether good or bad, since words create reality.

Such has been the origin and development of the Creative Faith concept. As for its results, my first observation is anthropological. Faith teaching would appear to represent something of the age-old problem of bridging the gulf between the ideal and the real. This was the problem that preoccupied Continental Philosophy from the time of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason onwards. The Faith teachers have inserted ‘speech’ into the gulf. The spoken word is the bridge that makes the ideal become real. A difficulty in Faith teaching is that its account of the ‘ideal’ is too ideal to ever become real at all. What repeatedly surfaces throughout the writings of the Faith teachers is an over-exalted view of man. Man, in their estimation, is practically divine. Such a position amounts to a refusal to accept the limitations of being human and fallen and can only lead to disappointment when adherents are inevitably faced with reality.
A Second observation with regards to the implied outcomes of Faith teaching is its confused cosmology. The difficulties begin when reasons have to be found as to why the creative force of Faith does not always succeed in creating anything. The need to confess and keep on confessing, as well as the need to take into account the opposing forces of fear and unbelief, with their attendant negative confessions, have all proven popular in this regard. The result is that the mighty ‘force of faith’ is defeated by its own get-out clauses. That is to say, the lack of results is traced primarily to unbelief, but both unbelief and Faith must go, ‘cap-in-hand’, to the world of words in order to find expression and materialise. If therefore, nothing whatsoever can materialise without words, then it is words that are in control, not the Faith-filled believer, nor the fear-filled doubter. For a Faith-filled believer to make a difference in a universe in which words become events, he must continually form and contribute as many Faith-filled words as possible into the word-galaxy of life. These words, of course, will then have to compete with the vast array of words that, at some point, have been spouted by all those careless people who are not abreast of the laws of Faith. Such people, of course, are in an overwhelming majority. The Faith-filled believer, then, must send his words out into the no-man’s-land of a hostile universe and hope that, somehow, they will ‘bear fruit after their kind.’

Such are the issues so far raised by this paper with regards to the origin, development and outcomes of the Faith teachers’ concept of faith. In the following section, I will examine more closely whether or not the Creative Faith concept bears any relation to the biblical notion of faith. For this, I will be using Hebrews 11:1, the closest thing to a definition of faith to be found in the Bible, and Mark 11:22-24, the Faith movement’s most important set text on the nature and functions of faith.


2.1.1. E%stin de\ pi/sti$

In the King James Version, this appears as “Now faith is…” This is quite important for both Hagin and Copeland as they take the word “now”, de\, to literally mean ‘at the present time’, although this may be purely a rhetorical device. They say, with Kenyon, that hope is always in the future, whereas faith is always now. Hope, at times, can therefore be the enemy of faith as it can often be a mere wish that something would change, that success or healing or prosperity would come, but is incapable of bringing forth what it desires. Faith on the other hand has the power to aggressively lay hold of the promises of God and confess them until they come to fruition.

De\ is a conjunction that could be translated in a number of ways: adversative: ‘but’, ‘yet’, ‘on the other hand’, transitional: ‘now’, ‘then’, ‘and’, or emphatic: ‘in fact’, ‘indeed’. Its usage here is probably transitional, although an emphatic sense would not be out of keeping in view of 10:38-39. It is a purely literary device. Whether or not hope may ever be considered an enemy of faith is a philosophical and theological

120 E.g. Hagin, What Faith Is, 5.
121 Hagin, What Faith Is, 2: “If it’s not now, it’s not faith.” (italics his); Copeland, Force of Faith, 24: “Hope without faith has no substance.” Kenyon, Faith, 32-35;
question. There does not appear to be any biblical warrant for such a belief. In Hebrews 11:1, hope would appear to be foundational to faith. This is what makes faith “eschatologically-orientated.” In Romans 15:13, conversely, it is faith that is foundational to hope. Either way, the two concepts are clearly interdependent and on friendly terms.

The noun πίστις, as used in Hebrews often carries the same meaning it has in the Septuagint, where it is more-or-less identical with ‘faithfulness’ (see Heb. 3:12; 4:14-15; 6:12 and 10:39 where the life of faith is contrasted with apostasy). In non-literary sources, πίστις is a ‘trust’, or, ‘confidence’, between two people. It is the opposite of a state of mistrust. This element is also present in the writer to the Hebrews’ use of the word (3:12-14; 10:22; 11:1). Philo is said by many to have significantly influenced the writer to the Hebrews. Philo uses the word to mean ‘trust’, ‘freedom from doubt’, but brings to it also the notion of ‘stability’. In the writer to the Hebrews, likewise, πίστις may be described as the ability to be free from all mistrust and doubt towards God (3:12; 19; 4:1-4; 10:35-39). It is a solid,

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124 Perriman, Faith, 139: Faith is “…an attitude of eschatologically-orientated trust in the context of a fallen world.”
125 Cf. Rom.8:24-25 where ελπίς, hope, has exactly the same function for Paul as πίστις does for the writer to the Hebrews.
126 See especially Deut. 32:20 LXX, where to be a people in whom there is no πίστις is specifically to be apostate. It is to be a people who are idol worshippers and unfaithful to the God of Israel. The other occurrences are: 1Sam.21:2; 26:23; 2Ki. 12:15; 22:7; 1Ch. 9:22,26, 31; 2Ch. 31:12, 15, 18; 34:12; Neh. 9:38; Psa. 32:4; Pro. 3:3; 12:17, 22; 14:22; 15:27, 28; Cant. 4:8; Jer. 5:1, 3; 7:28; 9:3; 15:18; 35:9; Jer. 39:41; 40: 6; Lam. 3:23; Hos. 2:20; Hab. 2:4, where the primary import is, likewise, ‘faithfulness.’
129 E.g. “…hoping thus to obtain at length a view free from all falsehood, and to exchange doubt and uncertainty [αβαίνειν ενδοεισομαι ] for a most assured confidence [βεβαιεί αλλήλων]” De Posteritate Caini. 13, From translation by Colson, F. H., Loeb Classical Library: Philo II, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), 335 (Underline and Greek insertions mine).
unshakeable God-confidence. This confidence in God and trust in His veracity is what then, presumably, leads to the more Septuagintal shade of meaning, that of faithfulness towards God. Mistrust leads to apostasy; confidently trusting God leads to a life of faithfulness. There is no evidence that πιστις was seen, whether by the writer or any of his possible influences, as a force. It is a disposition, an attitude of trusting fidelity. It indicates a personal relationship, not an indwelling creative power.

2.1.2. εἴπισμεν/νων ὑπ'οστασίας πράγματος

Etymologically, the word ὑπ'οστασίας could be broken up into the English words ‘standing under’ and always carries the idea of solidity. This solidity could be something objective, that is, a tangible ‘substance’ or ‘essence’ called faith, or it could be something subjective, an inner disposition or attitude of assurance. The Faith teachers, especially Copeland, have adopted the objective view. Copeland displays an understanding of this word, doubtless influenced by the King James tradition, as “substance”. Faith is the ‘substance’ of things hoped for. Copeland sees faith as something like a muscle, that, once it is strong enough, can be used to move obstacles in the spirit realm. For him, Faith, seemingly, carries on its process of self-actualisation entirely within the life of the believer. God Himself does nothing more than honour the Faith principles. It must be admitted, of course, that Hebrews 11:1

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131 Copeland, K., Authority of the Believer II, audiotape 01-0302 (Fort Worth: KCP, 1987), side 1: “…faith was a raw material substance that the Spirit of God used to form the universe.” Cited in Hanegraaff, Christianity, 69. According to Perriman, this line of reasoning is also advocated by the New Thought writer Charles Fillmore, Prosperity, (Kansas City: Unity School of Christianity, nd), 161. Cited in Perriman, Faith, n16 p252.

132 Copeland, Force of Faith, 20-21. He uses the illustration of a physical body that must be fed and exercised.
itself contains no reference to God. It is purely a description of faith in and of itself. Yet the rest of Hebrews 11 makes plain whom it is that faith must faithfully rely on from beginning to end if it is to achieve any commendation.\textsuperscript{133}

On the basis of the use of \(\upsilon(\rho\sigma\sigma\iota\iota\varsigma)\) in Hebrews 3:14 (cf. 2Cor. 9:4; 11:17), the subjective interpretation is to be preferred.\textsuperscript{134} If the objective view of \(\upsilon(\rho\sigma\sigma\sigma\iota\iota\varsigma)\) is taken, then this must mean that faith, in some sense, already possesses what it hopes for; it has the first instalment, essence, or, ‘very being’ of it. This state of already having things hoped for must either be a figurative ‘already having’ or a literal inward possession of things in a non-material form before they come into material existence. The latter idea is good Transcendentalism but finds no clear support from Scripture. The former idea, the figurative ‘already having’, is pointing to the subjective interpretation of \(\upsilon(\rho\sigma\sigma\sigma\iota\iota\varsigma)\). It is simply a way of saying that faith makes a person so sure of what they hope for that it is as though they already have it. Even if \(\upsilon(\rho\sigma\sigma\sigma\iota\iota\varsigma)\) here is an objective entity, therefore, it can only be figuratively so.

\(\upsilon(\rho\sigma\sigma\sigma\iota\iota\varsigma)\) then, is a subjective ‘confidence’, ‘certainty’, ‘assurance’.

\textsuperscript{133} 11:3: Faith must believe that God created the universe; 11:4: It was to God that Abel, by faith, offered his sacrifice; 11:5-6: By faith Enoch pleased God; 11:17-18: God tested Abraham’s faith; 11:27: Moses persevered because, by faith, he could see God, besides the implications of the ‘divine passives’ in 11:7: \(\varepsilon\rho\mu\mu\mu\tau\iota\mu\varsigma\varsigma\iota\varsigma\varsigma\varsigma\), “was warned”; 11:8: \(\kappa\alpha\lambda\omega\upsilon\mu\nu\varsigma\rho\omicron\varsigma\), “being called.”

\textsuperscript{134} So Kistemaker, \textit{Hebrews}, 110-111; Lane, W. L., \textit{Word Biblical Commentary: Hebrews 9-13}, (Dallas: Word, 1991),328-329; Montefiore, H. W., \textit{The Epistle to the Hebrews}, (London: A & C Black, 1964), 186;.” Bruce, F.F., \textit{New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Hebrews}, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964),276-277. Koester prefers “realization”: Koester, H., “\(\upsilon(\rho\sigma\sigma\sigma\iota\iota\varsigma)\)” in G. Kittel (ed) \textit{Theological Dictionary of the New Testament} Vol.8 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1978), 579-580. Moulton and Milligan commend “title deed”: Moulton & Milligan, \textit{Vocabulary}, 660. Long has “very being” on the basis of the use of \(\upsilon(\rho\sigma\sigma\sigma\iota\iota\varsigma)\) in 1:3:Long, T., \textit{International Bible Commentary: Hebrews}, (Louisville:John Knox, 1997), 113. These objective meanings, though not without value, have to reckon with what the writer is illustrating in verses 2-40. He appears to be illustrating a superhuman confidence in God. Added to this is the fact that \(\upsilon(\rho\sigma\sigma\sigma\iota\iota\varsigma)\) must chime with \(\pi\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma\varsigma\), ‘trust’ ‘confidence’, in order to be a definition of it. For detailed surveys see Hughes, P. E., \textit{A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews}, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 438-440 and Attridge, \textit{Hebrews}, 308-311.
Faith is an assurance that “ἐλπίζω...πράγματα”, ‘things hoped for’, will come to realisation. These may be the things of this life (11:11-12; 32-35), but the focus of faith, for the writer, is the life to come (11:10, 13-16, 26, 35, 39-40). Faith looks forward to those things with confidence.

2.1.3. εἴληξο$ ou) blepome/nwn

Εἴληξο$ is the second word used in the writer’s parallelism as a synonym for πίστι$. Faith is υπο/στάσι$ and faith is εἴληξο$. In true Jewish poetical tradition, the second part of the parallelism reinforces and adds some new twist to the first part. The concept of εἴληξο$, therefore, is similar to υπο/στάσι$, ‘confidence’, ‘assurance’, plus something more besides. Here, εἴληξο$ carries its judicial meaning: ‘proof’, ‘conviction’, ‘evidence’, “…the evidential character that deprives uncertainty of any basis.” The other possible meaning, that of illumination or ‘bringing to light’ also has some value. Besides 2Timothy 3:16, this is the only occurrence of this word in its noun form in the New Testament, so certainty is impossible. The context, with its synonymous parallelism, would seem to favour the judicial meaning of ‘proof’, bringing certainty concerning things that cannot be verified by physical sight. Faith brings a certainty so great that it is comparable to that experienced in a court of law when overwhelmingly persuasive evidence is

135 Lane, Hebrews 9-13, 329.
136 “Physical eyesight produces conviction or evidence of visible things; faith is the organ which enables people (like Moses in v.27) to see the invisible order.” Bruce, Hebrews, 277. So Ellingworth, P., NIGTC: The Epistle to the Hebrews, (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1993), 565.
137 So Kistemaker, Hebrews, 311; Montefiore, Hebrews,187; Hughes, Commentary, 440.
presented. Yet all of this is without any sensory evidence being present at all. It is a miraculous certainty.

Board has pointed out that critics should be more hesitant than they are about their accusations of ‘sensory denial’ against the Faith teachers. He rightly points out that all Christians practice sensory denial to a greater or lesser extent since this is part of the very nature of faith. Looking with their physical eyes at the world around them believers can see plainly enough that all is not well with the world, yet their conviction lies in the realm of the unseen, that God, in spite of appearances, is very much in control and will surely carry out His sovereign purposes. The difficulty in Faith teaching is its propensity to cross the boundary from faith into presumption, seemingly without any awareness that this has happened. For Farah this is the main crime of the Faith movement. Perhaps presumption is best avoided by seeing faith as a response to God. If God has clearly spoken (e.g. Noah:11:7; Abraham:11:8,17) or acted decisively (the work of Christ: 4:1-3; 10:19-22), then it is legitimate to disregard anything that contradicts and endeavour to make a response that pleases Him.

In conclusion, the writer to the Hebrews, the only New Testament writer to have written at length on the subject, sees faith as a confident and trusting attitude towards

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139 Farah, C., From the Pinnacle of the Temple, (Plainfield: Logos, 1978), 4. He defines presumption thus: “In its primary meaning, presumption is ‘the act of presuming, specifically an overstepping of proper bounds, forwardness, effrontery.” Cf. Board who takes Martin Luther’s definition of Theologia Gloria and applies it to charismatics. By this he means, “…the human tendency to exaggerate our knowledge of God and his ways. He [Luther] called it a ‘theology of glory’ when people go beyond Scripture and profess to know the unknowable or to have the mind of God on more things than he has revealed.” Board, “High Wire Act?” 15.

God. This, however, is not a quality that man can generate. Hebrews 11:1 makes plain that this is a supernatural confidence; it is certainty in spite of grounds for uncertainty. This must be seen, though, as a divine enabling to trust rather than a divine implantation of creative power. It is not seen as creative, neither is it understood as being dependent on positive confession, or negated by negative confession. This attitude of faith issues in and consists in a life that pleases God (11:6). It is related to faithfulness. This being the case, the Hebrews concept of faith can never be anything other than profoundly personal. It is the essence of man’s relationship to God. This relatedness to God is irreducible to any kind of metaphysical law or formula.

2.2.1. Εὐχέτε πιστίν Θεοῦ

This phrase, which appears in most Bible translations as, “Have faith in God”\(^\text{141}\) is crucial to Faith teaching due to a widespread reliance within the movement on an alternative rendering of the phrase as “Have the faith of God”. This could either mean, “Have the faith that God gives, of which God alone is the author”, or, “Have the God-Kind of faith, faith like God’s own faith.” It is this last meaning that is universally favoured by the Faith teachers.

Both versions of this alternative rendering arise from what is indisputably the ‘literal’ meaning of the Greek – if lifted from its literary context. Θεοῦ is a genitive. It would normally be translated, “of God”. Εὐχέτε πιστίν is either the imperative, “have faith!” or else it is the indicative, “You have faith.” Contextually, the imperative is the most likely and is accepted by the majority of scholars.\(^\text{142}\) The phrase, ‘word-for-word’, therefore, is, “Have faith of God!” To translate the phrase in this manner, however, misses what only the context can determine and that is whether the word Θεοῦ is an objective genitive or a genitive of origins, whether it is in fact faith ‘in God’ or faith ‘from God’. As Dowd points out, a rendering of the phrase with

\(^{141}\) E.g. AV, NKJV, ESV, NIV, GNB, Moffatt, J. B. Phillips, REB, NEB, NLT.

the genitive of origins is contextually unnatural.\textsuperscript{143} Jesus is commending faith in God as opposed to faith in the Temple system.\textsuperscript{144} He is not teaching anything about the origin of such faith. Not only that but to translate as “faith of God” requires the theological assumption that God has faith. The idea that God has faith, in the sense intended by the Faith teachers, is not supported anywhere in Scripture. He is a God of faithfulness (eg.Ps.36:5; Isa.25:1; Lam.3:23; Rom.3:3) but never a God of faith.\textsuperscript{145}

The same word πίστις can be translated as ‘faith’ or ‘faithfulness.’ In view of this, a rendering of this sentence as referring to faithfulness: “Be firm as God is firm”, or even “You have the faithfulness of God” has been commended by some\textsuperscript{146} yet the context is clearly a discourse on the theme of faith, not faithfulness. To ‘doubt’ in 11:23 is primarily the opposite of faith, not faithfulness. Neither can there be a reference to God’s faithfulness, as the doubt referred to is not doubt that God will be faithful but doubt that God will be powerful, powerful enough to move a mountain.

“Have faith in God”, as the majority of English translations agree, is by far the most straightforward way to translate this phrase.\textsuperscript{147}

\textsuperscript{143} Dowd, \textit{Prayer}, 59-63.
\textsuperscript{144} See p43 of this paper.
\textsuperscript{145} As Hanegraaff rightly points out: “…God could never be a faith being. A being who must exercise faith is limited in both knowledge and power, since faith lies in the region of nonabsolute certainty and control…If God had to have faith, He would be dependent upon something outside of Himself for knowledge or power.” Hanegraaff, \textit{Christianity}, 92.
What it means to have faith in God is illustrated in the first part of 11:23 by the promise that whoever speaks to the mountain and does not doubt but believes, this person will see a result. So here ‘faith in God’, as already mentioned, is defined in terms of its opposite: ‘doubt.’ Doubt is allied to unbelief, which, in the teachings of Jesus, is a profoundly sinful refusal to trust, a matter of stern rebuke (Matt.14:31; 17:17; Mark 6:6; 16:14, 16). To believe is the opposite of doubt and unbelief, it is to trust God (Matt.9:28; Mark 5:36). So here, as in Hebrews, faith is not a metaphysical substance or force by which to manipulate unseen reality, it is a disposition of trust.

The condition, then, to being able to speak words of power is faith. Faith is the opposite of mistrust. It is the decision to trust God.

2.2.2. e#stai/ autw|` e)a\n e&iph]151

This phrase, “He shall have whatsoever he saith” is the keynote of Hagin’s entire ministry and is of central importance to all those who have adopted his doctrine of Faith. Where the previous phrase, translated as, ‘Have the faith of God’, supplies the basis for the Faith movement’s understanding of what faith is, the phrase, ‘He shall

148 Dowd, Prayer, 64: “To believe is to refuse to doubt in one’s heart. Thus ‘not doubting’ does not represent an especially strong faith, but is rather a definition of faith.”
149 So Lane, Mark, 410: “…in this immediate context faith is unwavering trust in miraculous divine help.” Dowd believes that this passage was designed, with its emphasis on the God to whom faith must be directed, as a protection for Christian miracle-workers against allegations of magic. Magicians would use the phrase “o^ e*neipw, dei` gene/sqai”, “What I say must happen.” Dowd, Prayer, 64.
150 Anderson, Mark, 208 quotes Schweizer that faith “…expects everything from God and nothing from itself.” Cf. Edwards, Mark, 347: “It is a decision to trust Jesus despite everything to the contrary, and expect from him what cannot be expected from anything else in the world.”
151 This is the Theodore Beza edition of the Greek text, the one underlying the King James Version. It is similar to the Majority next but distinct from the Nestle-Aland text which has: “…o^ti o^ lalei` gi/neTai, e&stai au)tw.” (Lit. “…that what he says will happen, it will be to him”)
have whatsoever he saith’ provides the mechanics of how faith works. Faith teachers delight to use all aspects of the mountain-moving saying, but it is this phrase, ‘He shall have whatsoever he saith’ that is made to pulsate like a neon sign outshining not only its context but all the other Scriptures in the Faith repertoire. The phrase, lifted from its context and abbreviated to the bald statement, ‘You can have what you say’, is then made to promise and to threaten great and terrible things alike. A first step, therefore, in a proper exegesis of this phrase, is its restoration to the literary context.

In the wider context of Mark 11:23, Mark deliberately weaves together the events of the cursing of the fig tree (11:12-14), the cleansing of the Temple (11:15-19) and the mountain-moving saying (11:20-25). Many scholars agree that Mark, by doing this, is conveying a close relationship between the three events. The cursing of the fig tree is symbolic of judgment on the equally barren Temple system. The Temple system, now declared redundant by the coming of the Messiah, is to be replaced by pure faith in God (11:22). This will result, not merely in a physical ‘house of prayer’ (11:17), but in a praying community.

Within the more immediate context, Verse 24 supplies the matrix for interpreting both of the key phrases of the Faith teachers. For it is here that Jesus explains what He means by having faith in God and what He means by speaking to the mountain. ‘Have faith in God’ is interpreted in 11:24 as meaning pisteu/ete o^ti lamba/nete, “…believe that you have received…. This is an example of the ‘prophetic perfect’, a

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152 E.g. Dowd, Prayer, 57; Hooker, St Mark, 261; France, The Gospel, 436.
154 Dowd draws attention to the many plural verbs used in 11:24-25: Dowd, Prayer, 65-66.
155 Dowd points out that the use of the connective dia\ tou~to, “on this account” relates verse 24 to what has been taught in the previous verse: Dowd, Prayer, 63.
common Semitic tool to indicate certainty so great that it is as though the desired or predicted event has already taken place.\textsuperscript{156} To have faith in God is to be certain of His power. Having whatever you say, is explained in verse 24 as \textit{Panta o\%sa a\&n proseuxo/menoi ai)tei’sqe…e\&stai u(mi’n}, “whatever you ask for in prayer…it will be yours.”(NIV). The verb \textit{a)itei’sqe}, “you ask, request”, is what Jesus intends by His use of \textit{proseuxo/menoi}, “praying”. Moving mountains involves prayer.\textsuperscript{157} Prayer involves asking. The certainty of faith is expressed in petition and results in the miraculous. This is what it means to have ‘whatever you say’.

There is, however, some Scriptural warrant for Hagin’s logocratic understanding of this passage. There are numerous occasions in the Bible when it is not petitionary prayer but a prophecy or a word of command that appears to trigger an outbreak of the miraculous (e.g. 1Kings 17:1; 13-16; Acts 3:6; 13:9-11; 14:10). The difficulty is with insisting on this pattern as a way of life, as a form of prayer or substitute for it. Such events represent something paranormal, a moment of supernatural endowment. By contrast, prayer, in the New Testament, is largely represented as requesting rather than commanding.\textsuperscript{158} The teaching that Christians should regularly repeat certain sentences, even if they are Bible sentences, in the belief that speaking them out everyday will make them happen, is not a teaching native to this passage.

In Mark 11: 22-24, then, Jesus commands His disciples to place their total trust in God alone over against the earthly institution of the Temple. This faith truly is

\textsuperscript{156} Edwards, \textit{Mark}, 347; Hooker, \textit{St Mark}, 270.
\textsuperscript{157} Bultmann intimates that the faith here alluded to may even be faith in “…one’s own miraculous power”, comparing this passage to 1Cor.12:9 and 13:2. Yet even then he is careful to state that this faith is “…fundamentally the faith of prayer.” Bultmann, “\textit{pi/sti$, pisteu/w}…” \textit{TDNT}, 206.
released in words – words of prayer and entreaty to God for His miraculous intervention in life. Mark 11: 22-24, far from teaching that faith in and of itself is a miracle-working power imparted from God to believers, is actually teaching something much better than that. The faith that Jesus is urging upon His disciples is not a creative power contained within the believer, and circumscribed by his or her diligence at feeding it and exercising it in order for it to self-actualise. Such an idea of faith, though designed to unleash an unlimited human potential, actually imprisons a believer within the constraints of all the machinery that has to be in place, of positive confession, of feeding on the Word, of avoiding negative confessions, of perseverance, in order to see a result. Faith, in Mark 11:22-24, is nothing less than the ability, on Christ’s invitation, to draw upon God’s power to see impossible things happen (cf. 9:23). Human limitations thus give way to a God of infinite power. Fee is right to point out that Jesus is summoning believers both here and elsewhere in the Gospels to a level of expectation that far exceeds what has become the status quo among many Christians today.¹⁵⁹ Yet this expectation, as Fee would agree, is a God wards expectation. It is not faith in one’s own faith.

Conclusion.

The idea that faith is an indwelling creative power released by words almost certainly comes from a source foreign to the Bible. The concept of Creative Faith is at least analogous to some foundational New Thought ideas. Whatever its source, this concept was assimilated by E. W. Kenyon, popularised by Hagin and reproduced by everyone else in the Faith movement, reaching disturbing extremes in the teachings of Charles Capps. The first section of this work showed that not only is Creative Faith of doubtful origin and disturbing in its development, it is in essence self-defeating. The Faith view of God is too small, its view of man, too great, and its doctrine of words as causation is rendered useless by the power attributed to negative confessions.

In the second section, I demonstrated that this concept of Faith is not supported by either of the Scriptures that are the most likely to offer such support. The writer to the Hebrews understood faith to be a relationship to God of confidence, trust and faithfulness. This concept of faith is supported by Mark 11:22-24. In the mountain-moving saying, Jesus is summoning His disciples to a faith that defers to God alone. This absolute trust in God is manifested in prayer, which is understood as ‘asking’. There is no evidence in either of these passages that faith is creative or that it is released by positive confession, or that it is obstructed by negative confession.
Pastorally, it must be said that the ‘hamster-wheel’ of techniques that have to be employed to keep the Faith idea of faith buoyant seriously compromises the Christian understanding of God’s grace. The very teachings that promise wonders in response to words are in danger of producing a loss of wonder - a loss of wonder, that is, at the unprompted kindness and benevolence of a holy God towards His sinful and wayward creatures. There is a danger that all that Faith adherents think they deserve from the correct observance of the Faith formulas could blind their eyes to the wonders of God. The Faith idea of faith is, after all, a mere human ability to think and speak positively that is then expected to achieve the super-human. It is so weak as to be curtailed by the slightest negative word. It cannot be proven whether this Creative Faith ever actually produces the results promised. It is equally improbable that such Faith could have been the same power by which God created the universe.

A blind spot, however, in academic Christian writing is the tendency to uproot and pull down without also taking care to build and to plant (Jer.1:10). Soar-faced evangelicals pointing out the exegetical errors of their charismatic brothers and sisters – of whom I am one - generally only serves to alienate. There needs to be something to build and to plant in the place of a faith concept that, for those who embrace it, appears to be offering so much. Letting go of this Faith concept may be hard, just as it was, in fact, for Kenneth Copeland to change from his over-rich diet of cakes and sweet things to a love of tossed salad. Yet there is a need for someone, in a spirit of grace and gentleness, to offer the good food of a healthy God-concept in place of the over-rich diet of an unhealthy faith-concept. There is always the hope that the proclamation of a right concept of God, in all of His magnificence, will summon in

160 His remarkable story of overcoming gluttony and obesity is candidly told in Copeland, The Decision, 17-26.
the hearers a response of true faith like that called for by the writer to the Hebrews and by Jesus Christ Himself.

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