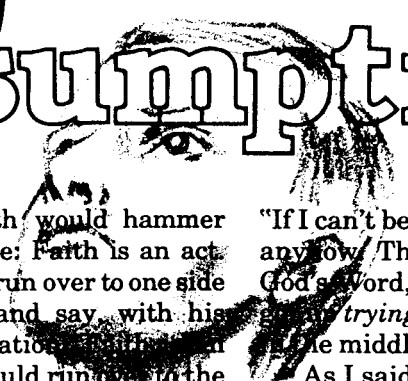


FAITH or presumption

by Kenneth E. Hagin



John Wesley said that the devil has given the church a substitute for faith—one that looks and sounds so much like faith that few people can tell the difference. This substitute he called "mental assent."

He said in effect, "I have come to see that so many in the church do not have heart faith. They merely mentally agree that the Bible is true. They mentally agree that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. They mentally agree that He died for their sins according to the Scriptures. They mentally agree that He was raised from the dead for their justification. But they do not really believe all that in their hearts. If they did, it would change their lives."

Heart faith brings results. Mental agreement does not.

The mental assentor agrees that the Bible is a revelation from God—that every word in it is true. It sounds terribly religious and awfully good for someone to say, "I believe the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. I believe every word is so." Yet when the crises of life come to that person and they say, "It doesn't work for me," it cannot be faith. Faith works. Mental agreement does not. The mental assentor sees what God's Word says, but usually winds up saying, "For some reason, it doesn't work for me."

Faith Is An Act

Faith is acting on God's Word. Mental agreement simply recognizes the truthfulness of the Word; it does not act upon it.

Dr. Charles Duncombe, able minister and Bible teacher who now writes a regular column for "Christ For The Nations" magazine, is from England. As a young man he knew Smith Wigglesworth well. He told of

how Wigglesworth would hammer this thought home: Faith is an act. He said he would run over to one side of the platform and say with his English pronunciation, "Faith is an hact." Then he would run to the opposite side of the platform and say, "Faith is an hact." He might do this several times.

Well, after all, James said that faith without works is dead (James 2:17). That's a little blind to us. Weymouth's translation makes it more clear, "Faith without corresponding actions is dead."

Faith is an act. It is acting on what God said.

Now—it is possible to act on mental agreement. But it will not work. It produces no results.

I knew a minister, mightily used of God, a great soul winner, who in his mid-fifties came down with a severe heart condition. He did not preach divine healing. He wasn't opposed to it, but he didn't preach it. He preached a simple salvation message and won thousands of souls. The doctor told him that his preaching days were over—but that if he would stay on medication and lie around and rest, he could live another couple of years. At one point his heart was in such condition the doctor said, "Don't dare try to get up. Don't even raise up in bed."

He had minister friends who believed in divine healing and had been healed by the power of God. So he got some of them to come and talk to him. Of course, they talked to him about faith. But even though he had preached for years, this was a new area for him. And you do not get it just because somebody tells you once. It has to get beyond the head down into the heart—and that takes time.

This minister reasoned like this,

"If I can't be preaching, I'd rather die anyhow. They talk about acting on God's Word, so I'll just act on it." He was trying to act on it and fell dead in the middle of the floor.

As I said, you don't get there just because you hear it one time. It takes time for it to get from your head to your heart. It did for me. I stayed bedfast 16 months. The doctor cautioned me not to try to raise up in bed. He said, "Your heart is so bad you would die." Yet that is the very thing I did—even before I had any manifestation of healing. But, you see, I did it because I had been feeding and meditating for months on the Word until I had that inward conviction. I knew on the inside of me. I wasn't just imitating somebody else.

A few years ago when Dr. Duncombe's school, Trinity Bible College, was here in Tulsa, a young couple from Ohio came for the husband to attend. The wife worked in our office that year. After graduation they felt the call of God to work among the Navajo Indians in Arizona. They went to a little Presbyterian mission there. Before long they had the Presbyterian missionary and his wife baptized with the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. They got him on our books and tapes. Several times he gave his testimony in our crusades.

He had had an incurable disease. If he was off medication three days, he would die. He and the young man from Trinity and some Indian brothers went back in the mountains for a retreat. They drove their jeeps, then hiked back up to a remote cabin where they listened to tapes and read books. Then he took his medication and threw it down in the canyon. (I would never tell anybody else to do

Continued on next page

that.) The medication was gone. He couldn't get back within three days. Unless he is really believing God, he's dead. Those three days have now stretched into years—and he is still healed.

He gave this testimony, "I had listened to your tapes over and over, day and night. I knew on the inside of me. I knew on the inside of me, this is it." And it worked.

Now for somebody else to do that just because he did, will not work. It will not work unless they have the same conviction, the same inner assurance.

I knew of another pastor who had an incurable condition—without proper medication he could not live. If I had been there the day he threw away his medicine, I would have known what he said wasn't according to the Bible. Perhaps I could have helped him. He said, "I'm just going to trust God or die." A real confession of faith would have been, "I'm going to trust God and live."

Throwing away your medicine is not trusting God. Within three days this minister was dead. I'm glad he's in heaven. I'm sorry he acted unwisely and brought a reproach on the Lord Jesus Christ and His cause. It seems to me anyone should know that just throwing your medicine away would not heal you. If it would, all we would have to do is get everybody to throw away their medicine and they would all be automatically healed. I am sorry that this minister left here in his mid-thirties when he could have been working for God. His church suffered. The kingdom of God, in a sense, suffered.

But I knew quite well another preacher who had the same disease. Over a period of several years I preached five meetings in his church. Now he never did get what I was saying, I don't think, during those five meetings. I was there three times for three-week meetings, once for a ten-day meeting, and once for a four-week meeting. In fourteen and a half weeks of meetings over the years I taught the same truths.

(It's rather like eating. One time you might have mashed potatoes, the

next time baked potatoes, the next time fried potatoes, the next time potato salad, the next time potato chips—but it is still all potatoes. A good cook fixes things up differently—but it is still the same basic food. One thing that causes false teachings and getting off on tangents is always trying to come up with something new. What if someone said, "I'm not going to eat any more unless I get something new every meal." Well, they are not going to get something new every meal. It's the same way with the Word of God. That good old Word is good. Just keep staying with it. Just keep feeding on it.)

My wife and I were back in that area some time later and we went to visit this pastor and his wife. Now in his 60's he said, "Brother Hagin, I am completely healed. I am no longer on medication."

I asked, "How did it come about?"

He said, "It finally dawned on me what you were saying."

You see, it had to get down into his heart. He had heard what I said every time with his physical ears. It registered on his mind, but it did not get in his heart.

I have utmost sympathy and patience with people who are in a similar state. Yet there are those who do not. Some seem to think like this, "If you don't go along with me, I'm ready to cut you off." Those people are in worse shape than the folks they are trying to help. No, you don't knock your children in the head because all they can say is "mama" and "daddy." You brag about it. You say, "That baby of mine is already talking." You encourage your children—and they keep growing. But if every time they tried to say something you slapped their jaws and said shut up, they would never learn anything. If your child takes one little step at 8 months old, you go off and say, "That kid is already walking." Just because he takes one little step and falls in the floor you don't slap his jaws and say, "He'll never make it." No, you keep bragging on him and encouraging him, and after a while he can walk. The same thing applies spiritually. Do not criticize people. Encourage

them. They will get to walking after a while.

Now back to this minister. He said, "It finally dawned on me what you were saying. Or, really, I should have said it finally dawned on me what the Word of God says on the subject of faith. So when I would take that medication I would say, 'I believe I receive my healing.'"

That is acting on God's Word. That is what Jesus said to do in Mark 11:24. Jesus said to believe you receive.

"Immediately," he said, "the devil would say to my mind, 'You're not healed. If you were healed you wouldn't take that medicine.' But I would say, 'That's right. I didn't say I am healed. That's not what Jesus told me to believe. He told me to believe that I receive and then I will have it. So I believe that I receive it.'"

He kept holding fast to that over a period of many months. Then, in the process of time, his own doctor said, "I don't understand it, but your body after all these years is beginning to function normally. Leave off your medication."

The last time I talked with him he was 72 and it had been years since he'd had any kind of medication. He actively pastored until he was 72. That beats dying at 36 like the other minister who had the same disease.

Some would say, "It was just God's will. He healed one of them, and the other one He didn't." No. One of them took advantage of what belonged to him. He took time to get into the Word and get faith and practice it. The other just acted on presumption and missed it.

Eyeglasses

A husband and wife, both ordained ministers graduated from one of the best Pentecostal Bible schools in America at that time, were attending a meeting we held in the western part of the country.

The wife wore glasses. They looked to be a quarter to a half inch thick. She was a pretty young woman about 28 at this time, but her glasses were so thick they marred her looks.

After the service one night my

Continued on page 8

wife and I went out with them for a sandwich. Sitting right across the table in front of me she said, "Brother Hagin, I came up the other night in the healing line. You laid hands on me for my healing and I pulled off my glasses. Now I've worn glasses since I was a child. My eyes would never focus. They started to operate on me a few times, but they would decide against it. It took those strong-lensed glasses to hold my eyes in focus."

I could see that her eyes were not focusing. At one time they would appear to be crossed—and then they would turn out.

She continued, "I pulled off my glasses, but I can't see any better than I could. I have to drive the children to school and I can't even see the center median on our street. I'm liable to run right up over it. I've got a restriction on my drivers license and if I did happen to run into something, I'd be in difficulty."

Pulling off glasses will not heal you. If it would, all a person would have to do is pull his glasses off and he would automatically be healed. But she thought that was an act of faith. Yet there are other ways to act our faith. We need to realize that.

She asked me, "What am I going to do?"

I said, "Put your glasses back on—that's what you're going to do. But, don't give up on your confession. Here is a way to exercise your faith. You have come to see the truth of God's Word in Mark 11:24. Notice what Jesus said to believe."

It is really so simple when you start doing what Jesus said to do and what the Bible said to do, instead of doing what you think you ought to do, or what somebody told you to do, or what somebody else did. You see, God might even have told somebody else to do something which worked for them. But if He did not tell you, don't do it.

Jesus said, "*When you pray, believe . . .*" What is it you are to believe? That you have them? No. He said to *believe that you receive them.* And what will happen? *And ye shall have them.*

No, Jesus did not say, believe you have them and you will receive them.

He said, "*believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*"

You do not believe you have it. (Or them. "It" is singular. "Them" is plural. You will note that the word "them" is italicized in the King James. That means it was added by the translators.) If you have it, it is quite obvious. You don't have to believe it. If this woman had possessed her healing she would not have needed her glasses. She is not to believe she has it—she is to believe that she has received it and she shall have it. When is she going to have it? After she believes she receives.

I said to her, "Mark 11:24 says to believe you receive. You do not have to believe you have it. It is quite obvious you do not have it. But do this. The last thing every night, when you take off your glasses, say, 'I believe I receive my healing.' If you happen to wake up in the night, say, 'I believe I receive my healing.' The first thing in the morning, when you reach for those glasses, say, 'I believe that I receive my healing.' That is all He asked you to do—just believe you receive. He didn't ask you to do any more. Your business is to see that you believe you receive it. His business is to see that you have it. Don't try to tend to His business. Don't even talk about His business. Let Him tend to it. You tend to yours. As often as you think of it—and see that you do think of it—say 'I believe that I receive my healing.' Keep at it."

We left and went on our way. Every once in a while we would get a letter from these folks with an offering. But she never said anything about the matter and we never asked.

Five years later they were living in another state and we were in the area ministering. So we went to their home and stayed with them a couple of days between meetings.

The first thing my wife and I noticed was that she was not wearing glasses—her eyes focused perfectly. About the same time we said, "I see your eyes are all right."

"Yes," she said, "Brother Hagin, I had a time with it but I did just what you said. (Really she should have said I did just what Jesus said.) I practiced it religiously. Every night,

the last thing before I went to sleep, I said, 'I believe I receive my healing!' Every morning the first thing, as I drove the children to school, as I came back, as I went in the afternoon to pick them up, and as I came back, as I drove down the road to buy groceries, as I came back— There's no telling how many times a day I said it— And I kept saying it for six months— 'I believe I receive my healing.'

"My head kept saying, 'It's not working. It won't ever work. You're not any better. You can't see without your glasses. You know you can't.' But I stayed with it. For six months I couldn't tell it was helping a bit. But then I could tell my eyes were changing a little bit. I stayed with it. After another three months, it didn't make any difference whether I wore my glasses or not. I could see just as well without them as I could with them. So most of the time I just discarded them.

"Then we moved to this state and had to get a drivers license. We had to take a written test and turn in our out-of-state licenses. I passed the written test and then I passed an eye test they gave. But the man said, 'You have this restriction on your license and we cannot rescind it without your going to an eye doctor.'

She went. After examination the eye doctor said, "We will rescind that restriction. You don't need glasses. You have 20/20 vision and your eyes focus perfectly."

She had almost missed it. But then she began to *practice* her faith, to *use* her faith. She started where she was.

I could readily see that night in the restaurant that her faith wasn't at the point where she could receive an instant healing. Now, of course we must realize that God does initiate some things on His own. And if He does, thank God for it. But most of the healings of the Bible were not initiated by God, but initiated by the faith of the individual.

Jesus said to the woman with the issue of blood, "Daughter, your faith has made you whole."

Faith works.

