God's Final Word

(A Study of the History of Divine Revelation)

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Chapter I - A Brief History of Divine Revelation

Has God spoken? How did he speak? What did he say? Has he said all he intends to say? Where may we find an accurate record of his revelation to man? Those who seek to know, worship and serve God cannot avoid these questions.

Christian's affirm that God has spoken in a variety of ways. As music and art are acts of self expression, so God's creation is an act of self revelation.

"The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork."
Psalm 19:1

"Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.
For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."
Romans 1:19-20

Were men's hearts not darkened by sin every glimpse of forest, sky and sea would be a sermon.

Even in the human heart, God has not left himself without witness. The conscience in limited measure speaks of God's law and the coming judgment. Even the thief who justifies his greed sees clearly the evil of theft when he becomes the victim. At judgment, God will have no trouble unmasking the hypocrisy of those who disclaim knowledge of right and wrong.
Theologians refer to such forms of divine self-disclosure as "natural revelation." While natural revelation is in every way worthy of the Almighty, yet it fails to meet the need of man in his fallen state. Creation shouts of a creator but cannot bring men to worship him or even acknowledge his existence. Conscience speaks of God's law but cannot produce obedience. Neither can it find a way of forgiveness for the law breaker. One can study the volume of nature for a lifetime and never read:

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."  
Romans 5:8

God in his grace has supplied our need. In revelation he moved beyond the natural to the supernatural. To the ordinary, he has added the special. In special revelation, God has revealed himself, his will and his gracious plan of redemption through Christ Jesus. This gift of revelation is sufficient for salvation and as a guide in worship and service.

The Bible claims to be an inspired and inerrant record of special revelation. Christians accept this claim. They believe the Bible to be "God's Word."

That God should produce a book is really no surprise. Men must be addressed using the vehicle of human language. Our memory being limited and fallible, this record needed to be written down. We needed an accurate, complete and permanent record. We needed a book! Notice the words that prophecy places in the mouth of Christ:

"Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me."  
Psalms 40:7

The history of revelation recorded in the Bible shows that revelation was progressive in nature. The journey from Eden to Calvary was a long and eventful one. As the centuries rolled by, God revealed more and more of himself and his plan. The progress was sporadic, but not random. Each step led toward the goal. Every word was in preparation for his final word. Some two thousand years ago, God spoke his final word. The sun of revelation reached its zenith.

The Epistle to the Hebrews gives us a thumbnail sketch of these matters. We might call these verses a "brief history of special revelation."

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets,  
Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."  

John Calvin gets to the heart of this in his brief tabulation of Hebrews 1:1-2.  
"God spake
Of old by the prophets: - now by the Son  
Then to the fathers: - but now to us  
Then at many times: - now at the end of the times.\(^1\)

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Looking at Hebrews 1:1-2, we understand why the Bible has two major divisions: the Old and the New Testaments. These divisions of scripture are referred to as "testaments" because each centers on a divine covenant. The Old Testament records the history and details of the covenant God made with Israel at Mt. Sinai. The New Testament concerns the history and exposition of the New Covenant brought into force by the death of Jesus the Christ.

The Old Testament then records the history and content of special revelation before the coming of Christ. This came in a variety of ways and through many individuals. Prophets, priests, kings, soldiers, women and even little children heard God speak. He spoke to Adam in the Garden and to Moses at the burning bush. He spoke to Micah of Bethlehem, to Isaiah of Calvary and to Joel of Pentecost. God talked of his creation, his holy law, his chosen nation and the details of his covenant with Israel. Repeatedly he spoke of a coming Savior whose advent would introduce the last days and a new covenant.

This initial period of special revelation reached from the time of Adam forward to the close of the prophet Malachi’s ministry. The record of this revelatory activity is inscripturated in the first 39 books of the Bible. These books are what we call the "Old Testament."

In these preliminary revelations, God was preparing the way for his final word. In giving his holy law, God exposed men's sin and their need of a Savior. Messianic prophecies assured that when Jesus arrived, he would have their witness to his claims. The types, offices, ceremonies and even the people of the Old Testament, illustrated concepts and produced a language that made it possible for us to understand the person and work of Christ.\(^2\) Having at the time of Malachi said everything short of his final word, God said no more for four hundred years.\(^3\)

Moving on to the second period of special revelation we shall again notice the "thumbnail sketch" given in Hebrews 1:1-2.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,  
Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."
Consider this the next time you think of Christ as the Lamb of God, a sacrifice for sins, or our great high priest.

The period of time between the closing of the Old Testament Canon and the coming of Christ is often referred to as "the four hundred silent years."

God's final word came to us through Jesus Christ. So significant was his coming that it divided both the historical calendar and our Bible. Christ Jesus is the anti-type of all old covenant types, the subject of the prophets and the object of Israel's forward-looking faith.

So great was the revelation made through the Son, that he is called "the Word."

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
The same was In the beginning with God.
John 1:1-2

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."
John 1:14

Who can fully ponder the glory of one who could truly say "I am the light of the world"? What truth can be added to the revelation of him who is "the truth"? Does the theology of "God manifest in the flesh" need augmentation?

The life of Christ on earth is our only perfect example. Others are to be followed only as they follow Christ. His teachings are the essence of all New Testament truth; the bud from which the flower of apostolic exposition opened up. His saving work is the "good news" to be proclaimed to all. He is the completion of God's revelation in this age; He is God's final word.

How beautifully this was expressed by the late F. F. Bruce in his exposition of Hebrews 1:1-2:

"The earlier stage of the revelation was given in a variety of ways: God spoke in His mighty works of mercy and judgment and made known through His servants the prophets the meaning and purpose of these works; they were admitted into His secret council and learned His plans in advance. He spoke in storm and thunder to Moses, in a still small voice to Elijah. To those who would not heed the gentle flowing stream of Shiloh, He spoke by means of the Euphratean flood. Priest and prophet, sage and singer were in their several ways His spokesmen; yet all the successive acts and varying
modes of revelation in the ages before Christ came did not add up to the fullness of what God had to say. His word was not completely uttered until Christ came; but when Christ came, the word spoken in Him was indeed God's final word. In Him all the promises of God meet with the answering "yes!" which seals their fulfillment to His people and evokes from them an answering "amen!" The story of divine revelation is a story of progression up to Christ, but there is no progression beyond Him. It is "at the end of these days" that God has spoken in Him, and by this phrase our author means more than "recently"; it is a literal rendering of the Hebrew phrase which is used in the Old Testament to denote the epoch when the word of the prophets will be fulfilled, and its use here means that the appearance of Christ "once for all at the end of the age" (Hebrews 9:26, RSV) has inaugurated that time of fulfillment. God's previous spokesmen were His servants, but for the proclamation of His last word to man, He has chosen His son.


Chapter II - The Apostles of Christ

Jesus Christ is God's final word. What then was the purpose of the apostles in God's plan of special revelation? As the coming of Christ was a historical event, could it not be said that they were the witnesses, historians, expositors, as well as the publishers of this event? Through them the record of God's final word was transmitted to us:

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;
(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)
That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship Is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."
I John 1:1-3
"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
Hebrews 2:3-4

Notice how Christ in his high priestly prayer links the faith of succeeding generations to the work of the apostles:
"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.
John 17:6-8

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;"
John 17:20

1 In our study we are referring exclusively to the Apostles of Christ. The Greek word translated "apostle" is also used in a more general sense in the New Testament. In II Corinthians 8:23, the word is translated "messengers" and refers to men who were sent to represent individual churches. The Greek words translated "elder" or "deacon" are examples of other words used in both an official and a general sense.

We might further emphasize the nature of the apostolic work by pointing out that they were the link between our Lord Jesus: (the incarnate word) and the New Testament: the final portion of God's written word. The 27 books of the New Testament were either written by the apostles or by men under their influence. The New Testament is the inscripturated record of God's final word.

No wonder the beliefs of Christians are described in Acts 2:42 as the "apostles' doctrine." All scriptural churches are built on their teaching.

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;"
Ephesians 2:20

The foundational nature of their work is emphasized in John's vision of the New Jerusalem.
"And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."
Revelation 21:14

Holding this critical position, the Apostles were given special qualifications. God fully endowed them for their work. First, we are assured that they were eye witnesses of Christ Jesus.
"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;"
I John 1:1-2

"Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord?"
I Corinthians 9:1

"And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."
John 15:27

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty."
II Peter 1:16

Peter was specific about this qualification when a replacement for Judas was sought. "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection."
Acts 1:21-22

Secondly, the Apostles received their message directly from Christ. Unlike preachers in succeeding generations, they were not dependent upon the testimony or teaching of others. Paul makes this defense of his apostleship when attacked in Galatia. "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Galatians 1:11-12

Thirdly, as inspired instruments of revelation, they were accredited by their ability to perform signs. These might be called the "apostolic credentials." "And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease."
Matthew 10:1

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
Hebrews 2:3-4

"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."
II Corinthians 12:12
Fourthly, as the witnesses and historians of God's greatest and final revelation, they were promised infallibility of memory.
"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
John 14:26
We can trust the accuracy of the New Testament record.

Lastly, as expositors and interpreters of God's final word, they were promised fullness of understanding.

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:"
John 16:13

During the earthly sojourn of Christ Jesus, the apostles were often limited in their grasp of spiritual matters. All this changed with the coming of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. They were guided into all truth. Please note that the New Testament is the inspired repository of this "truth." Its existence is the fulfillment of Christ's promises to the apostles.

At this point, let us enlarge on a matter that has already been hinted at. Everything the apostles taught and recorded in the New Testament had its roots in the words and work of Christ. He, not the apostles, was God's final word. The spirit came not to reveal new things to their mind, but to remind them of what Christ had taught and done. It was not new things, but these things they were illumined to understand.

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."
John 15:26

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you."
John 16:13-15

The reader is challenged to consider how foundational the words and work of Christ are in the apostolic message. Take time to notice how the doctrines of the New Testament have their origins in the words of Christ. For the sake of emphasis, let us repeat what was formerly said: "The teaching of Christ is the essence of all New Testament truth; the bud from which the flower of apostolic exposition opened up."

May God help us to grasp the importance and the finality of the apostolic labors. To deny the apostolic inspiration and authority is to lose the record of Christ our Lord. To go
beyond the apostles in our search for truth is to go beyond Christ. The truth about Jesus is the "apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42). The "faith" or "body of Christian doctrine" is said to be "once delivered" because it was transmitted in one generation by the apostles.

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Jude 3

Without the apostles, we would never have heard God's final word!

Chapter III
"Sola Scriptura"

We have traced the history of special revelation from the time of Adam until its consummation in Christ Jesus. The place of the apostles in God's final word has been explained. What then is the implication of all this for us who today wish to hear from God?

"Sola Scriptura" was a Latin phrase coined during the reformation which means "scripture alone." The phrase was intended to assert that scripture alone is the source of revelation for post-apostolic Christians. We believe that a true understanding of the history of special revelation leads one to this belief. To say that Christ is God's final word is to say "the Bible is our only rule of faith and practice."

In explaining the truth of "Sola Scripture," there are several issues we should address:

1. "Sola Scriptura" is an assertion of the sufficiency of the Bible as a spiritual guide. As a revelation it needs no additions. This is often stated in scripture:

"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." II Timothy 3:15-17

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:105

2. "Sola Scriptura" is an assertion of the finality of scripture. This is logically connected to the sufficiency of the Bible. That which is sufficient needs no additions. The old covenant promised a new covenant. Christ in bringing this new covenant, brought God's final word:
For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,
John 1:17

There is no newer covenant beyond Christ. Christian's possessed of a complete Bible
expect and need no other word from God. To add to the apostolic record is to add to the
revelations God gave through his Son. It is to deny the fullness and finality of Jesus the
"Word."

Connected to the finality of the scriptures is the fact that the Bible has two major
divisions. Remembering that the history of special revelation has two major divisions this
is just as we would expect. Both Christ and the orthodox Jews accepted the first 39 books
of scripture as an inspired record of the first covenant. It comes then as no surprise that
with the coming of Christ and a new covenant a new body of scripture would emerge.
Such was recognized to be the case. In apostolic times, the New Testament books as they
were produced were accorded equal authority with the old covenant scripture. Returning
now to the finality of the Bible we make our point: Just as the history of special
revelation has two divisions, so we expect scripture in its complete and final state to
likewise have two major divisions. Our two-part Bible is complete and final.

At the risk of being repetitious, let us close this section of our study by reviewing the
facts that lead us to assert the truth of "Sola Scriptura." It is impossible to over-estimate
the importance of this issue. Here then is a brief survey reviewing our line of thought:

1. The Old Testament was received by Jesus Christ as God's word and as the inspired
record of special revelation up through the ministry of Malachi.

2. Jesus Christ in his coming was God's final word; the fullness of what God had to
say.

3. Christ's apostles were witnesses and expositors of God's final word.

4. These men were promised infallibility of memory concerning Christ, as well as
fullness of understanding. They were guided into all truth.

5. Following the pattern of Old Covenant prophets they produced a body of scripture
containing the fullness of the revelations received.

6. The apostles in producing the New Testament gave in their lifetime a record of
God's final word. This is why Jude 3 speaks of the faith or body of doctrine as "once
delivered."

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1 The content of the Jewish Canon was exactly that of our Old Testament and never
 included the Apocrypha. Our Lord never quoted the Apocrypha but constantly received
 and used the Jewish Canon as authoritative.

2 The Apostle Paul quotes the writings of both Moses and Luke as of equal authority (I
 Timothy 5:18). Peter recognized Paul's epistles as "scripture" (II Peter 3:15-16).
7. The apostles being dead and Christ's promises being true, God's word is now complete. The New Testament contains the "apostles' doctrine," the "faith once delivered to the saints," the "all truth," and the "all things" brought to remembrance.

8. Any attempt to add to the New Testament is an attempt to go beyond Christ as God's final word.

Chapter IV
The Doctrine of "Sola Scriptura" Practically Applied

Doctrinal exposition should be followed with practical application. After asserting the sufficiency and finality of scripture, we then ask how this applies to our day. In so doing, we are following the example of, not only, inspired apostles like Paul but also of wise preachers through the ages. Hear for instance the words of John Calvin who after expounding Hebrews 1:1-2 made strong practical application for his day:

When he says "hath spoken to us at the end of these days", he means that there is no further reason why we should be in doubt whether to expect any new revelation. It was not a part of the Word that Christ brought, but the closing Word. It is in this sense that the apostles understand "the last times" and "the fast days." This too is what Paul understands when he writes that "upon us the ends of the ages have come" (I Corinthians 10:11). If God has now spoken His last Word, it is right to advance thus far, just as we must halt our steps when we arrive at Him. It is very necessary for us to recognize both these aspects, for it was a great drawback on the part of the Jews that they did not reckon with the possibility that God had postponed a fuller teaching to another time. They were content with their own law, and did not hurry on to the goal. On the other hand, since Christ appeared the opposite evil has begun to take effect in the world. Men try to go beyond Christ. What else is the whole system of Popery, but the transgression of this limit which the apostles fixed? Therefore, as the Spirit of God in this passage invites all to come as far as Christ, so He forbids them to overstep this last Word of which He makes mention. In short, the limit of our wisdom is placed here in the gospel."

Following such examples, we call men in our day to submit to the Lordship of Christ by acknowledging him as God's final word. There is great danger in neglecting the gospel of Christ. How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first, began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that hear him; God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?
Hebrews 2:3-4
He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
John 3:18


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Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. He died to pay for sins and arose to prove that it was done. He is the only way to the Father, and the only means of forgiveness. Without Christ, you are without God and without hope. God calls you to repent and believe on his Son.

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave his Son.
I John 5:10

To our Jewish friends, we offer the reminder that to reject Jesus as the Christ is to close our ears to God's final word. Moses and the prophets prepared the way for him. He is the mediator of the new covenant promised in your prophets. He is the hope of Israel, the prophet like unto Moses, the seed of David, and the king of Israel. God forbid that he should stand as a light to the Gentiles while you are left in darkness.

Thirdly and finally, we would warn men of the danger of moving beyond Christ. Think of the Muslims who recognize Christ as a prophet then run past him to Mohammed. Likewise, the Mormons feel that they honor Christ yet race past him to Joseph Smith. Such is the case in multitudes of religious movements. They trade the light of the Son for the flickering candle of human thought or satanic deception.

Even among those who claim to be Christians, there is the danger of moving beyond Christ Jesus. Consider the errors of Roman Catholicism. To the Old Testament they add the apocrypha. To the New Testament of our Lord and Savior they add tradition, papal infallibility plus countless visions and appearances of Mary over the years. Most basic in this system of error is the belief that the apostles of Christ have successors in the person of the Pope. Having denied the sufficiency and finality of scripture, they have an open-ended revelation rather than "the faith once delivered to the saints." No wonder that new doctrines have and are being added to the Catholic belief system.² God's final word loses its finality.


Give special attention to Chapter 12. Here the author recounts how the "Assumption of Mary" became Roman Catholic dogma.

Lastly, let me address our non-cessationist³ friends. Historically
A cessationist is someone who believes that certain gifts of the Spirit ceased with the passing of the apostles. A non-cessationist denies this. Neither side questions the existence of the supernatural or the necessity of many present-day spiritual gifts. Indeed apart from spiritual gifts the church could not operate as a body. The controversy surrounds only the gifts that involved direct revelation or those that produced signs. Cessationists see such as strictly apostolic while non-cessationists believe they have an ongoing purpose.

Ultimately, the debate comes down to "What does the Bible teach on this subject?" Can we prove from scripture that certain gifts were only temporary? At first glance, the cessationist seems to be at a disadvantage. Little in the way of scripture seems suitable for his arsenal. Is this really the case?

As a cessationist, I respond with the caution that we need to beware of preconceived ideas as to just how the bible must teach something. Let me illustrate with a question: Where does the bible say that the New Testament canon would close with the passing of the apostles? Though never explicitly stated, was this not implied in the promises of Christ made to the apostles (see chapter on Sola Scriptura). Would not the same promises also imply the cessation of any gift involving direct revelation? Is it consistent to forbid written prophecy while permitting oral prophecy? Either God's word is complete or it is not. Is it anymore rational to ask "Where does the Bible say that prophecy would cease with the passing of the apostles?" than it is to ask "How do we know the canon closed with John's writing of the book of the Revelation?" I do not question that many non-cessationists sincerely believe they are committed to the finality and perfection of the scriptures. What I question is the consistency of their position. Perhaps you have heard the Arabic proverb about the nose of the camel. The non-cessationism that permits the "nose" of tongues and prophecy to enter the tent is not theoretically that different from the non-cessationist who allows the whole camel of Catholic tradition and papal infallibility into the tent.

Moving on we notice that most non-cessationists agree that the office of apostle was foundational and temporary. While we are glad that this is understood, it seems strange when we recall that in Ephesians 4:8-11 the apostles are classed as "gifts." Even non-cessationists who are committed to scripture must become cessationists of a sort.

Finally, I would remind our non-cessationist friends of what seems obvious. Apostolic churches had needs we do not have. After Christ's ascension, a period of about sixty years passed before the New Testament was complete. Visualize New Testament churches operating with none or little of the New Testament. How could they have received new covenant truth apart from the ministry of the apostles and prophets? Such ministry was, of course, accompanied by signs to authenticate the revelations given (Hebrews 2:2-3). God wonderfully met their need. Still, the question remains as to why churches today who possess complete Bibles need prophets and signs. Truly a church with all sixty-six books of Holy Writ is better provided for than the most gifted church of apostolic times. Our treatment of this subject has been very brief. To those who desire
further study we recommend the following book: *To Be Continued*, by Samuel Waldron. - available at http://www.calvarypress.com/theol.asp.

evangelical people have believed that spiritual gifts which involved direct revelation or such gifts that acted as signs to authenticate these revelations were foundational in nature and ceased with the passing of the apostles. The existence of these gifts was deemed unnecessary for those who possessed a complete Bible. When you assert that these gifts still operate, consider the company you keep. Most Pentecostal/Charismatic/Third Wave people would cringe at the thought of adding to God's word but the charge is difficult to evade.\(^4\) Do not your prophets claim to speak "God's word"? How often have you heard "God told me" in your services? Is there really any difference in a Pope who claims to speak "ex Cathedra" and a prophet who assures the audience that his message is directly from God? Are not both a denial of the sufficiency and finality of Holy Scripture? Is there really anything to say beyond what God has said through his Son? As the apostles gave us an inspired record of Christ, was not the door of revelation closed? Would we not be well advised to leave a lock on the door?

Cessationism is not about a style of worship. It is not a denial of the supernatural or of our need of God's Spirit. Really, it concerns our view of scripture, the apostles and ultimately, Christ Jesus. Cessationism is not a limitation of the Almighty but an exaltation of Christ as God's final word.

> God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,  
> Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;  
> Hebrews 1:1-2

\(^4\) Non-cessationists have attempted to evade this charge by asserting the possibility of non-canonical or non-scripture quality prophecy. While various forms of this teaching have been asserted by even recognized scholars, the whole ideal seems quite unconvincing. Again, we are somewhat reminded of Catholicism where the Pope is said to be God's mouthpiece but is forbidden to create canonical scripture. For more information, the reader is again referred to the book by Samuel Waldron.