



The Bible is the Word of God and is therefore inerrant (free of all error and entirely trustworthy in everything which it records) and has complete authority in all matters of theology and behaviour. It is 'God-breathed' and its human authors were channels of the divine Word. The Christian's task is to discern accurately what the Bible teaches and then to believe and obey it. Reason, experience and tradition should be judged in the light of the Bible, not the other way round.

The Bible's teaching about God, salvation and Christian living is entirely trustworthy. It cannot be expected, however, to provide entirely accurate scientific or historical information since this is not its purpose. Nevertheless, it provides the supreme rule for faith and conduct, to which other ways of 'knowing', while important, should be subordinate.

The Bible is the essential foundation on which Christian faith and life are built. However, its teachings were formed in particular historical and cultural contexts, and must therefore be read in that light. The way to apply biblical teaching in today's very different context is not always obvious or straightforward. Reason is an important (God-given) gift which must be used to the full in this process of interpretation.

The Bible is one of the main ways in which God speaks to the believer. However, the movement of God's Spirit is free and unpredictable, and it is what the Spirit is doing today that is of the greatest importance. The Bible helps to interpret experience, but much stress is placed on spiritual experience itself, which conveys its own compelling authority

The Bible witnesses to God's revelation of himself through history and supremely through Jesus Christ. However, the Bible is not itself that revelation, but only the witness to it. Christians must therefore discern where and to what extent they perceive the true gospel witness in the various voices of the Bible. Reason, tradition and experience are as important as the biblical witnesses.

The Bible comprises a diverse and often contradictory collection of documents which represent the experiences of various people in various times and places. The Christian's task is to follow, in some way, the example of Christ. And to the extent that the Bible records evidence of his character and teaching it offers a useful resource. However, in the late 20th century it is simply not possible to obey all its teachings since these stem from very human authors and often represent the ideology of particular groups or classes in an ancient and foreign culture. Reason and experience provide much more important tools for faith and practice.

The Bible's teaching, while foundational and authoritative for Christians, needs to be interpreted by the Church. In practice it is the interpretation and guidance offered by Church leaders and preachers which provides authoritative teaching. Church tradition is therefore of high importance as a practical source of authority.