Lecture on Anglican view of Scripture


1. **Scripture**

   a. **The Bible as the Word of God**: Article VII of the Thirty-nine articles: In Anglican view the real purpose of the Bible is to give knowledge of the saving work of Jesus Christ. Article II: the primary Word of God is Jesus Christ.

   b. **The Bible as Scripture**: The Bible is the sacred text of our faith community, a community extends back to the ancient communities of faith (both Christian and Jewish) that produced and preserved it.

   c. **Inspiration of Scripture**: Even during the Reformation there was no claim made for the inerrancy of the Bible. Rather it is understood that the Bible is the product of human endeavor as well as the work of God: We understand the Bible to be a human product reflecting the times, circumstances and personalities of its writers but at the same time a work of God. That is, the word of God is conveyed through human writers, even as the Holy Spirit leads us to faith through the ancient witness of the people of Israel and the early Church. Inspiration is therefore an ongoing activity of the Holy Spirit, experienced over and over again as we read the Word of God. Furthermore, Anglicans are open to using current scholarly methodologies that expand our knowledge about the Bible and those early faith communities.

   d. **The Sufficiency of Scripture**: Article VI says, “Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation . . .”

      i. Anglicans accept the Reformation idea of sola *scriptura* “Scripture alone,” as the primary authoritative witness of God’s saving acts in history.

      ii. The primacy of Scripture means “Scripture is the norm of faith and the norm by which other norms (creeds, tradition, confessions of faith) are judged.”

      iii. The Bible is a norm for theology, the primary guide for forming theological assumptions.

      iv. The Bible is a norm for ethical behavior, though it is not understood to be a codebook of law to be rigidly followed. Rather all our behavior is to be evaluated in light of the gospel. However the heart of the law and the teaching of the prophets also serve as valuable guides.

   e. **Canon**: The Church of England adopted the canon of the Hebrew Bible, and the New Testament. It regarded the Apocrypha to be secondary, works valuable for teaching and study, but not considered on that same par as scripture.