

critically. Works of criticism, from Michaelis down to Sharp, on the Greek article, were resorted to. While these threw light on many passages, *still the book as a whole*, the religion of Jesus Christ *as a whole*, was hid from me. I took the *naked text* and followed common sense; I read it, subject to the ordinary rules of interpretation, and thus it was it became to me a new book. Then I was called a *natural* man, because I took the *natural* rules of interpretation. Till then I was a *spiritual* man, and a *regenerated* interpreter. But, alas! *as I learned by Bible I lost my orthodoxy*; and from being one of the most evangelical in the estimation of many, I became the most heretical. I can only say for the spirit which actuated me, that it was a most vehement desire to understand the truth. I did most certainly put the world ought of my sight. I cared no more for popularity than I did for the shadow which followed my body when the Sun shone. I valued truth more than the gold of Ophir, and I sought her with my whole heart, as for hidden treasure. My eye was *single*, as King James' Translators said. I paid no court to the prejudices of the world, and did sacrifice every worldly object to the Bible. This much of my experience and history I deem due to you for the narrative you have given. I would only add, that experience has taught me that to get a victory over the world, over the love of fame, and to hold in perfect contempt human honor, adulation, and popularity, will do more to make the New Testament intelligible, than all the commentators that ever wrote.

But, brother Semple, I do not claim any regard or authority to my conclusions from an argument drawn from those premises. No; I appear before the public with the Bible only in my hand. What I cannot evince and demonstrate to be the mind of the Holy Spirit from that, my experience, or my labors in pursuit of truth, will not be plead as any evidence in favor of its truth; for in discussing the views of others I will not allow an *argumentum ad modestiam* (an argument addressed to my modesty) to have any weight.

I differ not from you in the conclusion that the Holy Spirit begins, carries on, and consummates the salvation of men, *But the question is, whether independent of, accompanying, or simply by the word of life?* Much has been said upon this subject already, and much may yet be said about it before the speculations of the dark ages shall be banished.

I have long thought that the best way to understand the work of the Holy Spirit, is, to take every sentence in which it is named, one by one, and, *in the light of their respective contexts*, decide their import. When you attempt this, or have done it, you will find no text supporting the views of Andrew Fuller's *previous* holy disposition infused *anterior* to faith. This idea, sometimes called *sovereign grace*, is the radix of the system, and of the religious metaphysics of this age.

You speak of the Holy Spirit bearing witness with your spirit. *Do you mean in any other way than by the written word?* I had a