are used of our Lord in Heb. ix. 12, 25,  
which chapter is the best of all comments   
on this difficult expression.

**by water and blood** has been very variously   
understood. Two canons of interpretation   
have been laid down by Düsterdieck,  
and may safely be adopted: 1) “Water”  
and “blood” must point both to some  
purely historical facts in the life of our  
Lord on earth, and to some still present  
witnesses for Christ: and 2) they must not  
he interpreted symbolically, but understood  
of something so real and powerful, as that  
by them God’s testimony is given to believers,   
and eternal life assured to them.  
These canons at once exclude all figurative  
interpretations, such as that of Socinus  
und his school, in which *water* stands for  
the purity and innocence of the life and  
doctrine of Christ, Heb. x. 22, Eph. v. 26,  
—and *blood* for the death of Christ as His  
testimony of Himself.

Düsterdieck observes that it is remarkable  
that the best Roman-Catholic expositor,  
Estius [whose commentary is unfortunately  
broken off at this verse], does not, as some  
have done, interpret **blood** of the Sacrament   
of the Lord’s Supper, but puts together   
*water* and *blood*, as Calvin and Luther.  
So that, as Düsterdieck proceeds to say,  
the great leaders of the three schools of  
theology have had the tact to see that which  
their less skilled followers have missed  
seeing,—that *blood* cannot by any means  
be understood of the Lord’s Supper, as  
has been done by many.

The next point which comes before us  
is to enquire whether at. all, or how far,  
our passage is connected with John xix.34?  
It occurs here, because many Commentators   
have seen in the incident there related   
a miraculous symbolizing of the two  
sacraments, and in this passage an allusion  
to that incident. To deny all such allusion   
seems against probability. The Apostle  
could hardly both here and in that place  
lay such evident stress on the water and  
blood together, without having in his  
mind some link connecting this place  
and that. The idea that we have here  
nothing more than a reference to the fact  
of John xix. 34, is against our 2nd canon  
above: but that John xix. 34 and this  
refer to the same fundamental truth, is I  
conceive hardly to be doubted.

It rests now then that we enquire into  
the meaning of each expression. On the  
first, **blood**, there cannot surely be much  
uncertainty. The blood of His Cross must,  
by all Scripture analogy, be that intended.  
The pouring out of this blood was the  
completion of the baptism which He had  
to be baptized with, Mark x. 28, 29, Luke  
xii. 50. And if this is so, to what can the  
term **water** be referred so simply, as to  
that baptism with water, which inaugurated   
the Lord’s ministry? It might indeed   
be said, that the baptism which He  
instituted for His followers, better satisfies   
the test of our 2nd canon, that viz. of  
being an abiding testimony in the Christian   
Church. But to this there lies the  
objection, that as *blood* signifies something   
which happened to Christ Himself,  
so must *water* likewise, at least primarily,  
whatever permanent testimony such event  
may have left in the Christian Church.  
And thus some modern Commentators  
have taken it; as uniting the historical  
fact of the Lord’s baptism with the ordinance   
of baptism, grounded on it, and  
abiding in the Christian Church. Düsterdieck   
refuses to accept this view, denying  
that our Lord’s baptism was any proof or  
testimony of His Messiahship, aud understanding   
water of the ordinance of baptism only.   
But surely we are not right  
in interpreting the words “*He that came  
by water,*” *He that ordained baptism:*  
nor in giving the two, *blood* and *water*,  
an entirely different reference. For his  
endeavour to escape from this by making  
the former represent not Christ’s death  
but His blood, applied to us, cannot be  
accepted, as giving a “non-natural”  
sense to the words *“he that came by  
blood”* likewise.

All this being considered, it seems impossible   
to avoid giving both to *blood* and  
*water* the combined senses above indicated,   
and believing that such were before  
the Apostle’s mind. They represent,—the  
**water**, the baptism of water which the  
Lord Himself underwent and instituted  
for His followers,—the **blood**, the baptism  
of blood which He Himself underwent,  
and instituted for His followers. And it  
is equally impossible to sever from these  
words the historical accompaniments and  
associations which arise on their mention.