The Lord's baptism, of itself, was indeed  
rather a result than a proof of His Messiahship:   
but in it, taking St. John’s account   
only, a testimony to His divine  
Sonship was given, by which the Baptist  
knew Him to be the Son of God: *“I have  
seen, and have borne witness, that this is  
the Son of God,”* are his words, John i.  
34; and when that blood was poured from  
His “riven side,” he that saw it again  
uses the same formula, *“he that hath  
seen it hath borne witness.”* It cannot  
be that the word **witness** being thus referred   
to two definite points of our Lord’s  
life, should not apply to these two, connected   
as they are with water and blood  
here mentioned, and associated by St. John  
himself with the remarkable word **hath  
borne witness** (ver. 9) in the perfect  
tense, of an abiding witness in both cases.

But these past facts in the Lord’s life  
are this abiding testimony to us, by virtue  
of the permanent application to us of their  
cleansing and atoning power. And thus  
both our canons are satisfied, which certainly   
is not the case in Düsterdieck’s  
interpretation, though they were laid  
down by himself), **Jesus Christ** (see above  
on **this**, In all the places where St. John  
uses this Name, it las a solemn meaning,  
and is by the emphasis thus thrown on  
the official designation of our Lord, nearly  
equivalent to “*Jesus the Christ.*” Compare   
John i. 17, xvii. 3: 1 John i. 3, 7,  
ii. 1, iii. 23, iv. 2, v. 20: 2 John 3, 7):  
**not in the water only, but in the water  
and in the blood** (**in**, see above on **by**.  
The sense of the two is there shewn to be  
closely allied, in giving rather the “element   
in which,” **by**, the medium through  
which. The definite article before each  
word shews that they are well-known and  
solemn ideas. It is inserted not as matter  
of course, but as giving solemnity.

But why has the Apostle added this  
sentence? It has been thought that it is  
to give Christ the preference over Moses,  
who came only by water (1 Cor. x. 2), and  
Aaron, who came only by blood (of sacrifice),   
whereas Christ united both. But  
this is too far-fetched. Another opinion  
again regards the words as directed  
against those who despised the Cross of  
Christ (1 Cor. i. 23): but a more definite  
explanation than this is required. And  
those can hardly be wrong, who find it in  
such words as those of the Baptist in John  
i. 25, *“I baptize with (in) water, but  
there standeth one among you whom ye  
know not:”* compare the emphatic repetitions   
below, ver. 31, *“I came baptizing  
with (in) water;”* and ver. 38, *“He that  
sent me to baptize with (in) water.”* The  
baptism of Jesus was not one of water  
only, but one of blood,—*“behold the Lamb  
of God”*—and something more than that  
which follows in the next clause): **and the  
Spirit is that which witnesseth, because  
the Spirit is the truth** (that is, as explained  
by the next verse, the Spirit is an  
additional witness, besides those already  
mentioned to the Messiahship of Jesus,  
and in that, to the eternal life which God  
has given us in Him. Some have thought  
that **because** should be “that:” the same  
Greek word signifying hoth these. But  
it is not to the fact that the Spirit is the  
truth, that the Spirit gives witness: but  
it is the fact that He is the truth, which  
makes Him so weighty a witness; which  
makes the giving of witness so especially  
His office.

Very various however have been the  
meanings here given to **the Spirit**. One  
view understands, the spirit of our Lord,  
which He when dying commended into  
His Father’s hands, Another, explaining  
*water and blood* of the two Sacraments of  
Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, sees in  
**the Spirit**, in connexion with John xx. 22  
ff., a third Sacrament of *absolution*, Others  
regard it as equivalent to *the spiritual  
man*, i.e. St. John himself. Others again  
regard it as equivalent to God—and the  
occasion of the testimony to be the Resurrection,   
when our Lord rose with Divine  
power. The Socinian Commentators interpret   
it of the divine power by which  
Christ wrought His miracles. But this,  
as well as Bede’s interpretation, that the  
Spirit which descended on the Lord at His  
baptism is meant, inasmuch as it testified  
to His being the true Son of God, fails, in  
giving no *present abiding* testimony such  
as the context requires. Others again understand   
by it the ministry of the word.