Most of these understand **the Spirit** here  
and in ver. 8 differently. But nothing  
ean be plainer than that we must not  
alter the meaning, where the word **for**  
binds together the sentences so closely.

The above interpretations failing to give  
any satisfactory account of the text, we  
recur to the simple and obvious meaning,  
*the Holy Spirit*. And it seems fully to  
satisfy all the requirements of the passage.  
The Holy Spirit is He, who testifies of  
Christ [John xv. 26], who glorifies Him,  
and shews of the things which belong to  
Him [John xvi. 14]. It is by the possession   
of Him that we know that we have  
Christ [ch. iii, 24], And the following  
clause, “because the Spirit is the Truth,”  
exactly agrees with this. He is the absolute   
truth [John xiv. 17, xv. 26], leading  
into all the truth [John xvi. 13 f.]. And  
in this consists the all-importance and the  
infallibility of His witness).

**7.**] “John  
here renders a reason why he spoke not of  
the Spirit only, who has the chief authority   
in this matter, but also of the water  
and the blood, because in them also there  
is no small credit due to testimony, and  
the ternary number is in case of witnesses   
the most complete.” Grotius. **For**  
(that this, and not “*because*,” is the correct   
English reading, see my Greek Test.)  
**those who bear witness are three** (the  
three are considered as living and speaking   
witnesses; hence we have the masculine  
form in the original. By being *three*,  
they fulfil the requirements of the Law as  
to full testimony: Deut. xvii. 6, xix. 15:  
Matt. xviii. 16, 2 Cor. xiii, 1), **the Spirit,  
and the water, and the blood** (now, the  
Spirit is put first: and not without reason.  
The Spirit is, of the three, the only living  
and active witness, properly speaking:  
besides, the water and the blood are no  
witnesses without Him, whereas He is independent   
of them, testifying both in the  
und out of them), **and the three concur in  
one** (contribute to one and the same result:   
viz. the truth that Jesus is the  
Christ, and that we have life in Him.  
And this their one testimony is given by  
the purification in the water of baptism  
into His name, John iii. 5: by the continual   
cleansing from all sin which we enjoy  
in and by His atoning blood: by the inward   
witness of His Spirit, which He hath  
given us).

The question of the genuineness of the  
words read in the received text at the end  
of ver. 7 is discussed, as far as external  
grounds are concerned, in the Digest in  
my Greek Test.; and it may there be  
seen, that unless pure caprice is to be  
followed in the criticism of the sacred  
text, *there is not the shadow of a reason  
for supposing them genuine*. Even the  
supposed citations of them in early Latin  
Fathers have now, on closer examination,  
disappeared.—Something remains to be  
said on internal grounds, on which we  
have full right to enter, now that the  
other is secured. And on these grounds  
it must appear, on any fair and unprejudiced   
consideration, that the words are  
1) alien from the context: 2) in themselves   
incoherent, and betraying another  
hand than the Apostle’s. For 1) the context,   
as above explained, is employed in  
setting forth the reality of the substance  
of the faith which overcomes the world.  
even of our eternal life in Jesus the Son of  
God. And this is shewn by a threefold  
testimony, subsisting in the revelation of  
the Lord Himself, and subsisting in us  
His people. And this testimony is the  
water of baptism, the blood of atonement,  
the Spirit of truth, concurrent in their  
witness to the one fact that He is the Son  
of God, and that we have eternal life in  
Him. Now *between two steps* of this  
argument,—not as a mere analogy referred   
to at its conclusion,—insert the  
words “for there are three that bear  
witness in heaven, the Father, the Word,  
and the Holy Spirit: and these three are  
one,” and who can fail to see, unless prejudice  
have blinded his eyes, that the context   
is disturbed by the introduction of an  
irrelevant matter? Consequently, Bengel,  
one of the most strennous upholders of the  
words, is obliged tamely to take refuge in  
the transposition of vv. 7 and 8 (which  
was perhaps the original form of its insertion  
in the vulgate), so as to bring into  
treatment the matter in hand, before the  
illustration of it is introduced. But even  
suppose this could be done; what kind of  
illustration is it? What is it to which  
our attention is directed? Apparently the