immanence in the personal Christ will  
satisfy the words: a living because He  
lives, and as receiving of His fulness)  
**sinneth not** (nor again is this to be tamed  
down, as has been done by far more and  
better interpreters than in the last case, by  
making it mean “does not persist in sin,”  
so Luther, “does not allow sin to reign  
over him,”—so the Socinians and semi-Socinians.

Against all such the plain words  
of the Apostle must be held fast, and explained

by the analogy of his way of  
speaking throughout the Epistle of the  
ideal reality of the life of God and the  
life of sin as absolutely excluding one  
another. This all the best and deepest  
Commentators have felt: so Augustine  
and Bede, saying, “In so far as he abideth  
in Him, he sinneth not.” The two are  
incompatible: and in so far as a man is  
found in the one, he is thereby separated  
from the other. In the child of God i  
the hatred of sin; in the child of the devil  
the love of it; and every act done in virtue  
of either state or as belonging to either, is  
done purely on one side or purely on the  
other. If the child of God falls into sin,  
it is an act against nature, deadly to life,  
hardly endured, and bringing bitter repentance:

it is as the taking of a poison, which  
if it be not corrected by its antidote, will  
sap the very springs of life. So that there  
is no real contradiction to ch. i, 8–10,  
ii. 2, where this very falling into sin of the  
child of God is asserted and the remedy  
prescribed. The real difficulty of our verse  
is in that which follows); **every one that  
sinneth hath not seen** (so literally : see  
below) **Him, neither hath known Him**(here it seems to be said that the act  
of sinning not only *so far* excludes from  
the life in God and Christ, but proves  
that that life h*as never existed* in the  
person so sinning. That this cannot be  
the meaning of the Apostle, is evident  
from such passages as i. 8–10, ii. 2, and  
indeed from the whole tenor of the Epistle,  
in which the words, *“now are we children of God,”*

occur in combination with  
  
*“let no one deceive you,”* and the like:  
whereas if the above view were correct,  
the very fact of *being deceived* not only  
would cause them to cease from being  
*children of God*, but would prove that  
they never had been such. If then this  
cannot be so, what meaning are we to put  
upon the words? First observe the tense  
in which the verbs stand in the original.  
They are perfects, almost equivalent to  
our English present, by which I have  
accordingly rendered them. And the  
meaning will be, that the cutting off by an  
act of sin of the sight and knowledge of  
Christ, shews, and shews in proportion as  
it prevails, unreality in that sight and  
knowledge. See the force of the tense  
discussed in my Greek Testament.

As regards the relation of the words  
themselves, **seeth** and **knoweth**; some  
hold that there is no perceptible difference :  
but that the latter word fixes and specifies  
the necessarily figurative meaning of the  
former. Lücke would understand *“seeing”*of knowledge obtained by historical information,

which matures and completes  
itself into *“knowing.”* But this seems  
hardly according to St. John’s practice,  
who uses *“seeing”* either of bodily sight  
[John i. 18, 1 John i. 1, &c., &c.],—  
or of an intuitive immediate vision of  
divine things, such as Christ has of the  
Father and heavenly things [John iii.  
11, 32, vi. 46, viii. 38],—or of spiritual  
intuition gained by knowledge of Christ  
and the divine life [John xiv. 7, 9;  
3 John 11]: and there can be little  
doubt that this last is the meaning here:  
and thus **neither** will retain its proper  
exclusive and climacteric force: *seeing*  
is a further step than *knowing* : a realization of

Christ's personality and of the  
existence of heavenly things which is the  
result of spiritual knowledge: and thus  
the sinner “hath not seen Him, nor yet,  
nor even, known Him”).

**7, 8.**] *The contrast is again stated*,  
and introduced by a solemn warning not  
to be misled respecting it : and, as usually