more general than the particular acts which  
it induced. But the reference must be to  
*sin in principle*, the principle of sin: **I had  
not recognized such a thing as sin, but  
by means of the law**. **The law** here is in  
the full sense of *the Mosaic law* as regarded *himself*,—not excluding the wider  
sense on which I have insisted in the former part of the Epistle when applied to *others*.

**for I had not known** (by experience: ‘known any thing of’) **coveting** (this rendering is better than “lust ”  
of the A. V.: the substantive here being  
the one corresponding to the verb in the  
commandment. So also in ver. 8, **coveting** is better than “*concupiscence*.’ The  
word expresses the motions of the flesh  
towards sin,—whether acted on or not,—  
whether consented to or not :—this *motion*he would not have *perceived*, because he  
was simply *moving with it*), **if the law had  
not said, Thou shalt not covet** (Exod. xx.  
17. Deut. v.21). ‘*Covet*,’ in the above  
sense. The Apostle omits all the objects  
there specified, and merely lays hold of the  
idea contained in the prohibition. And it  
may well be said and strictly, that the  
‘coveting’ there spoken of would lead to  
all kinds of sin—therefore murder, adultery,  
&c., if carried out: and that the prohibition of coveting there serves as an  
example of what the law actually forbids  
elsewhere.

**8.**] **But** (proceeding with  
the development of sin by means of the  
law) **sin** (the sinful principle or propensity,  
but without any conscious personification  
on the part of the Apostle), **having found  
occasion** (*occasion* means more than mere  
*opportunity*,—it indicates the furnishing  
the material and ground of attack, the  
*wherewith* and *whence* to attack, The  
words here are not to be joined with  
**through the commandment** following,  
which belongs to the verb **wrought**: sce  
below), **through** (by means of) **the commandment** (meaning, not *the law* generally,  
but the *tenth commandment*, the prohibition in question) **wrought in me** (not  
‘*wrought out*, ‘brought into action,’ but  
  
‘*originated*,’—using this commandment as  
its instrument) **all** (**manner of**) **coveting**.  
**For without the law sin is** (not ‘*was*:’  
the sentence is a general axiom,—compare  
ch. iv. 15) **dead** (powerless and inactive:  
comp. 1 Cor. xv. 56, “*the strength of sin  
is the law*”’).—This *deadness of sin without  
the law* must not be understood as meaning that sin was committed but not recognized, the conscience being not informed  
nor awakened: such a statement would be  
*true*, but would *not touch the matter  
argued here*. Erasmus well explains this  
word **dead**: ‘Before the law was promulgated (but see below) I was ignorant of  
some sins, and only knew thus much of  
others, that I thought I might commit  
them because they were not forbidden: so  
that my mind was more lightly and languidly moved towards sin; for we ever  
have colder love towards those things  
which we can enjoy whenever we like.  
But when the law marked out so many  
different forms of sins, the whole band of  
lusts and desires, irritated by the prohibition, began more eagerly to solicit me  
towards sin.’ Compare also Prov. ix. 17 ;  
and the citations from the classics in my  
Greek Test., to the effect that prohibition  
itself irritates and incites towards violation  
of the command.

**9.**] It is a great question with Interpreters, *of what period* St. Paul here  
speaks, Those who sink his own personality, and think that he speaks merely  
as one of mankind, or of the Jews, understand it of the period before the law was given: some, of Adam in Paradise before (?)  
the prohibition: those who see St. Paul  
himself throughout the whole think that  
he speaks,—some, of his state *as a Pharisee*: this however would necessitate the  
understanding the legal death which follows, of his *conversion*, which cannot well  
be: some, of his state as a *child*, before  
that freedom of the will is asserted which  
causes rebellion against the law as the  
will of another. Agreeing in some measure with the last view, I would extend