*commandment itself* that became to me this  
death of which I speak?—**God forbid** (far  
from it : let not such a thing be imagined) :  
**but sin** [**became death to me**] **that it  
might appear (be shewn to be) sin**, (by)  
**working death to me through that which  
is good** (see above. The misuse and perversion of good is one of the tests whereby  
the energy of evil is detected ; so that sin,  
by its perversion of the [good] commandment into a cause [evil] of death, was  
shewn in its real character *as sin*); **that**(explains and runs parallel with the former  
*that*) **through the commandment sin might  
become exceeding** (above measure) **sinful** :  
i.e. that sin, which was before unknown  
as such, might, being vivified and brought  
into energy by (its opposition to) the commandment, be brought out as being (not  
merely ‘*shewn to be*’) exceedingly sinful  
(sinful in an exaggerated degree—prominent in its true character as the opponent  
of God).

**14.**] On the change into the present  
tense here, see above in the remarks on  
the whole section. Hitherto, the passage  
has been *historical*: now the Apostle  
passes to the *present time*, keeping hold  
yet of the carnal self of former days,  
whose remnants are still energizing in the  
renewed man.—**For** (by way of explaining  
and setting in still clearer light the relative  
positions of sin and the law, and the state  
of inner conflict brought about by their  
working) **we know** (it is an acknowledged  
principle amongst us) **that the law is  
spiritual** (sprung from God, who is a  
Spirit, and requiring of men spiritual  
purity. These meanings, which have been  
separately held by different commentators  
may well be united): **but I** (see beginning  
of section) **am carnal** (subject to the law  
of the flesh, and in bondage to it, see  
below), **sold** (into slavery: but the similitude must not be exacted in *all particulars*,  
for it is only the fact of slavery, as far as  
its victim, *the man*, is concerned, which is  
here prominent) **under** (to, and so as to be  
under the power of) **sin**.—Tholuck (who  
differs from the view of this section advocated above, yet) adds here: “The ‘*I*’ appears here in its totality as sinful, while  
in vv. 16, 20 it is distinguished from sin.  
That St. Paul does not here bear in mind  
this distinction, may be justified by the  
maxim, that a thing takes its name from  
its principal component: the ‘*I*’ is a  
slave, and has not his own will: as ver. 23  
shews, the ‘*I*,’ which is hostile to sin,  
the *law of the mind*, is under coercion,  
and the man is a captive.” The latter clause  
of the verse is the very strongest assertion  
of man’s subjection to the slavery of sin  
in his carnal nature.

**15.**] **For** (a proof of this being sold  
under sin, viz. not being able to do what I  
would, verses 15–17) **what I perform,  
that** (am in the habit of carrying ont in  
my practice: the verb is the same as that  
rendered in A. V. “*perform*” below, in  
verse 18) **I know not** (act blindly, at the  
dictates of another: which is proper to  
a slave. ‘I am in the dark, he says, I am  
hurried along, I suffer insolence, I am  
staggered and struck down I know not  
how.” Chrysostom. The meaning, “*I  
approve not*” (*allow not*, A. V.), introduced  
by Angustine, and held by many commentators, is not sanctioned by usage, and  
would make the following clause almost a  
tautology): **for** (explanation of last assertion, shewing how such blind service comes  
to pass) **not what I desire, that do I** (this  
*desire* is not the *full determination of  
the will*, the standing with the bow drawn  
and the arrow aimed; but rather the *inclination* of the will,—the taking up the  
bow and pointing at the mark, but without  
power to draw it :—we have the same verb.  
in the sense of *to wish* (“ *I would*”) 1 Cor.  
vii. 7, 32; xiv. 5; 2 Cor. xii. 20); **but  
what I hate** (the expression answers to  
“*I desire not*,” ver.19: no distinction in  
intensity need be insisted on between  
the two), **that I do**. The commentators  
cite several parallel passages from profane  
writers: for example, Seneca: “I call you  
to witness, all ye gods, that this very thing  
which I wish, I desire not :”—Epictetus,  
“For if the sinner desires not to sin, **but**