*it leads to fresh mention of infirmity, in  
which he wilt boast, as being a vehicle for  
the perfection of Christ’s power.* In  
order to understand the connexion of the  
following, it is very requisite to bear in  
mind the burden of the whole, which runs  
through it—“*I will boast in mine infirmities.*” There is no break between this and  
the last chapter. He has just mentioned a  
passage of his history which might expose  
him to contempt and ridicule—this was  
*one* of the *weaknesses*. He now comes to  
*another*: but that other inseparably connected with, and forming the sequel of, a  
glorious revelation vouchsafed him by the  
Lord. This therefore he relates, at the  
same time repudiating it as connected with  
*himself*, and fixing attention only on the  
*weakness* which followed it.

**1.]** On the  
difficult question of the reading in this verse,  
see my Greek Test.

**I must boast, though  
it is not to my advantage: but I will proceed to visions and revelations of the  
Lord]** as if he said, ‘*and the instances I  
will select are just of that kind in which,  
of boasting ever were good, it might be  
allowed.’*

**vision** is the form or manner  
of receiving **revelation**. There can hardly  
be a *vision* without a *revelation* of some  
kind.

**of the Lord,** i.e., **vouchsafed  
me by the Lord,** not of, i.e. revealing,  
the Lord, as the subject of the vision; for  
such is not that which follows.

**2—4.]** *An example of such a vision and  
revelation.* The adoption of the third  
person is remarkable: it being evident  
from ver. 7 that *he himself* is meant. It  
is plain that a contrast is intended between  
the *rapt and glorified person* of vv. 2, 4,  
—and *himself*, the weak and afflicted and  
almost despairing subject of the *thorn in  
the flesh* of verses 7 ff. Such glory *belonged*  
*not* to *him*, but the weakness *did*. Nay,  
so far was the glory from being *his*, that  
he knew not whether he was in or out of  
the body when it was put upon him; so  
that the “*I myself*,” compounded of the  
*mind* and the *flesh* (Rom. vii. 25), clearly  
was not the subject of it, but as it were  
another form of his personality, analogous  
to that which we shall assume when unclothed of the body.—It may be remarked  
in passing, as has been done by Whitby,  
that the Apostle here by implication *acknowledges the possibility of consciousness and receptivity in a disembodied state.*  
—Let it not be forgotten, that in the context, this vision is introduced not so much  
for the purpose of making it a ground of  
boasting, which he does only passingly and  
under protest, but *that he may by it introduce the mention of* **the thorn in the  
flesh,** *which bore so conspicuous a part in  
his* **weaknesses**, TO BOAST OF WHICH *is his  
present object.*

**2.] I know** (not,  
*‘knew*,’ as A. V.: which is a mistake in  
grammar, and introduces serious confusion, making it seem as if the fourteen  
years ago were the date of the *knowledge*,  
not, as it really is, of the *vision*) **a man in  
Christ** (i. e., ‘a Christian” ‘a man whose  
standing is in Christ; so in Rom. xvi. 7),  
**fourteen years ago** (the *date* refers entirely to the event about to be narrated,  
and probably refers back to the time when  
he was at Tarsus waiting for God to point  
out his work, between Acts ix. 30 and xi.  
25. See the chronological table in the  
introduction to the Acts), **whether in the  
body, I know not; or out of the body, I  
know not: God knoweth** (if *in the body,*the idea would be that he was taken up  
*bodily*: if *out of the body*, to which the  
alternative manifestly inclines,—that his  
spirit was rapt from the body, and taken  
up disembodied) ; **such an one** (so ‘**such an  
one**’ *resumes* after a parenthesis, 1 Cor. v. 5)  
**caught up** (snatched or taken up) **as far as  
the third heaven.**—*What is the third heaven?* The Jews knew no such limit of number, but commonly recognized *seven* heavens:  
and if their arrangement is to be followed, the  
third heaven will be very low in the celestial  
scale, being only the *material clouds.* The