and others, by *Satan*, of whom such an  
expression as *was given*, would surely hardly  
be used: compare “*the grace given to  
me,*” so often said by the Apostle,—Rom.  
xii. 3, 6; xv. 15 al., and the absolute use  
of *given* for *bestowed, portioned out by  
God,* 1 Cor. xi, 15; xii. 7, 8; Gal. iii. 21;  
James i. 5) **a thorn** (the word may signify  
a *stake*, or *sharp pointed staff:*Stanley rejects the meaning *‘thorn*,’ and  
supposes the figure to refer to the punishment of impalement) **in my flesh** (the  
expression used Gal. iv. 14 of this same  
affliction, “*my temptation which is in my  
flesh*,” seems decisive for rendering thus,  
and not “*for* my flesh”), **the** (or, an)  
**angel of Satan** (it is doubtful whether  
the *form* of the word **Satan** in the original be nominative or genitive. But  
usage decides for the genitive. If taken  
as the nom., the expression would mean  
a *hostile angel*, which would be contrary  
to the universal usage of Satan, as a proper  
name: some render it, *the angel Satan,*  
which is inconsistent with New Test. usage,  
according to which Satan, though once an  
angel, is now the Prince of the powers of  
the air, Eph. ii. 2, and has his own angels,  
Matt. xxv. 41), **that he** (the angel of Satan)  
**may buffet me** (not, *might* buffet me: the  
action of the afflicting thorn continued and  
was to continue, even when St. Paul was  
writing to them. This is Chrysostom’s  
observation), that **I may not be uplifted** (the repetition gives force and solemnity,—expressing his firm persuasion  
of the divine intention in thus afflicting  
him).—As regards the *thorn itself,* very  
many, and some very absurd conjectures have been hazarded. They may be  
resolved into three heads, the two former  
of which are, from the nature of the case,  
out of the question below): (1) that  
Paul alludes to *spiritual solicitations of  
the devil,* who suggested to him blasphemous thoughts, so Luther (how characteristically!),—or remorse for his former life:  
or according to the Romanist interpreters,  
who want to find here a precedent for their  
monkish stories of temptations,—*incitements to lust.* (2) that he alludes to *opposition from his adversaries*, or *some one  
adversary*: so many ancient Commentators, and some modern. (3) that he  
points to *some grievous bodily pain,* which  
has been curiously specified by different  
Commentators. The ancients mention *headache:* some have supposed *hypochondriac  
melancholy,* which however hardly answers  
the conditions of a *thorn*, in which *acute  
pain* seems to be implied: see Stanley’s  
note, which is important in other respects  
also, and full of interest.—On the whole,  
putting together the figure here used, that  
of a *thorn*, occasioning pain, and the *buffeting* or *putting to shame;* it seems quite  
necessary to infer that the Apostle alludes  
to some *painful and tedious bodily malady,  
which at the same time put him to shame*before those among whom he exercised his  
ministry. Of such a kind *may* have been  
the disorder in his eyes, more or less indicated in several passages of his history  
and Epistles: see notes on Acts xiii. 9;  
xxiii, 1 f.:—and Gal. iv. 14 (15?);  
vi. 11 (?). But it may also have been  
something besides this, and to such an inference probability would lead us; disorders  
in the eyes, however sad in their consequences, not being usually of a very painful  
or distressing nature in themselves.

**8.] In respect of this** (*angel of Satan,*not *thorn*, see below) **I thrice** (Meyer well  
observes, ‘At his first and second request,  
no answer was given to him: on the third  
occasion, it came; and his faithful resignation to the Lord’s will prevented his  
asking again’) **besought the Lord** (Christ,  
see ver. 9), **that he might depart from me**(the angel of Satan: in Luke iv. 13, the  
same Greek word is used of the devil  
*departing* from our Lord: as also in Acts  
xxii. 29, “they *departed* from him which  
should have examined him”).

**9.]  
And He said to me** (literally, **hath said:**but this perfect can hardly in English  
be represented otherwise than by the  
historical past; in the Greek, it partakes of its own proper sense—‘*He said,  
and that answer is enough:’ ‘He hath*