*the elders*, ch. xxii. 5.

**to Damascus**]  
DAMASCUS is probably the oldest existing  
city in the world. We read of it in Abraham’s time (Gen. xiv. 15; xv. 2): then no  
more till David subdued it (2 Sam. viii. 6);  
it became independent again under Solomon  
(1 Kings xi. 24 ff.), and from that time  
was the residence of the kings of Syria  
(1 Kings xv. 18; xx. 1 ff.), who were long  
at war with Israel and Judah, and at last  
were permitted to prevail considerably over  
Israel (2 Kings x. 32; Amos i. 3, 4) and to  
exact tribute from Judah (2 Kings xii. 17,  
18, see also 2 Kings xiii. 3, 22, 25). Damascus was recovered to Israel by Jeroboam II. (about 825 A.C. 2 Kings xiv. 28).  
Not long after we find Rezin, king of  
Syria, in league with Pekah, king of Israel,  
against Ahaz (2 Kings xv. 37). Ahaz invited to his assistance Tiglath-pileser, king  
of Assyria, who took Damascus and slew  
Rezin, and led the people captive (2 Kings  
xvi. 5–9; Isa. viii. 4). From this time  
we find it subject to Assyria (Isa. ix. 11;  
x. 9; xvii. 1), then to Babylon (2 Kings  
xxiv. 2; Jer. xxxv. 11),—Persia, the Syrian  
Seleucidæ (1 Macc. xi. 62; xii. 32),—and  
from the time of Pompey (64 A.C.), to the  
Romans, and attached to the province of  
Syria. Many Jews were settled there, and  
the majority of the wives of the citizens  
were proselytes.—On its subjection to  
Aretas, see below, ver. 24, note. It was  
later the residence of the Ommiad Caliphs,  
and the metropolis of the Mahommedan  
world. At present it is a large city, with  
250,000 inhabitants, nearly 70,000 of whom  
are Christians.—It is situated most beautifully, in a large and well-watered plain,  
on the river Chrysorrhoas (Barrada), which  
divides into many streams (see 2 Kings  
v. 12), and fertilizes the plain:—and is  
bounded on all sides by the desert. See a  
vivid description of Damascus in Conybeare  
and Howson’s Life of St. Paul, vol. i. pp.  
104–108.

**to the synagogues**] i.e.  
to the *presidents* of the synagogues, who  
would acknowledge the orders of the Sanhedrim, and could, under the authority of  
the Ethnarch, carry them out.

**of the way**] Not ‘of this way,’ A. V., which rendering should be kept for the places where  
the pronoun is *expressed*, as ch. xxii. 4,—  
but **of the way**, viz. of ‘salvation,’ ch. xvi.  
17, or ‘of the Lord,’ ch. xviii. 25. The  
expression ‘THE WAY’ had evidently become a well-known one among Christians  
(see in this edition ch. xix. 9, 23; xxii. 4;  
xxiv. 14, 22); and it only was necessary to  
prefix the pronoun when *strangers* were  
addressed.—The special journey to Damascus presupposes the existence of Christians  
there, and in some numbers. This would  
be accounted for by the return of many  
who may have been converted at the Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit, and perhaps  
also by some of the fugitives from the persecution having settled there. This latter is rendered probable by Ananias’s words,  
“*I have heard* **from many** *of this man,*” ver.  
13.

**3.**] The journey from Jerusalem  
was probably made on the Roman road, i.e.  
that of the Itineraries, by Neapolis (Sichem)  
and Scythopolis, crossing the Jordan, south  
of the lake Tiberias,—Gadara, and so to  
Damascus. Or he might have joined,—  
either the Petra road, by Jericho and Heshbon, and so by Botsrah to Damascus,—or the  
Egyptian caravan-track, which passes to  
the north of the lake of Tiberias, and near  
Cæsarea Philippi. In either case the journey would occupy from five to six days, the  
distance being 130 to 150 miles.

**there shined round about him...**] It was  
(ch. xxii. 6) *about noonday*; and from ch.  
xxvi. 13, the light was *above the brightness of the sun*. These details at once cut  
away all ground from the absurd rationalistic attempt to explain away the appearance as having been *lightning*. Unquestionably, the inference is, that it was a  
bright noon, and the full splendour of the  
Oriental sun was shining.—His companions  
saw the light, and were also cast to the  
ground, ch. xxvi. 13, 14; xxii. 9: see below  
on ver. 7.

**4. a voice saying unto  
him**] *in the Hebrew language*, ch. xxvi. 14.

**why persecutest thou me?**] A remarkable illustration of Matt. xxv. 45.  
No stress should be laid on me; but the very