IX. 1—5. THE ACTS. 709   
   
 to the synagogues, that if he found any of ” ¥ ¢his way, b goggh xix.   
 whether they were men or women, he might bring them   
   
 bound unto Jerusalem. 3 c C arruaTVeNe n 3   
 near Damascus: and suddenly there he shined round he about ect.3%i 8.   
   
 him a light from heaven: “and he fell to the earth, and   
 heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, ¢why per- \*yi"\*\*"   
 secutest thou me ? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord ?   
   
 Y render, the.   
   
 the elders, ch. xxii. to Damascus] way] Not ‘of this way,’ A. V., which ren-   
 Damascus is probably the oldest existing dering should be kept for the places where   
 city in the world. We read of it in Abra- the pronoun is expressed, as ch. xxii.   
 ham’s time (Gen. xiv. 15; xv. 2): then no but of the way, viz. of ‘salvation,’ xvi.   
 more till subdued it (2 Sam. viii.6); 17, or ‘of the Lord,’ ch. xviii. 25. The   
 it became independent again under Solomon expression ‘THE wax’ had evidently be-   
 (1 Kings xi. 24 ff), and from that time come a well-known one among Christians   
 was the residence of the kings of Syria (see in this edition ch. xix. 9, x: ii.   
 (1 Kings xv. 18; xx. 1 ff.), were long xxiv. 14, 22); and it only was necessary to   
 at war with Israel and Judah, and at last prefix the pronoun when strangers were   
 were permitted to prevail considerably over addressed.—The special journey to Damas-   
 Israel (2 Kings x. 32; Amos i. 3, 4) and to cus presupposes the existence of Christians   
 exact tribute from Judah (2 Kings xii. 17, there, and in some numbers. This would   
 18, see also 2 Kings xiii. 3, 25). Da- be accounted for by the return of many   
 mascus was recovered to Israel by Jero- who may have been converted at the Pen-   
 boam IT. (about 825 a.c. 2 Kings xiv. 28). tecostal effusion of the Spirit, perhaps   
 Not long after we find Rezin, king of also by some of the fugitives from the per-   
 Syria, in league with Pekah, king of Israel, secution having settled there. ‘This latter   
 against Ahaz (2 Kings xv. 37). Ahaz in- is rendered probable by Ananias’s words,   
 vited to his assistance king «“T have heard from many of this man,” ver.   
 of Assyria, who took Damascus and slew 18. 3.] The journey from Jerusalem   
 Rezin, and led the people captive (2 Kings was probably made on the Roman road, i.e.   
 xvi. 5—9; Isa. viil. 4). From this time that of the Itineraries, Neapolis (Sichem)   
 we find it subject to Assyria (Isa. ix. 11; and Scythopolis, crossing the Jordan, south   
 x. 9; xvii. 1), then to Babylon (2 Kings of the lake Tiberias,—Gadara, and so to   
 xxiv. 2; Jer. 11),—Persia, the Syrian Damascus. Or he might have joined,—   
 Seleucid (1 Mace. xi. 62; xii. 32),—and either the Petra road, by Jericho and Hesh-   
 from the time of Pompey (64 4.c.), to the bon, and so by Botsrah to Damascus,—or the   
 Romans, and attached to the province of Egyptian caravan-track, which passes to   
 Syria. Many Jews were settled there, and the north of the lake of Tiberias, and near   
 the majority of the wives of the citizens Ceesarea Philippi. In either case the jour-   
 were proselytes.— On its subjection to ney would occupy from five to six days,   
 Aretas, see below, ver. 24, note. It was distance being 130 to 150 miles.   
 later the residence of the Ommiad Caliphs, there shined round about him . . .] was   
 and the metropolis of the Mahommedcan (ch. xxii. 6) about noonday ; and from ch.   
 world. At present it isa large city, with xxvi. 18, the light was above the bright-   
 250,000 inhabitants, nearly 70,000 of whom ness of the sun. These details at once cut   
 are Christians.—It is situated most beau- away all ground from the absurd rational-   
 tifally, a large and well-watered plain, istic attempt to explain away the ap}   
 on the river Chrysorrhoas (Barrada), which ance as having been lightning. Unques-   
 divides into. many streams (see 2 Kings tionably, the inference is, that it was a   
 y. 12), and fertilizes the plain :—and ‘s bright noon, and the full splendour of the   
 bounded on all sides by the desert. See a Oriental sun was shining.— His companions   
 vivid description of Damascus in Conybeare saw the light, and were also cast to the   
 and Howson’s Life of St. Paul, vol. i. ground, ch. xxvi. 14; xxii. 9: see below   
 104—108. to the synagogues] i.e. on ver. 7. 4. a voice saying unto   
 to the presidents of the synagogues, who him] in the Hebrew language, ch. xxvi.   
 would acknowledge the orders of the San- 14. why persecutest thon mot] A   
 hedrim, and could, under the authority of remarkable illustration of Matt. xxv. 45.   
 the ele carry them out. of the No stress should be laid me; but the very