

# THE MISSIONARY REVIEW OF THE WORLD.

VOL. XIX. No. 12.—*Old Series*.—DECEMBER.—VOL. IX. No. 12.—*New Series*.

## THE PERMANENT BASIS OF MISSIONS.\*

BY THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.

In Acts 26 : 12-23 we have the story of Paul's conversion as recited by himself in the presence of Agrippa and Festus. It suggests not only the secrets of Paul's own devotion to missions and of his grand success in his life-work, but also the elements which must permanently enter into all true and lasting missionary enterprise.

In his first letter to Timothy (1 : 16) Paul says : " For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, *for a pattern* to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." This word " pattern" possibly has a wide application, and may imply that this converted persecutor and blasphemer was not only an example of a sinner saved by grace, but also the pattern of a disciple and apostle, of a servant of the Church and missionary of the cross. A pattern suggests features, permanently fixed for purposes of reproduction ; and Paul seems designedly put before us in the Acts of the Apostles as a pattern of a typical missionary. Some may ask, What need there is of such a pattern, since the Lord Jesus Himself left us " an example that we should follow His steps ?" But we all need also an example on a *purely human plane*. We think of our blessed Lord as at such an infinite distance from us, and as presenting such an unattainable, ideal pattern of godliness, that it sometimes disheartens us ; but when a man like Paul can say, " Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ," the example is brought down to a human level ; and what one man has done and has been any other disciple may do or be by filling out the measure of his opportunity and capacity in humble dependence on the grace of God.

We shall briefly study this passage of Scripture with reference to the permanent pattern features of a model missionary ; and, as all the thoughts

\* An address at the annual meeting of the China Inland Mission, in London, May, 1896. Some thoughts and illustrations will be found here which have appeared in other editorial articles ; but for the sake of completeness they are retained in their present setting.—A. T. P.