

The ecclesiastical tens and hundreds gained only through the believing units ; and whether by ones or by thousands, all " *added to the Lord!*" Jesus Christ is the Divine Unit, the one and only Centre of accretion to which all increase is related. Indeed, the phrase " *added to the Church!*" occurring in our common version (Acts 2 : 49) is unknown to the original. " *The Lord added daily* such as were being saved." and "believers" and such as "gladly received the Word" were " *added to the Lord.*" Such is the record in the Acts ; and from it we see how closely related is all growth in the kingdom of heaven to the person of the Saviour. Such a conception as a church standing as a portico to Christ, or as an introductory school to Christ, seems to be unknown to the New Testament.

Now, whether the question under consideration is a vital one or not will appear when we note the fact that several of the most eminent writers on the philosophy of missions regard it as the hinge on which the most important religious crises have turned.

Dr. George Smith considers that the conversion of Constantine, with the subsequent looming up of the ambitious legend, " *By this sign conquer,*" marks the first step in a fatally wrong policy of Christian aggression. "From a purely missionary point of view," he says, "it began a system of compromise with error, *of nationalism instead of individualism in conversion*, which in the East made the Church an easy prey to Mohammedanism, and in the West produced Jesuit missions." \*

Let the reader mark the words which we have italicized : "nationalism instead of individualism in conversion." They contain the crucial question of missionary policy. If we will conform to God's order for this dispensation, and labor for an elective *outgathering* instead of a *universal ingathering* ; seeking individual conversions instead of grasping after national conquests, we shall be found in a way that has always proved safe in the history of missions. The " *In hoc signo vinces*" as interpreted by Constantine and his successors marks a total break with the whole spirit of apostolic and primitive Christianity. The cross indeed ! But "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, *by whom the world is crucified unto Me and I unto the world ;*" not the cross emblazoned on banners and inscribed on the *Labarum* moving on for the subjection of the nations to Christianity. The work distinctly appointed for this present time is the gathering of the *Ecclesia*—the called out. Not that we would question for a moment the ultimate conversion of the world. When "that which is in part shall be done away," and "when that which is perfect shall come," then indeed shall our Lord Jesus have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the end of the earth." But the time of this consummation is not yet.

Now, a misconception of the present purpose and aim of foreign missions has undoubtedly had much to do with fostering these large and expensive schemes for educating the heathen about which many thoughtful

\* "Short History of Christian Missions," p. 57.