

observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.)* The question is, how would the persons to whom this commission was originally given be likely to understand it?

There can be no doubt that they would understand their commission to mean, as far as adults were concerned, that they were to preach the Gospel to them, instructing them in the doctrines and duties of Christianity; and that when any one was so convinced of the claims of Jesus, as to receive Him as the Messiah and the Son of God, and was willing and anxious to identify himself with the Christian church, they were at once to baptize him, and thereby admit him to the privileges of church-membership. The entire apostolic practice, as far as it can be ascertained from the Acts and Epistles, appears to have been in perfect harmony with this statement. This, too, is the practice of modern missionaries belonging to all sections of the Christian church, Pædobaptists and Antipædobaptists are quite agreed here. It is somewhat gratifying, in this wide field of strife, to find a spot of ground which the combatants occupy in common, and in regard to which they have no controversy.

But how would the apostles be likely to understand their Master's commission in regard to the children of their converts who had not arrived at years of accountability? Would they be likely to understand our Lord's words to mean that they should baptize only adults; and that infants and young children, although their parents had embraced Christianity, were to be denied the rite of baptism, on the ground that they were not capable of believing? Those who in modern times deny baptism to infants, do it on the

* See also Mark xvi. 15, 16.