

## WHAT IS THE CHURCH'S COMMISSION? SOME EXEGETICAL ISSUES IN MATTHEW 28:16-20

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The final paragraph of Matthew, in which the so-called "Great Commission" falls, actually begins at verse 16, even though the commission itself is contained in verse 19 and the first part of verse 20. This is indicated in the paragraph division of Westcott and Hort (*The New Testament*), of Nestle (*Novum Testamentum Graece*), of Alford (*The Greek Testament*), and in most of the commentaries which concern themselves with such matters.

This paragraph furnishes: 1) the historical setting for the commission (v.v. 16-18). Herein there is a. notice of a pre-arranged meeting of the disciples with the risen Christ in Galilee (v. 16), b. the mixed reactions of the disciples to the meeting (v. 17), and c. the consummation of the meeting in Christ's declaration of universal power (v. 18). Then follows 2) the presentation of the actual elements of the commission itself (v.v. 19, 20a). Herein, although many things are exceeding plain, there are important nuances that escape the reader of the English versions, some of which are immediately plain to one versed in the Greek usages of mood and tense. Others provide a field of controversy for the experts, with the denominational polemicists joining heartily in the fray. What is plain to everyone is that the Church in the world has been committed to a task of world-wide evangelism. Whether the church is already deployed upon the field of activity or its members must go somewhere to be deployed is one of the main interests of this paper. The paragraph closes with 3) Christ's personal encouragement furnished with the commission—his abiding presence in every place and "through all time to be."

In order not to be distracted by them later, we call attention to some problems of interpretation subsidiary to the main problem which we shall introduce later. These have been amply discussed by the older exegetes, whom for the larger part we shall cite and quote at this stage of the discussion.

### I MINOR PROBLEMS

1. Who were in attendance at the meeting in Galilee? J. P. Lange (uncorrected by his far-from-timid American translator and editor, Philip Schaff) wrote of the phrase "Then the eleven disciples": "They come forward here as representatives of the entire band of disciples, and not the select apostolic college of the Twelve, which makes its first reappearance after the selection of Matthias. This distinction is to be found in the remark that *some doubted*, which cannot apply to the Eleven: reference is made to many witnesses in i Cor. xv.6 ["five hundred brethren at once"]"<sup>1</sup> Lenski, a recent Lutheran writer concurs.<sup>2</sup> H. A. W. Meyer,

1. *Commentary, The Book of Matthew*, p. 555.

on the contrary, holds it was the eleven only and that the doubting is to be understood in a pluperfect sense—i.e., 'Thomas' doubts reported by John, and perhaps others'. As many observe, however, only in Galilee would 500 Christian believers be found at this date, and there is therefore, every likelihood that this is the occasion referred to by Paul in I Cor. 15:6. The importance is that if all Christian believers who could come were there it is much easier to accept this as the church's commission and not merely the Apostles' commission. Without dignifying the thought with a separate entry, it is worthy of notice that deWette (cited unfavorably at Lange)<sup>3</sup> and others of a "liberal critical" bent have asserted that the doubting was not over the reality of the resurrection but over the propriety of worshipping the risen Christ. Certainly as far as the apostles themselves are concerned Alford is correct in saying this is unthinkable.

Closely related is a second problem:

2. To whom was given the promise, "I am with you always?" Roman Catholic theologians generally and certain Anglicans (e.g., Wordsworth) apply it to the apostles and their successors only. (Both Roman Catholics and Anglicans teach apostolic succession without agreeing as to who are the successors.) Dean Alford, certainly the most noted of Anglican exegetes and probably also the most influential through the last 85 years of all New Testament exegetical writers in our language, disposes of Wordsworth, a fellow Anglican, as follows:

To understand μεθ' ὑμῶν only of the Apostles and their (?) successors, is to destroy the whole force of these mighty words. Descending even into literal exactness, we may see that διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν [teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you] makes the αὐτοὺς [them] into ὑμεῖς [you] as soon as they are μεμαθητευμένοι [made disciples]. The command is to the UNIVERSAL CHURCH—to be performed, in the nature of things, by her *ministers* and *teachers*, the manner of appointing which is not here prescribed, but to be learnt in the unfoldings of Providence recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, who by His special ordinance were the founders and first builders of that Church—but whose office, *on that very account, precluded the idea of succession or renewal.*<sup>4</sup>

3. What is the "all power" Christ claims and what is the significance of "is given unto me" in that connection? It is the power of deity assumed by Him at his resurrection and ascension and has regard to the human nature only, since as regards his divine nature "all power" had been his

2. *An Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel*, p. 1167.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *The Greek Testament*, vol. I, p. 308.

always.<sup>5</sup> So agrees Schaff.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, it may simply be an assertion of his "eternal power and Godhead" as "Son of Man." This is the force of Alford's suggestion that it is derived from the Son of Man prophecy in Daniel 7:14<sup>7</sup> (Scholarship is pretty well agreed that "Son of Man" is a divine title of Jesus. See, e.g., Karl Adam in *The Christ of Faith*, p. 130 ff.) This is surely correct. It was to prepare the disciples to expect his power to be with them in their difficulties and weakness as they were to disciple the nations.

4. Does the order of "teach all nations" preceding "baptizing" suppose adult baptism only? In Reformation times Anabaptists, dependent mainly on the Vulgate or the Luther translations (followed also by the English Authorized Version) uncritically took this view as have more recently certain Baptists and others. Actually this is based on a mis-translation of μαθητεύσατε (See below).

5. Does the order of verses 19 and 20, "baptizing" before "teaching" as Alford,<sup>8</sup> Lange,<sup>9</sup> and others think, presuppose infant baptism? As will be seen this is based upon still another misunderstanding.

6. What is the meaning of "in the name of" etc.? A triune God with one name: Father, Son, Holy Ghost? A triune God with three names? The best suggestion seems to be that the sentence is elliptical and would fully read "In the name of the Father, and [in the name] of the Son, and [in the name] of the Holy Ghost." If this is true, then triune action in baptism is quite defensible. The practice of all Eastern Orthodox (trine immersion) and the trine action of the usual baptismal affusion or aspersion appears to be based on this exegesis as well as rather consistent tradition to very early times. See footnote #4 of Meyer's *Commentary on Matthew*, p. 528, also Schaff's footnote at bottom of the left column of *Lange's Commentary on Matthew*, p. 558.<sup>\*</sup> Meyer is right in rejecting this passage as proof for the unity of the Godhead, though many so argue on the basis of the singular number of τὸ ὄνομα. There is further controversy over the purport of εἰς (into). Does it mean on the authority of? Into the covenant of? etc.

F. C. Cook's suggestion is very helpful. He writes on the A.V. "in the name": "Rather 'into the name.' The difference is considerable. 'In

5. Lenski, *Op. Cit.*, p. 1170.

6. Lange's *Commentary*, *Ibid.*, pp. 556, 557.

7. *Op. Cit.*, p. 306. The recent literature on this subject is enormous. See the lengthy article "The Origin of the Son of Man Christology, H. M. Teeple, JBL, Sept., 1965.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Op. Cit.*, p. 557.

\*There is a whole literature on the significance of the trinitarian form of the "formula" in relation to the mode of baptism. "The Brethren Church, Church of the Brethren and Old Order Brethren (all known formerly as German Baptists, Dunkers, Dunkards) defend the practice by appeal to this formula. The branch of the Brethren Church known popularly as Grace Brethren have sophisticated and refined the argument on the basis of the "frequentative" (ιζω) ending of the word for Baptize. The Greek Orthodox do not, apparently, support their practice of trine immersion by reference to the formula. See note #29 at end of this article."

the name' might imply that baptism was to be administered by church ministers acting in the name of the Almighty. 'Into the name' means that converts are pledged by baptism to a faith, which has for its object the Being designated by that name" (*Commentary* by Bishops and other Clergy of the Anglican Church, *loc. cit.*).

This gets very controversial and is beyond the scope of this paper. Everyone seems to bring all his own soteriology and ecclesiology to the passage and leave again with all his baggage intact.

## II MAIN PROBLEM

These are some of the problems. But with none of these—many of them arising out of previous sectarian convictions, it must with all due respect be justly said—is this paper primarily concerned. Our interest is in the basic elements of the commission. These elements come to focus in four verbal forms, rendered in the Authorized Version: "Go ye! . . . teach . . . baptizing . . . teaching"; in the American Standard Version: "Go ye! . . . make disciples . . . baptizing . . . teaching." This is a decided improvement over the A. V. which apparently followed Luther, the Vulgate and the Itala.

The usual exposition, expressed in a thousand missionary sermons, goes something like this: The first step in carrying out the Great Commission is to *Go*—to those who have not heard, to the very ends of the earth. If you cannot go yourself the next best is to help someone else to go and to pray for him. The second step for these missionaries is *Evangelism*—getting people to make a public "decision" for Christ, thus becoming disciples. Many methods of making the decision public are allowed. This is deemed to be making disciples. The third step is to *Baptize* these confessed disciples. As a fourth and final step they are to *Teach* the details of Christian doctrine. There is an adult-baptism variety and a paedo-baptism variety of this approach.

It is the opinion of this writer that this common understanding is both naive and, in part, erroneous. An improved understanding that surely ought to result in a more effective Christian witness seems readily available and defensible. Perhaps there may be some explanation herein as to why the Christian missionary enterprise has geographically, turned inwardly upon itself and is now sending "foreign" missionaries to those very communities of the Near East, North Africa, and especially Europe, where Christianity had its beginning and made its first extension.

### 1. Four Critical Forms

Before citing the critical authorities, a close look at the four verbal forms under consideration is in order.

**Πορεύθεντες** is a nominative plural masculine participle, first aorist of **πορεύομαι**, a deponent verb meaning "to pass from one place to another, to go." It is *not* an imperative form and as an aorist participle would naturally be rendered either "having gone" or "as ye go." It is inflected

in agreement with the understood subject of the imperative verb which follows immediately. This word is now presented.

**Μαθητεύσατε** is second person, plural, first aorist, imperative active of **μαθητεύω**. This verb is somewhat anomalous here, for it is ordinarily intransitive, meaning to *be* a disciple. Yet it is here used in a transitive sense and must be translated, "Make disciples!" It is imperative in form and meaning—the only imperative verbal form in the entire paragraph beginning with verse 16.

**Βαπτίζοντες** is a nominative plural masculine participle, present active of **βαπτίζω**. This participle is likewise in agreement with the finite imperative verb **μαθητεύσατε**. It is not imperative in form, though because of its position and relationship to the imperative verb which controls it, is in much better position to convey an imperative idea nevertheless, as shall be seen. It means to baptize—a controversial word we will define no further on this occasion.

**Διδάσκοντες**. The word is to be analyzed exactly the same as the preceeding, except that it is derived from **διδάσκω** which has the meaning, to teach. It is in agreement also with **μαθητεύσατε**, yet is also grammatically and syntactically connected with **βαπτίζοντες** as dependent, not strictly co-ordinate, as is sometimes assumed. The justification for this statement is the absence of **καί** (and), the co-ordinate conjunction. That is, the "teaching" is associated with the "baptizing," not merely subsequent to it.

A certain structural relationship now clearly emerges. There is only one basic element in the commission—**μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη**, "make disciples of all the nations." Presupposed by this basic command is the fact that Christian believers are already to be deployed on the scene of their missionary labors—**πορευθέντες**, having gone, or, as ye go. Two activities will be involved in making disciples of the nations, not successively, but somehow contemporaneously, **βαπτίζοντες**, "baptizing," and **διδάσκοντες** "teaching."

The critical commentaries, i.e., those on the Greek text, present a reassuring consensus on these basic facts of exegesis. Not that every one of them consulted presents all these points, but they do not disagree, while supplementing one another. This survey, while not exhaustive, included many of the best recognized exegetical authorities.

## 2. The Commentators

We now direct attention to some representative commentators, both older and recent, to see what interpretations they have made of these exegetical data.

Recent decades have furnished no more productive an exegete than the Lutheran scholar R. C. H. Lenski—publishing 1181 pages on the Greek text of Matthew alone, employing the approach and nomenclature of modern language analysis. He writes:

**Πορευθέντες** is something new. Hitherto men were welcomed when *they* came to Israel, God's people; now the people of God

are to go to men everywhere. Yet Jesus does not command, "Go!" the participle is merely auxiliary to the main verb, "Having gone, disciple!" To go to the nations is the self-evident and natural way to proceed in making them disciples. What going there has been since Jesus spoke this word!

The heart of the commission is the one word μαθητεύσατε. This imperative, of course, means, "to turn into disciples," and in its aorist form conveys the thought that this is actually to be done. The verb itself does not indicate *how* disciples are to be made, it designates only an activity that will result in disciples.<sup>10</sup>

Lenski then goes on to say a paragraph later:

Two participles of means then state how all nations are to be made into disciples: by baptizing them and by teaching them.<sup>10</sup>

This author sees fulfillment of the Old Testament promises of Christ's universal kingdom in "all the nations" [standard amillennialism] and proof that Jesus foresaw the baptism of infants before catechism after the initial thrust of Christianity in and consequent adults baptisms in the order of "baptizing..." and "teaching them..." Those who know this writer's views on these subjects will understand how earnestly he sought further authorities on some of these matters! Yet note how faithful Lenski is to the actualities of the Greek words, their forms in this passage, and to the Greek idiom—"Going," a presupposition, not a command; "disciple," the only command; "baptizing" and "teaching," the method of making disciples.

Alford, to whom we have already paid our respects, while not commenting specifically on πορευθέντες, either here or later at Mark 16:15, does connect it with the disciples in general and sees beginning of fulfillment in Acts 8:2 ff. On βαπτίζοντες and διδάσκοντες he writes, "Both these present participles are the conditioning components of the imperative aor. preceding. The μαθητεύειν [to make disciples] consists of two parts—the initiatory, admissory *rite*, and the subsequent teaching."<sup>11</sup>

Another old respected authority, J. P. Lange, ably supported by his American translator and editor, Philip Schaff, gives essentially the same. He asserts that to make disciples is effected "in two acts, a missionary and an ecclesiastical,—the antecedent baptism, the subsequent instruction."<sup>12</sup>

A. Garr paraphrases, "Make disciples by baptism and by instruction."<sup>13</sup> Other well-known authorities in agreement are J. M. Gibson<sup>14</sup> and Geo. A. Buttrick.<sup>15</sup>

10. *Op. Cit.*, pp. 1172, 1173.

11. *Op. Cit.*, p. 306.

12. *Op. Cit.*, *loc. cit.*

13. *Cambridge Bible, Matthew*, p. 230.

H. A. W. Meyer adds a very important observation, while agreeing with the foregoing in the main. We shall quote only his added observation.

Διδάσκοντες . . . without being conjoined by καί, [is] therefore not coordinate with, but subordinate to the βαπτίζοντες, intimating that a certain *ethical teaching* must accompany in every case the administration of baptism: *while ye teach them to observe everything*, etc. This moral instruction must not be omitted when you baptize, but it must be regarded as an essential part of the ordinance. That being the case, infant baptism cannot possibly have been contemplated in βαπτίζοντες, nor, of course in πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.<sup>14</sup> [These comments are by a man who lived out his 73 years as a Lutheran pastor and church administrator in the kingdom of Hannover.]

Philip Schaff writes to the same effect but even more plainly:

We should not overlook that there is no καί before διδάσκοντες, so that *baptizing* and *teaching* are not strictly coordinate, as two successive acts and means of Christianizing the nations; but the teaching is a continuous process, which partly precedes baptism, as a general exhibition of the gospel with a view to bring the adults to the critical turning point of decision for Christ, [Note this familiar Billy Grahamesque use of "decision for Christ" in exactly the same sense a century ago], and submission to his authority, and partly follows baptism, both in the case of adults and infants, as a thorough indoctrination in the Christian truth, and the building up of the whole man [Note that recent theology did not discover the wholeness of man, either!] into the full manhood of Christ, the author and finisher of our faith. Since the eleven apostles and other personal disciples of our Lord could neither baptize nor teach all nations, it is evident that He instituted here the office of a continuous and unbroken *preacherhood* (not *priesthood* in the Jewish and Romish sense) and *teacherhood*, with all its duties and functions, its privileges and responsibilities; and to this office he pledged His perpetual presence to the end of time, without the intermission of a single day or hour.<sup>15</sup>

Apparently neither Schaff nor Meyer rejected infant baptism, though the force of the above-quoted remarks might seem in that direction. Evidently both justified the practice on other grounds.

To quote additional authorities would not add much on the points under consideration. However far they are from uncritical popular exposition on the basic structure of the passage, they are in agreement. Except for the minor variations noted above, a century of exegetical study has

14. *Expositors' Bible*, loc. cit.

15. *Interpreters' Bible*, loc. cit.

16. *Op. Cit.*, pp. 530, 531.

17. *Op. Cit.*, p. 558.

pretty well solidified this understanding of Matthew 28:19, 20 as to the meaning and relationship (grammatical) of *πορευθέντες*, *μαθητεύσατε*, *βαπτίζοντες*, and *διδάσκοντες*.

A summary of the contributions of these representative commentators is in order. 1) It is presupposed that disciples carrying out this commission will be deployed upon the scene of doing so—among the nations. 2) The commission is to make disciples of all the nations. This is the single command and is comprehensive. 3) The command to make disciples is carried out in two activities, baptizing and teaching. 4) The teaching is of an evangelistic sort preliminary to baptism, leading to decision, and of an edifying sort after baptism.

### 3. The Grammarians

Our investigation must continue with the contributions of the grammarians to the problems of tense, mood, and relationships of the four verbal forms we are investigating. The comprehensive work of A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament* with due notice of his references to the works of Moulton is the main source. The comprehensive work of the older authority, G. B. Winer (*A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament*, a 746-page work) is helpful, as is the popular *Manual Grammar of the Greek N. T.* by Dana and Mantey.

First attention must be assigned to the question of a possible "imperative" use of the participle in the case of *πορευθέντες*. Recall that though all the commentators cited agree that it is auxiliary to *μαθητεύσατε*, which is the only word in the paragraph imperative in form. Yet *πορευθέντες* is not rendered imperative in meaning by inclusion in the "Aktionsart," or kind of meaning, as are the participles rendered *baptizing* and *teaching*. These, no informed scholar seems to doubt, are taken up into the imperative verb and made a part of its meaning. But they are not, as such, imperative either in form or sense. They are in the realm of "duties" for those who would make disciples only because parts of the process of making disciples.

As to this question, Robertson says the participle "may be drawn into the modal sphere" and devotes two pages to the heading "The Participle" as "Alternative For the Imperative." Before noting his further remarks it should be noticed that Greek participles, as such, do not have tense significance. They convey ideas of quality of action rather than time. After noticing that Winer does not find participles ever used for finite verbs until the Byzantine period; that Green finds many such in the N. T. and that W. F. Moulton calls the same feature by the name "participle anacoluthon" he asserts that J. H. Moulton "has found a number of examples in the papyri where the participle is fairly common for the indicative."<sup>18</sup> His own deliverances on the subject are exceeding

18. *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 945.

19. *Ibid.*



mild: "On the whole, therefore, we must admit that there is no reason *per se* why the N. T. writers should not use the participle in lieu of the imperative."<sup>19</sup> In two pages on the subject, however, he does not present a single-clear New Testament case of a participle used as an imperative. What is demonstrable is each case cited is anacoluthon, that is, no demonstrable grammatical connection with a noun or verb in the immediate context, or elipsis. He writes with encouraging firmness there are a number of "unmistakable examples," yet after the first one cited (I Pet. 2:12), almost as an aside, strangely remarks that the participle ἔχοντες should be so taken "or taken as anacoluthon"—which is quite another matter and makes it something considerably less than an "unmistakable example" of a participle used as an imperative. This word rendered "having" makes perfectly good sense as a participle. "Having" is the word Peter used, and likely what he meant, not "Havel!" Further, although perhaps in anacoluthon it is undoubtedly connected in thought (and in grammatical agreement) with Ἀγαπητοὶ at the beginning of verse 11. He lists also I Pet. 2:18; 3:1, 7, 9; 4:8; Eph. 4:2 ff., 5:2; Rom. 12:9 ff., 15, 16. What is really the case in this list of examples is that often the word *to be* in indicative or imperative sense is omitted in what grammarians call elipsis.<sup>20</sup>

Yet even if Robertson's reluctant opinions here be regarded as correct, it is very important that he includes no constructions parallel to our πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε. This "having gone to something" Greek construction, usually translated, "go and do" in the English versions is very common in the N. T.<sup>21</sup> Yet, Robertson includes none of them in his list of examples of participles possibly used as imperatives. On page 946 he clearly states why: "This [imperative] use of the participle should not be appealed to if the principle verb is present in the immediate context." This is in harmony with what he states elsewhere on the same page to the effect that only a limited number of such participles exist in the N. T. and that in each case "the asyndeton [lack of connection] makes it impossible to connect with any verb. He quotes Lightfoot to the same effect and with the added thought that "the absolute participle, being (so far as regards mood) neutral in itself, takes its colour from the general complexion of the sentence."<sup>22</sup>

Dana and Mantey, reservedly, yet somewhat more positively than

20. *Ibid.*

21. In fact there is another in the same chapter; see v. 7.

22. *Op. Cit.*, p. 945.

Robertson allow<sup>23</sup> that participles may rarely be understood as finite verbs in imperative mood. They add nothing significant to what Robertson and others have said.

It remains to be said that Winer will have nothing of any participles in the New Testament put for finite verbs, imperative or otherwise, and takes four pages of his great grammar (350-353) to say it!

How about the time reference of Greek participles? It has none at all of itself, only as derived from the context, especially the main verb of its clause. Participles were put in the various tenses to indicate mainly quality of action rather than the time of it. In relation to the time of its governing verb an aorist participle will always be either previous (past) or contemporary (present), never future.<sup>24</sup> In the case of the aorist participle *πορευθέντες* in Matthew 28:19, then, Lenski's "having gone" is correct, with the possibility also of "as ye go."

### III CONCLUSIONS

To interpret, then, believers in Christ have both precedent and encouragement in other texts of the New Testament to go where Christ has not been named to declare his saving power, but the point of the Great Commission is that wherever they are they are to be carrying it out—making disciples. The commission is to make disciples of men of *any* nation as well as *all* the nations. Make disciples in the particular nation among whom you dwell. You need not go somewhere else to operate on the Great Commission program!

The present participle in Greek conveys expression of time simultaneous with that of the main verb. Thus declare Dana and Mantey.<sup>25</sup> The "teise of the participle never conveys an independent expression of

23. *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 229.

They give four examples:

I Peter 3:1. *γυναῖκες ὑποτάσσόμεναι τοῖς ἰδίας ἀνδράσιν*. Here the imperative of the verb *to be* is to be understood and is required. The participle is in its usual periphrastic use here with an auxiliary—only the auxiliary is understood. The sentence is elliptical.

Mark 5:23, *καὶ παρακαλεῖ αὐτὸν . . . ἵνα ἔλθῃ ἐπιθεῖς τὰς χεῖρας* etc. Here the main verb in the subordinate clause is *ἐπιθεῖς*, second person, aorist second, subjunctive, active of *ἐπιτίθημι*, lay upon. The participle is in agreement and auxiliary to it. This comes under the ban of Robertson's dictum that an imperative "use of the participle context. This participle merits full classification as a circumstantial (Dana and Mantey, *Op. Cit.*, p. 229) or a temporal participle (*Ibid.* pp. 226, 227).

Romans 12:9 (to which could be added several in the following verses). Herein several adjectives and participles are strung together loosely in what seems like an imperative sense, true enough. Yet the imperative sense must be supplied by means of an understood "let be," which is just what the English versions do supply. The imperative sense is then to be assigned to the understood verb, not to the adjectives and participles. This is by no means parallel to the situation in Matthew 28:19.

I Peter 2:18 is a case parallel to I Peter 3:1, discussed above.

24. Robertson, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 859-861.

25. *Op. Cit.*, pp. 229, 230.

time, yet its relation to its context usually involves a temporal significance."<sup>26</sup> So βαπτίζοντες and διδάσκοντες do indeed describe action which is co-incident with making disciples, and in context clearly indicate the composing elements of the commission. Thus they come under the heading of imperative action, not because imperative in themselves, but because their "governing" verb is imperative. Furthermore, that imperative is the most urgent one of all, the aorist, Winer states: "The Present Imperat. denotes an action already begun and to be continued. . . or one that is permanent and frequently recurring. Hence it is commonly employed in the measured and dispassionate language of laws and moral precepts. . . . In ordinary discourse the Present Imperat. conveys more softness and reserve of expression and frequently denotes merely advice."<sup>27</sup> Of the Aorist Imperative in the N. T. he states that it frequently denotes an action "to be undertaken at once."<sup>28</sup>

This means, it seems to this writer, that making disciples by baptizing and teaching them is no injunction to be trifled with by those who take seriously the authority of Him who said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

Baptism appears as the normal mode of initial confession of Christ together with his Father and the Holy Ghost, and of acknowledging their Lordship. Whether there be saving grace *in* the act, or *with* the act, or symbolized by the act is not our concern just now. Baptism needs to be restored to its significance, along with teaching as the means by which one enters upon discipleship and learns how to go about being a good disciple.

We close with a paraphrase of the paragraph, Matthew 28:16-20: v. 16. The eleven disciples went into Galilee as Jesus in Judea had previously directed them (Matthew 28:7). There he appeared to the Eleven again, commanding them to gather with other disciples of the area on a certain mountain. In obedience over 500 came (I Corinthians 15:6). v. 17. And when these beheld him (ιδόντες aor. 2, nom. pl. masc. part. of ὁράω) they worshipped him. There were some of the crowd, however, who doubted if it was really the resurrected Christ, whom they saw.

v. 18. Then Jesus, having come closer to the assembled group, talked freely with them saying, As the God-Man, now having finished the provision of redemption, there has been committed to me by the Godhead universal power, operative equally in heaven and on the earth.

v. 19. As ye go, therefore, and wherever you may be, as my disciples (Mark 16:20; Acts 2:9-11; 8:1, etc.) in this world, make disciples of all the nations, for I have authority among them all. You are to begin making disciples by instructing (not excluding witnessing, preaching and evan-

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Op. Cit.*, p. 313.

28. *Ibid.*

gelizing) men. Men thus informed by you and convinced by the Holy Spirit of the truth as it is in Christ and who wish openly to confess their submission to the Lordship of the triune God are to be baptized in the name of the Father, and [in the name] of the Son, and [in the name] of the Holy Ghost. After baptism they are further to be instructed in all the teachings of Christianity. They should guard these truths in their own lives.

v. 20. I will be with you individually and wherever two or three are gathered in my name as you carry out this commission until the full end of the age at my return.<sup>29</sup>

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29. The Longer Catechism of the Orthodox, Catholic, Eastern Church (of 1839) Question #24: "Why is tradition necessary even now?" Answer: "As a guide to the right understanding of holy Scripture, for the right ministration of the sacraments, and the preservation of sacred rites and ceremonies in the purity of their original institution. St. Basil then says of this as follows: Of the doctrines and injunctions kept by the Church, some we have from written instruction, but some we have received from apostolical tradition, by succession in private. . . . Whence is the rule of trine immersion? and the rest of the ceremonies at baptism, the renunciation of Satan and his angels?—from what Scripture are they taken? Are they not all from this unpublished and private teaching, which our Fathers kept under a reserve inaccessible to curiosity and profane disquisition, having been taught as a first principle to guard by silence the sanctity of the mysteries? for how were it fit to publish in writing the doctrine of those things, on which the unbaptized may not so much as look? (Can. xcvi. De Spir. Sanct. c. xxvii.)" (Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. II, pp. 449, 450).