

INTRODUCTION

I remember what the pastor said when he was baptizing me, because when I was growing up, attending the Baptist church with my family, we had the same old pastor for a long time, and the pastor always said the same thing when baptizing someone:

In obedience to the command of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and upon your public profession of faith in Him, I baptize you, my brother, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Buried with Christ in baptism, and raised to walk in newness of life.

You hear in what Brother Gene used to say the word I have been preaching to you about from 1 Timothy 6:12 --- “profession.” I heard that many times growing up, so I have known, for as long as I can remember, that baptism and profession have something to do with each other.

For the past few weeks, I have been looking in old Baptist publications to learn more about what it is to “profess a good profession.” In our own 1689 Confession, and in my favorite 19th-century Baptist manual of theology, I found the subject of “profession” primarily in the chapter on Baptism.

So I have known that part of a thorough treatment of the subject raised here in 1 Timothy 6:12 would be to speak on the relationship between a good profession and baptism. Today being the occasion of Conner’s baptism, I am taking this opportunity to address the question: “What is the relationship between baptism and professing a good profession?”

TEXT

1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have ~~confessed the good confession~~ [professed a good profession] in the presence of many witnesses.

BODY

I. Baptism Is Upon Profession

A. Upon

1. upon the basis of it: We as a congregation, and I as an ordained pastor, baptize someone on the basis of his profession; we baptize him because he has professed a good profession
 - a) we have no command or authority from Jesus Christ our Lord to baptize someone who does not profess faith in Him
 - b) but we have both the command and the authority of Jesus Christ to baptize someone who does profess faith in Him
2. upon the occasion of it: We as a congregation, and I as an ordained pastor, baptize someone on the occasion of his profession; we baptize him when he has professed a good profession.
 - a) many organizations try to baptize someone before he is able to profess a good profession
 - (1) when he is just an infant, unable to profess at all
 - (2) when he is a very small child, and we are unable to be sure at all that he grasps what he is trying to say
 - (3) when he is interested, and thinks he might believe, but is so unsure of things that he can't really profess a good profession
 - b) we understand that we wait until a person is able to profess a good profession

B. We understand this from our Lord's original institution of baptism - Matthew 28:18-19

1. "teach" all nations; more literally "make disciples"
2. it is those who have been made disciples whom our Lord commands us to baptize
3. so, our Lord's original institution of baptism tells us the relationship between baptism and professing a good profession: baptism is upon profession

C. We understand this from the apostles' primitive practice of baptism

1. Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ..."
2. Acts 2:41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized...
3. so, the apostles' primitive practice of baptism tells us the relationship between baptism and professing a good profession: baptism is upon profession

D. APPLICATION: Professing a good profession is the main criterion for a person being a proper candidate for baptism

1. 1689.29.2 Those who do actually **profess** repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ, are the only proper subjects of this ordinance.
2. Dagg: The primitive practice required each candidate for baptism to profess his faith personally. But a custom arose, of permitting the profession to be made by proxy: the candidate being present, and signifying his assent. This custom made it easy for very young persons to be admitted to the rite...

3. “Credible profession of faith;” essentially what I spoke to you about last time, in describing what makes a *good* profession
 - a) it is profession of faith, not of works
 - b) it is a profession of faith in Christ, as revealed in the Bible, not in any other
 - c) it is a profession of faith in what is true
 - d) it is a profession that seems honest to the hearers
4. Examples
 - a) when I had begun to serve as a pastor, a person told me she wanted to be baptized; when I asked her why, she told me, “I just think it’s time.” As I talked to her, I led her in the direction of professing faith in Christ, but that seemed to be nowhere in her mind. I gave her every opportunity to say something in that direction, but she was not professing faith in Christ at all
 - b) many years ago in this congregation, when people were professing to teach other after lunch, one visitor professed how he had felt strongly during the sermon, and had gone down front during the invitation; much prompting from the pastors could not get that man to profess anything about Jesus Christ or repentance or faith; his only profession was of feeling something and going down front during the invitation
 - c) several years ago a very friendly man came to this congregation; he was talkative; he had lots to say about the Bible and religion; when he stood before the congregation to profess, he told all about the wisdom in the scriptures, and several other things; there was essentially nothing untrue in what he professed; but he had nothing to say about Jesus Christ; even when prompted, nothing he said was about Jesus
 - d) several years ago one of the children in this congregation (who is not with us anymore) spoke to me, wanting to get baptized; she said several true things, but I was getting the impression that she did not understand what she was saying; finally, she told me that she knew when she got to heaven, she would see her grandpa there; the reason he was in heaven was because he had saved alot of people during the war
 - e) but others have come to me or stood before the congregation and, with all apparent sincerity, have professed themselves as sinners, and Jesus Christ as having died for sinners, and have spoken of how they have turned from sin and now believe in Jesus to give them eternal life

“What is the relationship between baptism and professing a good profession?”

Baptism is upon profession

II. Baptism Is Part of Profession

- A. Several of the old Baptist commentaries and other books speak of “The design of baptism.”
 1. by that they mean what our Lord Jesus Christ intends baptism to be, or to accomplish
 2. they use about the same words to state what the design of baptism is, all saying something like this: “The design of baptism is that it be the ceremonial act of a good profession.”
 3. I read and thought and prayed, and came to the conclusion that is true, because I agree that their interpretation of the applicable scriptures is correct
- B. Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
 1. when a person enlists in the army of a certain country, or goes to work for a certain company, he puts on the uniform of that country or that company; e.g. several of you here work for the same company; when you hired on, you were given the green shirt and jacket and hat with the owner’s name on it; because you love that owner and are happy to work for him, you gladly put on his uniform, to be identified as his employee; in putting on that uniform, you are communicating to anyone who sees you that you are your master’s servant
 2. that is the idea in this verse: to put on Christ means to put on His uniform, his livery, his colors
 - a) I don’t think I understood this rightly for years
 - b) but this is very standard in the old Baptist interpretation of this scripture, and having studied it, I agree with this
 3. in becoming a Christian, a person does not literally put on a certain uniform; instead, he submits to baptism
 - a) whereas a soldier would pledge his loyalty, then put on the uniform of his commander
 - b) a Christian professes a good profession in words, then submits to baptism
 4. so, in baptism, you profess that Jesus Christ is your master, and you are His servant; you profess that you believe the good news of His death, burial, and resurrection to save sinners
- C. Romans 6:3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?
 1. the spiritual operation by which we are associated with the death of our Savior Jesus Christ is faith; we believe in Jesus Christ crucified
 2. here the apostle teaches us of the physical operation by which that spiritual connection is shown to the world by symbolic ceremony
 3. the candidate for baptism already has professed in words that he believes in Jesus Christ, in His death on his behalf, for his sins
 4. so, in baptism, he is professing the same thing in symbolic act, the very symbolic act that our Lord and Savior has ordained
- D. APPLICATION
 1. we know that to profess a good profession is first or primarily done in words, by which we show forth a good profession
 2. but to profess a good profession is secondarily done in baptism, by which we show forth a good profession

CONCLUSION

What, then, is the relationship between baptism and professing a good profession?

Baptism is upon profession

- profession is the basis for baptism, and profession is the occasion for baptism
- profession is why you baptize, and profession is when you baptize

Baptism is part of profession

- profession is done first in words
- profession is done second in baptism

Roel - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Psalm 100

Thad - Scripture Reading - Acts 16:13-34

Dillon - Congregational Prayer

Lord's Supper

Benediction

Allison - Prelude

Allison - Trinity xvi "Doxology" + Trinity 1 "All People That On Earth Do Dwell"

Rita - attached sheet - "He Will Hold Me Fast" - Andrew lead

Rita - Trinity 216 "Crown Him with Many Crowns" - Alex lead

JRY:

not meaning that everyone who is baptized truly believes and spiritually has put on Christ, because many are baptized who do not truly believe

Gill:

so in baptism they may also be said to put him on as they thereby and therein make a public profession of him, by deeds as well as words, declaring him to be their Lord and King; and afresh exercise faith upon him, as their Saviour and Redeemer, and imitate and follow him in it, as their pattern; who himself submitted to it, leaving them an example that they should tread in his steps; which when they do, they may be said to put him on

Dagg:

To put on Christ, is to put on his religion by outward profession, the profession which is made in baptism.

Spurgeon:

You set forth that truth in your baptism; you then confessed that you were dead to sin, and declared that you were risen again in Christ to newness of life.

Carroll:

Baptism does not really put us into Christ; it is only figurative of it. Paul says, "By faith we are all children of God." By faith, and not by baptism, so that the form of being baptized into Christ is not the reality of putting us into Christ. In baptism we put on Christ, as an enlisted soldier puts on the uniform which is the external emblem, or symbol, of his enlistment.

RWP:

He does not here mean that one enters into Christ and so is saved by means of baptism after the teaching of the mystery religions, but just the opposite. We are justified by faith in Christ, not by circumcision or by baptism. But baptism was the public profession and pledge, the

soldier's sacramentum, oath of fealty to Christ, taking one's stand with Christ, the symbolic picture of the change wrought by faith already

[in notes on Rom 6:3] See note on Gal 3:27 where it is like putting on an outward garment or uniform.

Romans 6:3-4 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? (4) Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Gill:

...they...have entered into a new profession of religion, of which baptism is the badge and symbol...

Spurgeon:

In this we have believed---with a dying Saviour we are linked, and our baptism sets this forth. We "were baptized into his death."

...in the very act of baptism, he declares that he cannot live as he once did, for he is dead; he declares that he must live after another fashion...

RWP:

Baptism is the public proclamation of one's inward spiritual relation to Christ attained before the baptism.

Carroll [on Romans 6:1-11]

A justified and regenerate man is commanded to be baptized. Baptism symbolizes the burial of a dead man – dead to his old life – his cleansing from the sins of the old life, and this resurrection to a new life. Christ died on the cross for our sins once for all. Being dead he was buried, raised to a new life and exalted to a royal and priestly throne. All this, in the beginning of his public ministry, was prefigured in his own baptism. As he died for our sins, paying the law penalty, so we in regeneration become dead to law claims because we died to sin in his death. Being dead to the old life, we should be buried. This is represented in our baptism: "Buried in baptism." But in regeneration we are not only slain, but made alive, or quickened. The living should not abide in the grave, therefore in our baptism there is also a symbol of our resurrection. But regeneration not only slays and makes alive, but cleanses, therefore in our baptism we are symbolically cleansed from sin, as was said to Paul, "Arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins." So that not only both elements of regeneration, cleansing and renewal of soul are set forth pictorially in our baptism, but also the coming resurrection and glorification of our bodies.

Hiscox *The Standard Manual for Baptist Churches*

p. 19 It represents the burial and resurrection of Christ, and in a figure declares the candidate's death to sin and the world, and his rising to a new life. It also proclaims the washing of

regeneration, and professes the candidate's hope of a resurrection from the dead, through him into the likeness of whose death he is buried in baptism.

p. 19 ...except he first be baptized, as the distinguishing mark and profession of his discipleship.

Pendleton *Church Manual* 1867

p. 75 The design of Baptism furnishes a conclusive argument in favor of immersion. There is in baptism a representation of the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Romans 6:3-5

p. 77 We are baptized into the death of Christ. We profess our reliance on his death for salvation, and we profess, also, that as he died *for* sin, we have died *to* sin.

Don Fortner (on Mt 28:18-20):

Our Lord does not say baptize all nations and make them my disciples. He says, make disciples and baptize them. Baptism is to be administered only to those who are by their own profession Christ's disciples (Act_8:37). Baptism, being symbolically buried with him, immersed with him in water, is the believer's confession of faith in Christ. As such, baptism is the mark of distinction between believers and the rest of the religious world. It is our public oath of allegiance to Christ as our Lord. Baptism, rising up out of the watery grave, portrays and confesses our hope of resurrection glory.

Broadus: make disciples of, or more exactly, disciple. We greatly need an English verb 'disciple,' for this passage

Spurgeon: "Teach", that is, disciple, make disciples of "all nations."

RWP: making disciples or learners

RWP:

the public confession in baptism which many witnessed.

Carroll:

It is in Paul's thought when he calls Timothy's attention to the relation of his Christian experience: "Lay hold of life eternal whereunto thou wast called, and didst confess a good confession in the sight of many witnesses." In other words, "Go back to your conversion; what did you do when you came before the church? There were many witnesses present, and you came out openly with the statement that you were a lost sinner, saved by the grace of God by simple faith in Jesus Christ, and that your sins were remitted through the shedding of his blood on the cross. That was your confession. Stand up to it now. Don't go back on it."

Dagg:

Section I - Perpetuity of Baptism
Section II - Meaning of Baptize
Section III - Subjects of Baptism
Section IV - Design of Baptism
Section V - Connection of Baptism with Church Order

“So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death;” (Romans 6:3) and again, when it is said, “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. (Galatians 3:27) A public profession of Christ was, in the view of Paul, the design of this ceremony, involving an acknowledged obligation to be his, and to walk in newness of life.

To put on Christ, is to put on his religion by outward profession, the profession which is made in baptism. The baptism and the profession are alike, in implying a moral change in the subject, only so far as he is sincere. Some are physically baptized, who do not morally put on Christ; but this, though unquestionably true, is directly contradicted by the passage, if the proposed interpretation of it is correct. So in the passage under consideration, it is affirmed that the same persons, and the same number of persons that are baptized into Christ, are baptized into his death. This could not be true, if the first baptism is physical, and the second moral. Between these two clauses, therefore, there is no place for a division between what is physical and what is moral.

Objection 4.

...It figuratively represents the burial and resurrection of Christ...

Section IV - Design of Baptism

Baptism was designed to be the ceremony of Christian profession.

Profession is, in general, necessary to salvation. With the heart, man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10:10) Divine goodness may pardon the weakness of some, who, like Joseph of Arimathea, are disciples secretly through fear; but it nevertheless remains a general truth, that profession is necessary. Christ has made the solemn declaration, “Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” (Mark 8:38)

The profession of renouncing the world, and devoting ourselves to Christ, might have been required to be made in mere words addressed to the ears of those who hear; but infinite wisdom has judged it better that it should be made in a formal and significant act, appointed for the specific purpose. That act is baptism. The immersion of the body, as Paul has explained, signifies our burial with Christ; and in emerging from the water, we enter, according to the import of the figure, on a new life. We put off the old man, and put on the new man: “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.” (Galatians 3:27)

The place which baptism holds in the commission, indicates its use. The apostles were sent to make disciples, and to teach them to observe all the Saviour's commands; but an intermediate act is enjoined, the act of baptizing them. In order to make disciples, they were commanded, "Go, preach the gospel to every creature." When the proclamation of the good news attracted the attention of men, and by the divine blessing so affected their hearts, that they became desirous to follow Christ, they were taught to observe his commandments, and first to be baptized. This ceremony was manifestly designed to be the initiation into the prescribed service; and every disciple of Christ who wishes to walk in the ways of the Lord, meets this duty at the entrance of his course.

The design of baptism is further indicated by the clause "baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The rendering of our version, "in the name of," makes the clause signify that the administrator acts by the authority of the Trinity; but the more literal rendering "into the name of," makes it signify the new relation into which the act brings the subject of the rite. He is baptized into a state of professed subjection to the Trinity. It is the public act of initiation into the new service.

The design of baptism proves its importance. The whole tenor of the gospel forbids the supposition that there is any saving efficacy in the mere rite: but it is the appointed ceremony of profession; and profession, we have seen, is, in general, necessary to salvation. As the divine goodness may pardon disciples who fear to make public profession, so it may, and we rejoice to believe that it does pardon those, who do not understand the obligation to make ceremonial profession, or mistake the manner of doing it. But God ought to be obeyed; and his way is the right way, and the best way. Paul argues from the baptism of believers, their obligation to walk in newness of life. The ceremony implies a vow of obedience, a public and solemn consecration to the service of God. The believing subject can feel the force of the obligation acknowledged in the act, and Paul appeals to this sense of obligation: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3) Though it is an outward ceremony, it is important, not only as an act of obedience, but as expressing a believer's separation from the world, and consecration to God, in a manner intelligible and significant, and well adapted to impress his own mind and the minds of beholders.

The faith which is professed in baptism, is faith in Christ. We confess with our mouths the Lord Jesus Christ, and believe in our hearts that God has raised him from the dead. (Romans 10:9) If the doctrine of the resurrection be taken from the Gospel, preaching is vain, and faith is vain. So, if the symbol of the resurrection be taken from baptism, its chief significancy is gone, and its adaptedness for the profession of faith in Christ, is lost. Hence appears the importance of adhering closely to the Saviour's command, "immersing them."

The obligation to make a baptismal profession of faith, binds every disciple of Christ. Some have converted the Eucharist into a ceremony of profession; but this is not the law of Christ. Baptism was designed, and ought to be used, for this purpose. If infant baptism be obligatory, the duty is parental; and if it be a ceremony in which children are dedicated by their parents to the Lord, it is a different institution from that in which faith is professed. He who has been baptized in infancy, is not thereby released from the obligation to make a baptismal profession

of faith in Christ. If it be granted, that his parents did their duty in dedicating him to God, he has, nevertheless, a personal duty to perform. The parental act of which he has no consciousness, cannot be to him the answer of a good conscience toward God. Had it left an abiding mark in the flesh, an argument of some plausibility might be urged against the repetition of the ceremony. But the supposed seal of God's covenant is neither in his flesh, nor in his memory, and his conscience has no Scriptural release from the personal obligation of a baptismal profession.

Profession is the substance, and baptism is the form; but Christ's command requires the form as well as the substance.

The members who admit him are required to demand a credible profession made in obedience to Christ's command.

...Baptists admit nothing to be valid baptism but immersion on profession of faith...

The primitive practice required each candidate for baptism to profess his faith personally. But a custom arose, of permitting the profession to be made by proxy: the candidate being present, and signifying his assent. This custom made it easy for very young persons to be admitted to the rite...

...we account nothing Christian baptism, but immersion on profession of faith...

p. 268 In order that the church may judge whether a candidate is duly qualified for membership, they should hear his profession of faith. He is bound to let his light shine before all men, to the glory of God; and it is specially needful that they should see it, with whom he is to be associated in fellowship as a child of light.

p. 269 The churches are not infallible judges, being unable to search the heart; but they owe it to the cause of Christ, and to the candidate himself, to exercise the best judgment of which they are capable. To receive any one on a mere profession of words, without any effort to ascertain whether he understands and feels what he professes, is unfaithfulness to his interests, and the interests of religion.

p. 269 To preserve unity in the church, the admission of a member should be by unanimous vote.

p. 269 Admission to membership belongs to churches; but admission to baptism belongs properly to the ministry. A single minister has the right to receive to baptism, on his own individual responsibility; as is clear from the baptism of the eunuch by Philip, when alone. But when a minister is officiating as pastor of a church, it is expedient that they should unite their counsels in judging of a candidate's qualifications; but the pastor ought to remember, that the responsibility of receiving to baptism is properly his. The superior knowledge which he is supposed to possess, and his office as the shepherd of the flock, and the priority of baptism to church-membership, all combine to render it necessary that he first and chiefly should meet this responsibility, and act upon it in the fear of the Lord.

p. 282 Section IV - Rebaptism

In deciding the question, the first responsibility devolves on the candidate. He is bound to make a baptismal profession of faith...

p. 310-311 about immersion in the churches of England in the past