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## CHRISTOPHER BLACKWOOD

## Portrait of a Seventeenth Century Baptist(1)

Christopher Blackwood was born around 1606 in Yorkshire.(2) Educated at Cambridge, his writings and sermons demonstrate familiarity with Scripture as well as skills in logical reasoning. He made frequent references to Greek, Latin, and German sources from Church History.(3) He believed scholarly pursuits should serve devotional ends.(4)

Blackwood served as vicar of Stokesbury, Kent, from 2nd April to 17th June 1631. From 1632 to 1635, he was a curate of Rye, working under a Mr Twyne. The Sussex records indicate that some time at Rye he succeeded a Mr Thomas Warren. As a preacher, he delivered organized, simple, illustrative, practical, and persuasive sermons.(5) He proved popular, particularly among the puritan remnant.(6) Blackwood's sympathy for non-conformity, which in Sussex significantly increased during the 1630s, is indicated by a churchwarden's report that he abbreviated the prayer book service to the point where it hardly mattered.(7) However, he was willing to subscribe in 1633 as required by the Established Church.

Blackwood's activities between 1635 and 1644 are uncertain. Smart's reference to the record of a preacher named Christopher Blackwood purchasing land in Scituate, Mass., in 1641, indicates that by 1640 Blackwood had fled to New England, possibly because of religious persecution.(8) Venn and Venn suggest that he was invited to succeed a Mr Lothrop as pastor, but instead returned to Kent in 1642. Exactly what position, if any, Blackwood held when the 1644 meeting of the clergy convened at Cranbrook to hear Francis Cornwell is not clear. His own account of this event(9) confirmed Stinton's otherwise ambiguous phrase that Blackwood was 'one of the clergy' from Kent at the meeting.(10) Whitley, and recently Barnard, have continued Wood's view that Blackwood was the rector of Staplehurst in 1644.(11) However, Smart referred to records that showed John Brown as the rector of Staplehurst from 1626/27 to 1648/49, when the living was sequestered.(12)

The 1644 meeting at Cranbrook was a turning point for Blackwood. Francis Cornwell (later freed from Maidstone Gaol by Cromwell after the death of Charles I) developed a friendship with William Jeffrey, a General Baptist evangelist and messenger responsible for founding several churches of which the chief were Bradburn (Sevenoaks where he was pastor), Speldhurst, and Pembury.(13) Cornwell, who adopted Jeffrey's views and was baptized while in prison, published on 27th September 1644 his *Vindication of the Royal Commission of King Jesus*, which was handed out at the House of Commons.

At Cranbrook, Cornwell preached and Jeffrey defended. The clergymen were startled and offended by Cornwell's contention that infant baptism was 'an Antichrist innovation, a human tradition, and a practice with no precept, example, or true deduction from the Word of

God'.(14) A heated debate with Jeffrey followed. Blackwood finally proposed that they all study the matter and bring their conclusions to the next meeting a fortnight later. Blackwood became convinced in his study that Cornwell was right. At the next meeting, he submitted his conclusions to the group in written form. As the only proposal either for or against infant baptism, Blackwood's document was examined by the clergy and circulated for some time among them.

Being convinced that infant baptism was wrong, Blackwood was soon baptized by Jeffrey. He then retrieved his document on infant baptism, corrected and expanded the text, and entered it in the larger literary debate under the title *Storming of Antichrist* (December 1644). He included his desired church constitution, his argument against the compulsion of conscience, his refutation of infant baptism (including responses to Marshall's sermon to Parliament and Blake's *Birth Privilege*), and his catechism on baptism. Blake countered with *Infant Baptism Freed from Antichristianisme*. Blackwood responded with *Apostolicall Baptism* (London, 1645).

This debate brought out at least four of Blackwood's conclusions. First, concerning appeal to the Old Testament ordinance of circumcision in defence of infant baptism, Blackwood reasoned that

If so beare an allusion of a word in the New Testament to a word or phrase in the Old Testament will serve to prove points, we may make every thing of any thing and make the Christian religion more doubtful than the oracles of Delphus.(15)

He warned that 'We may bring in most of the points of popery if our understandings without command from God may under the New Testament make proportions from the Old'.(16) Second, concerning the silence of New Testament Scripture on the contested practice, Blackwood argued that 'Infant baptism was not in the world of the apostles'.(17) He concluded that 'Such qualifications as Christ and the Apostles set down for persons baptizable, these ought only to be observed'.(18) Third, concerning the nature of a true church of Christ, Blackwood proposed that

Infant baptism upholds a national church because if that were taken away, a national church would fall down, for it is hereby that all nations become (pseudo Christians many of them) Christians, not from any national multiplication of disciples.(19)

For him, this meant that

A church of Christ is a company of saints ..., the saintship of which company, joined together in bodies respectively (leaving others to their light), I take to be the essential note of a church because holiness is the most special difference of a church from the world.(20)

As for prospects of unity among Christians, he confessed,

I cannot enough bewail the alienation of heart that hath been among Christians because of differences of judgment... How can we quench the fire of contention? ... I cannot see. Some think that by unity of authority, that by the Magistrate compelling all to such a practice, every man will obey it and so there will be unity; but *quere* whether the remedy will not be worse than the disease? Many of God's people either leaving the kingdom or doing things with doubtful conscience. Others think that unity of verity will quench all; so many learned Divines considering things exactly; but this is not likely, seeing that variety of light will cause variety of judgments and even in apostolic times there was such difference about meats and days ... unity of charity is the solution.(21)

Fourth, concerning the nature and purpose of baptism, Blackwood posed this challenge:

... tell me whether it (a universal damning power of original defilement) be executed on your infants dying after baptism in their infancy before they believe or whether your baptism hath taken away this damning power... If you assert the former, then you uncharitably affirm your own infants ... to be damned; if the latter, then you ... joyne hands with the papists.(22)

He defended immersion because 'Baptism is a sign of my fellowship with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection'.(23) For him, in baptism, 'as a handwriting passing betwixt God and us, we confess our sins and profess our faith and he signs over and confirms unto us pardon of sins'.(24)

Separated from the national church, Blackwood remained with the Staplehurst congregation, which met at Spilshell House, a large old farmhouse owned by Richard Kingsworth.(25) Perhaps because Blackwood believed in limited atonement, Kingsworth was chosen to be the pastor (or 'elder' as the Medhurst document says), a position he held until his death in 1677. Blackwood's letters reveal that by 1646 he lived in Marden, having left the Staplehurst Church. Medhurst explained this departure as the result of the doctrinal difference on atonement.(26) As his first wife Martha died in this year, possibly personal reasons also influenced the move.(27)

In Marden, Blackwood's interest in the laity is revealed in his 1646 lengthy letter to 'the Mayor and Jurats of Rye' in defence of Nicholas Woodman, a poor Christian imprisoned for 'praying in the presence of some of the saints met at Mr Miller's house'.(28) Describing himself as 'a private person', Blackwood argued that Woodman had not violated the law and warned that the authorities had the sword from God 'only for this end, to terrify evil works and for the praise of them that do good'. That this concern for the poor was characteristic of Blackwood is suggested by the fact that thirteen years later, he extolled the task of 'preaching to poor people in villages'.(29)

The next few years seem to have been difficult ones for

Blackwood. In a 1651 letter to his sister-in-law, Francis Hartridge (soon to marry Samuel Jeake), he mentioned that

The extreame pressures that have lyen on me this yeare or two have .... interrupted my communion with God, but now I find him returning towards me in my ancient way of acquaintance.(30)

His abiding trust in God's providence upheld Blackwood in this time of trial and opposition. 'Man purposes but God determines', he explained in the same letter. Two weeks later, he wrote 'What God will doe with me I cannot tell ... I exhort you to stand fast in faith and to cleave unto God'.(31) The following week, he projected that 'God willing about the 8 or 9 of July I purpose, God assisting, to be in Marden'.(32) From Marden in August of the following year, Blackwood encouraged Francis, who had been ill after the birth of her first child, to 'make sanctified use of the chastisement of the Lord: learn to see that these visitations to the elect are as cups out of the hand of a father'.(33) He advised Francis to 'encourage yourself in God in all hard times, grow out of love with the world'.(34)

In June 1651, Blackwood journeyed to the North of Cheshire, where Colonel Duckenfield had been governor, to investigate the possibilities of receiving a chaplaincy in the army. He returned to Marden in time to participate in Francis' marriage on 17th July 1651, remaining there as late as 8th August 1652. His departure to Ireland with the army led by General Fleetwood came between this date and 1st June 1653, when a letter signed by Blackwood was sent from Ireland to the churches in England urging closer communion.(35)

The attempt to reform the Irish, which had been ineffective in the 1640s, was renewed by the Rump Parliament's 1650 'Ordinance for the Propagation of the Gospel in Ireland', but this ordinance received little support or power.(36) The arrival of the army and the 23rd June 1654 decision to offer fifty pounds a year to preachers who agreed to go to Ireland spurred several church groups, including the Baptists, to enter the Irish religious scene. Fleetwood's toleration lasted until 1656, when Henry Cromwell took the governmental power from the military. Baptist preachers such as Blackwood were able to increase their cause, but mostly among the soldiers, as they found little native interest.

According to a 1653 letter, Wexford is the earliest known ministry of Blackwood in Ireland.(37) Soon he moved to Kilkenny, from where in 1655 he was called 'to be the overseer of a Church of Christ in Dublin'.(38) Described by Thomas Harrison as 'the oracle of the Anabaptists in Ireland',(39) Blackwood was frequently in print during this period. In 1653, a second edition of his *Soul-Searching Catechism* was printed 'for the satisfaction and information of the people of God in Lancashire ... for as much as thou livest in times wherein many for want of sound principles laid at first go a whoring from God after sundry, dangerous, and destructive errors'.(40) This catechism included his explanation of the practice of laying on of hands as an apostolic ordinance and his defence of the inspiration of Scripture with seventeen arguments variously drawn from Scripture, church history,

and experience.

In the same year, he dedicated his *Four Treatises* to General Fleetwood. In these 'sermons', Blackwood sought to identify the true end of life and the means of attaining that end by discussing 'the precious worth of Christ', 'preparation for death', 'the danger of not loving the Lord Jesus', and 'charity to our neighbors'. In 1654, Blackwood published *Four Sermons*, the first of which was dedicated to 'Lady Fleetwood'. He dealt with 'a bridle for the tongue', 'the present sweetness and future bitterness of a delicious sin', 'a Christian groans under the body of sin', and 'a sermon proving the resurrection of the same body committed to dust as also the not dying of the soul of the body'. Blackwood's *Tractatus de Clavibus Ecclesiae* revealed his views on the church's power of censure and the proper procedure for exercising such power.(41) In 1659, Blackwood's massive commentary on Matthew, a work on which he had been progressing since his ministry at Kilkenny, disclosed his understanding of the discipline and holiness characteristic of Christian life.

By 1656, preachers 'denying the ordinances (of baptism and communion) upon the pretence of immediate communion with God', a key doctrinal conclusion of the Quakers, had become a particular problem for Baptists. Blackwood had his explanation of this problem's origin:

I can well nigh trace this delusion to the beginning. In 1644 divers books were printed against infant baptism, arguments whereof prevailed against infant baptism that many commanders in the Army were against it, but Parliament and the times being much for it, these commanders were troubled to keep in with conscience and with the times, sundry persons disputing that these officers were bound to take up the baptism of believers. In this juncture of the times comes a chaplain to the Army, who being forced out of the country of Kent, was in the same condition with these Gentlemen; he comes and preaches a doctrine that Baptism and the Supper were only carnal ordinances and types and that they ended in the first age, or to that effect; so this doctrine being received with great applause, this preacher, formerly of little acquaintance, came in one month to be one of the most eminent preachers in the Army, and these Gentlemen formerly troubled might now by the arguments of Mr J. S. easily bundle the times and their principles against infant baptism together, whiles hereby they were kept from the principles of the Anabaptists. Though the said Mr J. S. had formerly conferred with me to baptize him, which I was willing to do, only through worldly prudence he desired a place to be digged first in his own house, to escape the odium of the times, but at the end of four days when he had appointed me to come to dispense it, he came to question the power of the dispenser, so I departed home and left him. About six months after, I being with him, reasoned so far that in one afternoon I answered his arguments and his wife's, being many, 'till they had no more to say, save this, they were convinced but they must stay 'till God did persuade, after which time he speedily went into the Army,

product and spawn of whose preaching and printings were these delusions about denying ordinances, which groundly may be suspected was both to the speaker and the hearers the punishment for dallying with the truth and denying submission to it after conviction. My conscience tells me that the thing I write of him was truth, and he was my intimate friend, whom I should in no wise have cited so publick, but that conscience to God for the undeceiving of others urgeth me.(42)

From among the possible identifications of Mr J. S., this writer is convinced Mr J. S. was John Saltmarsh.(43)

According to Barnard, the Baptist cause in Ireland rose or fell with the military's rise to or fall from power.(44) By May 1660, their opportunities had deteriorated to the point that Blackwood had been displaced by the authorities, resulting in his return to London. In a letter a year later to Samuel Jeake, he spoke of 'the newes of Ireland' as 'a voting an uniformity of worship and sundry persons to the number of thirty at least are upon exception as to estate'.(45) The explosive nature of this time in London culminated in the Fifth Monarchy insurrection led by Vermer in January 1661. Baptists, being associated by the authorities with these 'rebels', were in serious danger. Early in 1661, thirty Baptist leaders, including Blackwood, signed *A Humble Apology of Some Commonly Called Anabaptists in Behalf of Themselves and Others of the Same Judgement with Them*. The purpose of this impassioned appeal was to disassociate themselves from the Fifth Monarchy uprising and to receive royal toleration by proving their loyalty to the Magistrate.(46) Signing this statement of submission to the Magistrate seems consistent with earlier comments by Blackwood.(47)

Soon Blackwood had decided to move his family to Holland, but delayed, as he explained to Samuel Jeake, because

Thers some incouragement as some think for liberty. Therefore I shall for two weeks longer demur to see what answer our petition hath, whereto we were incouraged by several of the Lords: howbeit I see but little hopes herein, seeing that yesterday there was a vote past for to bring in a bill for the confirmation of the service book; and I heare there are some penalties to those who shall not conform thereto.(48)

The situation subsequently stabilised to the point that Blackwood told Jeake 'I have not gone my intended journey by reason of the present liberty of conscience which we do not expect beyond this winter'.(49) He also explained that 'the news of the burning of the service book is nothing, being only done by some private persons, as a woman in Lestershire and some few tumultuously assembled in Scotland'.

The move to Amsterdam appears to have been made late in 1661, as Blackwood wrote his 18th January 1662 letter to Jeake from his new home 'least you should think that I had forgot you and changed my mind with my country'.(50) The information about Holland and the advice about travel which Blackwood sent to Jeake, who had lost his position in Rye as townclerk, indicates that he expected Jeake to leave

for Holland.(51) However, Jeake finally decided not to move, this perhaps being one reason for Blackwood's departure from Amsterdam. Blackwood soon explained in a letter to Jeake from London that 'I have returned from Holland together with my wife and son, not out of any dislike to the country, but intending for Ireland, to which place I had some tye of conscience, as I judged, obliging me ... We intend, God assisting, to go towards Dublin'.(52) Blackwood's anxiety about his return is seen both in his warning Jeake to 'walk wisely because the daies are evill, and remember that he that keepeth his mouth keeps his soul from trouble' and in his anticipation that his arrival in Ireland would be 'accompanied with many dangers and trials'.(53)

However, conditions in Ireland proved to be much better than Blackwood expected. On 28th March 1664 he told Jeake, 'I have found much satisfaction in my return to Dublin'.(54) As late as 1st March 1669, he informed Jeake that 'the Duke of Ormond is leaving his place here, for the which several good people are right sorry, thinking of that old proverb, seldom comes the better. All things here are very still and God's people have much liberty; blessed by God!'(55) This letter was occasioned by Jeake's question concerning 'the proper work of this operation'. Blackwood revealed his apocalyptic views when he responded,

Truly I am not skillful to understand the times, but my opinion is to get into the Ark, the Lord Jesus, and there to hide ourselves in him and to prepare to beare the crosse. Sion is in travell, but I think by the Scriptures, as I suppose, she is not near the time of her deliverance. I think it's very near two hundred yeares before that time comes. In the meantime ... his (Christ's) witnesses prophecy in sackloth (Rev.11): nor can we see any pompous glory in the kingdom of Christ as yet; but we heare the sighes of poore mourning doves, some of them cryeing how long, Lord? Prepare for the crosse: if better comes, count it gain.(56)

He then counselled Jeake to purchase 'Dr Brownrigg's sermons and Mr Ffenner's works'.(57)

By 17th August 1669, a tired Blackwood wrote to Jeake, 'I am growing old, being in the last month of my sixty-third yeare, and also am neare my journey end: pray for me that I may have a blessed departure'.(58) Blackwood's son, Christopher, informed Jeake the following March that 'it hath pleased God to vizzett me in taking to himselfe my deare father, who departed this life aboute 6 months agoe'.(59) Probate of Blackwood's will was granted by Archbishop Beyle of Dublin on 17th September 1670, in the Consistory Court of Dublin.

Interpreters of seventeenth-century Baptist history have the complementary tasks of both singling out individual histories and of tracing the curve of their collective journeys. This article has taken up the former. Christopher Blackwood's life has been enlarged, not because he capsules the whole story, but because, as a converted Baptist straddling Particular and General Baptist views, he personifies the struggles that created the whole story. Hopefully this report on

Blackwood will be a portal for other students drawn to unattended facets of Blackwood himself or to the wider religious currents in which he lived.

#### NOTES

The secondary sources for this study began with an early-eighteenth-century manuscript (hereafter referred to as Stinton-Crosby Manuscript) which dealt with early English Baptists, a document adopted and added to by Thomas Crosby in his *The History of the English Baptists* (London, 1738). The manuscript provided a biographical sketch of Blackwood and a list of his writings. The latter needed the following corrections: (1) the 1652 *Catechism on Baptism* is a reprint from a section of the 1644 *Storming of Antichrist*, (2) Blackwood's *Apostolicall Baptism* should be dated 1645, (3) the 1653 *Soul-Searching Catechism* is a second edition, and (4) Blackwood's *Four Sermons and Tractatus de Clavibus Ecclesiae* (1654) are omitted. Daniel Neal's *The History of the Puritans* (London, 1795) did not significantly add to the story of Blackwood. J. H. Wood, in his *A Condensed History of the General Baptists of the New Connexion* (London, 1847), gave more details on Blackwood's conversion to Baptist views and his work in Ireland. The January 1861 issue of *The Baptist Magazine* took up the question of unitarianism among early Baptists. As the Staplehurst Church was affected by unitarianism, the eight responses exchanged between Joseph Green and J. H. Wood (which ran through the January 1862 issue) came to centre on the early history of that church, of which Blackwood was a part. Wood, who introduced information from the church records of Staplehurst and Marden as compiled by Mr Medhurst, had the final word. Further discussion of Blackwood was put aside until T. W. W. Smart submitted to *The Baptist Magazine* (June 1867) an eight page statement on Blackwood which drew heavily from several of his letters found among Samuel Jeake's papers. Venn and Venn's 1922-27 compilation of information on Cambridge alumni included an entry for Blackwood (by J. A. Bartlett) and a note in the *Corrections and Additions*. Beginning in 1908, at least eighteen articles in the *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* mentioned Blackwood in studies of baptism, church discipline, seventeenth century theology, and the Baptists in Ireland. None, however, dealt exclusively with Blackwood. John Seymour included Blackwood in his discussion of puritans in Ireland in a 1921 *Oxford Historical and Literary Studies* publication. T. C. Barnard's *Cromwellian Ireland* (Oxford, 1975) included a few comments on Blackwood's role in the Irish Baptist Church between 1649 and 1660. Anthony Fletcher, in his *A County Community in Peace and War: Sussex 1600-1660* (London, 1975), used the Jeake papers in relating Blackwood to the society, religion, government, and politics of this county.

Concerning primary sources, the Blackwood letters printed in *The Baptist Magazine* gave important family and personal comments which helped to fill gaps in the story. Fletcher's work illustrated that the Jeake papers included even more 'bits and pieces' on Blackwood. The issue of infant baptism became by the 1640s a centre of attention for a growing number of English

Christians. Works by Thomas Blake, John Tombes, Stephen Marshall, Daniel Featley, Thomas Cobbet, and others yielded an impression of the protracted debate and provided a way to determine the place of Blackwood's two contributions, i.e. *Storming of Antichrist* (London, 1644) and *Apostolicall Baptism* (London, 1645). In 1648, Blackwood published *A Treatise Concerning the Denial of Christ* (London). Some time prior to his move to Ireland, Blackwood produced a *Soul-Searching Catechism* (London, 1653). In the same year, Blackwood wrote *A Treatise Concerning Repentance* (London) and had collected *Four Treatises* (London). In 1654, *Four Sermons* and a *Tractatus de Clavibus Ecclesiae* were published in London. The *Exposition of Matthew Chapters One to Ten* (London, 1659), over half of which dealt with chapters five through seven, was his last substantial work.

- 2 The usual birthdate of 1606 is uncertain. The entry in Venn and Venn states that Blackwood 'matriculated sizar (age 13) from Pembroke, Easter 1621'. This suggests a 1608 birthdate. But the entry also says he commenced 'B.A. 1624/5. Ordained Priest (London). 8th June 1628, age 24 (M.A.)'. This suggests a 1604 birthdate. Then in a 1669 letter to Samuel Jeake (Smart, op.cit., p.582), Blackwood mentioned that he was in the last month of his sixty-third year, making his birthdate 1605.
- 3 In commenting on Matthew 10.41 (Blackwood, *Exposition*), he lamented, 'English commentaries are not as good as Latin. It would be a work well beseeming some prince or great man to employ ten preachers or more who being painfull and studious might abridge the chief Latin commentaries and put them in a short English commentary; oh how it would make the way of salvation plain!' In the same context, Blackwood made the following book recommendations: (1) *Fundamental Divinity* - Ames, *Marrow*; Ames, *Cases*; Ursins, *Catechism*; Peter Martyr, *Common Places*; and (2) *Commentaries* - Baines on Ephesians, Elton on Colossians; Par(eus?) on Romans; Dixon on Matthew, Hebrews, and Psalms; Hutchinson on 'the small prophets'; Mayer on the prophets.
- 4 He counselled his wife's sister Francis Hartridge to 'Follow your latine still at spare times ... Take heed the desire of knowledge of the latine tongue doe not take off your heart from true pietye. Is there anything like to Jesus Christ and communion with him?' (Smart, op.cit., p.439). Francis later married Blackwood's good friend Samuel Jeake (1623-90). Jeake was born in Rye, Sussex, to a French family with possible roots in England back to the late-sixteenth century when many Protestant families left France. Jeake, who broke with the Established Church in 1640, pursued a legal and political career. However, his alignment with the nonconformists created repeated conflicts with the authorities, until legal protection came late in his life. (See *DNB*, 1959-60 ed., s.v. 'Samuel Jeake', by Edward Henry Marshall).
- 5 In his comments on Matthew 10.41 (Blackwood, *Exposition*), he recommended Bernard's *Faithful Shepherd* for a study of preaching.
- 6 Anne Peters, in a 1632 letter to Samuel Jeake's mother (Smart, op.cit., p.375), referred to the pleasing work of Blackwood. A Kentish correspondent was speaking of Blackwood's preaching when she prayed to Anne Jeake in a 1633 letter (Fletcher, op.cit., p.71), 'The Lord make you and the whole towne thankful'.
- 7 Fletcher quotes the church warden's complaint that 'Sometimes he

- omitteth one of the lessons, the litany, and the Ten Commandments altogether' (op.cit., p.73).
- 8 Smart, op.cit., p.375.
- 9 Blackwood, *Storming of Antichrist*, pp.1-12.
- 10 Stinton-Crosby Manuscript, p.48.
- 11 W. T. Whitley, 'Baptists and Bartholomew's Day', *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* 1 (1908-09), 24-41; T. C. Barnard, op.cit., p.100.
- 12 Smart, op.cit., p.370.
- 13 NA, 'Sandhurst Bicentenary', *Baptist Quarterly* 5 (1930-31), 322.
- 14 Stinton-Crosby Manuscript, p.48.
- 15 Blackwood, *Apostolicall Baptism*, p.58.
- 16 Blackwood, *Soul-Searching Catechism*, p.45.
- 17 Blackwood, *Storming of Antichrist*, p.2.
- 18 Blackwood, *Apostolicall Baptism*, p.21.
- 19 Ibid., p.31.
- 20 Blackwood, *Soul-Searching Catechism*, p.59.
- 21 Blackwood, *Four Treatises*, p.86.
- 22 Blackwood, *Apostolicall Baptism*, p.21.
- 23 Blackwood, *Soul-Searching Catechism*, p.42.
- 24 Blackwood, *Exposition*, 3.6.
- 25 Stinton observed that Blackwood did not gather 'a congregation of such as agreed with him in this doctrine of baptism' (Stinton-Crosby Manuscript, p.51). Green attributed the organization of the Staplehurst Church to 'Richard Kingsworth, formerly a clergyman in the neighborhood'. Wood attempted to show that it was Blackwood, assisted by one of his parishioners, Richard Kingsworth, who gathered the Staplehurst Church (*The Baptist Magazine*, pp.120,515,768).
- 26 Wood, op.cit., p.768.
- 27 Later he married Mary Hartridge. Through both marriages, Blackwood fathered four children about whom his letters frequently speak.
- 28 Smart, op.cit., p.435.
- 29 Blackwood, *Exposition*, 9.35.
- 30 Smart, op.cit., p.439                      31 Ibid., p.519.
- 32 Ibid., p.520.                                33 Ibid., p.521
- 34 Ibid., p.520. Even on the eve of Francis' wedding, Blackwood had reminded her that 'the eternall joyes with Christ are far beyond all the married joyes of this world' (Fletcher, op.cit., pp.45-47). Blackwood frequently commented on God's providence in his later writings. He called for a 'willingness to live and die at God's pleasure' (*Four Treatises*, p.39). He proposed that 'God hath set down the measure of the estate which he hath appointed for us' (*Exposition*, 6.27). When applying the story of Jesus' calming the storm, he concluded, '*Jesu Christe fer open aut actum est de salute mea* was a saying of Luther which I have often used to the Lord: saying Jesus Christ come and help me or else I am undone forever' (*Exposition*, 8.25).
- 35 Smart, op.cit., p.371.                      36 Barnard, op.cit., p.96.
- 37 NA, 'Chamberlain's First-Day Church', *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* 2 (1910-11), 192. This letter referred to 'a people lately gathered by brother Blackwood, with whom are brethren Tomlins, Hussey, Neale, Biggs, etc., who have not much among themselves but are sometimes visited by Waterford friends'.

- 38 Blackwood, *Exposition*, 'To the Reader'.
- 39 Smart, op.cit., p.371.
- 40 Blackwood, *Soul-Searching Catechism*, 'To the Reader'.
- 41 On this point, see also his *Storming of Antichrist*, Preface, pp.5-11.
- 42 Blackwood, *Exposition*, 7.15.
- 43 *DNB*, 1959-60 ed., s.v. 'John Saltmarsh', by Alexander Gordon. Saltmarsh belonged to a Yorkshire family, as did Blackwood. He spent some time in the county of Kent as rector of Brasted. As Blackwood was also in Kent, this could explain his reference to Mr J. S. as 'my intimate friend' and his conversations with Mr J. S. about baptism. Saltmarsh entered the army as a chaplain in 1646. His eminence as a preacher in the army is indicated by the complaint that Saltmarsh 'had the ear of the Army'. His writings were of a mystical nature. Blackwood's hesitancy to speak about Mr J. S. may suggest that he was dead at the time Blackwood was writing (1655-59), which would correspond with Saltmarsh's 1647 death.
- 44 Barnard, op.cit., pp.106-60.
- 45 Smart, op.cit., p.521.
- 46 Capp, in his *Fifth Monarchy Men*, has argued that several Baptists, for whom he gives biographical sketches, had Fifth Monarchy connections.
- 47 See Blackwood, *Storming of Antichrist*, Preface; *Apostolicall Baptism*, pp.26-30; *Four Sermons*, p.101.
- 48 Smart, op.cit., p.522                      49,50 Ibid., p.523
- 51 Ibid., p.524                                  52,53 Ibid., p.579
- 54 Ibid., p.580                                  55 Ibid., p.581
- 56 Ibid. Blackwood's earlier publications reveal further details of his apocalyptic views. He regarded the history of Christianity after 300 A.D. as 'the time of the Antichristian apostasie' (*Storming of Antichrist*, part II, p.55). He identified the fall of Rome with the destruction of the whore of Babylon (*Apostolicall Baptism*, p.2). He interpreted the events of Revelation 19 as those 'near to the end of the world, as appears by the order of Apocalyptic History', expected the conversion of the Jews, and looked toward a thousand year reign of Christ on earth (*Exposition*, 6.9; 10.34).
- 57 The two volumes of sermons to which Blackwood referred came from Ralph Brownrig (d.1659), bishop of Exeter and strict Calvinist (*DNB*, 1959-60 ed., s.v. 'Ralph Brownrig', by John Henry Overton). The 'Mr Ffenner' was either Dudley Fenner (d.1587), follower of Thomas Cartwright and minister in Kent (*DNB*, 1959-60 ed., by John Andrew Hamilton); or, more likely in this writer's opinion, William Fenner (d.1640), Cambridge scholar and celebrated puritan preacher whose many works were published in collected editions in 1651 and 1657 (*DNB*, 1959-60 ed., by Augustus Charles Bickley).
- 58 Ibid., p.582                                  59 Ibid., p.583.

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