

## VIII.—THOMAS WELD OF GATESHEAD: THE RETURN OF A NEW ENGLAND PURITAN

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During the period of the English Civil Wars, the Newcastle region was singularly blessed by the ministry of able and devoted Puritan preachers: Jenison, Hammond, Sydenham and others successfully nurtured the growth of religious nonconformity in the region, and it was one of the lasting changes wrought by the period of disturbance that Newcastle became a centre of dissent in North England.<sup>1</sup> Among the Puritan clergy who labored in the area, Thomas Weld of Gateshead deserves special mention. A man whose career was significant enough to merit inclusion in both the *Dictionary of National Biography* and the *Dictionary of American Biography*, Weld was among the most prominent of that too little studied generation of Puritans who returned from New England during the troubles to involve themselves in the task of reformation in their native country. Though distinguished, Weld was also controversial. His own Gateshead parishioners came to comment that Mr. Weld, "assuming a peculiarity and inclosure of some donative and irrefragable power instated upon him by greater authorities, acts diametrically contrary to the constitutions of our own and all other Christian churches."<sup>2</sup> The American historian, James Savage, referred to Weld as a "virulent pamphleteer" and an "overcunning writer" resorting to the "sneaking

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the Puritan movement in Newcastle in this period, see R. Howell, *Newcastle upon Tyne and the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford, 1967), chaps. 3 and 6. For a detailed study of Jenison, see R. Howell, "The Career of Dr. Robert Jenison, a Seventeenth Century Puritan in Newcastle," *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England*, vol. XIII, no. 2, 1965, pp. 14-25.

<sup>2</sup> W. H. D. Longstaffe, ed., *Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Ambrose Barnes* (Durham, 1867), p. 377.

device" of an "extraordinary instance of bibliographical disingenuity" for "a shield of his own cowardice."<sup>3</sup> The truth is that Weld, in an active career on both sides of the Atlantic, never shunned controversy, delighted in theological bickering, was eager to strike out against any who deviated from the narrow path which his own theological convictions had shown to him. Persons as diverse as Archbishop Laud, Anne Hutchinson, Thomas Ramsay the False Jew of Hexham, and James Nayler the Quaker propagandist, were all subjected to his wrath.

Very little can be gathered about the early career of Thomas Weld, though the meagre information in the *Dictionary of National Biography* that he was born about 1590 in the South of England can be somewhat supplemented.<sup>4</sup> He was actually born in 1595 in Sudbury, Suffolk, the fourth son of Edmond Weld, a well-to-do mercer, and Amy his wife. Weld matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and was graduated B.A. in 1613/14 and M.A. in 1618. He was ordained deacon at Peterborough 1 March 1617/18 and priest the following day. He then served successively as Vicar at Haverill, Suffolk and Terling, Essex. Exercising his ministry in this school of English Puritanism, Weld followed the familiar path indicated to him by other nonconforming divines. The first few years of his ministry at Terling, which commenced about February 1624/5,<sup>5</sup> seem to have been relatively peaceful, and between 1625 and July, 1631, Weld and his first wife, Margaret Deresleye, were blessed by the birth of four sons.<sup>6</sup> But as Weld's theological convictions became more openly expressed and as the church at the same time attempted to enforce a stricter conformity to Laudian ideals, Weld's parish came to the attention of

<sup>3</sup> J. Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649*, ed. J. Savage (Boston, 1853), 1:298-299, n.1.

<sup>4</sup> *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. Weld, Thomas.

<sup>5</sup> Weld's entries in the Terling Register commence 13 February 1624/5. T. W. Davids, "The Rev. Thomas Weld," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, October, 1882, p. 405.

<sup>6</sup> John (baptized 6 June 1625); Thomas (baptized 26 July 1627); Samuel (baptized 8 October 1629); Edmund (baptized 8 July 1631), *ibid.*

the clerical authorities. A paper survives in Laud's handwriting, dated 25 November 1630, and entitled "The Names of Such Ministers In Essex As Are Not Conformable"; included in this list is "Mr. Thomas Weld, Vicar of Terling." During the next year, Weld was fined £20 by the Ecclesiastical Commission for an unspecified offense.<sup>8</sup> Weld was, in fact, to receive noticeably sharp treatment at Laud's hands. The records of the High Commission contain a brief summary of his case:<sup>9</sup>

"An intimation was sent from this Court to be published in the parish church of Tarling that Mr. Welles should appeare heere this day upon pain of being deprived: An oath was made that it was soe published, and the intimation was likewise read to the Court, reciting that William Bishop of London had heertofore conuented him and given him thereupon a canonicall admonition and tyme for halfe a yeare to consider whether he would subscribe, and that afterwarde the said Thomas Welles was not satisfied, and being put to it whether he would subscribe he refused, that therupon he was excommunicate and afterwarde was scited to appeare in the Consistory at Paules, and he came not and that therefore the Bishop of London was forced to complaine to this Court, and the Court sent this intimation, &c. which beeing heere read and testified upon oath to be published as was required, and the said Mr. Welles not appearing, the Kinges Advocate desired for this contumacy, he might be deprived, &c. Which by the unanimous consent and sentence of the Court was donne: And a sentence ready drawen was then read to that purpose."

<sup>7</sup> S. P. Dom., Charles I, vol. 175, no. 104.

<sup>8</sup> Miscellanea Exchequer Queen's Remembrancer, List of Fines exacted by the Ecclesiastical Commission, 16 November 1631, quoted in Davids, "Thomas Weld," p. 406.

<sup>9</sup> S. R. Gardiner, ed., *Report of Cases in the Courts of the Star Chamber and High Commission* (Westminster, 1886), p. 260.

The deprivation of 1631 impressed itself strongly on Weld. Twelve years later, he made a special visit to Laud in the Tower to berate him for what he had done. Laud, writing of this latter confrontation, commented on Weld in icy terms:<sup>10</sup>

“On Thursday, December 28, which was Innocents day, one Mr. Wells, a New-England Minister, came to me, and in a boisterous manner demanded to know, whether I had Repented or not? I knew him not, till he told me he was Suspended by me, when I was Bishop of London, and he then a Minister in Essex. I told him, if he were Suspended, it was doubtless according to Law. Then upon a little further Speech I recalled the Man to my Remembrance, and what care I took in Conference with him at London-House to recall him from some of his turbulent ways; but all in vain: And now he inferred out of the good words I then gave him, that I Suspended him against my Conscience. In conclusion he told me, I went about to bring Popery into the Kingdom, and he hoped I should have my Reward for it. When I saw him at this heighth, I told him, he and his Fellows, what by their Ignorance, and what by their Railing and other boisterous Carriage would soon actually make more Papists by far, than ever I intended; and that I was a better Protestant than he, or any of his Followers. So I left him in his Heat.”

For the moment, however, Weld was in no position to answer back to Laud. He appears to have gone off briefly to Amsterdam<sup>11</sup> and on 5 June 1632, he arrived in Boston to take up residence in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> W. Laud, *The History of the Troubles and Tryal of William Laud To Which is Prefixed the Diary of His Own Life* (London, 1695), pp. 213-214.

<sup>11</sup> Laud stated in the Court of High Commission that Weld had gone to Amsterdam. Gardiner, *Report of Cases in the Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission*, p. 264. Henry Jacie wrote to John Winthrop, Jr., that Weld had gone to Bergen. *Winthrop Papers* (Boston, 1943, Mass. Hist. Soc.), 3:60.

<sup>12</sup> Winthrop, *History of New England*, 1:93.

Something of Weld's reputation must have preceded him; he is known to have been in touch with John Winthrop, Jr., as early as 1630/31,<sup>13</sup> and one of Winthrop's correspondents had given him a lively account of the excommunication and short-lived arrest of Weld in a letter of January, 1632.<sup>14</sup> In any case, within a month Weld had been established as first pastor of the church at Roxbury. As John Winthrop noted in his history, "After many imparlances and days of humiliation, by those of Boston and Roxbury, to seek the lord for Mr. Welde his disposing, and the advice of those of Plimouth being taken, etc., at length he resolved to sit down with them of Roxbury."<sup>15</sup> In the following November, John Eliot, the noted apostle to the Indians, was joined with Weld at Roxbury as teacher.<sup>16</sup> It is interesting to speculate on the extent of Eliot's influence on Weld, for certainly the desire to foster the propagation of the Gospel among the Indians became one of the strong motives in Weld's life.

Within a short period, Weld established himself as one of the leading ministers in the Bay Colony, and in many of its affairs he played a prominent role. He was a zealous partisan in the fierce Antinomian controversy and took a strict line against the followers of Mrs. Anne Hutchinson.<sup>17</sup> Convinced of their errors, he attempted to change their minds; that failing, he railed at them and that failing too, he participated prominently in the trials of the Antinomian leaders. Weld was later to refer to the Antinomian controversy as "the sorest tryall that ever befell us since we left

<sup>13</sup> The accounts of John Winthrop, Jr., for 1630-31 record the receipt of a payment of £13.7.0 from Weld. *Winthrop Papers*, 3:6.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:60.

<sup>15</sup> Winthrop, *History of New England*, 1:98.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:111.

<sup>17</sup> On the Antinomian controversy, see D. D. Hall, *The Antinomian Controversy 1636-1638* (Middletown, 1968); E. Batts, *Saints and Sectaries* (Chapel Hill, 1962); C. F. Adams, *Three Episodes of Massachusetts History* (Boston, 1896); C. F. Adams, ed., *Antinomianism in the Colony of Massachusetts Bay* (Boston, 1894); D. B. Ruttman, *Winthrop's Boston* (Chapel Hill, 1965). There is a full bibliography on the controversy in Batts, *Saints and Sectaries*, pp. 349-365.

our Native soyle."<sup>18</sup> On the whole, however, Weld found the New World to be the Puritan paradise for which he had hoped. Like many of those who took part in the Great Migration, Weld wrote back to his parishioners in England to tell them of the joys of New England. In a letter of 1633, Weld described his Atlantic crossing in near-lyrical terms:<sup>19</sup> "In spite of Devills and stormes, as cheerful as ever, my wife all the voyage on the Sea better then at land ... att sea my Children never better in their lives." And the Colony, so he urged his former parishioners, was just where the godly should desire to be: "Such groves, such trees, such a aire as I am fully contented withall and desier no better while I live. ... I find three great blessinges: peace, plenty and health in a comfortable measure ... I know no other place on the whole globe of the earth where I would rather be then here: We say to our freends that doubt this Come and see and tast. Here the greater part are the better part." Weld made his own contributions to seeing that the reality did something to match the propaganda. A person with an intense interest in education, he struggled to improve the facilities in the Bay Colony, and in 1638 he became an overseer of Harvard College.<sup>20</sup> He was also closely involved in the production of the Bay Psalm Book, the first volume printed in the American colonies. Inspired in part by a new metrical version of six psalms brought to Boston in July, 1638, by John Josselyn, Weld, John Eliot, and Richard Mather undertook a full metrical translation of the psalms to supersede Sternhold & Hopkins. *The Whole Book of Psalms Faithfully Translated Into English Metre* appeared in 1640, an important if not always, in a literary sense, a graceful production.<sup>21</sup>

By 1640, however, the affairs of the Bay Colony had

<sup>18</sup> *A Short Story of the Rise, Reign and Ruine of the Antinomians* (1644), Preface, printed in Adams, *Antinomianism*, p. 71.

<sup>19</sup> B. M. Sloane MSS 922, fols. 90a-93b, quoted in C. Bridenbaugh, *Vexed and Troubled Englishmen 1590-1642* (New York, 1968), p. 449.

<sup>20</sup> *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. Weld, Thomas.

<sup>21</sup> *Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. Weld, Thomas.

attained something of a desperate quality.<sup>22</sup> Despite financial assistance from England and the immigration of thousands of people into the Colony in the 1630's, the Colony was becoming distinctly poorer. The balance of trade was unfavourable, the colonists having virtually no products to sell to the home markets. Supporters of colonization in England increasingly looked elsewhere in their financial ventures; the prospect of vast profits in the West Indies led many former supporters of New England schemes, like Lord Brooke, the Earl of Warwick, and Sir Arthur Hesilrige, to turn their investments southward away from the apparently profitless Massachusetts Bay. The flow of migration to the Colony slackened, and the reverse flow of emigration from the Colony began, intensifying the economic depression and endangering the Colony's credit. By the autumn of 1640, the Colony had begun to debate the idea of sending agents to England to seek financial support to protect the Colony's chartered interests and to participate in the reformation of church and state that seemed so imminent. There were those who argued that this was not a sound course; Winthrop opposed sending agents "for this consideration, that if we should put ourselves under the protection of the parliament, we must then be subject to all such laws as they should make, or at least such as they might impose upon us; in which course though they should intend our good, yet it might prove very prejudicial to us."<sup>23</sup>

By the following February, however the Court of Assistants had voted "to send some chosen men . . . with commission to negotiate for us . . . both in furthering the work of reformation of the churches there which was now like to be attempted, and to satisfy our countrymen of the true cause why our engagements there have not been satisfied this year . . . and also to seek out some way for procuring

<sup>22</sup> For a good discussion of the state of the colony, see R. P. Stearns, "The Weld-Peter Mission to England," *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, December, 1934, pp. 188-246; R. P. Stearns, *The Strenuous Puritan* (Urbana, 1954), chaps. 6-7.

<sup>23</sup> Winthrop, *History of New England*, 2:30.

cotton from the West Indies, or other means that might be lawful and not dishonorable to the gospel, for our present supply of clothing, etc."<sup>24</sup> The agents selected were Thomas Weld, Hugh Peter, pastor at Salem and like Weld a Cambridge Puritan harried out by the Laudians, and William Hibbins, a prominent Boston merchant. The governor wrote to the Salem and Roxbury churches asking for the release of Peter and Weld; though the Roxbury church acquiesced in this plan, there was marked opposition at Salem, both on grounds of state policy and on the grounds that it was unseemly to send ministers on such a mission.<sup>25</sup> The opposition at Salem, spreading throughout the Colony, threatened to create dangerous divisions and the plan was temporarily abandoned, but by the spring of 1641, with the economic situation continuing to deteriorate, the scheme was revived and once again Weld, Peter, and Hibbins were chosen to act for the Colony. The Salem objections being this time silenced, the trio hastened to depart. Since no ship was immediately available for England, they left on 3 August for Newfoundland to catch passage in the fishing fleet.<sup>26</sup> In Newfoundland they were again delayed for lack of shipping; both Peter and Weld used the opportunity to preach to the seamen on the island who, it is recorded, "were much affected with the word taught, and entertained them with all courtesy."<sup>27</sup> After three weeks passage was secured, and following a voyage which, according to Winthrop, was marked by foul weather and continual storms, the agents reached England.

It is important to understand the intentions of the agents. Though no known copy of their instructions survives it seems reasonably clear what the intentions of the Colony in sending Weld, Peter, and Hibbins were. They were to

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> The opposition was led by John Endecott. See his letter to Winthrop, *4 Coll. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, vi. 138-141. See also Winthrop, *History of New England*, 2:31.

<sup>26</sup> *Winthrop, History of New England*, 2:37-38.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:38.

explain to the Colony's creditors why payments could not be made now as in former years; they were to secure what aid they could—in either money or supplies—for the Colony, for Harvard College, and for missionary efforts among the Indians. They were to seek any form of honorable support for the commerce of the Colony by approaching parliamentary leaders and other influential friends. Finally they were to further the work of reformation in the English churches. Though some authorities have denied that this was officially a part of their mission, the evidence of Winthrop's journal seems irrefutable on this point.<sup>28</sup> It is also indicative that Edward Johnson, writing in 1652, commented that Weld and Peter "so soon as they heard of the chaining up of those biting beasts who went under the name of spiritual lords" returned to England where "what assistance the Gospel of Christ found there by their preaching is since clearly manifested."<sup>29</sup> This specific part of their instructions was, in the long run, to prove fatal to their efforts as agents and was to change materially the life of Thomas Weld. That the Colony's confidence in its agents was in most respects justified is true enough; Weld and Peter were skilled controversialists and both were deeply committed to the ends for which they had been sent. Yet there was one chief difficulty; the Colony had not been quite clear in its own mind whether priority was to be given to the material or the spiritual parts of the commission. But the nature and inclinations of both Weld and Peter were such that it was nearly inevitable that they would be carried away by the work of destroying the Laudian regime at the expense of their other interests.

The England to which Weld and Peter returned in 1641 was vastly different from that which they had left less than

<sup>28</sup> Winthrop noted that the agents were "to be ready to make use of any opportunity God should offer for the good of the country here, as also to give any advice, as it should be required, for the settling the right form of church discipline there." *Ibid.*, 2:37.

<sup>29</sup> E. Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence* (1652), ed. Poole, p. 224, cited by Stearns, "Weld-Peter Mission," p. 194, n.1.

a decade before. In September, 1641, the country stood at the end of a euphoric summer in which it seemed as if a revolution had been peacefully achieved.<sup>30</sup> Star Chamber, High Commission, ship money had all been destroyed. The architect of "thorough" Strafford had been curbed, and Laud was in the Tower awaiting similar treatment for his ecclesiastical policies. Yet already disturbing signs had come to the surface, notably in ecclesiastical affairs, and it would not be long before the triumphant forces, splitting among themselves, allowed the King to create a party, to draw the moderates like Hyde to his side, and to begin that slow, insensible process by which the country slipped into a civil war.<sup>31</sup> During those chaotic and confusing days, the agents began their work for the Colony. It is not necessary to follow out in full detail their efforts on behalf of Massachusetts Bay, but several points are important to note. In the first place, though there existed little effective parliamentary machinery for regulating the colonies, the agents were able to gain the parliament's ear in an effort to remove restraints on New England shipping which had been imposed by a Laudian commission; in August, 1643, the parliament declared all restraints removed from ships, persons, and goods bound for New England.<sup>32</sup> They also met with some measure of success in seeking money and supplies from wealthy friends of the Colony. During their first winter, they made contacts with donors of various sorts, mainly London businessmen who had invested in the Colony before. For example, a group headed by Robert Houghton, a Southwark brewer and former donor, gave £500

<sup>30</sup> On the mood of England in the summer of 1641, cf. H. R. Trevor-Roper, "Three Foreigners: the Philosophers of the Puritan Revolution," in *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 1968), pp. 264-265.

<sup>31</sup> The phrase is Bulstrode Whitelocke's. He wrote that the country had "insensibly slid into this beginning of a civil war by one unexpected accident after another as waves of the sea which have brought us thus far, and we scarce know how." B. Whitelocke, *Memorials of the English Affairs* (Oxford, 1853), 1:176. On the passage of the moderates to the King's side, cf. the case of Hyde, discussed in detail in B. H. G. Wormald, *Clarendon: Politics, History, and Religion 1640-1660* (Cambridge, 1951), part 1.

<sup>32</sup> *C.J.*, 3:207.

in cloth and other useful commodities. This was shipped in 1642 to the Colony, sold at a profit of £80, which was divided equally between President Dunster for the college and Captain Sedgwick, and the principal returned to England by the next ship.<sup>33</sup> But even in these early transactions, difficulties arose. In one attempt to raise money Weld and Peter signed a bond for £110, and when the transaction failed, they were forced to pay the price of the bond out of their own pocket.<sup>34</sup> Still, by the end of the first year abroad, Weld and Peter had gathered nearly £2,000 in total for Massachusetts Bay, no small accomplishment in view of the chaos of the time.<sup>35</sup> But Peter first and then Weld began to find themselves drawn by inclination and temperament into the developing struggle.

The part which Weld played in the unfolding events of the war is very sketchily recorded, though there was no surprise in the fact that he vigorously espoused the parliamentary cause. Weld was active in the campaign to see that no accommodation that did not fully grant Puritan demands was reached with the King.<sup>36</sup> He played an active part in soliciting funds to transport children and orphans, many of them refugees from the Irish rebellion, to New England and succeeded in raising nearly £875 for this purpose.<sup>37</sup> With such a sum, it should have been possible to arrange for the transportation of about a hundred children, but unforeseen difficulties arose—delays in shipping, costs of clothing, medical expenses. Weld estimated that more than £300 of the fund was dissipated in such fashion.<sup>38</sup> In the summer of 1643, twenty children were safely transported and others followed. But over £200 of the money

<sup>33</sup> Stearns, "Weld-Peter Mission," p. 199.

<sup>34</sup> Bod. Rawlinson MSS c934, f.5., printed in G. D. Scull, "Rev. Thomas Welde's 'Innocency Cleared'," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, January, 1882, p. 64.

<sup>35</sup> Stearns, "Weld-Peter Mission," p. 201.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 214 ff. Weld mentions the figure of "Eight hundred and odd pounds." Scull, "Welde's 'Innocency Cleared'," p. 64.

<sup>38</sup> Stearns, "Weld-Peter Mission," p. 215.

sent to the Massachusetts Court for the care of the children was misapplied, some £150 going to President Dunster of Harvard to defray costs of his house, £50 to John Winthrop, Jr., for expenses, and more to pay for soldiers to go to Providence in 1643.<sup>39</sup> Though the financial records are anything but clear, there is evidence to suggest outright fraud, especially in the case of the merchants, Emmanuel Downing and Nehemiah Bourne, who received some £712 according to Weld's accounts for the care and transportation of children and who appear to have pocketed some portion of this without any services performed.<sup>40</sup> As Weld reported in his account to the General Court in 1647, Massachusetts had "little benefitt by all these moneyes and lesse Considering how great trouble the Court hath had about it."<sup>41</sup> This was the unfortunate story of many of the agents' efforts on behalf of the Colony. They assisted John Winthrop, Jr., in attempting to raise funds to establish an ironworks in the Colony; Weld witnessed the agreement and appears to have invested in the project, but a whole series of unfortunate developments brought this scheme too to ruin, and William Hubbard was to write of it a few years later that "instead of drawing out bars of iron, for the country's use, there was hammered out nothing but contention and lawsuits, which was but a bad return for the undertakers."<sup>42</sup>

There can be no denying that Weld was labouring in unfruitful fields. In the first year, the good will of friends had been substantially exhausted, and it was felt that further efforts would require a more strenuous campaign of pub-

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215, n.5.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216. Cf. the following entries in Weld's receipts and disbursements: £50 to Bourne "for 30 passengers agreed wth for and not put aboard"; £91 to Bourne and Downing "for losse that some passenge ye Chil: runne away." There are other similar entries. J. H. Tuttle, "Thomas Weld's Receipts and Disbursements," *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, December, 1911, p. 125.

<sup>41</sup> G. D. Scull, "The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England and the Rev. Thomas Welde," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, April, 1885, p. 182..

<sup>42</sup> W. Hubbard, *A General History of New England* (Boston, 1848), p. 374.

licity. Accordingly, the agents persuaded President Dunster of Harvard to send an account of the first commencement, a description of the college, and a summary of its rules and regulations so that they could demonstrate this was no paper institution, as a similar college in Virginia had turned out to be after its proponents had raised money for it in England. In the winter of 1643, Weld and Peter assembled this and other material sent to them from the Colony, made some additions of their own, and published the collection under the title of *New England's First Fruits* in the early spring of 1643. Here at least Weld did have some success. Following on his plea that "all things in the Colledge are at present, like to proceed even as wee can wish, may it but please the Lord to . . . stir up the hearts of his faithfull, and able Servants in our owne Native Country and here . . . to advance this Honourable and most hopeful worke,"<sup>43</sup> Weld secured £100 from Lady Ann Moulson, a fervent Puritan and wealthy widow of a former Lord Mayor of London. The donation was to be used for needy scholars, and it became the first scholarship established at Harvard College. Weld, it might be noted, not only signed the bond for the money, but also arranged that the stipend should go to his son John "till he attain the degree of a Master of Arts."<sup>44</sup> In conjunction with Peter, Weld secured perhaps an additional £200 in books, money, and other supplies for the college and the advancement of learning.<sup>45</sup> He had less success in raising funds for the conversion of the Indians, a cause to which he was personally deeply committed. Despite an encouraging annual gift of £20 from

<sup>43</sup> *New England's First Fruits* (1643), quoted in Stearns, "Weld-Peter Mission," p. 218.

<sup>44</sup> On the scholarship see A. M. Davis, "The First Scholarship at Harvard College," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, n.s.5, pp. 129-139 and A. M. Davis, "The Lady Moulson Scholarship at Cambridge," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, n.s.8, pp. 274-280.

<sup>45</sup> Weld noted receipt of £231 for the college and the advance of learning. This included Lady Moulson's gift. But there are other entries in his confusing accounts relating to educational purposes, such as Roxbury School. Tuttle, "Thomas Weld's Receipts and Disbursements," pp. 124, 126.

Lady Armine, Weld could only solicit meagre additional gifts for this purpose.<sup>46</sup>

By the late summer of 1643, it was apparent to both Peter and Weld that their usefulness as agents for the Colony, at least in a fund-raising capacity, was nearing or at its end. In fact, they intended to return in that year in one of the ships hired to transport the poor children, but as Weld later wrote, "providence appeared clearly to o<sup>r</sup> consciences to stop us in o<sup>r</sup> way, more then once or twice: in o<sup>r</sup> ful intentions and preparation for y<sup>e</sup> voyage putting such crosbarrs in our way that in deed we could not with good conscience break thorow them."<sup>47</sup> What exactly the circumstances were, other than the fact that Weld did not choose to risk a winter voyage, is not completely clear, but it would seem that a major consideration was the desire of Weld to participate more fully in the parliamentary and Puritan cause in England. In a letter which he wrote to the General Court in September, 1643, Weld revealed the extent to which he had become involved in the last of his commissions, the work of reformation in England.<sup>48</sup>

"The p<sup>r</sup>sent condition of this kingdome, y<sup>t</sup> is now upon the Verticall point, together w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>e</sup> incredible importunities of very many godly Persons, great & smale (who hapily conceive we by o<sup>r</sup> p<sup>r</sup>sence doe more good here, then we o<sup>r</sup>selves dare imagine y<sup>t</sup> we doe) have made us, after many various thoughts, much agitation, & consultation w<sup>th</sup> god, & men, vnwillingly willing to venter o<sup>r</sup>selves upon Gods Prövidence here, & be content to tarry one six moenths longer from yr & o<sup>r</sup> churches most desired p<sup>r</sup>sence with whom o<sup>r</sup> hearts are, w<sup>h</sup>out the least wavering, fixed; Things can not long stand at this passe here, as now, but will speedily be better or worse, If better, we shall not repent us to have bene spectatours

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>47</sup> Scull, "Welde's 'Innocency Cleared,'" p. 68.

<sup>48</sup> W. B. Trask, "Rev. Thomas Welde's Letter, 1643," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, January, 1882, p. 39.

& furtherers of o<sup>r</sup> Deare Cuntries good, & to be happy messengers of y<sup>e</sup> good newes thereof vnto you. If worse, we are like to bring thousands w<sup>th</sup> us to you.

“If yr selves were here & favor all things as they stand, & hard all argum<sup>ts</sup> on both sides, we p<sup>r</sup>sume you would advise, at p<sup>r</sup>sent, not to disert the cause of Christ, & discourage so many 1000<sup>ds</sup> at once, as will (say they) be weakned by o<sup>r</sup> departure; The greatest Venter is o<sup>r</sup> owne, but the Lord Jesus, whom we seeke herein, whose o<sup>r</sup>selves, tallents & lives are, is able to carry us on Eagles wings, by the helpe of yr praiers, above all dangers & feares & bring us safly into yr bosomes w<sup>th</sup> a blessing by y<sup>e</sup> next Opportunity.”

Even before he wrote this letter, Weld had joined with Peter in contributing to the controversial religious literature of the Presbyterian-Independent struggle. It would appear that their inspiration came largely from New England, through their editing and publishing of works written by Richard Mather and others of their Massachusetts colleagues.<sup>49</sup> The New England basis of their efforts created certain difficulties. Particularly was this the case in regard to policy towards toleration. On this point the Independent ministers of old and New England differed sharply. While in England the Independent circles stressed toleration to win converts and to protect themselves from the Presbyterians, in New England Independent churches, the whole principle was abhorred. Peter managed to engage in this pamphleteering without unduly compromising his position or raising charges of hypocrisy. Weld did not; in 1644 he was induced by Presbyterian plotters to edit, with additions, Governor Winthrop's manuscript account of the Antinomian troubles.<sup>50</sup> The book, by emphasizing Congregational intolerance in New England, seriously compromised the Independent's position in England and emphasized the

<sup>49</sup> Stearns, "Weld-Peter Mission," pp. 221 ff.

<sup>50</sup> *A Short Story of the Rise, Reign and Ruine of the Antinomians*, printed in Adams, *Antinomianism*, pp. 67-233.

ambiguities of Weld's position in the Independent fold, an ambiguity which he was later to demonstrate at Gateshead in an even more spectacular fashion.

It was at this time that Weld undertook his last recorded major action on behalf of Massachusetts. Parliament had created the Earl of Warwick governor-in-chief and Lord High Admiral of all the colonies in America. At the same time they had created a committee of seventeen of whom a majority (defined as nine plus the Earl of Warwick) were empowered, in effect, to rule the colonies and to control their charters.<sup>51</sup> Within six weeks of the creation of the Warwick commission, Weld applied to it for a patent to the Narragansett territory. He appears to have been acting on his own, without direct authorization from the Colony, in order to forestall the efforts of Roger Williams, who had recently arrived seeking a legal basis for his government in Rhode Island. Weld did receive a patent on 10 December 1643, but it had been signed by only nine of the commission, and when Williams secured a charter in March of the next year, properly signed and sealed, the battle was lost.<sup>52</sup> Apparently Weld knew that he had been outmanoeuvred from the very beginning, since he did not send his patent to Massachusetts until 1645, and only then in an effort to show he had tried to counter Williams.<sup>53</sup>

Though Weld continued to oversee a few commercial transactions for Massachusetts, his services had come to an end. After the failure of the Narragansett patent, he turned over part of the Colony's business to John Pocock and other London friends of Massachusetts, and he urged the General Court that Pocock and his group be designated the official agents.<sup>54</sup> This was done in October, 1645, and at the same time a sharp note was sent back to Weld: "The howse of Deputies think it meete y<sup>e</sup> as Mr. Peeters & Mr.

<sup>51</sup> C. H. Firth and R. H. Rait, eds., *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum* (London, 1911), 1:331-333.

<sup>52</sup> Stearns, "Weld-Peter Mission," p 233.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Winthrop, *History of New England*, p. 260.

Weld being sente ouer as persons fitt to negotiate for ye Countrye, having bine long absent desire they may understand ye Courts minde, that they desire their presence heere & speedy returne.<sup>55</sup> The tone of the note was indicative of the fact that misunderstanding and suspicion had come to characterize Weld's relation with Massachusetts Bay by 1645. From the Massachusetts side there was disappointment; the large collections of 1642 had raised hopes which Weld's efforts had not been able to satisfy. There was also a feeling that Weld had become so involved in the struggle between the Independents and the Presbyterians that he had been neglecting the real interests of the Colony. From Weld's side, there was great displeasure and mounting suspicion about the use which the Colony was making of the goods and materials being sent over. That the Colony misapplied the funds is obvious. Though the financial records are far from complete, there is ample evidence that the Massachusetts General Court persistently failed to honour contracts made by the agents with donors in England.<sup>56</sup> They acted in this way even to their closest friends, such as John Pocock. In 1642 Weld and his colleagues purchased cloth from him to the value of £150, agreeing to make payment within six months. The Colony sold the goods in question at a healthy profit, but neglected to transmit any money to Pocock. Weld and Peter repaid him £100 out of the money they were collecting for the Colony, but the remaining £50 went unpaid until 1656, much to Pocock's irritation and Weld's discomfiture.<sup>57</sup> Situations of this sort led to charges against Weld and Peter of embezzling the funds. To attempt to clear themselves, they opened their accounts to public inspection at John Pocock's shop in Watling Street, but even if they could show what they had done with the money, they could not account for what had happened to it after it had left their

<sup>55</sup> Mass. Archives, cvi. 4a., quoted in Stearns, "Weld-Peter Mission," p. 235.

<sup>56</sup> On this point, see Stearns, "Weld-Peter Mission," p. 237.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237, n.4.

hands.<sup>58</sup> In part, the confusion was procedural; there was no real system for transferring money and supplies to the colonies, and Massachusetts Bay did not appoint its first auditor of accounts until October, 1645, after Weld had been discharged.<sup>59</sup> But the trouble was also clearly connected with the role that Weld had played in the Independent-Presbyterian struggle. It seems clear that the most vociferous English critics were London Presbyterians, seeking to discredit Weld and Peter, and through them, the Independent cause. It is suggestive that the charges of embezzlement came largely from the pen of that cantankerous Presbyterian, Thomas Edwards, and appeared first in his *Gangraena*.<sup>60</sup> It is suggestive too that Weld identified a major group of his critics as being "divers ministers who used to meet at Sion College."<sup>61</sup>

Though Weld did his best to clear his name and bury these accusations, they followed him to Gateshead. The whole affair was renewed with considerable bitterness in 1649 at the time when the New England Company was being organized. This parliamentary effort, a companion piece to the Commission for Propagating the Gospel in Wales and in the northern counties, was better conceived than the solo efforts of Weld and Peter, and it had a wide parliamentary backing. But the new corporation found it difficult to raise contributions at the start because the old tales of embezzlement by the Weld-Peter mission were revived. William Steele, the president, wrote to the Commissioners of the United Colonies, saying that their work had been made difficult because of "the ill management of former gifts bestowed on y<sup>e</sup> Countrey of New England of which no account hath been given to y<sup>e</sup> donors and som personally Reflecting upon Mr. Wells and Mr. Peters, som upon our

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Scull, "Welde's 'Innocency Cleared'."

<sup>59</sup> *Mass. Records*, II, 141-144, cited in Stearns, "Weld-Peter Mission," p. 237.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. T. Edwards, *Gangraena* (London, 1646), pp. 40-42; T. Edwards, *The Second Part of Gangraena* (London, 1646), pp. 84, 289-290.

<sup>61</sup> Scull, "Welde's 'Innocency Cleared'," p. 65.

selves the Corporation as if wee had so much per pound of what is collected and might feast our selves liberally therewith wheras through mercy wee never yet eat or drank of the fruit or charge of yt."<sup>62</sup> Weld tried vigorously to clear his name; he sent full accounts to the Colony in 1645, forwarded a detailed relation of his efforts in April, 1647, and prepared a manuscript entitled "Innocency Cleared" for the press, but it was not until 1651 that the General Court finally audited and approved Weld's accounts.<sup>63</sup> His efforts and those of Steele on his behalf finally silenced his critics and cleared his name. As he wrote to Steele from Gateshead in January, 1650,<sup>64</sup> he was grateful for his "friendly, faithful and loving defense of me and Mr. Peters." The efforts, Weld maintained, had been worthwhile: "Glad am I that I have opportunitye hereby, to make my just defence to yo<sup>w</sup> and by yo<sup>w</sup> to the Corporation or to any others . . . that itt may appeare those guifts given for the good of Newe England were not in vaine . . . I am sure my Conscience knowes, and how much I am like to bee a looser will not see, yet I blame not those Godly Soules there in New England but looke higher and sitt downe contented if any way I have bene serviceable." Still, when all was said and done, Weld was discouraged and somewhat cynical. Though still deeply committed to the goals of fostering the godly, improving Harvard, and converting the Indians, he closed his letter to Steele by stating, "I shall learne some points of wisdome, I hope not to meddle noe more in this."

This is not the place to attempt a full analysis of the result of Weld's and Peter's efforts for Massachusetts Bay. But it should be noted that they had some success. Under the most unpropitious circumstances, they had obtained reasonably large contributions for the Colony, the college, the poor, and the Indians. By lobbying parliament, they obtained relief from the excise and other duties levied on

<sup>62</sup> "Records of the United Colonies of New England," quoted in Stearns, "Weld-Peter Mission," p. 238.

<sup>63</sup> Tuttle, "Thomas Weld's Receipts and Disbursements," p. 126.

<sup>64</sup> Scull, "Welde's 'Innocency Cleared'," pp. 63-64.

the Colony's commerce. They helped to give to the Colony a prestige in England which it enjoyed at no other time in its existence. And they did all this without compromising the Colony's position in regard to its own charter, proceedings against which were stilled until the Restoration period. There was failure admittedly to forestall Roger Williams, but Weld missed success here by a narrow margin. As one historian has written, "No subsequent Massachusetts agents to England in the seventeenth century obtained so great material benefits for the Colony."<sup>65</sup> The real failure lay in a different direction, the instructions to the agents to further reformation in England. These efforts not only diverted them from their material task, but led them, and especially Peter, to points of theology and ecclesiastical policy which placed them at odds with the Colony and would, as Thomas Edwards pointed out, have caused the colonists to "trod them down as mire in the street."<sup>66</sup>

Though Weld saw his relations with Massachusetts Bay severed, he did not find himself at loose ends. He had entered too fully into the maelstrom of English events for that. He may have maintained for a period a clerical position of some sort in London. Edwards refers to him as halting "between Giles Cripplegate and New England, between Master Walker and the money for the poor children's sending over to New England."<sup>67</sup> In 1646 he served a short spell as rector at Wanlip, Leicestershire, and on 1 February 1649/50, he was installed at St. Mary's, Gateshead, where he was to serve out the interregnum as a zealous supporter of the Cromwellian cause.<sup>68</sup> His arrival in Gateshead was a boon to the Puritan cause, even if it gave less comfort to a Presbyterian like Edwards, for Gateshead had stubbornly elected a delinquent preacher, probably

<sup>65</sup> Stearns, "Weld-Peter Mission," p. 245.

<sup>66</sup> Edwards, *Gangraena*, p. 53.

<sup>67</sup> Edwards, *Second Part of Gangraena*, p. 84.

<sup>68</sup> For Weld's stay at Wanlip, see *Dictionary of American Biography*. Weld came to Gateshead in February, 1650, following a petition on his behalf by the parishioners, *C.J.* 6:354; Gateshead Vestry Book, p. 159.

Elizason Gilbert, in 1647, and his anti-Puritanism apparently did much to encourage the malignants of Newcastle who were widely suspected of having a hand in his choice.<sup>69</sup>

Weld's career at Gateshead is noteworthy in two respects. In the first place, he displayed himself as a prolific propagandist of strict Puritanism and lashed out at the more left-wing sects, notably the Quakers and the Baptists. In the second place, his version of a gathered church created great tension in the parish, as he systematically excluded from full membership in the church any parishioners he suspected of being ungodly. This was to develop into a major confrontation between the parish and the ecclesiastical authorities in 1657.

It is interesting to note that although Weld remained in essence an Independent, some of his first published work while in the north involved editing sermons of Cuthbert Sydenham, who appears to have been in Presbyterian orders. That this could be the case illustrates the essential veracity of Sydenham's own picture of the Newcastle clergy of both Presbyterian and Independent persuasions working closely together.<sup>70</sup> The work in question was Sydenham's *Hypocrisy Discovered in its Nature and Workings*, which was published in 1654 with a preface by Weld. Weld displayed there some of his characteristic attitudes. He indulged in sharp attacks on Quakers and Arminians and criticized those who "allegging to be scandalized by your walkings are turned to embrace the gross abominations of popery."<sup>71</sup> More than a hint of the stress on Puritan morality which swept the Newcastle region in the 1650's is indicated in Weld's mention of "the loathsome fashions of many of you with powdered haire, painted faces, naked breasts and such phantastick garbes, that yet would go for choice Saints and Christians."<sup>72</sup> Weld

<sup>69</sup> On this incident, see Howell, *Newcastle and the Puritan Revolution*, p. 228.

<sup>70</sup> C. Sydenham, *The Greatness of the Mystery of Godliness* (London, 1654), dedication to William Johnson. See Howell, *Newcastle and the Puritan Revolution*, pp. 245 ff. on this phenomenon.

<sup>71</sup> Longstaffe, *Memoirs of Barnes*, p. 366.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

also included a warm tribute to his fellow preacher, indicating he was capable of praise as well as vituperation: "You may see his tender bowels towards the poorest soules under any of the workings of God, his unwearied paines, even to the visible wasting of his owne bodily strength in the work of the Ministry, and his great care over the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made him overseer, all of these did bespeake him a vessell fitted for his Master's use, and it is not unknown to those in chiefest places his otherwise usefulness to the people of God in this nation. Thus did he serve his generation with these many talents his God had furnished him with."<sup>73</sup>

The spirit of co-operation with other local clergy manifested here was typical of Weld's literary productions while at Gateshead. He seldom wrote alone but most often in conjunction with his two closest ecclesiastical colleagues, Samuel Hammond and William Durant, and in particular they joined together to resist the Quakers and the Baptists. It is significant that a large proportion of the books published in Newcastle in this period fell into this category of controversial writings: just under one-half the books published in the town between 1652 and 1662 were concerned with the Quakers and the Baptists, and in 1653, when more books were published in Newcastle than in any other year during the interregnum, all five of them meet this description.<sup>74</sup> It is not necessary here to trace out the shadowy beginnings of Baptism in the Tyne Valley, but one incident which closely involved Weld deserves discussion.<sup>75</sup> This was the bizzare episode of the False Jew.<sup>76</sup> The Baptist preacher at Hexham, Thomas Tillam, had proudly proclaimed the conversion of a Jew, Joseph ben Israel, to the Baptist faith. The convert turned out to be, however, a Scottish Catholic

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 367.

<sup>74</sup> R. Welford, "Early Newcastle Typography 1639-1800," *A.A.*<sup>3</sup> iii (1907), pp. 56-58.

<sup>75</sup> On the early history of the Baptists in the Tyne Valley, see Howell, *Newcastle and the Puritan Revolution*, pp. 248 ff.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 250-251; E. A. Payne, "Thomas Tillam," *Baptist Quarterly*, n.s., vol. 17 (1957-58), pp. 61-66.

named Thomas Ramsay. Ramsay had been born in London, educated at Edinburgh and Glasgow and then gone via Germany to Rome, where he had passed time in a Dominican monastery and a Jesuit College. He had then been sent by papal order on a special mission to Germany where he had worked closely with the Anabaptists. Returning to Rome, he was circumcised to act like a Jew and then sailed from Hamburg to Shields in 1652, using the name of Thomas Horsley. Under the alias of Joseph ben Israel, he remained in Newcastle for a short period, making some contacts with the Baptists there before going on to Hexham to ensnare Tillam. He had been sent to the north to create dissension among the sects, and he succeeded admirably. Under questioning by the clergy of the Newcastle region, in which Weld played a prominent part, the whole shabby story came out. Weld took an active role in publicizing the story, notably in the tract, *A False Jew*, published in 1653. The case allowed Weld and his colleagues to indulge in two of their favourite games: embarrassing the extreme sects and warning against the Catholic danger. "Deare Brethren," they warned, "keep the doore strictly, let none come over the wall, nor do not you breake it downe to let such in."<sup>77</sup> They stressed that "this wretched Counterfeit told us that the method of the Popish Emissaries at present in England is to undermine the churches by closing with errors and crying up notions."<sup>78</sup> They argued against the danger of the Baptist reliance on single ordinance of baptism; this, Weld argued, would undo all "for it will . . . make men under-valew grace in comparison of that ordinance."<sup>79</sup>

Weld and his colleagues were able to turn the affair into a highly successful assault on the Hexham Baptists. Ramsay was arrested and sent to London.<sup>80</sup> Tillam, despite

<sup>77</sup> T. Weld and others, *A False Jew* (London, 1653), p. iv.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Cal. S. P. Dom. 1653-4*, pp. 73, 101, 428. In March, 1660, a Thomas Ramsay was given a pass to France, but whether or not this was the same man is not clear. *Cal. S. P. Dom. 1659-60*, p. 572.

efforts to defend himself in print, was locally discredited, and his relations with Baptist congregations in London severely strained. The "child of the devil ... from Rome," as the Baptist records of Hexham refer to the False Jew,<sup>81</sup> had enabled the Newcastle clergy to cast Tillam into a position from which he and the Hexham congregation could not easily recover. Within a short period the Hexham congregation was split into two factions, and Tillam himself left, defeated, in 1656. The decay of the Baptist community, slow at first, became more and more rapid until shortly after 1660 they could write, "The church here began sadly to decline their duties, break off their meetings, and forget their Rock, whereupon miserable effects ensued to be their portion, so that most of them returned to folly ... little of a (right) spirit yet remained in them to return unto the Lord."<sup>82</sup> Weld could congratulate himself that he, just as he had in Massachusetts Bay when faced by the Antinomians, had struck a crushing blow for the godly party.

Weld's dispute with the Quakers, though it led to a greater volume of paper, was less successful, in part because he faced a more formidable antagonist in James Nayler, in part because the Quaker community struck more permanent roots, aided in this by the patronage of Sir Arthur Hesilrige's crony and secretary, Anthony Pearson.<sup>83</sup> The techniques of attack by Weld and the Newcastle clergy on the Quakers were similar to those they employed against the Baptists: discredit their theological position and imply there were dangers of popery being raised. In *The Perfect Pharisee Under Monkish Holiness*, published at Gateshead in 1653, Weld and his colleagues set out to present a view of what they considered to be the doctrines of the Quakers. If the end product is a thoroughly distorted picture of what

<sup>81</sup> B. Underhill, ed., *Records of the Churches of Christ Gathered at Fentanton, Warbovs, and Hexham 1644-1720* (London, 1854), p. 292.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 297.

<sup>83</sup> On the early history of the Quakers in Tyneside and the importance of Pearson, cf. Howell, *Newcastle and the Puritan Revolution*, pp. 254 ff.

Nayler, Fox, Pearson, and others did believe, it still affords a picture of the enemy which the Newcastle establishment assumed it was fighting. It is hardly necessary to list the seventeen positions which they attributed to the Quakers and supported by quotations often violently ripped from context. Their nature is illustrated by the assertion that the Quakers postulated an equality of man with God. The principles with which they taxed the Quakers were a more accurate presentation; they were the same charges that so often provoked difficulties between the Quakers and the government, namely that they would not salute anyone, that they would not give any outward token of reverence to those in authority, such as magistrates and parents, and that they claimed no man should bear the title of master.<sup>84</sup> To Weld, the Quakers were new Pharisees, separating themselves from the rest of humanity "upon an account of a conceit they had of their owne surpassing holinesse."<sup>85</sup> The tract concluded with a typical appeal to the faithful to remain firm: "And now, Brethren, you, for the establishing of whose Faith in a speciall manner we have Published this, having forewarned you of grievous Wolves entring in upon you; not sparing but endeavouring to make havocke of the Flocke and of the Faith once delivered to the Saints. We commend you to the Lord and the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance amongst all them that are sanctified."<sup>86</sup>

James Nayler was not one to let such attacks go unanswered, and Weld and his colleagues soon found themselves in a virulent pamphlet war with the Quaker leaders.<sup>87</sup> In their second onslaught, *A Further Discovery of That Generation of Men Called Quakers*, published at Gateshead in 1654, they attempted to draw parallels between the doc-

<sup>84</sup> T. Weld and others. *The Perfect Pharisee under Monkish Holinesse* (Gateshead, 1653), pp. 31-34.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>87</sup> On this, see Howell. *Newcastle and the Puritan Revolution*, pp. 257 ff. I shall treat this controversy in more detail in a forthcoming article.

trines of the Quakers and those of the papists, especially in connection with the doctrine of justification. "It is as claere as the noone day . . . that the Papall Apostasy and state is the Anti-Christ so often prophesied of in scripture. Now it is as plaine that the very distinguishing Doctrines and practices of these men are such as are the maine principles of that man of sinne in opposition to Jesus Christ."<sup>88</sup> The remainder of the argument was less imaginative and in the main was a repetition of their assertions in their first tract. Weld could take less satisfaction from this struggle than he could from his encounter with the Baptists. In characteristic fashion, Nayler got in the last word, and there is some evidence, notably in the visitation records of Bishop Cosin, that the Quakers had managed to settle themselves permanently in some places in Northumberland and Durham, including Gateshead.<sup>89</sup>

Weld was, however, diverted from these confrontations with the sects by difficulties in his own parish.<sup>90</sup> In his attempt to establish a godly church, Weld began to cast out of his congregation those who differed from his New England, Independent views. A crisis was reached in 1657. By then it was alleged he had "interpretatively excommunicated and actually excluded above a thousand soules from the benefit of the sacraments, with out any legall proceeding, hearing, or sentence denounced against them in any civill or ecclesiasticall judicature, and have so kept them under the same penall suspention above eight years together, against the rules of law, religion and conscience; nor will indulge the favour of administering the sacraments to any of his parish, but to eight women and two men, weak and unstable persons, that are sublimed his converts."<sup>91</sup> The Presbyterian element in Gateshead, alarmed at this sort of

<sup>88</sup> T. Weld and others, *A Further Discovery of That Generation of Men Called Quakers* (Gateshead, 1654), p. 11.

<sup>89</sup> G. L. Turner, "Presentations in Episcopal Visitations 1662-1679 Durham," *Journal of the Friends' Historical Society*, vol. 13 (1916), pp. 20-21.

<sup>90</sup> Longstaffe, *Memoirs of Barnes*, pp. 375-382; Howell, *Newcastle upon Tyne and the Puritan Revolution*, pp. 263-266.

<sup>91</sup> Longstaffe, *Memoirs of Barnes*, p. 380.

independent ascendancy and intolerance, demanded the establishment of a Presbyterian lecturer at Gateshead. The parishioners who complained stressed their willingness to undertake the charge of the lecturer themselves, "preferring their spiritual improvements before secular interests."<sup>92</sup> It is noteworthy that this petition for the installation of a Presbyterian lecturer was signed by all four serving churchwardens of the parish. They appear to have had in mind enlisting one of the Newcastle Presbyterians—Cole, Prideaux, or Knightbridge—until they secured someone on a more permanent basis. Weld, under pressure, seems to have agreed initially with this plan, but he then changed his mind and precipitated increased difficulties by withdrawing his approval. On 30 November 1657, his dissident congregation pressed him to sign an agreement which would have allowed a Presbyterian lecturer at Gateshead once a fortnight, with the administration of the sacrament once a month and a promise that he would not interfere in any way in the choice of the lecturer. He was further asked to disclaim forever any power of displacing the lecturer without the free and unanimous consent of the whole parish of Gateshead. It was Weld's refusal to admit the lecturer on these terms—and the refusal scarcely need occasion any surprise—that led in turn to the publication of complaints against him. A petition against him was presented to the Northern Commissioners on 3 March 1658; after they considered it, they returned answer that they were not empowered by their Commission to take cognizance of it.<sup>93</sup> Their verdict is not surprising. Weld was a prominent and respected person, who appears himself to have worked closely with the Commission. Moreover, he had powerful friends, including notably Sir Arthur Hesilrige, who exercised great authority in this area. Weld had carefully cultivated Hesilrige as far back as 1654, when he stated publicly that God had made Sir Arthur "a terror to the enemies of his Son" and brought him "among us when his enemies

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 375.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 382.

were very high and turbulent" and had drawn out his heart "in being an instrument to procure the three yeares commission for propagating the Gospell in these foure Northerne counties."<sup>94</sup>

The upshot of the attempt to force Weld's hand was totally unwanted and unexpected by the petitioners. Not only was the petition disallowed by the Commissioners, but the whole affair appears to have been employed as a pretext for a purge of the four and twenty of the parish, a change affecting secular, as well as religious, administration. Utilizing the aid of his ecclesiastical colleague, Hammond, and the support of some of the inhabitants of Gateshead, Weld petitioned the Council of State against the four and twenty of the parish, accusing them of assuming without right a power to govern the rest and of hindering the work of reformation. He urged that these "known oppressors of godliness" be removed and that those whose names appeared in an annexed list be allowed to act in their stead.<sup>95</sup> By a Council order of 22 June 1658, his wishes were carried out.<sup>96</sup> Among those who were purged by this successful tactic were the four churchwardens who had created difficulty for him.

As events in England moved towards the Restoration of the Stuarts, Weld's career at Gateshead came to an end. He performed one last characteristic, if fruitless, service in the north by becoming closely involved with the foundation of Durham College. Although strongly attacked by the Quakers for his interest in this institution, which Fox at least saw as sinful, he was appointed in the letters patent of Oliver Cromwell of 15 May 1657 one of the first visitors of the college to hold office for two years.<sup>97</sup> His interest

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 366.

<sup>95</sup> *Cal. S. P. Dom. 1657-8*, p. 251.

<sup>96</sup> *Cal. S. P. Dom. 1658-9*, pp. 69-70. The order is copied in Gateshead Vestry Book, p. 242.

<sup>97</sup> "The Letters Patent of Oliver Cromwell for Founding a College at Durham." *Allen Tracts* (Darlington, 1777), no. 44. For the Quaker attacks on Weld and others, see *Some Quaeries to be Answered in Writing or Print by the Masters, Heads, Fellows, and Tutors of the Colledge they are setting up at Durham* (n.d., n.p.).

in this educational experiment is a logical counterpart to his earlier work for Harvard College. His concern for education was a lifelong work, and there is every indication that he himself, for all the blustering of his pamphleteering, was a learned man; the catalogue of the library, which he sold to John Eliot for the use of the New England Company in 1651, is indication of that.<sup>98</sup> When exactly Weld left Gateshead is uncertain. He appears to have withdrawn prudently to London shortly before 1660. In any case, his successor, John Ladler, read the thirty-nine articles to the congregation on 26 August 1660; he had been presented to the living by the King somewhat earlier in the year, there being no Bishop of Durham in whom the patronage was vested between Morton and Cosin, who was not consecrated until December, 1660.<sup>99</sup> In March, 1661, Cosin, in his capacity as Bishop formally instituted the new incumbent.<sup>100</sup> In London Weld took little, if any, part in events. The only trace to be found of his activities is his signature to the Congregational ministers' renunciation of Venner's insurrection of January, 1661.<sup>101</sup> He died about two months later, survived by his third wife. He had buried the first at Roxbury and the second at Gateshead.<sup>102</sup>

In a career spanning the two sides of the Atlantic, Thomas Weld had left his mark both in Massachusetts Bay and in England. His achievements may not have been great, but it is clear he was a formidable follower of the Puritan way, as his enemies from Anne Hutchinson to his own Gateshead parishioners could testify. A man of broad interests and concerns, including education and conversion of the Indians, he was also marked by a narrowness of vision

<sup>98</sup> G. D. Scull, "Documents of the Society for Promoting and Propagating the Gospel in New England," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, October, 1882, pp. 371-373.

<sup>99</sup> Longstaffe, *Memoirs of Barnes*, p. 386.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *A Renuntiation and Declaration of the Ministers of Congregational Churches and Preachers of the Same Judgment Living in and about the city of London against the late Horrid Insurrection* (London, 1661).

<sup>102</sup> Davids, "Thomas Weld," pp. 405-406.

that turned him from the toleration the English Independents were developing to a simple but unattractive bigotry. Though more prominent than many, this interregnum clergyman of Gateshead may well have been typical of both the aspirations and the shortcomings of many of those Puritans who returned home from New England in the 1640's to build a new Jerusalem in old England to match their Bible Commonwealth in North America.