

Gershom Bulkeley of Connecticut: A Puritan Aberration

By JAMES POTEET

The restoration of Charles Stuart in 1660 sent an anticipatory shudder through statehouse and pulpit in New England. The collapse of the Commonwealth government meant a bewildering defeat for God's people in their attempt to reform the religious practices of old England. More importantly, it would soon threaten the religious and political equilibrium of the new England. The next three decades were crucial for Puritan government in New England. Before the Restoration, New England had fashioned its polity with little interference from London; distance translated into time made Whitehall, with its yet inchoate administrative abilities, only a potential threat. But the return of the Stuarts challenged all this, and New England became an unwilling object of interest for London.

The early years of the Restoration went quietly enough as Charles II sorted out domestic affairs. In fact, in 1662, John Winthrop Jr. was able to secure a corporate charter to ratify the de facto Puritan government in Connecticut, an act distinctly at variance with the vaguely defined colonial policies emerging from Whitehall. Even with a charter, however, the period after 1662 was precarious for Connecticut's independent existence. The Privy Council, continuing the Commonwealth's awakened interest in colonial affairs, moved relentlessly toward the opinion that consolidation of the colonies into fewer and larger administrative units would serve England's political and commercial interests. Even more pressing were the ambitions of the Duke of York. The Duke's colony of New York returned no profits to its royal proprietor and he greatly desired to extend his holdings; specifically, to regain the Jerseys where the port of Perth Amboy drained away customs from New York's harbor and to acquire western Connecticut to strengthen his colony's agricultural base. In 1675 the Duke's governor, Sir Edmond Andros, appeared at Saybrook, ostensibly to protect the inhabitants from Indians; his actual intent, to seize the territory, was frustrated by swift action on the part of the Connecticut magistrates.

By the second decade after the Restoration, New England began to see her worst fears become reality. A writ of *quo warranto* was brought against the Massachusetts charter and on October 23, 1684 the charter was annulled. On February 6, 1685, James II became

King, but colonial policy was unchanged; the experiment of consolidation was set into full force in May, 1686, with *quo warranto* writs issued against Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, the Jerseys, Maryland, the Carolinas, the Bahamas, Bermuda and Connecticut. On July 21, 1686, the gadfly of New England, Edward Randolph, appeared in Hartford bearing two writs against the colony's charter.¹ The General Court and the Governor were in a quandary; to surrender the colony into alien hands grossly violated the Puritan sense of destiny and their own personal interests, but did they dare to openly disregard royal policies? Taking advantage of the time and distance that separated Hartford and Whitehall, they tacitly disregarded the writs and procured a London agent to defend the charter before the Privy Council. But the English authorities were not to be denied and on October 23, 1686 a third writ issued from the Chancery. More to the point, on December 19, 1686, Sir Edmond Andros arrived in Boston, commissioned Governor of the Dominion of New England. Four separate invitations to submit to his government crossed the wilderness between Boston and Hartford and still the Connecticut officials malingered, disregarding the notices and making crude attempts to play Boston off against New York. The hitherto successful policy of forestalling the inevitable by ignoring it, came to an end on October 31, 1687, when Governor Andros himself appeared at Hartford. There was no door of escape, and the General Court submitted the government to Andros who appointed Governor Robert Treat and Secretary John Allyn to the Dominion Council and established county governments.² Generally the Dominion of New England meant little change for Connecticut; Andros continued almost all the old magistrates in office by his commission and his disturbing innovations were largely reserved for Massachusetts.

Puritan New England was slow to believe that her government had been permanently alienated. There had, after all, been other threats to New England's autonomy and they had, in each case, been obviated by almost providential events. Royal attention in the 1630's had been diverted by the English Civil War, in the 1650's by the Dutch Wars, and as late as 1675 the Popish Plot had ended another threat. Surely God would again intervene. Indeed, it appeared that He did. On November 5, 1688, William of Orange landed in England,

1. These were dated July 17, 1685 and April 21, 1686, but they were evidently invalid since the time for answering had elapsed before delivery.

2. The third writ of *quo warranto*, still outstanding, was apparently allowed to lapse since the magistrates' submission made it a moot question.

and on April 18, 1689, Boston seized Andros and resumed her old government. Rumors of imminent change had circulated in Connecticut throughout the winter of 1688 and news of the Boston action set events in motion. On May 9, 1689, Governor Treat and the old magistrates resumed the charter government where it had been left off one and one-half years before. At length, in April, 1694, King William ratified this action.

Resumption of charter government produced discord in the colony. A radical element, led by James Fitch, favored resumption without restoring to office those who had "betrayed" the charter in 1687. A compromise was reached that allowed the old magistrates to return to office, but Fitch imposed his demands for extreme autonomy as unofficial colonial policy. Until the mid-1690's, Fitch was the most influential figure in the colony and he favored a policy that would "screw up the ink horns, still the tongues, empty the purses, and confine the persons" of all who opposed the resumption of charter government. He directed these sentiments towards his opponents at the other extreme, a small group who sought to bring Connecticut fully into the imperial system and violently criticized resumption of the charter government. The leader of this group was the Reverend Mr. Gershom Bulkeley.³

Bulkeley's role in the controversy concerning resumption reveals a curious spirit of strange parts and unavoidable personal contradictions. Why he should have found himself so at odds with his society and the majority of his fellows in the small, parochial community of Connecticut poses an intriguing question. His social credentials were unimpaired and his abilities seem apparent. He was the eldest son of Peter Bulkeley, a Puritan clergyman of some note.⁴ The elder

3. Little adequate work has been done on the Dominion period or the Glorious Revolution in Connecticut. A general narrative of essential events can be found in older histories of the state such as G. H. Hollister, *The History of Connecticut, I* (Hartford, 1857) or Alexander Johnston, *Connecticut* (New York, 1915). A scholarly study of the period is Viola F. Barnes, *The Dominion of New England, A Study in British Colonial Policy* (New Haven, 1923), but the focus of this volume is the Dominion in Massachusetts, and Connecticut receives only passing notice. The most useful modern study is Richard S. Dunn, *Puritans and Yankees, The Winthrop Dynasty of New England, 1630-1717* (Princeton, 1962). Mr. Dunn's chapter on "Salvaging the Connecticut Charter" is particularly valuable, although some of his findings may be overstated. He describes Gershom Bulkeley as leading a conservative party; actually Bulkeley's faction amounted to himself, Edward Palmes and William Rosewell. It will be admitted, however, that they were a resourceful, active and articulate trio who were able, from time to time, to influence segments of the freemen regarding specific issues.

4. "Peter Bulkeley," Allen Johnson (ed.), *Dictionary of American Biography*, (New York, 1929), III 249-250.

Bulkeley (M.A. Cambridge, 1608) inherited his father's considerable fortune and parish at Odell, Bedfordshire, in 1620; in 1635 Laudian activities encouraged him to migrate to Massachusetts Bay where he was considered a man "learned . . . genteel, and which was the top of all, very pious." He became the first pastor at Concord, Massachusetts, and left his pastoral duties only once to harass Anne Hutchinson, his era's great threat to orthodoxy.

The son, Gershom Bulkeley, was born some time in late 1636, attended Harvard College (M.A., 1655) and began his career in the ministry in 1661 as pastor to the New London, Connecticut church.⁵ The next decade or so does not suggest Bulkeley's opposition to the status quo. Beyond pastoral duties, he maintained an interest in civic affairs common to the Puritan ministry. He was appointed by the General Court to committees considering ecclesiastical matters, participated in the Synod of 1662 that debated the institution of the half-way covenant and consociation, preached at least one election sermon and was even elected a deputy to the General Court in 1679.⁶ There may have been some hidden tensions in his New London ministry; he seems to have favored Presbyterianism, and perhaps this is the import of a New London town vote in 1664 that "they were willing to leave Mr. Bulkeley to the liberty of his conscience without compelling him or enforcing him to anything in the execution of his place and office contrary to his light according to the laws of the Commonwealth." Beyond this hint, little is known of his ministry in New London beyond the contractual arrangements of his employment.⁷ When he resigned this pulpit in 1666, there was a misunderstanding concerning money owing the parish, but no undue personal bitterness on either side is evident. Perhaps his pastoral career hints personal dissatisfaction, and even frustration, in his life. Bulkeley may not have found the ministry a congenial occupation. He had other interests: an apparent enthusiasm and capacity for the practice of medicine,⁸ he was involved in land speculation,⁹ and he

5. Most of the information concerning Bulkeley can be found in John L. Sibley, *Harvard Graduates* (Cambridge, 1872), I 387-402.

6. J. H. Trumbull (ed.), *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut* (Hartford, 1859), II, 33, 84, 99, III, 26, 388; *Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society* (Hartford, 1895), III, 71. He probably never occupied this seat, for he was not a freeman as the charter required.

7. Frances M. Caulkins, *History of New London, Connecticut* (New London, 1895), 131-132, 137-140.

8. Bulkeley was evidently an accomplished physician who numbered

9. Bulkeley's claims to the Naubuc farms lands were frequently before the General Court until his title was finally secured. Records of the case are found in J. H. Trumbull (ed.), *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut*, (Hartford, 1859), III, 163, 167, 173.

was always interested in law and politics. His religious devotion seems sincere, but it is possible that he felt himself a captive in a pulpit he had entered largely through inheritance and absence of attractive alternatives for a man of his abilities. After New London, he became pastor at Wethersfield, a less prestigious church but one that provided him a colleague pastor and thus more freedom than the larger parish at New London. His subsequent career provides additional suggestion of such a possibility. In 1677 Bulkeley resigned his pastorate at Wethersfield; he pleaded ill health as his reason for leaving the ministry and moved across the river to Glastenbury, but not to prepare for a speedy demise. For thirty-six years he lingered on, practicing medicine, concerning himself with political practice and theory and turning out a series of political tracts that do not call to mind a soul on the brink of the grave.

Although Bulkeley had been among those opposing Andros at Saybrook in 1675, he obviously approved of the Dominion government and accepted a commission from Andros as justice of the peace for Hartford county. The events surrounding the resumption of charter government in 1689 brought forth attacks of unbounded venom directed toward the re-established government and its officials. These attacks indicate a man thoroughly alienated from his society, an unusual position for one who, by birth and position, could demand a seat at the very center of power and activity. He considered May 9, 1689, a day of disloyalty, even of treason, and damned the entire history of the colony; Connecticut had been conceived in disloyalty and nurtured in disregard for royal allegiance and oppression of the populace. Why Bulkeley should have developed this extreme political theory cannot be discovered in the scanty information available. Perry Miller suggests that Bulkeley was the "last of the theorists," a man disillusioned by Puritanism because it had abandoned the "original ideals of subordination and submission."¹⁰ This explanation fits Bulkeley's political theory, but logic, and not fact, is the basis for such a statement.

Another explanation might be found in a life of frustration. If Bulkeley did feel trapped in an uncongenial ministry, he may have transferred his general frustrations to the small, tightly knit society

the leading citizens of New England among his patients. He served as a physician to the Connecticut troops in King Phillip's War and was licensed by the General Court. This aspect of his career is covered in Walter R. Steiner, "The Reverend Gershom Bulkeley, an Eminent Clerical Physician," *Johns Hopkins Hospital Bulletin*, XVII (January, 1906).

¹⁰ Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province* (Boston, 1953), 171.

that revolved around the Puritan pulpit. Leaving the ministry, Bulkeley may have also found personal satisfaction in viewing the destruction of other aspects of his past such as the charter government. As he had widened and liberated his interests by deserting—or at least departing—the pulpit, so the colony was liberated from its parochial bonds by absorption into the extended sphere of the British empire. May 9, 1689, saw the past returning in force.¹¹ Moreover, James Fitch, who bears the signs of a frontier demagogue, may have made acceptance of the event even more distasteful. Once begun on the road of opposition in a small, personalized society where semi-anonymity was impossible, there may have been no turning back; one had to go all the way or totally surrender. His writings suggest this fate for they are a progression from legalistic reasoning, couched in consciously ingratiating tones, to a hysteria of denunciation and charges of unproven persecution. Whatever the explanation, Bulkeley remains an enigma and perhaps even a tragedy, a man of ability unable to fit himself into any satisfying relationship with his society; a man marked by the establishment as one of her own, opting to remain without it.

In 1689 the events of resumption still fresh and malleable, Bulkeley was a voice of conservative and concerned reason in his first attack. Modestly he admitted that he was no freeman of the colony, and yet he declared himself “no enemy to our ancient charter-privileges and could they now be regularly recovered, I should rejoice in it, and if I knew anything thereby to justify the present proceedings, I should not conceal it.”¹² A paragon of civic virtue, he declaimed any desire to protect his commission; it was a burden he would gladly relinquish, but he feared for others that the present action “may be the beginning of great calamity and woe to the people . . . [since resumption was] not only illegal, needless and unprofitable, but indeed very criminal, dangerous and hurtful to us.”¹³

By 1692 it was obvious that his pleasantly offered advice had no effect and he vainly struck out against this “despotic, absolute, and arbitrary government, regulated by no laws but their own will and

11. The triumphant past also indicated its disapproval of Bulkeley, for he was among the few of Andros' commissions that the old magistrates did not continue in office.

12. Gershom Bulkeley, *The Peoples Right to Election or Alteration of Government in Connecticut* (Philadelphia, 1689), 2. Hereinafter cited as *The Peoples Right*. In all quotations from Bulkeley, spelling has been modernized.

13. *Ibid.*, 2-3.

pleasure."¹⁴ As the evil days continued with no sign of change, he sank into impotent fury at this "Oliverian republic" in which righteous men were "traded and reviled as enemies to God, our country and to wholesome laws and good government . . . and having dressed us in bear skins, they sport themselves in baiting us."¹⁵ How infuriated he was, in crying that these "insolent wretches," "varlets," "whited sepulchres," "fifth-monorchists," and "fiends," that rule Connecticut through their defunct charter were allowed to treat the people like "tennis balls," "cattle," and "villeins and slaves."¹⁶ Through 1692 and 1693 he pinned his hopes on annexation by Governors Phips of Massachusetts or Fletcher of New York, who successively had commissions to command all the troops of New England. When even the royal officials failed him, he lapsed into a bitter silence with a final shot that wearily reminded his successful opponents that "a spirit of government doth not dispose a man to be hail-fellow-well-met with every clown."¹⁷

Bulkeley had settled views on the origin of true government: "civil government is the ordinance of God and all lawful authority is of God . . . [and] monarchy is the best form of civil government."¹⁸ Bulkeley accepted, without reservation, the divine right of kings. It could hardly be stated more clearly than

The king's person is sacred, he is a God on earth and therefore to be feared . . . man is the image of God being made in His likeness, and the king is the image of God by way of imminency; he is a created ray of the divine majesty and sovereignty; the next and immediate deputy of God among men; to whom God hath lent His own throne and put His name upon him.¹⁹

No high Tory could have put this common and simple theory of government better. Authority originates with God and is passed

14. Gershom Bulkeley, *Some Objections to the Present Pretended Government in Connecticut in N. England in America*, in E. B. O'Callaghan (ed.), *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York* (Albany, 1855), III, 853. Hereinafter cited as *Some Objections*.

15. Gershom Bulkeley, *Will and Doom, or the Miseries of Connecticut by and Under and Usurped and Arbitrary Power*, in *Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society* (Hartford, 1895), III, 2-3. Hereinafter cited as *Will and Doom*.

16. *Ibid.*, *passim*.

17. Gershom Bulkeley, *Some Seasonable Considerations for the Good People of Connecticut* (New York, 1694), 58. Hereinafter cited as *Seasonable Considerations*.

18. *Will and Doom*, 93.

19. *Seasonable Considerations*, 15.

down to His viceroy the king and from him to the royal magistrates. There is no particular originality here; Bulkeley even drags in the old Great Chain of Being concept to lend support. "The king is *pater patriae*, the father of his country,"²⁰ he declares, and "their majesties are our political father and mother."²¹ The only surprising element is that such a theory should be heard in late 17th century Connecticut, for it was a theory buffeted by time and hardly acceptable to the drift of colonial political theory.

From this basis, Bulkeley also turns out a theory of justified rebellion in reverse. Since the Scriptures clearly teach passive obedience to princes as an indispensable duty for Christians,²² and since rebellion against the king is rebellion against God,²³ resistance to a government in opposition to the king is not only permissible, but commanded. A usurped government is of Satan and should be as bitterly opposed. Particularly to be despised is a democracy, for "a democracy within a monarchy is an intestine enemy" that will always degenerate into a tyranny.²⁴ Bulkeley seems to suggest natural and divine rules surrounding government that require a king to make government work. It is clear that "sovereignty in a king is a sceptre of gold, but in the hands of a subject, it is a rod of iron."²⁵ To be a "servant of servants," Bulkeley frequently declares, is unbelievably demeaning and will never work in practice. God has endowed kings with some attribute that makes their governments succeed, while democracies are inherently doomed to failure.

The true nature of government established, the Reverend Mr. Bulkeley would even sacrifice the church of his fathers, if necessary, to protect it. Without any lingering loyalty to the Puritan pulpit, he ruled "if our religion teaches us to king it ourselves, we should get a new one, for such a religion is a scandal to the Gospel."²⁶ No apologist for his church, Bulkeley admitted that the churches of Connecticut were "shaking hands with and bidding adieu to loyalty." In scorn, he struck about at the "religioussimi" who "talk very jocosely of cutting off kings' heads" and say that "the king hath nothing to do with us."²⁷ Such teachings had damned the New England churches out of their own mouths, for "the true church is

20. *Ibid.*, 27.

21. *Will and Doom*, 96.

22. *Seasonable Considerations*, 13.

23. *Will and Doom*, 95.

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*, 258.

26. *Seasonable Considerations*, 20.

27. *Will and Doom*, 239.

no rebellious city, nor an enemy to kings; a Godly rebel is a solecism, a prodigious monster that true religion never brought forth."²⁸ Any doctrine or institution that denied the divine origin of royal government was false and unnatural, and Bulkeley so labeled it.

How came the present sad situation in Connecticut? Here Bulkeley turns historian and accounts for it with a narrative of the evolution of ideas of disloyalty that is decidedly unpuritan. Setting out to break all the old idols, he found the seeds of the present treason sown in "the unhappy rebellion in England against that noble prince, King Charles the first."²⁹ Not only is this "hellish murder" condemned, but the whole Commonwealth period is deplored: "we may sorrowfully remember the years in England from 1642 to 1660."³⁰ This disease was born in England but soon transferred to the new world. Towns were planted in Connecticut and they were conceived in iniquity. Rather than apply immediately for a charter, "sagacious independency could find a nearer and easier way" and so "they, by their innate authority, incorporate themselves . . . they assume to themselves nomothetic power and ultimate judicature."³¹ In time a charter was procured, but it was too late for "the old democratical leaven had so seasoned the lump that it would not be so easily purged out, nor is yet, and God knows when it will be."³² The charter was perverted, for the magistrates hid it from the people and used it as a screen for their own arbitrary actions; in utter disregard of its provisions, they acted as if "the king had thereby set the crown upon their heads."³³ Then, all too briefly, came the golden days when Sir Edmond Andros brought proper government, the king's government, to the colony.

The charter officials submitted to the king's representatives, "nor had they any cause to repent it; for they soon see that the change was not for the worse, but for the better."³⁴ Although Bulkeley never specified exactly what they were, he placed a high premium on the inherited liberties of Englishmen provided by an English government. Under the Andros regime, which was not a notably liberal one, Bulkeley found "we came to understand and enjoy more of the laws and liberties of free and natural English subjects than ever we had

28. *Seasonable Considerations*, 18.

29. *Will and Doom*, 91.

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*, 100.

32. *Ibid.*, 101.

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Ibid.*, 143.

done under the charter government.”³⁵ Connecticut was a small, personal community and it is perhaps logical that Bulkeley should feel that there was greater justice to be obtained in the wider anonymity of the king’s courts; in fairness, however, it should be noted that evidence indicates that Bulkeley received unusual consideration from the Connecticut courts after 1686. Bulkeley’s own historical version asserts that, under the Dominion, government ran efficiently and justly, the king’s authority was properly recognized, and, with the old annual elections gone, local animosities died and “in Connecticut things went tolerably well, and that year and a half was the best time that Connecticut had seen for many years.”³⁶ But the May 9 resumption brought this golden age to an end and the land was once more gripped by an illegal and oppressive government. This was the thrust of Bulkeley’s attack on the charter government: it had no basis in law, and it was an oppressive administration.

A point repeatedly registered by Bulkeley was the essential nature of the charter government. The 1662 patent, in his view, erected a corporation—in no wise differing from any other corporation—with certain powers for ruling Connecticut. An exponent of the rigid legalism of the 17th century, Bulkeley did not doubt that the existence of this corporation depended on a strict adherence to its written and implied terms, and that any diversion from them would be fatal. The crucial point was that “the corporate government of Connecticut is but the son of a year; if it be not then continued, it dies of itself; if there be a cesser of elections . . . they are at a full stop, and can go no further until the same power that gave them being and life at the first do restore them again.”³⁷ Bulkeley had a reservoir of scorn—whether real or manufactured—for those who had “deserted” the government in 1687 and in 1689 sought to retrieve it, but the real point was that essential steps for the continuation of the charter had been omitted, and it was dead and totally unable to support a government. This could be discovered by looking at the charter and its provisions for functioning. The patent provided for annual elections to be called by the governor or deputy governor at an assembly of the freemen where two slates of officials should contend against one another to provide governing officials for the coming year. But in 1689 there was no governor or deputy governor to call an assembly, there were no freemen of the corporation to vote and the false elec-

35. *Some Objections*, 850.

36. *Will and Doom*, 144.

37. *Ibid.*, 183-184.

tion did not follow the proper procedural forms.³⁸ The exact terms of the patent had not been followed and "all this seems necessary to follow from the very words of the patent, and how it can be avoided I cannot see."³⁹ Nor was there any other warrant for the government; King James' proclamation restoring corporations had clearly not applied to the Connecticut patent and there was no warrant from the present rulers. Almost smugly, his legal argument neatly tied up, Bulkeley proclaims that the government must be illegal and thus it must be in opposition to the king.⁴⁰

As reenforcement, Bulkeley dwelt at length on the evils of the "present pretended government." Even if it were legal, it violated its own patent for it provided a comprehensive system of laws and judiciary for the colony, whereas this was a totally unwarranted over-reaching of the charter privileges. A corporation may make by-laws, and the charter allowed the government to make supplementary laws to provide for unusual colonial circumstances, but Bulkeley flatly denied that the king ever intended for the laws and courts of England to be supplanted. Where did any other group of men ever assume that a corporation could enact laws governing inheritance or providing criminal statutes that exacted the death penalty? What overweening, democratic arrogance was it that led the Connecticut men to go their own way so that their majesties "do no more reign in Connecticut than the king of Spain or Duke of Venice."⁴¹ Here is the real issue in which "we must call a spade a spade . . . there is a great question in Connecticut which needs a decision and that is, who it is that sets on the throne."⁴²

In addition, Bulkeley strongly disapproved of both the men and measures of the reconstituted charter government; clearly, it was a government of interested parties that sought to enrich themselves and their cohorts at the expense of the colony. The usurping magistrates were tyrants: "they cry out against Sir Edmond Andros, but their little finger is thicker than his loin."⁴³ Their only grievance against the Andros government was that "they were not the doers of it."⁴⁴ He charged the magistrates with plundering the innocent, for "if any

38. At the 1689 election the freemen had offered three alternatives: (1) to continue the present government (2) restore the government as it had been in 1687 (3) erect a temporary committee of safety. *Some Objections*, 851.

39. *The Peoples Right*, 11.

40. *Some Objections*, 852.

41. *Will and Doom*, 20, 257.

42. *Ibid.*, 174.

43. *Ibid.*, 192.

44. *Ibid.*

whom they are minded to gratify do but hold up their finger and whistle, men and money are present at their command . . . it is their maxim, Drink lustick boys, the country pays for it." 45 And their evil was not restricted to Connecticut; the government also sought to "entangle, harass and beggar the people" for the benefit of the traitor Leisler in New York. Carrying this grievance as far as he could, Bulkeley plaintively cried, "they may take the protection of the world on them and lay the drudgery of it upon us. We have no end of masters." 46

Venal men, as might be expected, spawned evil policies. Again and again Bulkeley declared that justice had departed from Connecticut and the people were ground into the earth by the government's exorbitant demands. A few quotations will suffice to indicate the quality of government that Bulkeley professed to live under: "there is no justice to be expected in their courts; it is the person and not the cause that is regarded. Whatever they do with us, we must be dumb. Very numerous are the instances that might be given of their arbitrary proceedings, the most gross and willful injustice . . . they are not ministers, but masters of the law." 47 Or, "we have no law but Will and Doom, no security of anything; if we have any case pending, we have nothing to expect but discretion of the court." 48 In 1692 the General Court appointed one man in each town to report if any had omitted reporting their livestock for taxation purposes. Any guilty party would forfeit the unreported stock. Here, in Bulkeley's view, was the great plot to impoverish those loyal to the king. If the stock were forfeited "we shall have nothing left to live upon, neither milk nor butter, beef nor pork to eat, and our stock being gone we cannot manure our land, and so we shall not be able to raise bread neither, that we shall have bread and water to keep us alive in prison or out of prison; and not being able to manage our

45. *Ibid.*, 214, 215-216.

46. *Ibid.*, 214. In fact Bulkeley was able to inspire a minor rebellion in his hometown of Wethersfield by persuading numerous townsmen to embrace passive disobedience and refuse to pay their rates or serve in the militia. In time this opposition threatened to spread to Greenwich, Stamford, Norwalk, Simsbury, and Windsor. The government was forced to take stern measures and fine the recalcitrants. When Samuel Smith was unable to pay his fine, Bulkeley paints doughty old Governor Treat as a Nero: "well, then, he shall go to prison, and the governor claps his hand to his hilt, and says he, if I put on my harness I will subdue these rebellious fellows, and make them pay their fines. Ha, brave governor, cry the deputies, do, governor, do, we will all stand by you." *Ibid.*, 209.

47. *Ibid.*, 223-224.

48. *Ibid.*, 115.

lands ourselves [he evidently had decided his hypothetical example would end in prison] the next act will be to make them forfeited also for the same cause . . . we thank 'em for this plain English and that now we have the happiness to know that we have nothing."⁴⁹ There was neither wisdom nor legality to be found at Hartford.

Bulkeley's advice and predictions went unheeded; in 1694 Fitz John Winthrop was able to obtain ratification of the charter government from England and the government and the church from which Bulkeley had departed in such disgust were triumphant. The moderates at last ousted Fitch from his position of influence, and Connecticut, after a unique decade of political unrest, was again the "land of steady habits." They owed none of their success to Bulkeley, however; he had spoken in the plainest of terms and had left no idol unquestioned. A political aberration, one wonders if the act of dissent in itself was not of significant satisfaction for him.

49. *Ibid.*, 253.