

2: Early Life, 1676-1701

A Puritan Inheritance

Benjamin Hoadly was born on 14 November 1676, surviving the first recorded influenza epidemic of the autumn of that year. He was the second son of the Reverend Samuel Hoadly of Westerham, Kent. The site of Hoadly's birthplace was marked by a yew tree near some cottages, Samuel Hoadly having planted the tree to commemorate his son's birth.¹ He was baptised on 22 December 1676.² The Reverend Samuel Hoadly was one of twelve children of the Reverend John Hoadly and his wife Sarah Bushnell. John Hoadly was born at Rolvenden, Kent in 1617 and he married Sarah in 1642. But Samuel Hoadly was born at Guildford, New England, in September 1643 where his Puritan parents had fled in 1639 during the disturbances that led to the English Civil War –reputedly John and Sarah met on board ship on their way to America.³ The story of John Hoadly's emigration to America is rooted in the religious patrimony that he bequeathed to his grandson.

In May 1639, John Hoadly was among two score young men who set sail from London for America on the ship 'Saint John' under Captain Richard Russell. The emigrants were chiefly from Surrey and Kent, seeking religious freedom from England under Charles I. Puritan Anglican clergy had been horrified when they were required to read the 'Declaration of Sports' to their congregations in 1633. In it people were encouraged to dance, practise archery, and play games in the churchyards on Sunday afternoons. Those clergy who refused to read it were censured and even turned out of their parishes. Thereafter the Laudian High-Church movement relentlessly pursued Puritan churchmen who refused to conform to its aggressive agenda for the Church of England.⁴ Some of these clergymen sought to evade religious regulation by migrating to the New World, where they accepted privations and dangers but enjoyed religious freedom. Among these Puritans was Henry Whitfield, Rector of Ockley, Surrey. Whitfield's rectory at Ockley had become the resort for many distressed Puritans. Whitfield was an inspiring

preacher, who spent much of his time visiting other congregations. He attracted a circle of people who were strongly attached to him, and they readily joined his venture to leave for America, where Puritans were welcomed in both Connecticut and Massachusetts. John Hoadly was among the settlers. On the same ship were two sisters, Sarah and Rebecca Bushnell, John later married Sarah Bushnell in America. After twelve days at sea, the pioneers drafted a compact similar to that drawn up by the Pilgrim Fathers in 1620, pledging their helpfulness to one another in the proposed settlement. This first recorded act as a separate community was signed on ship, and ran as follows:

We, whose names are hereunder written, intending by God's gracious permission to plant ourselves in New England and if it may be, in the southerly part, about Quinnipiack: We do faithfully promise to each, for ourselves and families, and those that belong to us: that we will, the Lord assisting us, sit down and join ourselves together in one inure plantation: and to be helpful each to the other in every common work, according to every man's ability and as need shall require: and we promise not to desert or leave each other or the plantation, but with the consent of the rest, or the greater part of the company who have entered into this engagement. As for our gathering together in a church way, and the choice of officers and members to be joined together in that way, we do refer ourselves until such time as it shall please God to settle us in our plantation. In witness whereof we subscribe our hands, the first day of June 1639.

It was signed by twenty-four leading men, including John Hoadly. The 'Saint John' entered New Haven Harbour, Connecticut, in July 1639. The voyage had taken seven weeks. The vessel was the first to cross the Atlantic directly and enter the harbour. The settlers received title to 53,000 acres through a series of seven free grants or divisions of land. These divisions included the home lots on which the planters built their houses; John Hoadly had a lot on the south side of Broad Street between Fair and River Streets. On 14 July 1642, John Hoadly married Sarah Bushnell, by whom he had twelve children, seven of them born in Guilford, where three died in infancy. Samuel Hoadly, the father of Bishop Hoadly, was born on 30 September 1643. John and Sarah had three more children at Edinburgh Castle, and two more at Rolvenden, where they moved in 1662.⁵

In 1653 John Hoadly left his family in America and returned to London, where he attracted Oliver Cromwell's attention and became

a Court chaplain. In 1655 Cromwell appointed Hoadly to the chaplaincy of Edinburgh garrison. Aged just twelve, Samuel Hoadly and his mother returned from America to join his father in Edinburgh and he was educated there at King James's College. Though a Puritan, John Hoadly was a subscriber to the Restoration of Charles II, having given General Monk £300 to support the return of Charles II. John Hoadly – the Bishop's son – described his great grandfather as an 'involuntary' subscriber to the Restoration of Charles II, having lent rather than given the £300 to General Monk, but he never saw the money again.⁶

In 1662 Samuel Hoadly and his parents, John and Sarah, left Edinburgh for Rolvenden, Kent, where he became a schoolteacher at Cranebrook School. The choice of Kent was motivated by his father's origins in the county and the fact that there were other family members there.⁷ Four years later Samuel married Mary Wood, who died in childbirth in 1668, the same year as the death of his father, John Hoadly. Samuel's mother, Sarah Hoadly, died in 1693.⁸ A year later Samuel Hoadly married Martha Pickering, daughter of Benjamin Pickering, a leading Nonconformist minister; Martha was Benjamin Hoadly's mother.⁹ For young Benjamin, his parents brought together Puritan and Dissenting traditions. Samuel and Martha had nine children, Benjamin was their sixth. Benjamin's younger brother John was born two years later, and he was to follow Benjamin into the Church. John Hoadly shared Benjamin's Latitudinarian views, and, in his wake, ended his days as Archbishop of Armagh. Six years before Benjamin's birth, Samuel Hoadly had moved to Westerham to become Master of the Grammar School there. Westerham had the advantage of being near the village of Hasted, where Samuel's brother John was rector. Two years after Benjamin's birth, Samuel Hoadly moved to the mastership of a school at Tottenham High Cross and after eight years he moved again to teach at Brook House School in Hackney. It is likely to have been in London that Samuel Hoadly became friendly with the fashionable High Church parson, William Sherlock, who was to become Dean of St Paul's. With such a friend, who later helped Benjamin Hoadly find a living, it is interesting that Samuel Hoadly did not enter the parish ministry. Perhaps Samuel Hoadly chose to teach, rather than exercise a parochial ministry, because of doctrinal differences with the Church, and perhaps he passed these on to his son. Either way, Samuel Hoadly had high hopes for his sons. He is said to have claimed 'my son John will probably one day be a bishop and Benjamin an Archbishop.'¹⁰

In April 1700 Samuel Hoadly was appointed Headmaster of

Norwich School, in succession to the Reverend John Burton, and his younger son John was his assistant, or usher.¹¹ In conformity with the requirements of the registrar of Norwich diocese, Samuel Hoadly subscribed his adherence to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England on 30 September 1700, and his son John did so on 14 November.¹² Norwich School paid its master £50 a year and provided him with 'a commodious and well appointed house to live in,' the usher received three guineas.¹³ Samuel Hoadly reformed the school, which his predecessor, Burton, had somewhat neglected. A Bible was bought, the schoolroom was whitewashed and a water supply introduced to the school. To ensure that Samuel Hoadly did not neglect his charge, as Burton had, three ministers of the city of Norwich were appointed at regular intervals to test the boys' knowledge.¹⁴ Whilst serving as master at Hackney and later at Norwich, Samuel Hoadly had published *The Natural Method of Teaching, being the Accidence of Questions and Answers*, which went through eleven editions, and he edited a school version of Phaedrus's fables in 1700 which was extremely successful; while it acknowledged and built on the work of previous scholars such as Danet and Wase, it added fuller notes and incorporated new material from Burman's massive scholarly 1698 edition and Hoogstrated's 1700 edition. It was from Samuel Hoadly's reputation at Norwich that the author of *The life, birth and education of the Reverend Mr Benjamin Hoadly . . .* (written in 1710) erroneously assumed that Benjamin Hoadly had been born there.¹⁵

Samuel Hoadly was able to attract as a pupil Samuel Clarke, the son of the Mayor of Norwich, and thus established a friendship and connection between Samuel Clarke and Benjamin Hoadly that was to last all their lives.¹⁶ Samuel Clarke was, like Benjamin, not an orthodox Anglican and was to sacrifice his career for sincerely held Low Church views. Samuel Hoadly may also have transmitted a contempt for Convocation to his son, since Henry Taylor later claimed that 'Old Hoadly used to say of ye Westminster Grammar that all the d[evils] in Hell and Blockheads on earth in Convocation could not have made a worse [one].'¹⁷ In Lady Sundon's *Memoirs* there is a suggestion that Samuel Hoadly did not receive the acknowledgement from the Church that was his due. Mrs Thomson, the editor of Lady Sundon's letters and memoirs, recorded that Samuel Hoadly was 'a man of great acquirements . . . but whose merits never raised him to any preferments in the Church, though an excellent scholar and critic. His son ran a much more fortunate, though perhaps not a happier, career.'¹⁸ Nevertheless, under Samuel Hoadly the decline in pupil numbers at Norwich School set in, which lasted for a century.¹⁹ Samuel Hoadly died in April 1705, three years after his

wife, both were buried in Norwich Cathedral. Benjamin's older brother, Samuel jnr, had died whilst an undergraduate at University College, Oxford in 1694.

Education

Of Hoadly's childhood we know little. One biographer claimed that Hoadly was his mother's favourite. There were also stories that he was a child prodigy: that he could read the Psalter at the age of three and delighted in singing psalms. The young Hoadly's thirst for knowledge, and especially Greek, was likened to the 'burning sands of Egypt, that greedily suck all the moisture that comes upon them.'²⁰ If his first, anonymous, biographer is to be believed, Benjamin Hoadly was always destined for the Church:

His father was a man of some estate and took such care of his sons education that nothing was wanting to make him a scholar, he having even whilst a boy, a quick and sprightly genius and took much delight in his books, from which early promises of learning his parents had no little hopes, resolving to educate him so as to make him fit for the pulpit; and in this they had encouragement from the friendship of the late famous Dr Sherlock, Dean of St Paul's, and the master of the Temple, that he would provide for him somewhere as soon as he was fit to be prefer'd.²¹

Inevitably perhaps, for the son of a schoolmaster, Benjamin was educated by his father until he entered St Catharine College, Cambridge, on 18 February 1691/92. It was certainly unsurprising that that Hoadly matriculated at Cambridge. Oxford remained influenced by High Church Laudianism and rejected Lockean rationalism well into the eighteenth century, whereas Cambridge was far more welcoming to the scion of a Puritan family. It was claimed that young Benjamin was so much his mother's favourite that she had to be persuaded to part with him when he went to University. On the journey to Cambridge from London, Benjamin's father was reputed to have seen a 'light shining about his head' and to have known from that time that his son would be an enlightener of people.²² The choice of St Catharine's College is an interesting one. St Catharine's had a reputation for liberal thought at a time when the Clarendon Code had made the universities restrictive in their composition and curriculum. St Catharine's liberalism stretched back to William Spurstow, Master from 1644 to 1666, who wrote *An Humble Remonstrance* which denied the inseparability of episcopacy and royal government in Church and

State. By the Restoration, William Lightfoot, Spurstow's successor as Master, created a college receptive to Latitudinarians because he was deliberately 'not very scrupulous' in applying the Act of Uniformity of 1662 in admitting undergraduates and fellows. Among those who took advantage of this laxity were Benjamin Calamy and Stephen Newcomen, both sons of ejected clergymen. Calamy in 1673 preached a sermon at the Guildhall before the Lord Mayor of London in which he made an impassioned plea for 'our Catholick Christianity' and for people to take 'a greater care and study of those things which have never yet bin made matter of controversie about which all sides and parties were agreed' and he called for Dissenters to rejoin the Church. This was a view that young Benjamin Hoadly found overwhelmingly attractive. By 1690 James Calamy, Benjamin's brother, was preparing an edition of Benjamin's works for the press. John Eachard, though a stickler for the educational standards of clergy was less concerned with the doctrinal orthodoxy of candidates for the Church, indeed he denied that a 'pure crystalline Church' was possible. He also claimed a reputation as a Protestant hero, having refused to admit a Benedictine monk to a degree without swearing the oaths despite a royal mandate from James II to do so.²³

Benjamin was entered under the tutorship of Dr John Leng, a young fellow of St Catharine's, and a friend of Samuel Hoadly. Benjamin was just fifteen years old. Leng was a distinguished Latin scholar, a staunch Whig and an adherent of the Protestant Succession established by the Glorious Revolution of 1688.²⁴ During Hoadly's time at Cambridge Leng was actively engaged in the translations of Terence, Aristophanes, Cicero and other classics which were printed by the University Press at the end of the century.²⁵ Leng's Boyle lectures on *The Natural Obligations to believe the Principles of Religion and Divine Revelation* and his work for the Society for the Reformation of Manners earned him a Whig-Latitudinarian reputation sufficient to gain him the bishopric of Norwich in 1723, eight years after his student Benjamin Hoadly obtained a mitre.²⁶ It was perhaps from John Leng, as much as from his father, that Hoadly learnt his stubborn adherence to the Church of England. Leng preached that the Church of England was 'a Church which for the primitive form of its constitution and soundness and purity of its faith and doctrine, and its wholesome discipline, does of all other approach the nearest to the churches of the apostolical times.'²⁷ In the future, even when he doubted the Church of England's claims to authority, it was Leng's view that kept Hoadly from leaving the Church. Certainly as a student Hoadly

'constantly frequented the public prayers of the Church.'²⁸ Hoadly proved to be a good scholar at Cambridge 'where he daily profited in his studies and became of such note among the young students, and shewed extraordinary signs of proving an excellent divine.'²⁹ He was, like Saul, 'head and shoulders' above his teachers.³⁰ He also took an active interest in politics. There was much in politics to be observed since in the same year as Hoadly's matriculation, William III at last defeated the Irish Jacobites at the Battle of Aughrin and set about the pacification of Ireland and Scotland.

St Catharine's had been ravaged by the Commonwealth; at the Restoration new building works were begun under Dr Lightfoot, and completed under Dr Eachard, which cost the College dearly. Altogether £9,000 was spent between 1673 and 1694, when the works were stopped through lack of funds. Feasts were cancelled, fines on College properties foregone and College plate sold to raise the sums required for the buildings. In 1698 the inventory for Hoadly's own chambers noted the plate as 'sold.' By 1697, when John Eachard died, the College was still in debt to the tune of £1,600. Eachard had been installed as Master in 1675 against the wishes of James II: he was a somewhat stern and forbidding figure, with rigid views on the status of the clergy. At St Catharine's he sought to prevent 'indigent and imperfectly educated candidates from taking Holy Orders' and, in the attempt, restricted the duties assigned to sizars.³¹ In spite of the High Toryism of Eachard, and some other members of the College, there were some sympathetic Whiggish influences at St Catharine's while Hoadly was there, in addition to Leng's. Sir William Dawes, who succeeded Eachard as Master, had migrated there while Hoadly was a fellow.³² In spite of a natural Tory background, Dawes was a staunch supporter of the Glorious Revolution, a chaplain to William III, and would later strongly advocate the Hanoverian succession.³³ Another significant St Catharine's man was Offspring Blackall, also a chaplain to William III and – when bishop of Exeter – fiercely to clash with Hoadly. In all, at St Catharine's during Hoadly's time there were five future members of the bench of bishops.³⁴ St Catharine's was at the zenith of its popularity as a College, having grown from a small society in the early seventeenth century to a hall of 150 members by 1672.³⁵ Hoadly seems to have made friends easily enough. His chamber-fellow, John Byde, shared his rooms 'without any trouble but with a great deal of satisfaction' to Hoadly.³⁶

At Cambridge, Hoadly experienced one of the critical moments of his life when he was disabled. There are three accounts of how Hoadly came to lose the use of his legs. The first, and least plausible,

was that his 'violent acquisition of knowledge' had damaged his legs.³⁷ Hoadly's anonymous biographer of 1710 claimed:

I would just mention the natural infirmity he has in his limbs, which was from his childhood, so that he is fain to be assisted when he walks, with two sticks to lean on; but not crutches, as I have seen represented in some pictures, or if it had been so, I cannot but think those Reflections upon Natural Imperfections to be very absurd and displeasing; But the cause that makes me speak it, is, that by such infirmity, being incapable to pursue those diversions which most young students do whilst they are at the University, he had greater leisure to follow his studies to which he constantly applied himself with the greatest diligence.³⁸

Stephen Cassan, however, following Hoadly's son's account, claimed that whilst an undergraduate Benjamin had contracted smallpox which was badly treated by an unskilful barber, and which would have cost Hoadly his leg, had Charles Barnard not intervened to try save it, against the advice of several eminent surgeons.³⁹

For the celebrated surgeon, Dr Charles Barnard, saving Hoadly's leg was a triumph of professionalism as he was a staunch High Churchman.⁴⁰ Whatever the occasion of the illness, Hoadly was disabled, using only walking sticks in public but crutches at home; he was also forced to pray and preach kneeling on a stool or cushion to prevent him having to stand on weakened legs, and could not ride a horse.⁴¹ From the time of this illness, Hoadly never enjoyed good health. During his thirties it was feared that he was sinking into consumption. However his insistence on taking the air daily in a chariot, which he did every day until he died, saved him from this fate and he lived till the age of 85 years. Writing to Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough in 1719, Hoadly claimed that he had been so ill that his life had been in peril. The following year a bout of fever left Hoadly with red marks on his face so that he could not go out for a week.⁴² His correspondence with his friend and patron, Mrs Clayton, Woman of the Bedchamber to Princess Caroline and later Lady Sundon, was peppered with references to ill health. In 1717 he commented that he was 'too ill to come out' of his house, and he seems to have been plagued with colds and headaches. In 1731 he referred to the way he coped with his disability as 'a man dragging life like a chain behind him' and thereafter referred to life as 'the chain.'⁴³ Later in life he often foiled requests for preferment on the grounds that he would not live long enough to redeem promises. Perhaps Hoadly's incapacity did indeed lead him to regard the pen as the most effective means of self-expression, and lies at the root

of his wide-ranging and polemical writing.⁴⁴

Hoadly's undergraduate career at Cambridge was remarkable. In spite of his ill-health, or perhaps because of it, Benjamin was an outstanding scholar. His ill-health did not prevent him graduating BA, but the illness had lost him seven terms, which he was indulged *ob gravissimam valetudinem* and he was entered in the *ordo senioritatis* for 1695-6 in sixth place aged just nineteen.⁴⁵ He was elected fellow of St Catharine's in 1697, proceeded M.A. in 1699, served as tutor from 1699 to 1701, and praelector from 1699-1700. An anecdote of Hoadly's undergraduate studies is featured in the biography of Thomas Sherlock, who was one year Hoadly's junior at St Catharine's and also assigned as a student to Leng. After Hoadly and Sherlock attended the same class on Tully, Hoadly sarcastically complimented Sherlock on his translations, alleging he had done it with the help of Cockman's translations. Sherlock's reply was reputedly that he had tried to get a copy of Cockman's book but had discovered that Hoadly had secured the only copy.⁴⁶ It was to be a competitive spirit that pitted the two against each other for most of their lives. However, in the light of the fact that Dr William Sherlock, Thomas's father, preferred Hoadly to a living in 1704, the competitive spirit between them may, initially, have been good natured. It seems likely that Hoadly did not altogether enjoy his time at Cambridge. Years later, in 1760, a close friend of Hoadly wrote 'as to the College [St Catharine's] I know he despised it, and thought all his time spent there as good as thrown away.'⁴⁷ Significantly, Hoadly did not enter his sons for St Catharine's, choosing to send both of them to Corpus Christi College instead.⁴⁸

At the same time that Hoadly was at St Catharine's his friend and life-long supporter, Samuel Clarke, was at Gonville and Caius College. Hoadly, while a fellow of St Catharine's, was also tutor to Mr Chadwick, grandson of Archbishop John Tillotson of Canterbury.⁴⁹ There were other Cambridge men of Hoadly's kidney too. Thomas Woolston was a fellow of Sidney Sussex at the same time; Woolston studied Origen's views that the Old Testament was frequently allegorical rather than literal. William Whiston felt that Woolston's mind gradually became disordered. He preached in chapel on the 'wild' idea that the Old Testament could be used to prove the truth of Christianity, and there were dark rumours that Woolston had to be confined whilst he regained his reason.⁵⁰ Gradually, Woolston came to the view that the Old Testament could not be taken literally and, more dangerously, that much of it flew in the face of some Christian tenets. For a study of the Bible as an allegory he was ejected from his fellowship in 1722. However

Woolston was not to be deterred from expounding the view that Christ's miracles were allegories and were not intended to be taken literally. He published these views in *Discourses on the Miracles of Christ* in 1730. For this work he was tried before the Lord Chief Justice and sentenced to a year's imprisonment and a fine of £100. The exertions of the defence took its toll on Woolston and he died in 1733. Woolston's importance was that, like Hoadly, he developed a strong sense of the liberty of enquiry into the scriptures and the necessity of developing one's own interpretation of them.

Another important and like-minded contemporary, William Whiston, was a fellow of Clare Hall and, like Hoadly, a friend of Samuel Clarke. In time Whiston and Hoadly also became friends, though they did not remain so. Whiston was a tenacious and fiercely combative debater. Following the publication of his *Primitive Christianity Revived* in 1711, Hoadly mentioned to Whiston that Bishop Gilbert Burnet of Salisbury had expressed surprise that a man of his erudition should have developed such a view. Whiston could not restrain himself from seeing Burnet and arguing the point with him.⁵¹ Whiston's career was ruined by this impetuous temperament. Another young Whig Cambridge undergraduate in Hoadly's time was Daniel Waterland. Waterland entered Magdalene College in 1699. In the years in which Hoadly was occupying a London pulpit, Waterland was expounding quasi-Arian views in his BD exercises. But Waterland was a curious mix of a High Churchman in theology, who agreed with the Non-juror Roger Laurence on the invalidity of lay baptism, and a Whig in politics.⁵² He was quickly elected to the headship of his college and, as a staunch supporter of the Hanoverian succession and Vice-Chancellor, was able to ensure Cambridge's calm reception of the death of Queen Anne and the arrival of George I in England. But when Hoadly published his book on the Eucharist in 1735, which argued that it was solely a commemorative feast, Waterland strongly disagreed with him.

Locke and Rationalism

While Hoadly's immediate contemporaries at Cambridge were starting to form the views that complemented his work, there were writers and thinkers whose ideas were fully formed, and achieved a lasting impact on the young cleric. Hoadly's time at Cambridge coincided with a flowering of British rational philosophy. Writing later of his friend, Samuel Clarke, Hoadly described Cambridge during their time as dominated by Descartes, 'the system of nature hardly allowed to be explained any otherwise than by his principles.'

But Hoadly regarded the Cartesian system as 'no more than the inventions of a very ingenious and luxuriant fancy having no foundation in the reality of things nor any correspondence to the certainty of facts.' For those who, like Hoadly, rejected Cartesianism there were only two other sources of inspiration: Isaac Newton, whose *Principia* was 'but for the few' and John Locke.⁵³ Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* was published in 1690, his *Ideas on Education* was published in 1693 and his *Reasonableness of Christianity* in 1695. John Toland's *Christianity Not Mysteriorious* was published in 1696.⁵⁴ Locke's views were considered to be thoroughly dangerous; his books were condemned as anti-Trinitarian by the Middlesex Grand Jury in 1697 and proscribed by the authorities of Oxford University in 1703. There is no doubt from the internal evidence of his later writings that Hoadly read Locke at Cambridge. Indeed some of his later work, especially his *Original and Institution of Civil Government* of 1710, has been identified as almost identical to Locke in ideas and form.⁵⁵ The importance of Locke to Hoadly lay partly in his ideas, but also in the fact that Locke was a Protestant as well as a philosopher who drew on Cartesian doubt to inform his thinking. Locke was prepared to abandon certainty in favour of doubt and scepticism. 'Nothing' he wrote, 'can be so dangerous as principles . . . taken up without questioning or examination.'⁵⁶ For Locke, revelation was a dangerous method for understanding religion; he believed that the problem with revelation and revealed religion was that it was 'easier' than the difficult process of reasoning and applying logic. Thus, claimed Locke in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, men 'pretend' to revelation and thereby 'fancies' become the word of God.⁵⁷ It was to be a suspicion that the young Hoadly harboured, and his approach, like Locke's, was always to take the more difficult path of reasoning in religious controversy. For Hoadly, Locke inspired consideration of the source of authority in religion and its role in binding the doctrines of the faithful.

One of the things of which Locke himself was certain was the purpose and end of human society and government.

The business of men being to be happy in this world by the enjoyment of the things of nature subservient to life, health, ease and pleasure, and by the comfortable hopes of another life when this is ended . . . we need no other knowledge for the attainment of those ends but of history and observation of the effects and operations of natural bodies within our power, and of our duties in the management of our own actions. . . .⁵⁸

This doctrine profoundly influenced the young Hoadly. Perhaps

his family background of emigration to avoid High Church persecution, or his own experience of ill-health, convinced him that the end of human society was the happiness of the individual. This was an important element in Hoadly's thought, also derived from Pelagian doctrine. An integral element in happiness for both Locke and Hoadly was a pacific society with easy redress of grievance and social tranquillity. Tranquillity, almost by definition for Locke, was the avoidance of extremes, in government, society and religion.

Locke's most influential work on religion, *The Reasonableness of Christianity as Deliver'd in the Scriptures*, was published whilst Hoadly was at St Catharine's. It was an influential book for emerging Latitudinarians like Hoadly, for it sought to avoid the Protestant extremes of Deism and Calvinism and to make Christianity accessible to the majority of people. Locke spoke of religion which was not rooted in the unquestioned authority of institutions of the Church, but in an inner conviction born from a personal dialogue with God. Such a view led almost inevitably to a tolerant attitude to those who did not conform to strict denominational norms and those whose inner dialogue with God was different. Rigid doctrinal approaches to religion were, in Locke's view, the cause of the religious, social and political troubles of the seventeenth century. To avoid the conflicting demands of the many voices claiming institutional authority in matters of faith and government, Locke raised up the liberty of the individual to judge for himself. It was through the liberty of his reason that Locke argued for the existence of God and defined his attributes. Locke argued that the Bible itself was a work of 'natural revelation,' which was another term for reason. The Scriptures could be tested against reason and interpreted using reason; reason should be the judge of whether revelation was divine or not. Mixing faith and reason was an uncomfortable accommodation for many Anglicans, and one with which Locke himself did not always seem to have been content. But, when pushed, Locke argued that the true test of revelation was whether it stood up to scrutiny of rational evidence: 'evidence, therefore, is that by which alone every man is . . . taught to regulate his assent.'⁵⁹ This approach enabled Locke to strip Christianity to its bones. In the absence of doctrinal authority, the Church could be no more than a voluntary association of people; to Locke certainty in faith made it faith no longer.

Locke's ideas on religion were no less important for Hoadly than his works on government. His *Two Treatises of Government*, published in the year of the Glorious Revolution and seeking to justify it, sought to advance the notion of a contract between ruler and people.

In the absence of a ruler who respected the contract, the people had a right to overthrow a tyrant for maladministration, incapacity or abuse of power. It was a view that overthrew all ideas of the divine origin of power, or of the divinely ordained authority to exercise it. These ideas were a powerful influence on the young Hoadly. They formed the bedrock of his creed that appeared time and again in his political and religious work.

Marriage and London

In 1698 Benjamin Hoadly was ordained deacon, and advanced to the priesthood on the anniversary of his baptism in 1700 by Bishop Henry Compton of London. He was ordained on the title of his fellowship at St Catharine's. On 30 May 1701, at St James's, Piccadilly, Hoadly married Sarah Curtis, a widow from Yorkshire who was six months his senior and a talented scholar, painter, and musician. Sarah Curtis's reputation as a portrait painter who had studied under Mary Beale and her son Charles (themselves trained by Sir Peter Lely) was sealed by her portraits of Gilbert Burnet, William Whiston and her husband.⁶⁰ It may well be that Benjamin and Sarah were brought together by their shared love of art and music. Sarah Curtis had lodged with Hoadly's sisters who were 'mantua makers' in Covent Garden, and the couple probably first met this way.⁶¹ Mantua making was a genteel occupation, more akin to an artistic pursuit than that of a tailor. At about this time, one of Hoadly's sisters married the printer and bookseller Timothy Childs of St Paul's churchyard, who specialised in publishing French translations.⁶² Childs was to be the publisher of many of Benjamin and John Hoadly's early works. Benjamin's marriage required him to vacate his fellowship of St Catharine's, and he did so to take up the appointment of lecturer of St Mildred in the Poultry, London. The source of his patronage was the old friend of his father's, William Sherlock, who redeemed his earlier promise of preferment. As his biographer wrote, 'having now to a wonderful degree, for one of his years, qualified himself for the pulpit, upon the recommendation of Dr Sherlock, he was . . . preferred to be lecturer of St Mildred Poultry, where he preached with good reputation for about five years in that station.'⁶³

St Mildred in the Poultry had been united with St Mary Colechurch after the Great Fire of London, when it was decided that only St Mildred's Church would be rebuilt. The opportunity was taken to brick up the windows in the south wall to keep out noise from the Poultry next door. The rector of St Mildred was George

Martin, a Whig and an appointee of King William III. During Benjamin Hoadly's ten year tenure of the lectureship it was said he 'preached it down to £30 per year (as he pleasantly observed) and then thought it high time to quit it.'⁶⁴ The interpretation of this phrase is open to question. Most writers have regarded it as a criticism of Hoadly, *reducing* the value of the lectureship. In fact it is likely that the phrase, taken from John Hoadly's laudatory life of his father, means that Benjamin's preaching *increased* the income from the lectureship to £30 by attracting listeners to his pulpit, the emphasis in the original being sarcastic.⁶⁵ A lectureship was essentially a post which rewarded the lecturer in proportion to the attendance at the lecture, and thus the popularity of the lecturer. The stipends were often very low and sometimes used to supplement the meagre income of a curate. It is likely that St Mildred's in the Poultry could not attract the sort of attendance that lectureships at the fashionable London pulpits could, and thus £30 a year may well reflect a significant achievement by Hoadly.⁶⁶ At the same time as he obtained the lectureship, probably for financial reasons more than any other, he also served as curate at the tiny church of St Swithin's, London Stone, for Mr Hodges the rector, during his absences at sea as chaplain-general of the Fleet in 1702.