

PATRONAGE AND SINECURE: EXAMPLES OF THE PRACTICE OF BISHOP HOADLY AT WINCHESTER (1734–61)

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the ways in which an 18th-century Bishop of Winchester, Benjamin Hoadly (b. 1676), distributed some of the favours at his command. It describes how Hoadly provided his son with a series of livings and then agreed with Mr Folkes, President of the Royal Society, to transfer one of them to a relative of the former Archbishop of Canterbury, one William Wake. When Wake proved unqualified for that particular living, it was passed to another relative by marriage of the Archbishop, and William was given a different living. Questions are raised about why Hoadly worked to secure plural livings for two relatives of a man with whom he had been on bad terms, especially when one beneficiary appeared to be deeply incompetent and untruthful. Additionally, Hoadly seems to have been supplied by Folkes with false information about the terms of Wake's will. These events, recorded in an unparalleled cache of letters uncovered by the author in the library of the Royal Society, shed light on the gap between principle and practice in the granting of livings in the Augustan Church. They also reveal the strength of the network of private relationships which sustained public business in the 18th century.

INTRODUCTION

As priests in the Church of England today struggle to cope with a plurality of churches, it is interesting to reflect on a time when pluralism spelt out profit without pain for a lucky few. In the 18th century, access to influential people could make the difference between penury and prosperity. In the absence of competitive interviews, systematic patterns of record keeping, and a modern network of communications, people

had to rely on informal networks supported by family and social relationships. As this discussion of the patronage of Bishop Benjamin Hoadly (1734–61) will demonstrate, helping one's family was a natural course to take, and helping someone else to maintain another set of family ties was a more obvious thing to do then than now.

While reading on a separate matter in the library of the Royal Society, I came across correspondence between Hoadly, Dr Martin Folkes President of the Royal Society, and two men whom they set out to favour. The letters display the complete acceptance of a system in which the powerful looked after kindred and friends – and friends of friends – without regard to their merits or the merits of more suitable candidates for office. Perhaps not surprisingly such letters, dealing in a detailed way with the distribution of patronage at the beginning of the 18th century, are very rare and it is even more extraordinary to catch a glimpse of Hoadly's private correspondence. Covering the bishop's time at Winchester, W R Ward records in *Parish and Parson in 18th-Century Hampshire* that '... no proper records had been kept [by bishops] since the death of Bishop Morley in 1684' (1995, 211). Thus the correspondence, discussed in detail below, offers a fascinating insight into the ways in which the social system worked in early 18th-century England. But first, some background on Hoadly and his beliefs must be set out.

Benjamin Hoadly (1676–1761) Latitudinarian

Benjamin Hoadly (b. 1676) was perhaps the most controversial bishop of the Church of

England in the 18th century. He disagreed deeply with the High Church men, successors in spirit to Charles I's authoritarian Archbishop, William Laud. A Latitudinarian and a Low Church man, Hoadly was tolerant of the right of Dissenters to worship as they chose, even though he thought them misguided. Yet he and his sort feared what was called 'Enthusiasm', a major characteristic of the Puritans of the seventeenth century. A key to understanding Latitudinarians was the distinction they made between 'the visible church', represented, for example, by the establishment of the Church of England, and 'the invisible church', the body of true believers, known only to God, and members of a kingdom that Christ had said 'was not of this world ...' (John 18. 36). Tolerance for the views of others and a mistrust of all forms of authoritarianism caused Latitudinarians to seek a broad-based church that could accommodate most protestant dissenters. Because of the dangers that religious excess could cause, they considered that the 'visible church' should be under the control of the civil state.

The faith of the Latitudinarians was bible-based, with a rejection of Tradition that the High Church men claimed as the source of much of their authority. They were sceptical about the validity of the Apostolic Succession because it had no biblical support. Instead they believed that bishops gained their authority as the Church's 'senior management' rather than by inheriting the authority that Christ had given the apostles along with the power to absolve sin or deny forgiveness. Similarly, Latitudinarians dismissed the claims of James II and his descendants that they had been divinely appointed, and approved of the 'Glorious Revolution' of William III in 1688, and afterwards the Hanoverian succession. Together with the majority of High Church men (who had once believed in the divine right of kings and a consequent duty of non-resistance and passive obedience to them), Latitudinarians understood Isaiah 49.23, 'And kings shall be thy nursing fathers and queens thy nursing mothers', as a requirement on monarchs to act as benevolent parents to their subjects rather

than tyrannical ones. Politically, then, Latitudinarians were strong Whigs. Hoadly himself was a prolific essayist, for many years writing for the Whig party on church and political matters in pamphlets, sermons and newspapers, so that he became anathema to the Tories, the High Church men and the Non-jurors (those who considered they were bound to the 'true' continuing Anglican Church of James II and his descendants because of the oaths of allegiance they had taken).

The hostility between the factions in the Church of England in the early-mid 18th century was passionate and deeply painful. It was at this period that a gulf developed between those who held views formed in the religious controversies of the 17th century – High Church men on one side and Dissenters on the other – and a new group whose thoughts on religion were formed by Enlightenment thinking. Preserved Smith in his *The Enlightenment 1687–1776* writes:

'After the Great Renewal came the Enlightenment; after the Age of Science the Age of Reason. Doubtless the growing confidence in the powers of the human understanding, the enthronement of reason on the seat once held by authority and tradition, the conquest by science of politics, philosophy, and theology, the triumph of reason over superstition, intolerance, and despotism, the education of the masses in the new world-view, and the final decline of rationalism before the assault of neglected emotions and under the solvent of self-critical analysis and subjectivism—doubtless all this is the supremely important revolution of the 18th century' (1962, 21).

This is a good description of the mindset of Hoadly, and one which fitted most Latitudinarians. Naturally such views created the deepest suspicion among the conservatives. Surely people such as Hoadly must be Socians (doubters of the divinity of Christ), Deists (believers in a Supreme Being that could be understood by reason alone) – or worse, Atheists! (followers of Hobbes).

Hoadly and the 'Bangorian Controversy'

In 1717 the Bangorian Controversy (so called because at that time Hoadly was Bishop of Bangor), almost certainly carefully orchestrated, burst like a bombshell. In a sermon preached before the king, 'My kingdom is not of this world' (John, 18.36), Hoadly had challenged the authority of the clergy of the Church of England to interfere with the consciences of men. In effect, he argued that Dissenters should not be forced to worship as the hierarchy of the Church of England decided, or punished if they refused to conform, because earthly authority could not be exercised over the citizens of Christ's kingdom. Hoadly's sermon, and the ensuing reaction, occupied so much of the public attention that for a few days in London trading was almost brought to a halt. The debate was passionate because after the accession of George I and the uprising of 1714, it acted as a surrogate for an issue that could not openly be debated: the legitimacy of the Hanoverian succession. Over the next months and years at least 1,000 pamphlets were printed supporting one side of the argument or the other. Members of the Lower House of Convocation (the equivalent of the House of Commons in the Church's two chamber lawmaking 'Parliament') planned to censure Hoadly for his sermon, and Convocation was suspended by King George I. Effectively it was not allowed to function for the rest of the century and beyond, by which time civil legislation had removed the powers over the laity (but not the tithe), that the Church had once held. The High Church party lost the forum in which it could validate its authority in church matters, and it was plain to all that Hoadly had been protected at the highest level.

Benjamin Hoadly as Bishop of Winchester (1734–61)

In 1734, Hoadly became Bishop of Winchester, at best a consolation prize for a man who believed that Robert Walpole should have had him translated to Durham. Edmund Gibson, the moderate Whig Bishop of London, blocked

that appointment but Hoadly was too important a figure to be entirely sidelined. He certainly did not gain Winchester because of the regard of King George II. Sedgwick editor of *Lord Hervey's Memoirs* notes the King's comments to Hervey about Hoadly in 1735:

"A pretty fellow for a friend!" said the King ... "Pray what is it that charms you in him? His pretty limping gait" (and here he acted the bishop's lameness), "or his nasty stinking breath? -plough!- or his silly laugh, when he grins in your face for nothing, and shows his nasty rotten teeth? Or is it his great honesty that charms your Lordship? ... I cannot help saying ... you have a great puppy and a very dull fellow and a great rascal for your friend ... But he is just the same thing in the Church that he is in the government, and as ready to receive the best pay for preaching the Bible, though he does not believe a word of it, as he is to take favours from the Crown, though, by his republican spirit and doctrine, he would be glad to abolish the powers of it." (Sedgwick 1952, 160–1)

What had particularly annoyed the king was Hoadly's *A Plain Account of the Nature and End of the Sacrifice of the Lord's Supper* published in 1735, in which he described the Communion Service as a commemoration of the Last Supper rather than an event dependent on the sacerdotal powers of the priest.

At odds with Robert Walpole rather than hurt by the view of the king who nominally approved his bishops, Hoadly abandoned his promotion of Whig causes and settled down diligently to work in his diocese. He continued to prove himself a friend to dissenters and his clerical appointments reflected his Latitudinarian views. However when he offered his friend, the distinguished scholar Samuel Clarke, a prebend at Winchester, it was on condition that he subscribed to the 39 Articles of the Church of England. Clarke refused.

So that Hoadly should not be mistaken for a prototype of the modern liberal bishop, his attitude to patronage should be examined. In the 18th century simony and nepotism was so

frequently disapproved of in theory, and so frequently accepted in fact, that contradictions between principle and practice seemed almost to go unnoticed. Although Hoadly had gained exceptional promotion thanks to his practical services to the Whigs, he was a very active nepotist.

For many gentlemen in Augustan England, the private property and patronage they commanded were inseparable from the faith they professed. The philosopher John Locke (1632–1704), whose works were a great guiding light for 18th-century thinking, had given the individual the absolute right to do as he wished with the property he owned or controlled. (To their cost, the Stuarts had seemed to threaten this central pillar of Lockean freedom.) Locke's position can be summed up in an extract from his *Two Treatises of Government* (c. 1689):

'Though the Earth, and all inferior Creatures be common to all Men, yet every Man has a *Property* in his own Person. Thus no Body has any Right to but himself. The *Labour* of his Body, and the *Work* of his Hands, we may say are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the State that Nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his *Labour* with, and joyned to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his *Property*.' (Laslett 1988, 290–1)

Not all churchmen were doctrinaire followers of Locke, or complacent about current practices in church appointments. The more conservative Thomas Sherlock (1677–1761), a bitter antagonist of Hoadly since their Cambridge days and his successor as Bishop of Salisbury when Hoadly was translated to Winchester in 1734, was critical of the lax moral and legal practices that lay behind the granting of many church livings. Sherlock's father had helped Hoadly at the start of his career. However, the promotion of Hoadly's own son John, who had trained for the law, owed everything to his father. Almost immediately on John Hoadly gaining his Bachelor of Laws (LLB) his father appointed him Chancellor of the Diocese. Two years later he was granted the Lambeth degree

of LLD (Doctor of Laws) by Thomas Herring, the Archbishop of Canterbury of the day. William Gibson, in his substantial biography of Hoadly, *Enlightenment Prelate 1676–1761*, notes the younger Hoadly's rise in the Church.

'... his father ordained him deacon on 7th December 1735 and priest on 21 December. In February 1735/6 he married Elizabeth Ashe of Salisbury. He was fortunate in his father's connections. Just before John Hoadly was ordained Bishop Hoadly was invited by the Prince of Wales (who knew how much the Bishop liked music but that he could not attend the theatre or opera 'without impropriety') to attend an operatic rehearsal at Carlton House. Hoadly ... took his son with him, where the Prince chose to appoint him as his chaplain. John Hoadly received his chaplain's scarf on 26 December 1735. He also received a series of livings in the diocese of Winchester from his father: Michelmarsh in March 1737, Wroughton, [in the Diocese of Salisbury but in the Bishop of Winchester's gift] in September 1737, Arlesford and a Prebend of Winchester in November 1737, St Mary's Southampton in June 1743, Overton in December 1746 and the Mastership of St Cross in May 1760 [in 1855 St Cross Hospital became the probable setting for Trollope's novel, *The Warden*]. He resigned the livings of ... Michelmersh and his prebend to his brother in law, Robert Ashe in 1743' (2004, 249–50).

Robert Hoadly Ashe, the son of John Hoadly's brother in law Robert Ashe, was to spring to the bishop's defence in later years. The Catholic priest, the Rev John Milner in the 1809 second edition of his *History ... of Winchester*, made criticism of Hoadly, although ironically Hoadly would have been proud of his description. Milner wrote contemptuously of 'the incongruous association of emblems ... crowded in the margin [of Hoadly's statue].' The cap and wand of liberty are in saltire with the pastoral crozier; Magna Carta is blended with the New Scripture, as forming subjects equally proper for the meditation of a bishop.' In a footnote

at the bottom of this particular page Milner wrote:

'The paragraph which next followed in our first edition, having given offence to some respectable friends and relatives of Bishop Hoadly, is expunged from the present text; but as it excited a considerable interest in the public ... it is here copied into notes, to gratify the curiosity of the reader. It stood thus: "In vain, however do we look for the mask and the dagger, to record the dramatic labours of the deceased prelate, from which he is certainly entitled to as much honour as from most of his other writings." One remark more will strike us before we lose sight of this monument. The column against which it is placed has been cut away to a considerable depth, in order to make place for it, evidently to the weakening of the whole fabric. Thus it may be said with truth of Dr Hoadly, that, both living and dying, he undermined the church of which he was a prelate' (1809, Vol II 33).

Many Anglicans would have agreed with these views of Hoadly. Milner acknowledged a dispute he had had with Dr Hoadly Ashe on the question of Hoadly's integrity, and the mistake he had made in confusing Hoadly with his son the Chancellor who was the author of a play. However Milner could scarcely be accused of being repentant for what he had written.

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HOADLY AND FOLKES

Dr Martin Folkes (1690–1754) was President of the Royal Society from 1741, and his correspondence with Hoadly is contained within a number of his papers lodged in the library of the Royal Society (Folkes 1743). There is no indication that the two had any sort of close relationship before they corresponded on the subject of the late Archbishop of Canterbury's wish for the preferment of his relatives. Archbishop William Wake (d. 1737) had been a great exponent of nepotism. Norman Sykes

recounts how Edmund Gibson, the Bishop of London, defeated an attempt by Wake to secure a Residencyship for his son in law, Dr Lynch, 'who was already overwhelmed with pluralities and the manner in which he continued to accumulate preferments, the duties of which he entirely neglected made him the object of bitter attacks as 'The Great Churchman' in contemporary satires' (1926, 130). After death, Archbishop Wake continued to look after his own. Though Folkes had known the archbishop, he was not named as an executor of the will. Perhaps Wake's friends and relations saw Folkes as an important figure that Hoadly would admire and readily seek to please. For whatever reason, Hoadly sought to ensure that the late archbishop's wishes were met, in particular in the case of a certain William Wake.

Archbishop Wake's will of 1731, amended by a later codicil of 1736, had directed that, if Priested, 'William Wake (the second son of my cousin Doctor Edmund Wake) should receive the next vacancy of a living at Ower-moigne, (now Overmoigne), in Dorset' (TNA PROB/682). Going beyond what was written in the will Folkes also championed the cause of William's younger brother, Charles, and a Reverend Mr Conant, the husband of another of the late archbishop's relatives. It is extremely doubtful that the archbishop had any legal right to arrange for his relatives' well being, post mortem.

Wake's purpose had been to provide his cousin with a sinecure living. The living, the income endowed on a parish, was treated as a piece of property owned either by the Church or a lay person. In lay hands, a living could be sold or bequeathed in a will. A rector, lay or ordained, received all of the income of a living and in the case of a sinecure or a plural living he appointed a vicar to carry out the actual work, usually at a small fraction of the income of the parish. Once appointed, a rector need never visit the parish again. Hoadly was prepared to arrange that in 1743, his son John would surrender his sinecure living in Wroughton in the Salisbury Diocese, so that Archbishop Wake's cousin's son, William Wake,

could take it up. (At this time John Hoadly had just gained the lucrative living of Southampton from his father.) Although it was in the Diocese of Salisbury, the living at Wroughton was in Hoadly's gift as Bishop of Winchester. However the actual transfer of the living required the formal agreement of the Bishop of Salisbury, Thomas Sherlock. No reference was made in any of the letters exchanged between Hoadly and Folkes of the living at Owermoigne, the parish named in Wake's will, and no mention had been made in the will of the parish of Wroughton.

Benjamin Hoadly had been no favourite of Archbishop Wake. Writing to the Archbishop of Dublin in 1719 concerning Hoadly's attitude to the Apostolic succession, Wake had wondered whether posterity would '... believe that a bishop of the Church of England should write against his own authority; and yet continue not only to exercise it, but seek by these very means to become more considerable in the very church whose foundations he is so zealous to root up?' (King 1719). Why, then, should Hoadly have involved himself in promoting the interests of the Archbishop's cousin once removed, and then the husband of another relative? Today, perhaps unworthily, one might suspect that cash was involved. However it is probable that Hoadly and Folkes were acting in a more subtle way, supporting the informal network of alliances of family, friends, and friends of friends, with its favours and consequent obligations that kept the social system in working order. The practice is not unknown today. In addition, Hoadly's isolated position on the far wing of the clerical Whigs, themselves a group mistrusted by the rest of the Church, might have inclined him to grant favours to a man such as Folkes, a leader in science and enlightenment.

The collection of material in the Royal Society library contains correspondence between Hoadly, Folkes, the younger Wake, and Conant in a period between 31 May and 12 August 1743. The first letter, dated 25 May 1743, is from William Wake to Folkes, responding to earlier, untraced correspondence. It begins:

'Sir!,

I have enclosed, as I promised in my last, sent you a Copy of my Deacons and Priests Orders, and also a Testimonial of my Conduct since my residence, signed by Dr Macro our Convocation Man of Norfolk and several other Clergy, Men of undoubted Reputation in ye World, I return you my hearty Thanks for yr kindness towards me and if any other Certificate is wanting, if desired, you shall have it with all possible dispatch fro[m]

Your most obliged Humble Sevt Wm Wake'.

This was responded to by Folkes, in an undated letter, a copy of which still exists, highlighting the discrepancies in Wake's alleged academic achievements and informing him of Folkes' and Hoadly's endeavours on his behalf:

'Revd Sir

I receiv'd last Night only, Yours dated the 25th Instant, and was not a little surprised at such a Neglect in an affair of such Consequence. I now have the Testimonial but only for two years, whereas you know better than I that all bishops require them at least for three, from whatever Place or Places you have been resident in. This has necessitated some Enquiry, and tho' you told me your Deacon's Order mentioned your Degrees and that I see you are called AB we are apprehensive you have not been explicit with us in that Particular; as a Search in the Registry at Oxford very much inclines us to believe you may have neglected taking your Degree there. It is not, Sir, my Business to expostulate with you about this Conduct towards us: who as you must see could have no Wish but to serve unasked, unsolicited, and purely out of respect to the memory of the late Abp, a Relation of his entirely unknown to ourselves. This want of a Degree has entirely prevented what we would have wished. All that under the present Circumstances it has been in the Archdeacon's Power and mine to attempt for you is to endeavour the obtaining the Rectory and Sine Cure of Wroughton in Coun Wilts, which requires no Residence and is consist-

ent every way with your present Cure at Oby. It is of the reserv'd Rent of £50 of corn [?] and there is upon it what is call'd a Corpse of the [.... ?] as we are informed of about £400. And this I think we can obtain, always supposing you can of your Canonicals above mention'd give the Bp the Satisfaction he shall desire from you. What is therefore yet wanting I think you should instantly set about and come directly up with it to Town, to wait on the bishop with your proper Instruments. This is really and truly what is, and all that is, in our Power to attempt for your Service. I heartily wish you Sir all Health, Happiness and Prosperity in the World and remain

Sir, Your faithful Friend and Servt'

After this letter from Folkes, Wake always replied to him in the humblest terms, all his letters, as in this reply to Folkes's above correspondence, beginning with 'Good Sir':

'Good Sir

I did not rec: your most kind letter 'till Monday Morn: not being forwarded to me from Yarmouth.

I think the Testimonial is signed for two years and upwards for I have been resident three the 7th of Sber next. I am sorry if it is not in my Power to procure what is more Satisfactory, I cannot by any means expect that any Neighybour, [sic], would answer for my Conduct longer than they have known me. The loss I undergo is the just Reward of my past misconduct, but I hope my present and future Behaviour will recommend me to the Favour of my Friends.

I supposed by your first Letter, that You designed Me Some Addition to my present Preferment here in Norfolk, otherwise I wd never have given You so much Trouble, having long resolved never to quit Obye, upon any Consideration, a Place tho' melancholy, most agreeable to my Inclinations, and to give up all my Right and Title to the Rectory in Dorset to my Bro^s; but this intention I never revealed before. Your great Goodness makes me hope that when it is in your Power You will recommend me to Something here. I

shall never forget the unmerited Favours I have rec^d from You and Mr Archdeacon, but have no way of returning them, but by the sincerest Gratitude.

I assure You, S^r I did not impose upon You as to the literal Copy of my Deacon's Orders for I am there stiled, [sic], A.B.

Having been given my Degree in the College, I was willing to take Orders as soon as possible, that I might be in some Capacity of relieving my Mo^r, from the Expense of providing for me, wth was (my Fath^r being dead) a very heavy one to Her; therefore with great Intreaty, I prevailed with the Gentlemen that signed my Testimonial to put me down A: B, promising to take my Degree in the University as soon as the Term came in; but this was my mismanagement, having run much in Debt, prevented and I was obliged to quit Oxford. This I should have informed You of in my first letter, had I been able to write myself, but as I had the Rheumatism, I was obliged wch I hope You'll excuse, to get the Assistance of a neighbour Who asked me concerning my Degree to wch I made answer that it was inserted in my Orders, being quite ashamed to confess to my negligence to Him in an Affair that so much concerned Me. That much I thought proper to acquaint You with in Vindication of myself, and hope that You will excuse my giving You so much Trouble. I beg to repeat my hearty thanks for all Your Favours, and to remain

Good S^r, Your most obliged Humble Servt
Will Wakes. Obye'

Meanwhile, in his letter of the 31 May, Hoadly had told Folkes, 'I cannot but take notice with pleasure of the zeal and faithfulness with which you have endeavoured to serve Both the Young men, [Wake and his younger brother], pointed out to you by the late Archbishop. I thank you for the Confidence you place in me ...'. Clearly William Wake was not given up as a hopeless case. The more he showed himself to be incompetent and unreliable, the harder Folkes and Hoadly seemed to work to obtain for him a sinecure living.

It seems that Wake came to London to meet

Folkes. However, somehow the meeting did not take place. Two notes were sent to Folkes by Wake. The first reads:

'Good S:

Last Thursday Night I came hither, much tired and fatigued with the Length of so long and tedious a Journey, and greatly indisposed.

I would not offer to pay my Respects to You, for Fear of being impertinent, 'till I knew from You, w^t Time would be most convenient to You, therefore I hope You will excuse my giving You this additional Trouble (who am)

Sr, Y^r most obliged Humble Serv.t, Will:
Wake

Mr Austin's Flying Horse

Catherine Street Strand

July 25th 1743'

A second letter from Wake, dated 28 July, arrived few days later. It read 'Good S: I can. t stay in London any longer than this Night; my Cure being as I understand, by Letter, unprovided. A Neglect in this Case might be prejudicial to me. Your Instructions, S: shall exactly be observed. Rec: the repeated Thanks Of Y^r most obliged Humble Serv.t, W.m Wake'. Then, apparently on the same day and in reply to an unrecorded communication from Folkes, Wakes wrote again:

'Good S:

I did not rec: your most kind Letters 'till this Morn: I do not wonder at your Surprise at my sudden Departure from London, and not paying the greatest Deference to your most kind Instructions. But as my coming down was a Case of real Necessity I must beg You to excuse it, otherwise my Church must have incurred the Displeasure of the bishop, Mr Chancellour and Mr Archdeacon, m.ch (as the affair at Wroughton appeared to me) I judged the most imprudent and inconsistent thing I could hazard. I should never forgive myself if I in the least doubted of the Sincerity of Your Favours, w^{ch} you have confirmed by so many unquestion-

able Instances, and particularly in this last, the Promise of this New Sinecure. I have nothing more to offer to You but a grateful Heart, w^{ch} I shall always pray may never be wanting.

I shall meet with Dr Macro at Bungay who is there for his Health, and this Afternoon will obtain such other Hands to my Testimonial as shall, I hope, give perfect Satisfaction.

I can't possibly set out 'till Tuesday in the Yarm.^o Stage being obliged to go to Norwich to procure a Supply for my Church where I will again wait upon his Lordship, who was from Home at my coming Down.

I am with the Sincerest Respect S^r, Your ever obliged and most humble Servant
William Wakes [sic]'

On 12 July, Hoadly wrote referring to another letter that does not appear to have survived. He still seemed to believe that Wake would go to Wroughton, and expressed the conviction that otherwise he would work to obtain him a suitable living:

'... I fear my haste to Say Something for the advantage of Mr Wake made me write by last Post unintelligibly ... I shall only add that if I should die, My Son will most punctually be ready to resign his S.Cure, whenever Mr W be sure of it; and that if I live a little while, I have no doubt of procuring Something as good for Mr W. If this should fail I am with great regard.

Sr Y^r St B Winchester'

On 14th July a brief note from Hoadly indicated his continued support for Mr Wake, and the following day Hoadly wrote yet again, unaware of an impediment that prevented Wake being eligible for Wroughton. He wrote, '... You may be sure, when Mr W is provided for as You like the S.Cure in Wilts shall be at your Joint Command; if you think not fit that Mr W shd have both ...' However, a decision was made that as Wake could not go to Wroughton, he should instead have a sinecure living at Llansanffraid in Wales. On the 19th Hoadly was writing urgently to Folkes:

'... There is one reason for Hastening Mr Wakes presentation to Llansanfrid, wh I did not think of when I wrote last, and that is a very material one – viz; and as from the prophits, [sic], from Tithes, Mischief may come and great loss for the year if there be no one in possession, who has a right to them ... I hope Mr Wake has kept in town and that He has his Testimonial (I mean the same he showed me) Safe and ready to carry with him. He seems so helpless a man, that it would be well if He had One to go down with him.'

However in a subsequent letter of 20 July, Hoadly wrote to Folkes complaining that '... the Bishop of Salisbury [Sherlock] is being obstructive ...'. A draft of an ensuing letter written by Folkes and a certain 'SL' to Hoadly offered a way out of the impasse involving John Conant, yet another of Archbishop Wake's relatives. It reads:

'My Lord'

The option of Llansanfrid lately fallen having enabled us to provide a way for Mr Wake; and the living your Lordship has been so kind to promise us at a proper time being also a prospect of plentiful provision for his younger Brother not yet of age for holy orders, we become petitioners to your Lordship to bestow the Sinecure of Wroughton on another very near relation of the late Archbishop, Mr Conant of Hastings in Kent, and who is we hope and are persuaded a worthy man and a Clergyman of unblameable life and character, who has resided many years in his present cure. His relation to the Archbishop was by the marriage of the only Daughter of Mr William Wake His Graces cousin germain, and own brother to the father of Rev and Mrs Wake before mentioned. The late Archbishop had always a particular kindness and regard for that Gentleman and we therefore hope by doing this piece of service to his son in law, especially as otherwise a deserving man, would have been agreeable to his Grace could he have foreseen the situation we are

in. He left Mr Conant a legacy of 50£ by his will which we paid him soon after his decease. We hope we shall have the satisfaction of Your Lordships approbation, and that Mr Conants behaviour will be such as not to appear unworthy of the favour he shall have received from your Lordship. We have the honour to remain with great respect
My Lord Your Lordships Most obedient humble servants MF SL'.

Hoadly, who appears to have received a 'copy' of an extract from the Will and Testament of the Archbishop 'promising the Rev William Wake the Sine-cure of Wroughton', sent it on to Folkes on 31 July. However the 'copy' was inaccurate. The will spoke of Owermoigne, but it may have convinced Hoadly of the reality of the Archbishop's 'promise'. Was Hoadly being deliberately misled? Either way, plans continued to place Mr Wake at Llansanffriad. On 1 August a note from Hoadly insisted that 'Mr Wake must get down to Llansanfrad.'

By 3 August a letter from Mr Conant reached Martin Folkes, whom he plainly believed to be responsible for his good fortune. His response to his good news suggested a level of social skill quite above that which Wake was capable of. It reads:

'Sir

I humbly thank you for the favour of your Letter and think myself more oblig'd to you than I can express, for having me in your thoughts, as you were disposing of the late Archbishop's Options. The benefice intended for me by you, Sir and the Archdeacon, will be the more acceptable to me, as I had no grounds to expect so great a favour from you, not having had the honour so much as to be known to you. And I am very sensible, that the most grateful acknowledgment I can possibly make you; can be no way equal to the great obligation you have laid upon me by procuring for me such a handsome Addition to the Preferment, which by his late Grace's favour I am already possess'd of. To you therefore, Good Sir, and to Mr Archdeacon, I shall ever think myself

indebted for this plentiful Accession to my present Income, which will make my circumstances perfectly easy to me and enable me, by God's blessing, to provide for my increasing Family. In this acknowledgment my Wife very heartily concurs and desires to join her humble Thanks with mine for so great a favour and benefit confer'd upon us both. I have procur'd what I hope will be thought a proper Testimonial, and am in a readiness to set out for London upon the first notice. In the mean time I remain,
Sir, Your most Obedient and most Obligated Humble Servant, Jo Conant.'

Meanwhile, by 5 August an escort had been arranged to get Mr Wake to his destination. Hoadly wrote that 'The B. of Bangor says he knows nobody nearer than '14 long Welsh Miles' to the place but that a particular friend of his would meet Mr W ... at Oswestry if Mr W takes that road; and do him all the service he could.' (In the 18th Century 'long Welsh Miles' were something of an English joke. However the sense of 'Wild Wales's' isolation from England was very real.). It is sometimes claimed that Hoadly never went to Bangor or Hereford when he was Bishop of those two dioceses. In practice the first duty of a bishop was to attend the House of Lords, yet in this letter he displayed a practical knowledge of the use of Welsh in Wales, and the problems it could cause to a monoglot Englishman. He added that Wake would need:

'... a good guide who knows the country ... It is come into my head that it would not be amiss for Mr Wake to carry into Wales a good common-Prayer book, in English for his own Use when He reads prayers in the Church. For if the service be always in Welsh, it may be hard to meet with one in English fit for his Use. For he must read all and make his Declaration of Absence in English.'

On 7 and 8 August, Hoadly wrote notes confirming that arrangements were being made for Mr Wake and Mr Conant. On the 10th Mr Wake was finally on his way and Hoadly wrote

to Folkes, 'I am glad to hear of his setting out on Friday on ye Worc. Coach'. The final letter from Hoadly was sent on 12 August.

'... At the same time that you receive this I hope you also receive my presentation of Mr Conant to Wroughton: which I should have sent yesterday but that the letters (Which brought me an assent of the bishop's Acceptance of my Sons resignation came in too late for Me to do it. Mr Conant will find the bishop at his Palace at Salisbury and after being dispatched there, He will, I suppose go and take legal possession of Wroughton, which lies near Swindon a Market town in North-Wilts ... But one comfort is, when He has once done and read there Every thing necessary He will never again have occasion to see it ... Mr Jones and my son after him allowed four guineas towards a Charity School ... but this was voluntary ... I now heartily congratulate you upon the honourable, truly honourable End you have by your own care alone, have made of part of your Trust. I am with a true regard. Dr Sr Yr most faithful B. Winchester.'

The Royal Society correspondence concludes with a note to Folkes from John Conant, conveying brief information on his preparations to assume his living. It ends with a postscript, 'I pray excuse this short hasty letter, For the Postman waits and is impatient.' In the 18th-century letters were not merely delivered but collected as well!

During all of Hoadly and Folkes's endeavours there seems to have been no thought of questioning the right of senior clergy to look after their own, even after death. In helping to secure a sinecure living for William Wake, Folkes and Hoadly went to real trouble. However they could not be accused of doing so because they admired the man. Likewise, the more 'deserving' Mr Conant was not given a sinecure living because of his abilities, the size of his family or even because of a mention in the will. Folkes and Hoadly had no qualms about enabling the Archbishop's wish to benefit his wider family to be carried out, even though

the terms of the will, legitimate or not, were not complied with.

In 1772, few years after Hoadly's death the poet Mark Akenside published his *Ode to the Bishop of Winchester* which is recorded in William Gibson's *Enlightenment Prelate, 1676–1761*. Akenside had no doubt about Hoadly's integrity. I quote a verse.

'O never, Hoadly, in thy country's eyes,
May impious gold or pleasure's gaudy prize,
Make public virtue, public freedom vile;

Nor our own manners tempt us to disclaim
That heritage, our noblest wealth and fame,
Which thou hast kept entire from force
And factious guile.' (2004, 301)

As frequently lampooned as praised in verse, Hoadly was both hated and admired for his churchmanship, his politics, and his striving for personal advancement. However not one of his contemporaries had anything to say, negative or otherwise, about his use or abuse of patronage.

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