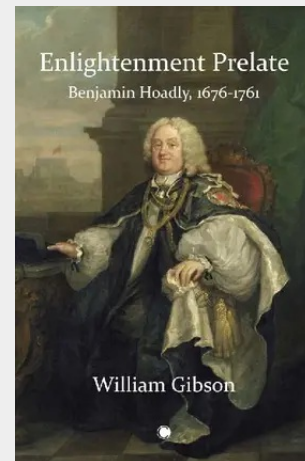


Enlightenment Prelate

A revisionist study of Benjamin Hoadly in the context of church, national and international politics in the eighteenth century. Benjamin Hoadly, Bishop successively of Bangor, Hereford, Salisbury and Winchester, was the most controversial English churchman of the eighteenth century, and he has unjustly gained the reputation of a negligent and political bishop. His sermon on the nature of Christ's kingdom sparked the Bangorian controversy, which ranged from 1717 to 1720 and generated hundreds of books, tracts and sermons, while his commitment to the Whigs and the cause of toleration for Dissenters earned him the antagonism of many contemporary and later churchmen. In this powerfully revisionist study, Hoadly emerges as a dedicated and conscientious bishop with strong and progressive principles. His commitment to the ideology of the Revolution of 1688 and to the comprehension of Dissenters into the Church of England are revealed as the principal motives for his work as a preacher, author and bishop. Gibson also shows how Hoadly's stout defence of rationalism made him a contributor to the English Enlightenment, while his commitment to civil liberties made him a progenitor of the American Revolution. Above all, however, the goal of reuniting of English Protestants remained the heart of Hoadly's legacy.

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