

## Chapter 1

# PROLOGUE

### CAMBRIDGE IN 1870

In the years 1869–71 there could be seen a series of dramatic harbingers of change. In 1869 Henry Sidgwick, who had become a devout agnostic, made protest against the survival of religious tests in Cambridge by resigning his Trinity fellowship.<sup>1</sup> In 1870 Joseph Barber Lightfoot refused to be translated from the Hulsean to the Regius Chair of Divinity in the hope – rapidly fulfilled – that this would enable his friend Brooke Foss Westcott to return to Cambridge in the Regius Chair.<sup>2</sup> In the same year, both of them, with F. J. A. Hort, joined the panel which produced the Revised Version of the Bible. Thus was cemented the alliance which made the late nineteenth century the golden age of Cambridge theology; a movement by no means checked by the abolition of religious tests in 1871.<sup>3</sup> In the same year 1870 Lightfoot endowed a fund ‘for the encouragement of the study of history, and more especially ecclesiastical history’;<sup>4</sup> this helped to establish history as a serious subject and was to support a succession of notable young historians in the century which followed. The endowment was more significant than the career of Charles Kingsley as Regius Professor of Modern History – thronged as his lectures were – which came to an end in 1869, when he was succeeded by J. R. Seeley.<sup>5</sup> In 1870 the duke of Devonshire announced the benefaction from which the

<sup>1</sup> Sidgwick 1906, p. 198; cf. Schneewind 1977, pp. 26–52.

<sup>2</sup> Chadwick 1963, pp. 10–11; Eden and MacDonald 1932, p. 4; Westcott 1903, I, 366. For what follows, Chadwick 1970, pp. 46–50.

<sup>3</sup> On the tests see Winstanley 1947, chap. 3; for theology, below, pp. 134–46.

<sup>4</sup> Clark 1900, p. 329.

<sup>5</sup> Chadwick 1975; Wormell 1980, esp. p. 73.

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Cavendish Laboratory came forth.<sup>6</sup> In 1869 Frederic William Maitland arrived in Trinity as an undergraduate and in 1870 or so wandered into Henry Sidgwick's lecture room.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile the movement for reviving college teaching was under way. Trinity had already set a notable example. In 1868 Augustus Austen Leigh became tutor of King's; Ernest Stewart Roberts became a college lecturer in Caius in 1870, tutor in 1876 – and so one could go on, almost without end.<sup>8</sup> Most portentous of all, the nucleus which was to become Girton gathered at Hitchin in 1869; the five students and Miss Clough, who later moved to Newnham, settled in Regent Street in Cambridge in 1871.<sup>9</sup>

Yet in a very deep and very true sense Cambridge altered little in these years; and the roots and inspiration of such change as came lay far back in the past. Some of the leaders of late nineteenth-century Cambridge looked back to the first half of the century as the age of the giants. Writing of Robert Willis on his death in 1875, J. W. Clark, himself a notable scientist, antiquary and later University Registrar, called him 'almost, if not quite, the last of those great men who by their brilliant reputation in studies the most diverse – theology, mathematics, classics, science – made the first half of the present century the golden age of Cambridge'.<sup>10</sup> The sentiment seems absurd to us, and yet he could have provided a remarkable list going back to the great classical scholar Richard Porson, who died in 1808. He probably had chiefly in mind, apart from Willis, the giants of Trinity. First, there was Adam Sedgwick, a craggy Yorkshireman who took his BA degree in 1808, and by 1818 was professor of geology.<sup>11</sup> He was one of those who made geology a fundamental science, and helped materially on the path which led to Darwin's *Origin of Species*. But when Darwin published his book in 1859, Sedgwick – who regarded Darwin still as a young man of bright promise not quite on the right lines – gave it an ambiguous reception. 'Parts of it I admired greatly, parts I laughed at till my sides were

<sup>6</sup> Cavendish 1910, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Fisher 1910, p. 7. Maitland became a pensioner in October 1868 and matriculated in January 1869.

<sup>8</sup> Austen Leigh 1906, chaps. 6–7, esp. p. 92; Brooke 1985, pp. 234–6.

<sup>9</sup> Bradbrook 1969, chaps. 1–2; Hamilton 1936, chaps. 5–6; Sidgwick 1906, pp. 205–9.

<sup>10</sup> *Cambridge Chronicle* 6 March 1875, quoted in McKitterick 1986, p. 704.

<sup>11</sup> Clark and Hughes 1890.

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almost sore; other parts I read with absolute sorrow, because I think them utterly false and grievously mischievous'; and at the end 'believe me . . . your true-hearted old friend: A. Sedgwick'.<sup>12</sup> For he was in many ways a don of the old school, a cleric and prebendary of Norwich Cathedral, deeply suspicious of the tendency of modern thought to undermine the Christian faith. Next, there was William Whewell, the master of Trinity from 1841 to 1866, a formidable character who struck terror into many who encountered him.<sup>13</sup> Whewell was an original thinker who revolutionised several sciences and even has a niche in the history of moral theology and philosophy;<sup>14</sup> a little more reluctantly, he played an active part in university reform, helping to establish the new triposes in moral and natural sciences. But in Trinity nothing might change: he stood firm against the impertinent enquiries of the first Royal Commission, even though Sedgwick was a Commissioner; he built Whewell's Court for Trinity as an enchanting echo of the gothic past.<sup>15</sup> His death in 1866 made possible at last a movement for college reform in which Trinity could play a leading part.<sup>16</sup> Finally, there was Robert Willis himself, one-time fellow of Caius, but almost a Trinity man since he was a close friend of Whewell and uncle of J. W. Clark. He was a notable mechanical engineer, a leading figure in the development of railway engineering, and for many years Jacksonian Professor of Natural Philosophy. His engineering skills are still remembered, though probably not so widely now as his fundamental work in architectural history. When students engage today in the serious study of English cathedrals, there is usually a study by Willis from which they start.<sup>17</sup>

Whewell died in 1866; Willis lived on to 1875, but in failing health. His great *Architectural History of the University of Cambridge and of the Colleges of Cambridge and Eton* was left to his nephew Clark to complete.<sup>18</sup> The university was a very different place

<sup>12</sup> Clark and Hughes, 1890, II, 356–9; cf. Garland 1980, pp. 105–12.

<sup>13</sup> See esp. Clark 1900, pp. 1–76; also Robson 1967; Robson and Cannon 1964; summary in Brooke, Highfield and Swaan 1988, pp. 270–1.

<sup>14</sup> Robson and Cannon 1964; Schneewind 1977, pp. 101–17.

<sup>15</sup> On which he shared some expertise with his friend Robert Willis. Brooke 1985, p. 204 and n. 59.

<sup>16</sup> Winstanley 1947, chap. 6.

<sup>17</sup> Brooke 1985, pp. 204–5, and see esp. Willis 1845a and b, 1869.

<sup>18</sup> Willis and Clark 1886/1988; and see esp. David Watkin's introduction to the edition of 1988.

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from what it had been in 1800: there were new triposes, new museums, professors who lectured, even a few married dons.<sup>19</sup> But the colleges were only very slowly feeling the winds of change, and the old world lived on beside the new in all manner of surprising ways. Perhaps the end of this epoch is most fittingly portrayed by the passing of Sedgwick in January 1873.

‘We buried poor old Sedgwick today,’ wrote Alfred Newton, professor of zoology, to Clark, at that time curator of his museum, on 1 February:

the funeral was very well conducted, but the weather was bitterly cold. However, I dressed myself *à l’arctique*, and am none the worse . . . [At the Trinity Lodge] all the ‘swells’ assembled in the big dining-room, and we were *ex necessitate* rigged out in gloves and scarves. The minor dignitaries met in the Combination Room, and fell into the procession as it came round the court. I have no idea how many people joined – perhaps 300. We had the Bishops of Ely and Norwich; Stanley [Dean of Westminster], who looked as if he should have liked to carry off the corpse to his own collection at Westminster . . . sundry Deans, a few Lords, masters of public schools and the Mayor of Cambridge. My own order [the professors] . . . was of course very strongly represented, in fact I think Vernon Harcourt [professor of international law and an eminent politician] was the only absentee . . . So we walked round the court in a shower of sleet . . .<sup>20</sup>

The ceremony and the weather speak of a Cambridge which never changes; nor was the old order wholly buried with Sedgwick. At the heart of that procession must have walked a clergyman in his late forties, who combined the roles of University Registrar, vicar of the university church, Great St Mary’s, and fellow of Trinity; a very notable figure of the *ancien régime*, a scholar indeed, but equally a cleric – Henry Richards Luard. He lives for us in the charming memoir J. W. Clark wrote of him after his death in 1891.<sup>21</sup>

He passed his youth and many years of his manhood in the old University, and though he was compelled, intellectually, to admit

<sup>19</sup> On married fellows, see pp. 252–7.

<sup>20</sup> Shipley 1913, pp. 115–16. On Sedgwick see esp. Clark and Hughes 1890.

<sup>21</sup> Clark 1900, pp. 328–43; the passage which follows is from pp. 329–30.

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the advantage of many of the changes which have taken place in recent years, I doubt if he ever cordially accepted them . . . As his older friends passed away, he found a difficulty in making new ones; he felt out of his element; he was distracted by the multiplicity of tastes and studies; and vehemently disapproved of the modifications in the collegiate life which the new statutes have brought about. Though he himself, by a strange irony of fate, was the first Fellow [of Trinity] to take advantage of the power of marrying and still retaining the fellowship, he bitterly regretted that such a clause had ever become law; and it is hardly too much to say that he predicted the ruin of the college from such an innovation.

Luard dearly loved his fellowship, and dearly loved his wife, and he thought it calamitous that he was allowed to have them both. 'And yet he was by no means an unreasoning or unreasonable Conservative. In many matters he was a reformer; I have even heard him called a radical; but, when his beloved college was concerned, the force of early association was too strong, and he regarded fundamental change as sacrilege.'

Like most of his generation, he had been a wrangler in the Mathematical Tripos; but he was at heart a dedicated classic. 'He spoke of Bentley, Porson' and others 'as though they had been his personal friends . . . He resented any slights on Porson as almost a personal affront . . . He had a particular dislike for English notes [to classical texts]; and I had rather not try to remember what I have heard him say about English translations printed side by side with the original text.'<sup>22</sup> Thus far Clark.

As Registrary Luard had charge of the University Archives, and did his share, as did several of the nineteenth-century Registraries, in ordering and listing them. More than this, he played a leading part in the completion of the catalogue of manuscripts in the University Library.<sup>23</sup> Above all, he is remembered today as the most prolific editor of medieval texts in the Cambridge of his time. Eighteen volumes of the Rolls Series bear witness to his industry, all adorned (strange as it may seem) with notes in English. He seems to have taught himself as he went along. His first endeavour, the Lives of Edward the Confessor, is

<sup>22</sup> Clark 1900, pp. 331–2.

<sup>23</sup> Clark 1900, pp. 336, 338–9; McKitterick 1986, pp. 546–51.

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one of the worst in the series; his last, the great editions of Matthew Paris' *Chronica Majora* and the *Flores Historiarum*, are among the best – though admittedly he never achieved the stature of William Stubbs. 'His labours in this field of research', Clark claimed, 'have been better appreciated in Germany than in England' – a sort of refrain in memoirs of medieval scholars of this and the next generation – but Stubbs and his disciples greeted his best work with 'cordial appreciation' and his Matthew Paris has been in our hands ever since.<sup>24</sup> It was not a difficult task, since a part of Matthew's own autograph lay to hand in the Corpus library; but it is monumental. Luard was inspired to his love of the Middle Ages by reading S. R. Maitland's works;<sup>25</sup> and it is a strange and sad irony that although Maitland's greater grandson, Frederic William, was an undergraduate at Trinity – and at the end of Luard's life reader and professor in law – there is no evidence of any link or influence between them. None the less Luard's books must often have been in Maitland's hands. This helps to explain how Luard could perform so many roles. A fellow of Trinity need have no personal dealing with undergraduates, though a few had much; a Registrar, if a quick and efficient worker, could himself master all the business of the university now undertaken by innumerable full-time officials and clerks. There was infinitely less paper-work within the university, and no University Grants or Funding Committee without dedicated to sending endless requests for answers to questions of doubtful meaning. He was a conscientious clergyman of an old-fashioned character.

He was an eloquent preacher, and his sermons in the College chapel used to be listened to with an interest which we did not always feel in what was said to us from that pulpit. They were plain, practical, persuasive; the compositions of one who was not above his congregation; who had nothing donnish about him, but who spoke to the undergraduates as one who had passed through the same temptations as themselves . . . On the same principles, for the twenty-seven years during which he was Vicar of Great St

<sup>24</sup> Clark 1900, p. 337; on the quality of Luard's work on Matthew Paris, see Vaughan 1958, pp. 155–7, and for some weaknesses, esp. *ibid.* p. 31. Luard (in good company) failed adequately to identify Matthew's autographs, and wrongly denied Matthew's authorship of the *Flores Historiarum*: see Vaughan 1958, pp. 39–41.

<sup>25</sup> Clark 1900, p. 336; on F. W. Maitland, see pp. 216–24.

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Mary's, he laboured in the parish in a spirit of true sympathy. There was no fussiness about him; he did not take part in movements; he did not 'work' a parish as a modern clergyman does, on the principle of perpetual worry, leaving neither man, nor woman, nor child at peace for a moment; he led his people to better things by gentle measures; he sympathized with their troubles; he relieved their necessities . . . Those who know best tell me that his labours among the poor were unremitting, and that his generosity knew no limits.<sup>26</sup>

He was an old high churchman, not a ritualist. Clark goes on to underline his honesty and fearlessness; set in his ways, he yet understood that others held different views; and his sermon after the death of Frederick Denison Maurice was evidently a model of charity. He had a keen sense of humour and a deep memory from which countless tales of Cambridge life would well up. 'He delighted in society, and few men knew better how to deal with it, or how to make his home an agreeable centre of Cambridge life. In this he was ably seconded by his admirable wife, *qui savait tenir un salon*, as the French say, more successfully than is usual in this country'<sup>27</sup> – and who lived, we may add, in St Peter's Terrace, where one might find, at one time or another in the 1870s, F. D. Maurice, Westcott, Hort and Luard, and which was perhaps, even more truly than the Trinity high table or the Divinity School, the centre of Cambridge religious discourse.<sup>28</sup> Clark lamented at Luard's passing; yet much of him remains. His catalogue, his Matthew Paris, and the Victorian restoration of Great St Mary's, are his living monuments still.

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Luard lived through major reforms, and regretted them. None the less he harboured in himself some of the elements – love of learning, love of the college – which were to remain fundamental through the great changes of late nineteenth-century Cambridge. Beside the college the university began to grow, and labs and departments to achieve a measure of independent life crucial for

<sup>26</sup> Clark 1900, pp. 339–40. For what follows, see *ibid.* pp. 331–2.

<sup>27</sup> Clark 1900, pp. 342–3.

<sup>28</sup> For St Peter's Terrace, see esp. Hort 1896, II, *passim*, esp. pp. 167, 172, 193, 370.

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the future, even though the full development of Cambridge's strange constitution – the effective divorce of university and colleges – had to wait for the 1920s. This dual growth, in colleges and in the university, lends a marked ambivalence to the history of Cambridge between 1870 and 1926. By the same token, in the equally crucial changing view of the academic profession, old and new were mingled in an ambivalent way which lends a special interest to the theme we are now pursuing.

This changing view has been labelled by A. J. Engel, for Oxford, the transition *From Clergyman to Don*; and Sheldon Rothblatt has described the process, for Cambridge, as *The Revolution of the Dons*.<sup>29</sup> As a stereotype, Engel's picture is very revealing. The characteristic figure of mid-nineteenth-century Oxford – and Cambridge too – was the old-fashioned unmarried clerical don, whose whole life lay within the college, devoted to its preservation though often lacking in any academic aim we could easily recognise as such – neither directed to research nor to teaching. By 1900 he had been in large measure replaced by the professional academic, lay, learned, and married, whether he was a man of the labs and the libraries or of the towpath.<sup>30</sup> But like all stereotypes it dissolves the more it mingles with the crowd.

We have already studied one admirable example of the old-fashioned clerical don in H. R. Luard. Closer to the formula was the Reverend Dr E. H. Perowne, the master of Corpus, who in his later years certainly regarded himself as cast in the image of Cambridge tradition: he was a clergyman and bachelor and thought of his college as a clerical seminary. But the Corpus of his youth had been liberal in politics and more open to the new fashions of the age; he was one of those who had created the conservative, evangelical model there.<sup>31</sup> There is a sense in which Perowne and his colleagues in their later years were consciously forming the image of the clerical don which was under attack.

Nor were all the clergy arrayed on the conservative side. It is significant that the young tutor and bursar of Caius, E. S. Roberts and J. B. Lock, deeply involved in leading Caius into the new

<sup>29</sup> Engel 1983; Rothblatt 1981.

<sup>30</sup> We have no precise statistics for Cambridge dons to show how many married by 1900.

<sup>31</sup> Bury 1952, esp. pp. 55–9, 84–9, 114–18.



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world, both felt it right or incumbent on them to seek orders in the late 1870s.<sup>32</sup> The leaders of reform in the university included Bateson, master of St John's, and Phear, master of Emmanuel; and by Phear's side stood A. T. Chapman, celibate clerical fellow of Emmanuel from 1862 to 1913, when he left his Hebrew books and his wine to the college, twin memorials of what appear to have been the foundations of his life – his devotion to the college, and its common life, and to scholarship.<sup>33</sup> He was a staunch supporter of the remarkable scheme to amalgamate Emmanuel with Christ's, and was evidently involved, with Phear, in the election of Hort as fellow, and, with Hort, in the foundation of the Dixie Professorship – two significant steps designed to give Emmanuel a more professional image in education, religion, learning and research, all four.<sup>34</sup>

*F. J. A. Hort*

Hort himself had a link with almost every movement of the mid and late nineteenth century. A pupil of Dr Arnold at Rugby, an undergraduate and fellow of Trinity, an Apostle and disciple and personal friend of F. D. Maurice, he held firmly together in his lively, searching, penetrating mind the fervour of traditional Anglicanism with an enthusiastic welcome for the new learning, both in biblical scholarship and in science. In religious sentiment, he came of evangelical stock and gradually assimilated more liberal ideas and a modicum of high-church practices: he rejoiced in the adornment of Trinity chapel with murals and glass inspired by Lightfoot and Westcott and took pains to fill the windows of Emmanuel chapel with glass similarly portraying the glory of the Christian tradition.<sup>35</sup> His son would not allow that he was eclectic, yet he clearly grasped something of value from almost every aspect of the Christian tradition.<sup>36</sup> He rejoiced to say of Cambridge, 'we have no sharply-defined camps', in contrast to Oxford.<sup>37</sup> In 1850 he took part I of the Mathematical Tripos

<sup>32</sup> Brooke 1985, pp. 231–2 and 231 n. 30.

<sup>33</sup> See p. 58.

<sup>34</sup> See pp. 58–9. On Hort see esp. Hort 1896; Rupp 1977, chap. 10.

<sup>35</sup> Pevsner 1970, p. 167 and n.; Willis and Clark 1886/1988, II, 587–600, esp. p. 588; Hort 1896, II, 258–9, 293; Stubbings 1977, pp. 16–23.

<sup>36</sup> Hort 1896, I, 43.

<sup>37</sup> Hort 1896, II, 276–7, letter of 1879.

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(only one part owing to illness) and was third in the Classical Tripos – Perowne was first; in 1851 he took firsts in moral sciences and natural sciences.<sup>38</sup> We may reflect that rather less preparation was needed then than now; but also admire the universal scope of Hort's interests. Throughout his life he was a passionate botanist – a hobby he was particularly happy to indulge when despatched to the Alps to repair his precarious health; from his days in the Apostles he had formed a lifelong friendship with Clerk Maxwell, who was to be the first Cavendish Professor of Physics;<sup>39</sup> his first reaction to Darwin's *Origin of Species* was of fervent delight – 'In spite of difficulties, I am inclined to think it unanswerable. In any case it is a treat to read such a book' – a little tempered later on when *The Origin of Species* had to face some stony criticisms from Westcott.<sup>40</sup> As a scholar he lives still in his immortal introduction to Westcott and Hort's Greek New Testament, in which scientific and philological criticism of texts was combined with human insight into the interests and vagaries of editors and scribes which brought the whole complex subject onto a higher plane.<sup>41</sup>

Hort is an exceptionally good witness, because in early life he had made a spirited defence of the old-fashioned clerical don in a pamphlet addressed from his county living to his former colleagues in Trinity.<sup>42</sup> Though acknowledging matrimony, on which he had recently embarked, to be the 'greatest of human blessings', he thought temporary celibacy good for young men. He looked forward with abhorrence to the prospect of a Theological Tripos, replacing by a narrow specialism the broader theological training of former times – a bizarre comment (some might think) on an education dominated by the Mathematical Tripos. He deplored the growth of professional theology, and protested against the separation of theology from pastoral work: it was good for the young clergy to serve their celibate apprenticeship, and then seek wives and livings.

Thus Hort in 1857. In 1872 he returned to Cambridge to be the first married fellow of Emmanuel, just in time to embark with

<sup>38</sup> Hort 1896, I, 92–4.

<sup>39</sup> Hort 1896, I, 240, II, 230–I.

<sup>40</sup> Hort 1896, I, 414, 431.

<sup>41</sup> Westcott and Hort 1881; Neill and Wright 1988, pp. 74–81.

<sup>42</sup> Hort 1896, I, 362–8.