

Preface

I enjoyed the privilege of being an honorary priest at the Cathedral of St Thomas of Canterbury, Portsmouth for twenty-six years until 2014. I was a Spiritual Director, Diocesan Theologian and a tutor for potential ordinands. I was also engaged in writing the centenary history of the Community of the Resurrection (1992), a study of Christian Socialism (1998), a novel about the monastic life, *One Foot in Eden* (2011), and contributed to several symposia. For some years I was a tutor for the Open University and then a Visiting Lecturer at Portsmouth University. My wife also enjoyed contributing to the life of the Cathedral. Members of the Cathedral sometimes asked for copies of my meditations given at the Sunday Sung Eucharist or Evensong. This appreciation encourages me to select fifty of those addresses – twenty-nine of them are reflections on the main events of the Christian Year as the drama unfolds, and twenty-one of them ponder recurring topics such as Remembrance Sunday, social justice, as well as the changing patterns of marriage and of biblical interpretation.

The earliest part of Portsmouth Cathedral, in simple Gothic, dates from 1185. After the destruction of the nave during the Civil War, its replacement was in a Classical style. In the 1930s, a new nave was built in a neo-Romanesque style. The west end was completed with its twin towers in the same style in 1991. Internally, the re-ordering drew the three different styles into a ‘unity in diversity’, through renewed Eucharistic worship, focussed on the altar round which we gathered after the ministry of the Word. The Cathedral, splendidly rejuvenated under David Stancliffe (later Bishop of Salisbury), bore witness to the character of the Church of England, which I have celebrated in my dedication as ‘Catholic, Reformed, Liberal’; adjectives which I hope could also describe these reflections.

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*Alan Wilkinson,
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