George Kennedy Allen Bell was Bishop of Chichester from 1929 until his retirement in February 1958; he died in October the same year. Deeply involved in the Life and Work Movement after the Stockholm Conference in 1925, Bell worked tirelessly in support of ecumenism. With Adolf Deissmann, Bell initiated a series of Anglo-German Theological Conferences (1927, 1928 and 1931) which sought to explore and articulate the different theological approaches current in Germany and England, while at the same time encouraging friendships between theologians from opposing sides of the First World War. Through his ecumenical work Bell had many personal contacts in Germany and was well informed about the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazi regime when it came to power in 1933. He sought to bring the realities of Nazism to the attention of the Church of England and the British public, while attempting also to maintain relations with the different church groupings within Germany. In 1944 Bell was outspoken in his condemnation of the saturation bombing of German cities, a position which brought him hate mail and may have cost him his chance of further preferment in the Church of England.

Bell’s life has been the subject of two biographies: Ronald Jasper, *George Bell: Bishop of Chichester* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967) and Kenneth Slack, *George Bell* (London: SCM Press, 1971); many articles have considered particular aspects of his life. In his introduction to this collection, Paul Foster comments that it was nonetheless felt that ‘an overview might be welcome’ (p. 12). Accordingly, this volume brings together a selection of reminiscences and appreciations collected under five headings with an appendix.

The first is a ‘Portrait’ of Bell by Lancelot Mason, Bell’s chaplain from 1932 to 1938. Mason shows a caring, pastoral bishop, a lovable and a great man, who was disciplined in prayer, subtle in his sense of humour, and adamant that the cathedral of his diocese should be a ‘fountain and a house of prayer’. Alongside his ecumenical interests, Bell was a champion of the arts and their place in the Church. He was deeply concerned for the plight of the English working classes during the Depression, and sought to make their situation known to people in Sussex, twinning his Diocese with Salford and establishing a relief centre there. He himself became a member of the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE). Bell understood himself as ‘a bishop in England’, playing a leading role in the Church Assembly and the Convocation and later speaking regularly in the House of Lords. Alongside all these other commitments, he gave much thought to the care of his diocese. Bell had an enormous capacity for work, but Mason comments wryly that his orderly, devout mind was combined with an utter inability to keep either desk or altar tidy.
Mason’s portrait of Bell is complemented by the articles in section three, ‘George Bell in the Diocese’. Ursula Baily, daughter of the former Dean of Chichester Cathedral, Arthur Duncan-Jones, often attended the annual Christmas children’s parties organized by Bell and his wife, Hetty; memorable parties which form a central theme in the recollections gathered by Peter Wilkinson. These also feature goats tethered in the Palace yard to provide milk during a visit by Gandhi (p. 70). Mary Joice, for forty years secretary to successive Bishops of Chichester, recounts her part in enabling Bell’s prolific output. She highlights his courage in his response to the situation in Germany, and in particular in his visit to Stockholm in 1942, and describes how she sought to protect Bell from the vitriolic telephone calls to which his speech in the House of Lords against saturation bombing gave rise in 1944. She notes too the unease of some senior Anglicans when in 1955 non-Anglicans were first invited to make their Communion at an ecumenical gathering. Adrian Carey, Bell’s chaplain from 1950 to 1952, describes Bell as a pastoral bishop who dictated letters to his chaplain to spare his secretary from typing views with which she did not agree, but who could be terrifying when work had been left undone. Carey mentions the tensions between the Bishop and the Dean; Philip Barrett’s account of the visitation of the Cathedral in 1948 illuminates these: Bell’s concern about the sale of books from the Cathedral library and the Cathedral’s financial crisis led him to reorder the Cathedral in a Charge which, Barrett maintains, ‘is still of considerable value today’.

The second section, ‘George Bell: Ecumenist’, consists of a disappointingly brief account by Michael Manktelow of four ‘ecumenical friendships’ between Bell and Archbishop Nathan Söderblom of Uppsala; Nikolai Velimirovic of the Serbian Orthodox Church; Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the theologian of the German Confessing Church; and the Roman Catholic Giovanni Montini. These friendships demonstrate something of the range of Bell’s interests. However, given Bell’s significance as an ecumenist, these meagre six pages seem almost a travesty, and they are not without inaccuracies. Manktelow seems to suggest that Bell first learned about the difficulties of the Protestant Church in Germany after meeting Bonhoeffer in 1934 (he refers here misleadingly to ‘German Christians’, the title given to those who integrated Christianity and Nazism!). In fact, Bell had contact with Germany from the 1920s and began to speak out against the methods of Nazism in early 1933. He and Bonhoeffer first met at ecumenical meetings in 1933.

Section four, ‘George Bell and Germany’, opens with accounts by three Germans of their experiences of air raids and of flight before the Russians. These could have been put into context: the massive proportion of German cities and towns which suffered severe bombing; the huge numbers of refugees at the end of the war. A prayer for Jews and Non-Aryans in Germany written by Bell in 1936 demonstrates his deep understanding of the painful and incomprehensible shift from loyal citizen to pariah. Martin Hüneke, former