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052164061X - Peace in the Post-Reformation: The Birkbeck Lectures 1995

John Bossy

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Peace in the Post-Reformation

Christians are supposed to love their neighbours, including their enemies. This is never easy. When feud and honour are common realities, it is even harder than usual.

This book sketches the history of peacemaking between people (not countries) as an activity of churches or of Christianity between the Reformation and the eighteenth century. The story is recounted in four countries (Italy, France, Germany and England) and in several religious settings (including Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Church of England and Calvinist). Each version is a variation upon a theme: what the author calls a 'moral tradition' which contrasts, as a continuing imperative, with the novelties of theory and practice introduced by the sixteenth-century reformers. In general the topic has much to say about the destinies of Christianity in each country, and more widely, and strikes a chord which will resonate in both the social and the religious history of the West.

John Bossy is Professor of History, University of York. His many publications include *The English Catholic Community, 1570–1850* (1975), *Christianity in the West, 1400–1700* (1985) and *Giordano Bruno and the Embassy Affair* (1991) which shared the Wolfson Prize.

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*Et in terra pax hominibus
bonae voluntatis*

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P R E F A C E

The Mill Lane lecture rooms in Cambridge are full of voices, and it was very agreeable for an undergraduate of the early 1950s to have the chance of adding one more to them in the autumn term of 1995. Those who were kind enough to come and listen will find that the four lectures have been heavily rewritten since. But I have continued to think of them as lectures, and if some of them are now a little long for an hour's talk, they may make amends for the one which turned out to be ten minutes too short. I am very grateful to those who entertained me so nicely at the time, and especially to the Master of Trinity, Sir Michael Atiyah, to Patrick Collinson, Boyd Hilton, Peter Burke and Ulinka Rublack. This is also the moment to remember those whose gifts and tips have enabled me to deal with my subject less scantily than I should otherwise have done: Simon Ditchfield, Eamon Duffy, Steve Hindle, Amanda Lillie, Daniele Montanari, Adriano Prosperi, Mary Stevenson, Marc Venard, Danilo Zardin. Despatches from Italy have been particularly numerous and particularly welcome, and I hope I have done justice to them in the first lecture. More thanks to Libby Walker, who has turned my spotty typescript into an elegant printout; to Linda Randall, the copyeditor; and again and especially to Amanda Lillie, who put me in the way of finding the Sansovino statue which appears on the cover.

John Bossy