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EDITED BY W. J. SHEILS

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PERSECUTION
AND
TOLERATION

For the Ecclesiastical History Society
BASIL BLACKWELL

Persecution and Toleration

Edited by W. J. Sheils
Borthwick Institute, University of York

It can be said that these two experiences – persecution and toleration – sum up the history of the Christian Church and its relations with other systems of belief. These experiences were, as some essays in this collection show, equally important in the pre-Christian or non-Christian world of classical antiquity or 19th-century Yorubaland. It is, however, the Christian experience which forms the main focus of this volume, not only in its relations with other religions but also in coping with the diversity of traditions within Christianity itself. Thus the essays range from the early church, when Christians found themselves to be the victims of persecution, through the medieval centuries in which the Universal Church ruthlessly exploited its own ascendancy in its relations with other religions and in the extirpation of heresy within its own fold, to the post-Reformation period in which diversity of tradition and multiplicity of faiths gradually produced a reassessment of the accepted relationships between the Christian churches. The later essays in this book show the emergence of a spirit of inter-denominational toleration and also remind us that, in some countries, Christians once again find themselves the victims of persecution by unsympathetic regimes. If this suggests some developmental pattern to the essays we should remind ourselves that recent years have given us plenty

PERSECUTION AND TOLERATION

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PAPERS READ AT
THE TWENTY-SECOND SUMMER MEETING AND
THE TWENTY-THIRD WINTER MEETING
OF THE
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EDITED BY

W.J. SHEILS

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BASIL BLACKWELL

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