

# **PIERCED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS**

## Endorsements

**D. A. Carson, Research Professor of New Testament, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois**

This book is important not only because it deals so competently with what lies at the heart of Christ's cross work, but because it responds effectively to a new generation of people who are not listening very carefully to what either Scripture or history says. One of the delightful features of this book is reflected in the subtitle: the authors make no apology for their thesis, but underscore the *glory* of penal substitution. This book deserves the widespread circulation achieved by corresponding contributions a generation ago – the contributions of Leon Morris, Jim Packer, and John Stott.

**J. I. Packer, Professor of Theology, Regent College, Vancouver**

This extended declaration and defence of the penal substitutionary view of Christ's atoning death responds to a plethora of current criticisms, many of them in-house, with a thoroughness and effectiveness that is without parallel anywhere. The book's existence shows that a British evangelical theology which exegetically, systematically, apologetically and pastorally can take on the world is in process of coming to birth. I hail this treatise as an epoch-making *tour de force*, and hopefully a sign of many more good things to come.

**Gordon Wenham, formerly Professor of Old Testament, University of Gloucestershire**

Jeffery, Ovey and Sach have produced a careful and well-informed defence of the Christian doctrine of substitutionary atonement. It is a valuable contribution to the current debate.

**Stuart Townend, Songwriter**

This is a significant book. At a time when some people seem determined to snuff out this doctrine from what is sung and taught – unwittingly assisted by others who circumvent the issue in the interests of church unity – there is a need for the vital doctrine of penal substitution to be clearly, comprehensively and compellingly explained. This book does the job admirably.

**Mike Pilavachi, Founder and Director, Soul Survivor**

*Pierced for our Transgressions* is probably the most significant book on the doctrine of the cross since *The Cross of Christ*. It is timely and urgently needed. Let the exposition of this magnificent doctrine both inform your mind and warm your heart.

**Michael Nazir-Ali, Bishop of Rochester**

The authors of this work compel us to take seriously an objective view of the cross of Christ; one that is not simply dependent on how we feel and what the culture around us promotes. The truth of the matter is that God has sent his Son, the eternal Word and the creative Wisdom, in human form so that he could stand in our place, do what we could not and would not do and by his obedience undo the wrongdoing of Adam and Eve. It is this radical act of obedience, with the cross as its climax and fulfilment, that turns away God's anger from our wrongdoing, restores our relationship with the source of our being and makes us God's beloved. The atonement is, of course, multi-

faceted; Christ certainly defeated sin and conquered the powers of evil. He is an example to us as we carry our own crosses in following him and the cross manifests the extent of God's love for us. There would, however, be no sanctification, no transformation of self or society, no working out of the social, economic and political implications of the cross unless the fundamental transaction between God and ourselves had been completed and the impasse caused by sin broken by our representative, substitute and champion. Thanks be to God.

**Tremper Longman III, Robert H. Gundry Professor of Biblical Studies, Westmont College**

*Pierced for our Transgressions* is a treasure-trove of information and analysis on the important, yet disputed doctrine of penal substitution. As a biblical scholar, I enthusiastically commend the authors for their careful exegesis of the biblical text. From this point on, critics of the biblical teaching must interact with the arguments of this book. Further, every Christian, whether aware of the debate or not, can greatly benefit from this comprehensive and penetrating treatment of this crucial doctrine.

**Wallace Benn, Bishop of Lewes and President, Church of England Evangelical Council**

If gospel people are to be clear on the nature of the gospel, then they need to have a clear understanding of penal substitution. This is a timely and magnificent book, which will inform heads and warm hearts about the amazing love of God for us. There is much loose talk in the church about the gospel – this book tells us so powerfully how truly wonderful it is.

**Dale Ralph Davis, Pastor, Woodland Presbyterian Church, Hattiesburg, Mississippi**

The treatment of the biblical material is in itself worth the price of the book. A model of biblical-theological exposition. They expound the weightiest texts so concisely and so clearly – as they argue for the rugged truth about the rugged cross.

**I. Howard Marshall, Emeritus Professor of New Testament Exegesis, University of Aberdeen**

I commend this book for its comprehensive and fair scrutiny of the many objections brought against the doctrine of penal substitution in recent years. Even those who, like me, would disagree with the authors' belief that a doctrine of particular redemption (or 'limited atonement') is a necessary part of this doctrine will be grateful for this useful contribution to the current debate with its careful demonstration of the weaknesses of so many of the common criticisms made of the doctrine.

**Terry Virgo, Founder, New Frontiers**

Thoroughly researched and well-presented, *Pierced for our Transgressions* demonstrates the Scripture's unyielding insistence on the necessity for penal substitution as the only means of removing our guilt and enabling us to be presented faultless before a holy God.

**Mark Stibbe, author and Vicar, St Andrew's Chorleywood, Hertfordshire**

*Pierced for our Transgressions* is a timely, masterful and accessible exploration of the doctrine of penal substitution. It is timely because this doctrine has been under siege in recent years. It is masterful because its handling of the biblical, doctrinal and historical material is impressive. It is accessible because it is written in a way that

makes maximum use of scholarly resources without obscuring the issues. This is a much needed and very welcome addition to the doctrine of the Atonement. May it be used far and wide to restore confidence in the message that Christ died for our sins. And may the Holy Spirit use it – as he did me – to fill you with a new passion for worshipping God and for sharing the Gospel.

**Richard Cunningham, Director, Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship**

As secular society bullies the church into air-brushing out the harder elements of the gospel, evangelicals will find themselves tempted to downplay the central importance of penal substitution. If we do, we will lose the authentic, historic gospel for at least a generation. This brilliant book is a timely gift to God's people (not least to students) to help us hold firm. *Pierced For Our Transgressions* is set to become one of the most important books for evangelicalism at this critical moment of time.

**Mark Dever, Pastor, Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Washington, DC**

The Bible historically has been understood to teach explicitly and implicitly that Christ died as a penal substitute for sinners. That's what this excellent volume teaches us, too. Carefully studying the primary biblical texts and then answering numerous objections, this book explains and defends the understanding that Christ died in our place, taking our penalty for us. From the biblical material to patristic quotations, from pastoral implications to present objections, this book is a responsible and comprehensive introduction. All the authors' careful work promises to make this book the new standard text on Christ's atoning work. Now, I can't wait to read it again, devotionally.

**Timothy George, Dean, Beeson Divinity School and Executive Editor, Christianity Today**

The doctrine of the penal substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ can be abandoned only by eviscerating the soteriological heart of historic Christianity. This teaching has deep roots in both the Catholic and Protestant theological traditions and deserves to be taken seriously in the church's proclamation of the doctrine of reconciliation today. This is an important scholarly contribution to a current doctrinal debate with enormous spiritual and pastoral implications.

**Peter T. O'Brien, Senior Research Fellow in New Testament, Moore Theological College, Sydney**

This is a very significant book. It addresses the subject of Christ's penal substitutionary death, which lies at the heart of the biblical gospel, but which has now come under serious threat in the current theological ferment. The authors have carefully and convincingly evaluated the biblical material on which the teaching of penal substitution has been based and reaffirmed it. They have set the doctrine within the theological framework of creation, sin, redemption and relationships within the Trinity, while adducing key witnesses from two millennia of church history in support. Every major objection to penal substitution has been considered, and courteously but firmly answered. This refreshing affirmation encourages us to praise God in wonder at Christ's atonement for us sinners. The authors have placed us in their debt. Their book deserves to be read widely.

**R. Kent Hughes, Senior Pastor Emeritus, College Church in Wheaton**

A well-thumbed copy of *Pierced for Our Transgressions* ought to rest on the bookshelf of every thoughtful Christian. This even-handed, masterful defense of penal

substitutionary atonement is clear and convincing. Readers will quickly grasp the theology and the urgency of the issues, and will be especially grateful for the classic objection-response format of part two, which makes for easy reference. A crucial read.

**Roger Nicole, Professor of Theology, Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando**

Atonement is the central doctrine of the Christian faith, and penal substitution is the heart of this doctrine. It is wonderful to have a whole book on penal substitution.

**David Peterson, Principal, Oak Hill Theological College, London**

This book offers a formidable challenge to the caricatures and misunderstandings of penal substitution that flourish in many Christian circles today. It does so by providing a careful analysis of the relevant biblical material, an exhaustive engagement with the theological objections often raised, and a revelation of the historical pedigree of this doctrine that will surprise some. Such a thoroughly integrated approach to the topic is without precedent. My hope is that it will arouse opponents of this position to re-assess their arguments and interact carefully with the case presented here. My prayer is that it will also reassure and strengthen Christians who have long believed that this teaching is at the heart of the gospel.

**Professor A. T. B. McGowan, Principal, Highland Theological College, Dingwall**

This is a valuable contribution to the defence of a biblical understanding of the atonement. The exposition of Scripture is solid and helpful. The historical section puts to the sword any notion that penal substitution is a modern doctrine, not found in the early church Fathers. The 'objection and response' format of the central chapters is an excellent way of responding to arguments that are widely used but often lack theological substance. Overall, this book will be of great service to the church, especially to those who have been influenced by recent popular works on the subject of the atonement that deny the biblical teaching on penal substitution. We are indebted to the authors of this volume.

**John M. Frame, Professor of Systematic Theology and Philosophy, Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, Florida**

This is certainly one of the most comprehensive treatments available of the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement. It presents exegesis, historical theology, and responses to contemporary debate, all in one volume. In all these areas, the book is excellent, both in its exposition and in its argument. It presents a cogent defence of the biblical and historic church doctrine, and in my view it devastates the criticisms of this position. The writing is clear and understandable to non-specialists, but its authors fully understand the technical issues, so that the book makes a real contribution to the academic discussion as well. I am delighted to see this book appear, and I hope that it gets a very wide readership.

**David Jackman, President, Proclamation Trust, London**

Thoroughly researched and documented, cogently argued and presented with great clarity, this is a timely and much-needed restatement of the central Biblical doctrine of penal substitution. Its great strength lies in its comprehensive exegesis of the biblical text itself, explaining the positive content and answering its opponents with gracious fairness, but penetrating force.

**Steve Brady, Principal, Moorlands College and Trustee, The Keswick Convention**

For all who suspect that penal substitutionary atonement may not be a central biblical truth, think it a Johnny-come-lately doctrine, or judge it objectionable on other grounds, read this book! For all who gratefully believe that “the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all,” read this book – and let your heart sing!

**Jonathan Stephen, Principal, Evangelical Theological College of Wales and Director, Affinity**

Not so much a defence of the doctrine of penal substitution, this book is more a magnificent counter-attack, lifting the siege against it. The authors’ comprehensive survey of the evidence successfully calls the bluff of those whose aim is to airbrush the true nature of the atonement from the Bible and church history. Brilliant, passionate and unapologetic, such a response almost makes one grateful for the errorists.

**Andy Lines, General Secretary, Crosslinks**

In God’s mission to have a people that ‘no one could number from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages’, the penal substitution of his Son in our place, receiving in full the punishment of God’s righteous indignation that should have been ours, is absolutely central and critical to the whole enterprise. So this new contribution really does help us rediscover the glory of penal substitution; showing us its biblical foundations, the way that it has been clearly taught by the church for 2000 years and refuting contemporary objections to it. You will find this book a very useful resource, and an important one in contending for this key understanding of what Christ achieved at Calvary.

**Frank Retief, Presiding Bishop, Church of England in South Africa**

In *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, the authors do at least three things for all of us. First, they answer the challenge to the crucial doctrine of penal substitution in a clear, credible, loving and scholarly manner. Second, they do so simply and in an easy to understand manner. In my own situation this means that even those whose first language is not English will be able to follow this reasoning. Third, they focus our attention yet again on the very heart of the gospel, and in doing so not only encourage us as preachers but give us confidence to stand by our message. This book is superb and, in my view, should always be near the preacher’s desk.

**Chris Wigram, National Director, OMF International (UK) and Chairman, Global Connections**

The need for mission to be directed by a responsible reading of the Bible is essential. This book strives to put an essential doctrine – the penal substitutionary atonement of Christ, in the context of the major themes of scripture. As an exercise in biblical theology it is very helpful, especially to those who would be using a chronological method of teaching the Bible in a cross-cultural situation. It also shows the importance of the study of church history as an exercise in the tradition of the interpretation of scripture and in understanding the present. Whilst probably too academic for many mission contexts, it does provide the Bible teacher with all that they need to know in order to explain the importance of this doctrine and its relationship to other key doctrines of scripture. As a resource for the missionary it is invaluable, providing the foundation for building up of the church worldwide. It will

be up to the missionary to look for those contact points in the host culture that give an opening for the explanation of a vital aspect of the work of Christ.

**Peter Adam, Principal, Ridley College, Melbourne**

What a remarkable book! I have always believed in penal substitution in the atoning death of Christ, but have not seen so much useful material brought together before. I was struck by the breadth of biblical evidence, especially the material on the Passover. The book is a remarkable combination of biblical evidence for penal substitution, its integration into the big themes of the Bible, examples from historical theology, its trinitarian context, and answers to current objections.

**Liam Goligher, author of *The Jesus Gospel* and Pastor, Duke Street Church, Richmond-upon-Thames**

The authors have given us a wide-ranging and heart-warming treatment of penal substitution. They have a firm grasp of the biblical material, and are thoroughly aware of the current debates and scholarly issues involved. Above all they know the stakes are high, none other than the gospel itself and the health of Christ's Church. It deserves to be widely used by serious Christians concerned to know both what the Bible teaches and what the church has preached from its earliest days concerning the cross of Christ.

**William Taylor, Rector, St Helen's Bishopsgate, London**

The glorious truth of penal substitution lies right at the heart of the authentic Christian faith once for all delivered to the saints. It needs to be reaffirmed in each generation. I am delighted at this well argued, carefully researched, gracious and thorough defence of the doctrine.

**William J. U. Philip, Minister, St George's-Tron, Glasgow**

As a preacher, I welcome this book defending the orthodox doctrine of Christ's substitutionary atonement. It is scholarly, but just the kind of scholarship we need: readable, relevant to the whole church, and thus serving the flock of God. Drawing together in one place clear biblical exegesis, careful theological argument, comprehensive historical research, but also real pastoral wisdom, the authors show us that all this matters *in real life*. Go wrong in doctrine here, and our churches will bear the pastoral consequences. That's why we all need to *rediscover the glory of penal substitution*.

**Carl R. Trueman, Professor of Historical Theology and Church History, Dean of Faculty, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

A person's attitude to the cross tells you much about their theology as a whole, as it is on Calvary that we see the divine response to the human predicament. Thus, the perennial attempts throughout church history to relativize and even deny the propitiatory and substitutionary nature of Christ's sacrifice should not simply be understood as peripheral discussions; they indicate a constant tendency to revise the very essence of the Christian faith to conform to wider cultural mores and shibboleths. It is thus a great pleasure to commend a book such as this, which seeks to defend a biblical, orthodox understanding of the atonement and to reinforce the non-negotiable centrality of God's wrath against sin and merciful grace towards humanity. Careful readers will find much here that will enable them to articulate with clarity and conviction this important gospel doctrine.

### **Roger Carswell, Evangelist**

As I was sitting on a log in the mountains of the Lebanon, my uncle explained to me, a fifteen year old, the gospel. It was the explanation of the cross that struck me and convinced me that I must trust Jesus as my Lord and Saviour. If he had loved me enough to pay the penalty for my sin, then I had to receive him. Since then I have sought to proclaim 'Christ and Him crucified' to everyone I can. It is sad that *Pierced for Our Transgression* has had to be written to defend the very heart of the Christian message, but I am delighted that the authors have produced a warm, biblical, thorough and endearing defence of Jesus' great work on the cross. Whilst I would want to passionately argue that Jesus died for everyone, I commend this book and its great theme to all. As D. L. Moody said, 'The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.'

### **C. J. Mahaney, Sovereign Grace Ministries**

It is difficult to imagine a more important book than *Pierced For Our Transgressions*, or a more helpful one. It is important because of its skilful and thorough defence of the doctrine of penal substitution against a growing chorus of objections – objections that threaten our very understanding of the gospel. It is helpful because of its clear and accessible style that illuminates the issues whether you are a scholar, pastor, or simply a Christian who loves the Saviour. I am deeply grateful to God, and to the authors, for this critical and timely book.

### **David F. Wells, Andrew Mutch Distinguished Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Hamilton, Massachusetts**

At the cross, when Jesus bore the penalty for our sins in our place, the grace of God paid the price his holiness required. This has been the message of the gospel down the ages because this is the message of the gospel as Scripture reveals it. I am deeply grateful for this book, which illumines these facts so well. It is a book faithful to Scripture, knowledgeable of history, conversant with current debate, and deeply committed to seeing the Church flourish in our day.

### **Sindair B. Ferguson, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, South Carolina**

Agreement on the nature of the atonement has long been a defining feature of evangelical Christianity. Today, however, all is in crisis. For some time the writings of a number of scholars reared in evangelicalism have eroded, even denied, that the heart of the gospel is to be found in Christ's penal substitutionary death and his glorious resurrection. But now – inevitably – this view has begun to appear in books written by popular authors who are viewed as contemporary, cutting edge leaders. Sadly, much that is said and written unwittingly repeats what was long ago rejected as unorthodox. In the past, those views irrevocably led – within a generation – to a rejection of evangelical faith; unchecked, they will inevitably do so again. The stakes could scarcely be higher – the very nature of the gospel itself. *Pierced for our Transgressions* is a courageous, timely, comprehensive and welcome study. It is biblically sensitive and pastorally astute, with the added strength of being aware of where similar false steps in the past eventually led. Here is a sure-footed guide to the message of the cross – and therefore to Christ himself, and ultimately to God the Trinity. It deserves widespread and careful reading.

**Thomas R. Schreiner, James Buchanan Harrison Professor of New Testament, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky**

The doctrine of penal substitution is often maligned and misunderstood today. *Pierced for our Transgressions* is the perfect antidote. The authors defend the doctrine with sparkling clarity and winsome logic. I thank God for this work in which penal substitution is biblically grounded, theologically articulated, and historically vindicated. Nor could one object that the authors fail to consider alternative views. Every objection to penal substitution is considered and refuted. In this book we are summoned again to the heart of the gospel.

**Brian H. Edwards, author of *The Divine Substitute* and former President, FIEC**

A scholarly, detailed, heart-warming and satisfying response to those who deny the penal substitutionary atonement of Christ. The authors have well covered the biblical and historical ground, and opposing arguments are considered and answered. It is an accessible and most valuable addition to the strong defence of the vital Christian doctrine of propitiation. Let all who deny the doctrine respond to this book.

**Ian Stackhouse, author of *The Gospel-Driven Church* and Pastor, Guildford Baptist Church**

Some things are worth fighting for. The evangelical doctrine of penal substitution is one of them. Remove this strand of atonement theology from Christian proclamation and you fairly rip the heart out of the gospel drama. One does not have to agree with everything written here in order to appreciate that *Pierced for our Transgressions* is a methodical and reasoned response to the current debate. To be sure, as our authors point out, penal substitution is not the only way to understand what happens at the cross of Christ, nor must it be detached from a doctrine of creation; but to deny it altogether, as some are now doing, is just plain silly.

**Mark D. Thompson, Academic Dean and Head of the Department of Theology, Moore Theological College, Sydney**

*Pierced for our Transgressions* is carefully argued and richly edifying. More than that, it is a book sorely needed in the current confusion about the meaning of Jesus' death for us. The authors bring together biblical, theological and historical material in a compelling way, with a clear concern to remain faithful to Scripture and communicate clearly in today's world. They combine deft description with judicious defence as they explore the most important lines of the contemporary critique of evangelical thought on this vital subject. Even in those few places where there is room for disagreement, there can be no doubt that their purpose is to challenge us to a more biblically-directed understanding of the wonder of God's mercy to us in the cross of Jesus, and that must always be welcome. This book deserves a wide readership.

**Martin Morrison, Bishop, Church of England in South Africa**

At the very heart of the Christian faith is the penal substitutionary atonement of Christ. Those who deny this central doctrine to Christianity are in effect denying the faith once entrusted to the saints. Every generation needs a full defence of this biblical truth and the authors have provided us with an eminently winsome and forthright defence of this glorious doctrine.