

# Finding the Missing Peace



By Stephen G Baker

In the last issue of this magazine I wrote about some of the ways that people try to discredit the New Testament to prove that it cannot be trusted. In this issue I want to address one of the big problems that people have when reading the Old Testament, which is that they see God as being overly severe and hard. Let me say that I do understand the concerns and the issues that people have with what seems to be the severity of God in the Old Testament. I am not sure, however, how carefully they have read the whole biblical record and if they seek to understand the complete picture before coming to a conclusion.

A careful analysis of the Bible will show that among many things God is both holy (just, righteous, morally pure) and loving. One characteristic does not cancel out the other; in fact his goodness and love of what is right demands that he deals justly with acts of sin and wrongdoing. Where people assume that God was behaving inappropriately I believe that a careful analysis of the facts would persuade them that he was in fact acting to maintain what is right. Let me illustrate this from a more up-to-date scenario. If a judge in our times was confronted with evil behaviour, child abuse, rape and a whole range of antisocial behaviour that was illegal and detrimental to the good of society, we would not question his 'goodness' when he passed sentence and enforced a punishment that met the severity of the crimes. But when people in the 21st century read the account of God's judgment on nations who practised the very same activities, we question his goodness. Because he acts justly and righteously to deal with behaviour which breaks his laws and damages society does that mean that God is evil and inappropriate in his response? I am not sure if we are being consistent in our approach to these issues.

The Bible is the revelation of God and his purposes and as such he warns us that we are in danger of his coming judgment as a result of our moral defection and sin. However, the Bible also claims that God has made provision for us all to be safe and saved. This is possible through the sacrifice of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's offer to clear the legal case against us and to offer us pardon, forgiveness and salvation is still on the table. That doesn't sound like a vengeful, demanding, capricious, and tyrannical God to me.

A verse from the Bible comes to mind and seems most appropriate – 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners'. God has always abhorred wrong, but He has always offered forgiveness to those who will repent and trust him.

Listen, watch or read more on my webpage,  
[www.findingthemissingpeace.co.uk](http://www.findingthemissingpeace.co.uk)



Award-winning Wirral novelist, **Margaret Murphy**, who pens thrillers as **A.D. Garrett** and **Ashley Dyer**, recommends two books per month, across a range of styles and a mixture of new and old.

**The Buried Girl** by Richard Montanari  
Sphere, (2019), £10.26  
ISBN-10: 0751563854



Richard Montanari has long been among my favourite crime writers. In his Byrne and Balzano series, set in Philadelphia, two strikingly different and very likeable cops spark off each other. But he also pens stand-alone thrillers, and his latest, *The Buried Girl*, is darkly gothic in tone.

When New York forensic psychologist Will Hardy's wife is murdered, he relocates with his teenage daughter, Detta, to Godwin Hall, a run-down mansion in Abbeville – quintessentially small-town Ohio – where he hopes to rebuild their shattered lives as he renovates the property.

Meanwhile, Police Chief Ivy Holgrave investigates the death of a local girl, convinced she is the latest victim in a long line of murders dating back decades.

Three parallel strands run through this novel: a historical narrative, told through the nineteenth century journal of Eva Larssen, a servant at the orchard farmhouse nearby; Will and Detta Hardy's own harrowing story; as for Chief Holgrave – she has a deeply personal reason to pursue the unexplained disappearances.

A theme in Richard Montanari's novels is the inner strength of damaged individuals, and the power of goodness over evil. He explores both to marvellous effect in *The Buried Girl*, touching on religion and destiny, piety, and obsession. The atmospherically described rural setting is by turns idyllic and menacing; he switches with masterful ease from urgent and spare to lyrical prose, but never descends into the snobbishly 'literary'. Montanari's writing is tense and immediate, and he has an enviable facility for using simple language to evoke complex emotion. His wide knowledge of film and art is woven deftly into this story, and the relationship between the doctor and his emotionally scarred daughter is authentic and deeply moving. I devoured it – all the time regretting the pace of my reading – because it brought me to the end all too soon.

**Dark Chapter** by Winnie M Li  
Legend Press (1 Nov. 2017)  
ISBN-10: 9781785079061



Vivian is a cosmopolitan Taiwanese-American tourist who escapes her busy life in London through adventure and travel. Johnny is a 15-year-old Irish teenager, living a neglected and alienated existence on the margins of society. On a bright spring afternoon in West Belfast, their paths collide in a horrifying act of violence. In the aftermath, each is forced to confront the chain of events that led to the attack.

Inspired by true events and told from the perspectives of both the victim and the perpetrator, Winnie M Li's *Dark Chapter* is brave, raw and visceral. It deals with the devastating effects of violent crime on the victim, coupled with disturbing and thought-provoking insights into the mind and motivations of the perpetrator. An authentic and courageous debut, told with unflinching honesty.

**SPLINTER IN THE BLOOD**, penned as Ashley Dyer, is now available in all formats and it is in the Kindle Spring Sale until 22nd April:  
[www.amazon.co.uk/Splinter-Blood-Ashley-Dyer-ebook/dp/B075F8L6DX/ref=cm\\_cr\\_arp\\_d\\_product\\_top?ie=UTF8](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Splinter-Blood-Ashley-Dyer-ebook/dp/B075F8L6DX/ref=cm_cr_arp_d_product_top?ie=UTF8)