

receive the impress of the individual mind. **The divine mind is diffused.** *The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the Word of God [MS 24, 1886]" (7BC 945-946).*

When we see that God's mind is "diffused" through the mind of the writer, we see that it is like trying to see an object through a frosted glass, which diffuses the light and makes the objects on the other side fuzzy in appearance. We must be careful, therefore, in how we look at the language and check our tendency to interpret hastily, according to appearances. The picture we might see could come out the wrong way if we read it just the way we suppose. Satan has taken advantage of all this, that he might give another picture of God:

*"Their [the Jews'] sufferings are often represented as a punishment visited upon them by the direct decree of God. It is thus that the great deceiver seeks to conceal his own work. By stubborn rejection of divine love and mercy, the Jews had caused the protection of God to be withdrawn from them, and Satan was permitted to rule them according to his will" (GC88 36.1).*

This is a highly significant statement, for it tells us that *Satan hides behind the Bible language!* This "representation" of the suffering of the Jews as a punishment from God *is developed from the manner in which humans have interpreted the Bible language.*

The mode of expression in the Bible writing is that of the Hebrew language and manner of the ancient near-East, which is foreign to modern Western thought and culture. If we do not understand this and learn to interpret accordingly, we end up with a real problem on our hands in how we read the Bible, for then it turns into a swamp of apparent contradictions, making a laughingstock of Christians and the Bible. This has been a significant factor in the development of atheist thought and influence, as it mockingly points out

the apparent contradictions while calling Christians naïve and stupid for believing in such a book. For example, we can read a passage such as the following:

*"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these [things]" (Isa. 45:7).*

But then we would read other passages which seem to directly contradict what we just read:

*"[Thou art] of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity..." (Hab. 1:13a).*

*"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).*

How can He "create darkness" when there is none in Him? Here is another problematic comparison and contrast:

*"...[As] I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Eze. 33:11).*

*"Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;*

*But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:*

*I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh..." (Prov. 1:24-26).*

Many such pairings of Bible texts can be shown, but these are sufficient to make the point that if we read according to a modern understanding of the language, without regard for the Hebrew idiomatic manner of expression, we will make Scripture read against itself or we will end up with a picture of a two faced God. We cannot have a God with two

faces though, because the Bible says He has only one face:

*"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Jas. 1:17).*

*"For I [am] the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal. 3:6).*

This unchanging nature of God means that He does not say on one hand that *sin* (the rejection of God in order to have our own way) is what separates us from Him and destroys us while on the other hand it is *He* that works the separation and destroys us if we reject Him. The Bible says:

*"For the wages of sin [is] death; but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).*

Note that it does not say "the wages of **God** is death." God is light and in Him is no darkness at all, as we read above. John also defines the light as *life* (John 1:4, 9); therefore, the darkness would be death. *There is no death in God to give.* At all!

So, we must always remember, as we read the Scriptures, that they are speaking in a way that is foreign to us. The wrath of God is when He turns away in response to our turning away (Deut. 28:20b; 2 Chron. 15:2; 24:20). This is His judgment. Therefore He lets the consequences come to us though they bring us pain and even death, if we do not turn to Him again. This is His justice. Further, we must ever remember that the Hebrew mode of expression is that if one should not act to save when he is able to do so, then that one is destroying:

*"It was a maxim among the Jews that a failure to do good, when one had opportunity, was to do evil; to neglect to save life was to kill" (DA 286.2).*

So often we read in the Bible that “God sent” a destructive force upon an individual or nation but as we come to the proper understanding of the ancient Near Eastern idiom and their view of Deity we will realize that, “God is said in Scripture to *send* what he *can* (but *doth not*) hinder from being *sent*” (Edward Bird, *Fate and Destiny*, p. 141). God spoke through these cultural idioms and modality of understanding in His Word, but “Thankfully, He provided us Westerners with sufficient methods for interpreting the language” (Troy Edwards, *The Lord Sent It*, p. 15).

Take the example of 2 Kings 24:2,3 where we read how the Lord “*sent against*” Judah “bands of the Chaldees,” Syrians, etc., to destroy them and “remove them out of his sight,” but in other passages such as Ezra 5:12 we find the language clearly stating that God *gave the people over* to their enemies, as after they “had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath, he *gave them into* the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon” (see also 2 Chron. 36:15-17; Jer. 22:25; 32:24 as further examples).

It is notable that the word “send” is from the Hebrew “*shalach*” which can also be rendered as “let loosed.” This is the sense that we must read God sending destruction: He stands aside and lets it occur.

By now many would be thinking that it makes no difference whether God does it, or whether He simply looks the other way and lets other forces do it—the end result is the same. Not so. If God were to disallow wrong choices or to constantly interfere with the results of wrong choices we would have an issue with free will and/or making God to be an agent of sin. Follow along carefully: while we might desire to view God as One who would ever intervene against the results of evil, we would then be making Him to be sustaining sin. We would be representing Him as bypassing the consequences of a course of sin by arbitrarily healing the damages made by it, even as the sinner would be showing by disobedience that he actually does not want God.

For example, say that the sinner wants to cause pleasurable damages to the brain by consuming intoxicants. If God did not allow the damages, there would be no pleasurable effect to the sinner’s choice to consume poisonous substances. God would therefore be removing the opportunity for the self-willed to reject God and experience pleasures that are outside of God’s will—pleasures that would be damaging. God does not force. If God were to disallow the sinner’s choice, God would merely be populating His kingdom with machines that would just function according to program.

*“God placed man under law, as an indispensable condition of his very existence. He was a subject of the divine government, and there can be no government without law. God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; but in that case man would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automaton. Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. There could have been no development of character. Such a course would have been contrary to God’s plan in dealing with the inhabitants of other worlds. It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan’s charge of God’s arbitrary rule” (PP 49.1).*

God gives us freedom of choice! Let’s take responsibility for it and stop blaming God!



---

FOR FURTHER INFO OR LITERATURE CONTACT  
[straub@direct.ca](mailto:straub@direct.ca)

## *How to Read the Bible (and Not Become an Atheist!)* *Tract #3CGA, by 4<sup>th</sup> Angel Publications*

It is often said to “take the Bible just as it reads” but what does this mean? It is true that we should do this, but it cannot be a blanket statement thrown over every utterance without regard to figures of speech, symbolism, or typology, and without regard for “time, place, and circumstance.”

The common approach to the reading of God’s Word today is to apply the idea of inspiration as “verbal,” which means that God dictated the words and the writers penned them. Another error that is commonly made is to ignore what was meant within the context of the writer’s culture and understanding and make an interpretation of the text according to our modern culture and understanding, which is foreign to the origin of the former.

The Bible is not verbally inspired; it is “plenary.” This means that inspiration works in a more diffuse manner, coming filtered through human minds, not as though God held the writer in a state of possession as in “automatic writing.” Satan possesses men in this way, not God. Here is what the inspired pen writes regarding the nature of inspiration:

*“The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is **not God’s mode of thought and expression**. It is that of humanity. **God, as a writer, is not represented**. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. **But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible**. The writers of the Bible were God’s penmen, not His pen. Look at the different writers.*

*“It is not **the words** of the Bible that are inspired, but **the men** that were inspired. Inspiration acts **not on the man’s words or his expressions** but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost is imbued with thoughts. But the words*