

Research for James 1:17-18

(The words are taken from Thayer's Greek Lexicon on the Accordance Computer Software Program.)

James 1:17

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.

gift: 1394 *dosis*: gift

perfect: *teleios* 5046

Finished; wanting nothing necessary to completeness; perfect; consummate human integrity and virtue; of men: full grown, adult, of full age, mature; The perfect state of all things; i.e the more intelligent, ready to apprehend divine things; o mind and character, one who has reached the proper height of virtue and integrity; understanding and goodness

from above: *anothen* 507

From above, from a higher place; of things which come from heaven or God; from the first, from the beginning,

of lights: 5457 *lights*

The light; a heavenly light such as surrounds angels when they appear on earth; a star fire because it is light and sheds light; a lamp or torch;

metaph: God is light because light has the extremely delicate, subtle, pure, brilliant quality; of truth and its knowledge, together with the spiritual purity associated with it; that which is exposed to the view of all, openly, publicly; reason, mind – the power of understanding, esp. moral and spiritual truth

And cometh down from the Father of lights - From God, the source and fountain of all light. Light, in the Scriptures, is the emblem of knowledge, purity, happiness; and God is often represented as light.

“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.” John 1:5

“There is, doubtless, an allusion here to the heavenly bodies, among which the sun is the most brilliant. It appears to us to be the great original fountain of light, diffusing its radiance overall worlds. No cloud, no darkness seems to come from the sun, but it pours its rich effulgence on the farthest part of the universe. So it is with God. There is no darkness in him 1 John 1:5; and all the moral light and purity which there is in the universe is to be traced to him. The word Father here is used in a sense which is common in Hebrew as denoting that which is the source of anything, or that from which anything

proceeds” (Barnes).

variableness: *parallage*: 3883
variation change, fickleness

shadow: 575 *aposkiasma*
a shade cast by one object on another, a shadow; something that obscures

turning: 5157 *trope*
a turning; of the heavenly bodies, a shadow caused by revolution, one object upon another

With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning - The design here is clearly to contrast God with the sun in a certain respect. As the source of light, there is a strong resemblance. But in the sun there are certain changes. It does not shine on all parts of the earth at the same time, nor in the same manner all the year. It rises and sets; it crosses the line, and seems to go far to the south, and sends its rays obliquely on the earth; then it ascends to the north, recrosses the line, and sends its rays obliquely on southern regions. By its revolutions it produces the changes of the seasons, and makes a constant variety on the earth in the productions of different climes.

In this respect God is not indeed like the sun. With him there is no variableness, not even the appearance of turning. He is always the same, at all seasons of the year, and in all ages; there is no change in his character, his mode of being, his purposes and plans. What he was millions of ages before the worlds were made, he is now; what he is now, he will be countless millions of ages hence. We may be sure that whatever changes there may be in human affairs; whatever reverses we may undergo; whatever oceans we may cross, or whatever mountains we may climb, or in whatever worlds we may hereafter take up our abode, God is the same.

The word which is here rendered “variableness” (*parallagē*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means change, alteration, vicissitude, and would properly be applied to the changes observed in astronomy. The phrase rendered “shadow of turning” would properly refer to the different shade or shadow cast by the sun from an object, in its various revolutions, in rising and setting, and in its changes at the different seasons of the year.

God, on the other hand, is as if the sun stood in the meridian at noon-day, and never cast any shadow. (Barnes)

