

there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (Jas. 2:19).

Similarly verse 4 points out the indescribable nature of the blessings God has prepared for those who wait for Him. There is no other God who can do such wonders. They surpass human understanding. Paul quotes this verse in 1 Corinthians 2:9 as showing the failure of the princes of this world to see the greatness of God's power. This power must be revealed by God Himself.

The prayer contains a wonderful statement of God's goodness, but the question must be asked: For whom are the blessings intended? Does waiting for Him simply mean being born to parents who come of a line that He has blessed, or does it require a personal attitude of turning from sin and seeking truly to do His will? In this prayer we find no suggestion of promising to obey God's law more fully nor of asking Him to point out the wrong in the people's lives which keeps Him from blessing them. The whole stress is on one idea: we are God's people; God has blessed His people in the past; oh that He would pour out similar material blessings on them again.

Verse 5 begins with a statement of God's general attitude of mercy toward those who are righteous, but the following verses do not express either desire for personal righteousness or real penitence for sin. The last part of this verse is rather obscure in the King James Version. Probably the American Standard Version comes nearer to the meaning: "Behold, thou wast wroth, and we sinned: in them have we been of long time; and shall we be saved?" Verses 6 and 7 look superficially like a confession of sin and penitence, but they do not contain any promise of improvement in righteousness or plea for divine help to this end and are not followed by any such promise or plea. It is recognized that the nation is characterized by sin and iniquity, but the tendency seems to be to attribute this to God, and to emphasize the need for material benefit rather than to express a desire for spiritual or moral improvement. It is rather blandly said that "there is none that calleth upon thy name. . . for thou hast hid thy face from us." Religious indifference seems not to be regarded as calling for strong regret, but as something that can be blamed on God.