

The inner life of the Church, after the Ascension of her Lord, went on, as it had begun, in an atmosphere of prayer and praise. From the opening scene of the hundred and twenty in the upper chamber, "all with one accord continuing stedfastly in prayer," to the closing scene in this section of the history, where we see "many gathered together" in the house of Mary "praying," the voice of united prayer rises continually in the apostolic Church. It is the unfailing resource in every difficulty and emergency in the Church's affairs,—in the choice of an apostle, in the training of young converts, in the appointment of the seven, in the consolidation of the Church among the Samaritans, for the success of the apostles' ministry in Jerusalem, when Peter and John are forbidden by the Sanhedrin to speak in the name of Jesus, when Peter is lying chained in Herod's prison, to be put to death on the morrow.<sup>1</sup>

Only a few fragments of these prayers are recorded, but they are enough to give us some idea of their general character. They are simple fervent utterances, breathing the Old Testament spirit of reverence and faith, combining direct petition with adoration and thanksgiving.<sup>2</sup>

Utterances of pure praise are also spoken of,—a setting forth by the Spirit of the "mighty works of God," "speaking with tongues and magnifying God;"<sup>3</sup> but of these none have been expressly handed down to us. Christ and His apostles had been wont to sing together; and Hebrew Christians, with the treasury of the Psalter in their hands and memories, and with their hearts filled with the Holy Ghost and gladness, would certainly not forget His example, nor the precept which James, the Lord's brother, wrote afterwards to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: "Is any cheerful among you? Let him sing praise."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Acts i. 24; ii. 42; iv. 23 f., 31; vi. 4, 6; viii. 15; xii. 5, 12.

<sup>2</sup> Acts i. 24 f.; iv. 24-30.

<sup>3</sup> Acts ii. 4, 11, 47; x. 46; comp. xi. 15 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xxvi. 30; Jas. v. 13. On the place and significance of the Psalms in the apostolic and post-apostolic Church, I may refer to my little work, *Worship of the Presbyterian Church*, Edin. 1884, p. 21 f. The fact that so many of the Psalms seem to have been set, according to the traditional headings, to the melodies of well-known vintage and harvest songs, like that beginning "Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it" (Ps. lxxv. 8), would fit them the better to give