

be no question that the church is accountable for the employment of all the talent within her pale. I know of no good reason why a properly endowed woman may not take her stand beside our masculinity, become its "help-meet," and shine with it, as a twin-star, in the hand of Him who walks among the golden candlesticks. Assuming the legitimacy of the many branches of Christian work, which she now occupies, we shall limit our enquiry to the one debateable feature of her position,—may she preach the Gospel?

The enquiry thus indicated may be covered by the discussion of two questions:—*First*. What position has woman occupied in the church? *Second*. What position can she sustain, with credit to herself and with honor and profit to the Body of Christ? An answer to the first question will throw a valuable light upon the second. Biblical history teaches that if there were "holy men" in the church there were also "holy women." In the Old Testament we meet with *Miriam*, the first prophetess and songstress in ancient Israel; but it is probable that the prophetic spirit, in her, assumed no other form than that of poetic effusion and music. Next we have *Deborah*, designated prophetess and judge (Judges iv. 4, 5). In our A. V. she is said to have been "the wife of Lapidoth;" but the Hebrew, and, following it, the Septuagint, style her "a woman of Lapidoth," either indicating her place of residence, or, as the word suggests, a "woman of a fiery spirit," "a torch-glow." It is just possible, however, that the title "judge" belongs rather to Barak than to her (see Heb. xi. 32). If she really held the office, her appointment to it may be regarded as a kind of Divine satire upon the degeneracy of the men of that age. Then we have *Hannah*, the mother of Samuel, a woman largely endowed with the prophetic spirit. Her song of thanksgiving is a poetic outburst worthy of a place beside the songs of Miriam, Deborah, or Mary the Mother of Jesus. Above all this, it was a prophecy branching out into a magnificent description of Messianic days. Again, (2 Kings xxii.) we find *Huldah*, occupying a loftier position than either of those we have mentioned. She was a prophetess, and predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, but announced that the judgment would be mercifully delayed because Josiah's heart was tender. She was, moreover, looked up to as a person of high authority, and her opinion, upon the newly discovered book of the law, was consulted by royal commissioners. To be a prophetess, in those days, was regarded as a great honor, and for this reason the office was often claimed by those who had no