

down. He partly rose from his chair and shook his forefinger in Mrs. Powter's face. "By gosh! I'm glad there's no one about listening to you exposing your ignorance. I told Pointer that what he was talking at was confiscation. That's what I told him, and that's what I tell you!" he bel-lowed.

"All right, dear; don't get angry. Tell me what else happened," said Mrs. Powter.

Mr. Powter sat down again and continued: "Well, when I said 'confiscation,' Pointer said so it was, and I began to think the man had some glimmerings of reason in him. But off he went again. 'It's confiscation,' says he; 'but it's the landlord doing the confiscating.' I didn't try any longer to hide that I was mad, and I told him to come across with some sensible argument or shut up. 'Very well,' says he. 'He bought something that was worth \$30,000 a year, didn't do a thing to it, sat around while the population of New York grew enough to make the business of that store so much larger that he could jack up his tenants' rent; and then scooped in the increase. Now, it seems to me that the people who in common made that increase by living in New York should have the proceeds of it in their common treasury, and use it to build subways with, let us say.'"

"I never thought about it that way before," said Mrs. Powter, "but it sounds like a sensible argument."

Mr. Powter seemed about to choke. When he got his breath he said: "Aw, woman, gimme my supper, and hereafter talk about things you understand!"

A. J. PORTENAR.



THE DOUBLE PORTION.

Rev. H. L. Pickett of Unity Church, Boise, Idaho,
as Reported in the Boise Journal.

Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee before I am taken from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.—II Kings, ii:9.

What is the relation of the spiritual to the practical, of the realm of the ideal to that of everyday life? This is the question to be considered here.

A modern philosopher has declared it is our right to expect that the searcher after truth shall find "a living truth," one that has direct connection and concern with human life. And the same writer says that "the God of the wilderness, if he be indeed the true God, must show himself also the 'Keeper of the city.'"

The idea is that merely abstract truth is of little worth. The world is not made richer or better by the anchorite or the hermit who refuses to share his life with that of his fellows. Our visions on the housetop need to be carried into the activities of the street below. What the heart

seeth in secret needs to be manifested openly in the common affairs and daily concerns of life.

"Faith" is real and veritable only when it can be made to bring forth "works." Spirituality is truly such only when it is transmuted into higher character and nobler conduct. And this translation of the "ideal" into the "real," of perception into practice, of vision into action, is what I like to regard as "the double portion of the spirit" spoken of in the old Hebrew narrative of Elijah and Elisha.

When we unravel what has been called "an inextricable interweaving of fact and figure" in the lives of these men, we see in Elijah a typical "prophet" or messenger of Jehovah, sent to declare certain fundamental truths, certain great ethical facts and laws that are embedded in the structure of the universe, and to which men in their private and in their public life must conform. But Elijah was the voice of one crying in the wilderness. He lived in solitude and obscurity, taking no part in religious or political affairs. He was a teacher of abstractions rather than one who went about doing good; he was a man of vision rather than a man of action. As a seer and teacher of truth and right he served his age nobly and well. He had one portion of spiritual endowment. But if there is to be actual achievement and advance in the world there must needs be also men of action, men who can see the vision and go forth to translate it into actual fact among men.

Such a man was Elisha. All that Elijah had in the way of spiritual power was his also and more. Elisha's request for a double portion of the spirit was granted him. He was able to put into the concrete what the older prophet had set forth only in the abstract. He had the second gift of the spirit by which he helped to make politically real in Israel what Elijah had announced to be the national ideal. Elisha showed men of a truth the city; that the God of the solitary heart is likewise the God of the common life; that the Deity that meets the soul in secret is the same Deity that walks with men in their open practices day by day.

Elisha was called "the holy man of God which passeth by us continually." Upon him was the double portion, the second benefit and blessing which comes only to those whose deeds are commensurate with their convictions.

Elisha mixed in the common life of the people; he was not contented with crying out the principles of righteousness from afar off; but sought to promote the advancement of the Kingdom of the Ideal "in its ordinary channels of justice, mercy, peace."

In the language of Paul, we must "walk as children of the light," and the fruit of the light (the double portion) is in "all goodness and righteousness and truth." In other words, that which really counts is the practice of spirituality, the

making real, in all the relations of life, of the revelations of truth and right. Where there is no vision men perish. Likewise, where the vision is allowed to vanish as a cloud of vapor or a breath of smoke, the children of men suffer lack of their true inheritance, and the coming of the Kingdom of God is impeded. "The gift whose recompense is doubled" is the portion of all those who strive without weariness or shadow of turning to incorporate in the life of this world the ideal impulses which arise from that inward shrine where the soul sees and knows itself in the likeness of the Divine.

I close with a word from Dr. Charles F. Dole in his book on "The Coming Religion." "Men have thought that they could command delicious spiritual experiences, alone with God in closets and cloisters, by fasting and prayers, apart from their fellows, exempt from the laws of a world of mutual toil and helpfulness! As soon expect water in the house without making connection with the great main. The natural law of spiritual circulation of the universe is that the peace of God will flow into the life of faithful and friendly men. It cannot flow to the unfaithful or the unfriendly. It is not merely a relation between the individual and God. It also binds each man with all men."



CHARTER MAKING IN AMERICA AND EFFECTIVE VOTING.

C. G. Hoag, in the March "Representation," the Journal of the British Proportional Representation Society.*

The movement in America for the radical change of city charters offers proportionalists a rare opportunity. Not only are the cities involved numerous, but proportional representation can be shown to be precisely what is needed to correct the defects of both the old and the new charters.

The old charters, as a rule, provided that not only councillors but many executive officials should be elected at the polls. This wore a semblance of democracy, but in fact, as experience proved, it delivered the voters into the hands of self-seeking politicians. As most voters could have no first-hand knowledge of the candidates for so many offices, they were driven to voting some party ticket; and in the making up of those tickets, each of which had to bind together in mutual support many obscure candidates and jostling

interests, public-spirited citizens were seldom a match for inferior men who depended on office-holding and other rewards of party service for a livelihood.

"Commission" Government.

This defect is largely overcome in the new charters on the so-called "Commission plan." The Des Moines charter, for example, which is typical of these, provides that only five officials, called councillors, shall be elected at the polls, and that these five shall exercise all the city's executive powers and also all its legislative powers except in so far as these latter may be exercised by the people themselves under the "referendum" and the "initiative," which are explicitly reserved. This substitutes for the "long ballot" of obscure names a "short ballot" of known names, thus making intelligent selection by the voters possible and minimizing the power of professional politicians.

Inextricably connected with the defect of the old charters just mentioned was another, their elaborate system of "checks and balances," by which it was intended that one official or department should prevent the abuse of power by any other, but by which in reality any official or department could evade responsibility. This also the commission charters obviate; by giving the five councillors sweeping powers and freedom of action, they remove all doubt about who is responsible for results.

As was to be expected, a type of charter embodying such radical improvements is giving much better satisfaction than the type it supplanted. It is to be hoped, however, that before it is adopted in the cities which as yet have made no change—and which, after all, constitute the great majority—it will be amended itself.

Its first defect is its failure to put the chief executive offices on a professional basis. Though it makes each councillor a real as well as a titular executive chief by paying him a salary and making him personally responsible for the management of one of the five departments into which it divides the executive branch of the government, it provides that he shall be elected for the short term of two years, that he shall be elected by the whole body of voters at the polls, and that he shall constitute one-fifth of the only legislative assembly of the city. To put an official on a professional basis it is necessary, of course, to provide that he shall serve indefinitely if only he serves creditably, that he shall be selected and retained by some person or group of persons acquainted with the requirements of his office and competent to judge, after thorough inquiry, of his special qualifications for it, and that his political opinions shall not be confused with his qualifications for purely executive duties.

Its Defects and Their Remedy.

In England and in Prussia the problem of put-

*In a note appended to his article Mr. Hoag says that "American readers may already know of the American Proportional Representation League, which has members in all parts of the United States and Canada. Mr. Robert Tyson, the Secretary of the League, 20 Harbord Street, Toronto, Canada, or Mr. Wm. Hoag, a member of the Committee, 19 Milk Street, Boston, Mass., would be very pleased to forward information and pamphlets on application."