

have been issued in one day, or at the most two days, after the canvassing board declared the result, the time being ample. Now that considerably more than that period has elapsed, good cause exists for complaining of unnecessary, hence unlawful, delay.

The inconsistency of holding back such certificates will be easily recognized when it is remembered that if the official on whom devolves the duty of issue had been favorable to the officers-elect, and there had been a probability of contest, his whole office force likely would have been tumbling over itself in the eagerness to get the certificates ready. Such promptness in discharging an official duty is not to be complained of, but no just officer will go to the other extreme when political opponents are concerned. But since delay is complained of, if an inclination to hold back is discernible, it is in order for the county commissioners to take cognizance thereof, and to see that their order in pursuance of subdivision 3, section 21, of the law of April 14, the county government law, is carried out in regard to the issue of election certificates. If, on the other hand, there has been no unreasonable neglect in this matter, the speedy coming forth of those certificates will be acceptable evidence that the many complaints of delay have been made in undue haste.

FASTING.

One of the ordinances of the Gospel, or requirements of the Saints, the importance of which is perhaps most generally misunderstood or underrated is that of fasting in connection with prayer. As a means of sanctification and intercession with the Lord it has been resorted to with marvelous results in various ages and in many instances cited by the Lord as an acceptable offering, if not positively commanded. The notable forty-day fast of Moses on the mount, when he communed with the Lord and received from Him the law which was to govern Israel, and also that of the Savior in the wilderness, before He entered upon His ministry, are familiar historical incidents; but the purpose of such protracted abstinence from food and drink is not set forth in the scriptural narrative, and we are left to infer that it was resorted to as a means of gaining favor with the Lord and power to accomplish the special work required of them, and because of its being the most intense and devout form of worship and supplication that could be adopted.

Whatever may be the philosophy of fasting, there can be little doubt in the minds of any Bible believer that it has been the means, when coupled with contrition and prayer, of securing the favor of the Almighty.

A remarkable instance of this was in the case of the people of Nineveh. They had become so wicked that the Lord decreed that they should be destroyed, and called upon the Prophet Jonah to go and warn them of that fact. Jonah did not relish the thought of having such a mission to perform, and sought to escape from the Lord by embarking upon a ship to sail in another direction. His obstinacy and disobedience re-

sulted in his being thrown overboard from the tempest-tossed vessel, and conveyed to the shore in the body of a fish, after which he willingly went to Nineveh, when commanded a second time, and proclaimed that in forty days the city should be overthrown. The result was very unusual for such a wicked and at the same time such a numerous people. The record states that they included more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who could not discern between their right and left hands, without mentioning how many there were who were less ignorant, and they universally believed the Prophet's prediction. From the king upon his throne to the humblest of his subjects they turned in penitence to the Lord, in the hope of getting the dreadful judgment revoked. The king proclaimed a fast, saying, "Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed nor drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God; yea, let them turn every one from his evil way and from the violence that is in their hands;" and added, "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not?"

The supplication was so effectual that Jonah's pride was touched. He evidently thought his reputation as a Prophet was in danger; and while he witnessed the non-fulfillment of his prediction, he reproached the Lord and begged that his life might be taken, instead of having to live and be subjected to shame, and the Lord had to take up a special labor with him to cause Jonah to feel reconciled to the mercy and forgiveness extended to the Ninevites, in response to their earnest and sincere fasting and prayer.

Another notable instance is that mentioned in the book of Esther. Abasuerus, king of the Medes and Persians, who reigned over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, was induced by that arch-plotter, Haman, to authorize the issuance of a decree for the destruction of all the Jews in his kingdom, not knowing that his favorite wife, Esther, would fall under the ban, for she had never informed him of her Jewish ancestry. When the decree went forth it caused general consternation among the Jews, for it was well known that the laws of the Medes and Persians were irrevocable. Their only hope of deliverance from the cruel fiat was in appealing to the Lord, and the usual method in extreme cases was resorted to. They fasted and prayed, and mourned, and wept. When Queen Esther learned of her fate and that of her people from her cousin and foster-father, the naughty but loyal Mordecai, whose lack of servility had excited the ire of the wicked Haman and resulted in the vengeful decree, she made a special request that the Jews of Shushan fast for her, neither eating nor drinking for three days, and promised that she and her maidens would do likewise. The results of their supplications were soon manifest. She found favor in the eyes of the king, resulting in his proffer to grant whatever she asked, even to half his kingdom. The king, being unable to sleep, resorted to reading the chronicles of his kingdom, and being thereby reminded of the fact that

Mordecai, the despised Jew, at one time had saved his life when traitorous chamberlains had plotted to slay him, and had never been rewarded for his loyalty, resolved to make up for the oversight. He consulted Haman as to what should be done unto the man whom the king delighted to honor. Thinking that he, the most exalted of all the princes, must be the person meant, Haman pictured the greatest honors his ambitious soul could conjure up, only to find that the Jew whom he so heartily despised was to be the recipient thereof, and he the humiliated instrument of bestowing them. Nor did poetic justice end there, for the exposure of his perfidy quickly followed, and then came his execution upon the very gallows which he had erected to hang Mordecai upon, while the despised Jew was exalted to the greatest place in the kingdom, and his people were enabled to defend themselves and execute vengeance upon all who sought their destruction—all circumstances in evidence of the efficacy of fasting and prayer.

When Daniel, the young Hebrew, while a captive in Babylon, was blessed with such marvelous wisdom as to render him conspicuous among the magicians of that land, it was in response to his determined abstinence from the rich foods and viands with which he was pilled (the tendency of which was to promote the carnal passions rather than to develop the spiritual force), and by perseverance in his holy resolve, and through fasting and prayer, he was favored with heavenly visions and the personal ministrations of the angel Gabriel. (See Daniel ix: 3; x: 3, 12.) Nor was fasting and prayer as a means of intercession with God known to Daniel alone in the kingdom of Babylon, for the king also, when he reluctantly conformed to the law in casting Daniel into the lion's den for persisting in prayer, also resorted to fasting and prayer for his preservation from the ravenous beast; and the sequel proved that their united supplications and faith were effectual.

One of the most marvelous providential deliverances wrought out for God's ancient covenant people was in response to prayer and fasting enjoined by Judah's righteous king, Jehoshaphat, when he and his people were surrounded by an innumerable host, intent upon destroying them. The Lord witnessed their supplication, and just when their destruction seemed, from a human point of view, most imminent, this comforting assurance came to them through one of their Prophets: "Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours but God's. * * Ye shall not need to fight in this battle; set yourselves, stand ye still and see the salvation of the Lord with you." The slaughter was extensive and sanguinary, but the beleaguered Jews took no part in it. Their enemies in their blind madness ambushed and slew one another, and left their rich stores of wealth upon the battle-field for their intended victims, so miraculously preserved, to possess without danger.

Not only was fasting resorted to among ancient Israel when the people were overtaken by or threatened with