

authority of his holy ministerial calling which could not be broken; and as you well know who are familiar with the history, the Saints were during the following winter of 1838-9, driven out from Missouri altogether.

We will now look at this short revelation given through Joseph, the Prophet, at Far West, Missouri, July 8th, 1838, in answer to a question, "O Lord, show unto thy servants how much thou requirest of the properties of the people for a tithing."

1. "Verily, thus saith the Lord, I require all their surplus property to be put into the hands of the bishop of my church of Zion,

2. "For the building of mine house, and for the laying of the foundation of Zion and for the priesthood, and for the debts of the Presidency of my Church.

3. "And this shall be the beginning of the tithing of my people.

4. "And after that, those who have thus been tithed shall pay one-tenth of all their interest annually; and this shall be a standing law unto them forever, for my holy priesthood, saith the Lord.

5. "Verily I say unto you, it shall come to pass that all those who gather unto the land of Zion shall be tithed of their surplus properties, and shall observe this law, or they shall not be found worthy to abide among you.

6. "And I say unto you, if my people observe not this law, to keep it holy, and by this law sanctify the land of Zion unto me, that my statutes and my judgments may be kept thereon, that it may be most holy, behold, verily I say unto you, it shall not be a land of Zion unto you.

7. "And this shall be an ensam-

ple unto all the stakes of Zion. Even so. Amen."

Before going further I want to stop and consider the question asked by some, what He means where the Lord requires the surplus property of His people as the beginning of their tithing. Let us consider for a moment this word "surplus." What does it mean when applied to a man and his property? Surplus cannot mean that which is indispensably necessary for any given purpose, but what remains after supplying what is needed for that purpose. Is not the first and most necessary use of a man's property that he feed, clothe and provide a home for himself and family? This appears to be the great leading objects for which we labor to acquire means, and as, until the time that this revelation was given, all public works and raising of all public funds had been by consecration, was not "surplus property," that which was over and above a comfortable and necessary subsistence? In the light of what had transpired and of subsequent events, what else could it mean? Can we take any other view of it when we consider the circumstances under which it was given in Far West in July, 1838?

I have been unable in studying this subject to find any other definition of the term surplus, as used in this revelation, than the one I have just given. I find that it was so understood and recorded by the Bishops and people in those days, as well as by the Prophet Joseph himself, who was unquestionably the ablest and best exponent of this revelation.

Immediately following the persecutions of the Saints in the expulsion from the State of Missouri, the Prophet Joseph, in 1839, found the sickly town of Commerce so nearly