

"THE FIGHTING APOSTLES."

THE eastern magazine which has given place to articles purporting to be written by a "Mormon," but which were a rehash of old fictions by some cowardly anti-"Mormon" in league with the plotters for "Mormon" disfranchisement, publishes in its last issue portraits and biographical sketches of nine persons whom it calls "The Fighting Apostles." They are most of them miserable distortions, and the letter press accounts are stolen from Tullidge's works.

Out of the nine, only three are Apostles, and to call any of them "Fighting Apostles" is the very height of absurdity. One of them is Charles Woodmansee of Ogden, and his alleged portrait is exhibited as one of the nine men who are "the leaders of Mormonism." Can anything be funnier than that? Anson Call, now deceased, is pictured as another of these nine men, and our old friend Lorin Farr as another, who, "if pushed into a corner, will assuredly fight." We are told: "These are the nine men on whom the responsibility of all the actions of the Mormons rests. These are the nine with whom our Government must reckon." And the most ridiculous part of all this rubbish is that it purports to be written by a "Mormon."

The editor of the magazine gravely refers to the stuff published in the magazine as evidence that "the law is powerless," that "the shadow of the sword comes nearer every day," and that the question is, "Shall the Mormons defy the law in Utah or shall they be driven out of the country?"

Altogether this is the most ridiculous, and at the same time most contemptible and tricky attempt to arouse prejudice against the "Mormons" that has found place in a respectable public paper. The editor, if not a party to the fraud perpetrated upon his readers, or out of his mind, is densely ignorant of the subject he writes upon, and he may rest assured that every sensible reader will answer his momentous question thus: The "Mormons" do not defy the law; there is no earthly reason why they should be driven out of the country. And the scoundrel who gathered up the stories published in that paper, pretending to be a "Mormon," should be sent to jail for his criminal libel and cowardly lying, while the editor should either be compelled to read up on this subject or, if unable to do so, be required to rest his disturbed brain in a quiet lunatic asylum.

LONDON, Jan. 12.—The Duke of Somerset is dead.

THE NATURE OF JOSEPH SMITH'S MISSION.

IF WE inquire into the nature of the work of Joseph Smith, only two suppositions are possible: either, that work is Divine, or, it is a cunningly devised human scheme. Joseph Smith must have been either the most clever member of the human family, or else a humble instrument in the hand of a superior Being. His work must be ascribed either to human sagacity or to Divine intelligence.

Which of these two alternatives are we to accept, when we know how the work originated? There is, as will be seen on a proper investigation, only one possible.

When Joseph Smith received his first revelation, he was, as is well known, a young boy, with very limited education and small worldly experience. If we now for a moment suppose that the idea of starting a new religion originated with him, we may ask, when did it originate? Boys do not, as a rule, burden their minds with ideas of revolutionizing the world. Who cannot from his boyhood remember that a fine horse, a rifle and similar objects were considered far more important than all the dogmas and creeds in the world? A young man planning a religious system of the magnitude of that now under consideration is inconceivable. Had Joseph Smith at the time been a matured sage, familiar with the world and its various institutions, it would have been different. But he was not. Joseph, the son of Jacob, truthfully and innocently announced his prophetic dreams to his brethren and was betrayed into bondage therefor; so did this youthful seer. God selected him to this work at a period of life, when he was least able to commence a work of this kind in his own wisdom and strength. Mohammed was forty years old when he commenced his work and he had then traveled considerably and seen much of the world. Luther had already acquired the theological knowledge available at his time, before he conceived the idea of a protest against Rome. And his wavering position for years shows that he did not realize what he was doing. It is not in the age of fourteen or fifteen years that men stand up as reformers. We remember only one who at the age of twelve could astound the theological teachers of his day with his questions and answers. And this was the boy of Nazareth, who became the Savior of the world. We acknowledge that He was influenced by the Divine Spirit who rested upon Him. There is no other explanation possible of the fact

that Joseph Smith, at the age of fifteen, conceived the great idea for which he lived and died. The Spirit rested upon him, prompted him, taught him.

There is evidence enough that at the time when the Prophet had the first manifestations, he received instructions, contrary to everything that was held to be true by the world. Two opinions regarding the church were then, as they are now, held by men. Some thought that one particular church was the right one, exclusive of all other ecclesiastical institutions. Others held that no particular church was the church, but that all taken together would contain an element which, they hoped, could be designated the "invisible church." Joseph himself was not free from the first of these ideas. He was very much inclined towards Methodism and sought his friends among the representatives of that system. Now, the probability is, that a young boy, who—were such a thing conceivable—would build a system of his own, and by his own wisdom, would build on the foundation already laid. Had Joseph Smith been influenced only by his own wisdom, he might have started a new branch of the Methodist Church, depriving it of a few objectionable features and ornamenting it with some new embellishments. This has been done again and again in the world. For what are all the popular churches but branches of the great Roman trunk, one in nature, although diverse in forms? No man can by his own wisdom form an original church. He is a child of education and circumstances and his most original work consists of modifications of what already exists. Further than that man's wisdom does not go.

Now, Joseph Smith is all at once made aware of the fact that all the churches were wrong. Neither one particular church, nor all together were right. This is the offensive doctrine that he was told to announce to the world, much to his own wonder. Where did he learn that new doctrine, which at once placed him, a young boy, in opposition to the whole world? Only one answer to this question is reasonable. He got it as did Saul who through a vision from heaven was convinced of the fact that every system of the Jewish theology was wrong and that the crucified Galilean was the Son of God.

Further, it was a promise in the New Testament that led Joseph to the first step on the road he entered. With child-like faith, sublime in its simplicity, he embraces this promise: "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, * * * and it shall be given him."