

land themselves, which had been seized, or in some way appropriated by them in defiance or violation of the law, and of the right and title of the state. Tiberius Gracchus held that the public lands belonged to the state, or to the people themselves, and that every citizen was entitled to a certain portion if he was willing to use it, paying a certain rent for it, and that the race of small farmers or yeomen, who had been dispossessed by the capitalists of the city, and driven into the city to seek a precarious livelihood for their families through electoral corruption or other dishonorable means, should be re-established on these farms."

"The question was how to attain that object; the successful operation of this measure being considered the panacea for all the social and political troubles of Rome, and which would also at once and forever solve the great conflict between labor and capital, which has always and will always vex men and their affairs, as long as one man is more industrious and thrifter than another, or possesses more natural ability, or has received a better education, or begins life under more favorable surroundings than another. He approached the body politic, suffering from a social and political gangrene with the scalpel of a political surgeon. He determined to pass an agrarian law, under the practical operation of which three commissioners, annually elected by the people, were to confiscate and distribute these lands, with powers also to decide what was private property, and what was public lands. The distribution was to go on continually, and to embrace the whole class that stood in need of it. They were permitted under the law to allow the former holders indemnification for improvements."

### RIDICULE OUT OF PLACE.

THE Springfield, Illinois, *Journal* of a recent date, gives particulars of a visit paid to this city by a number of gentlemen "representing Springfield society." Among other incidents mentioned, is an inspection of the buildings on Temple Block. We clip this paragraph from the paper above-named:

"In his visit to the Assembly Hall," wrote Mr. Wilson, "the innocence of the writer was again brought into prominence by the incredulity he manifested. Among other paintings in panels on the ceiling of this building was one intended to represent Peter, James and John in the act of baptizing Joseph (Smith) as a Priest of the Order of Melchisedec. The query was simple; 'How did Peter, James and John get there?' The answer was 'They came down from heaven.' To a further question—'Do you really believe they were there?' the reply came promptly, 'O, yes, they were there.' It is needless to remark that the amusement of the party was greatly

heightened by this interesting colloquy, though held in till afterwards."

We can readily understand the "amusement of the party" of "Christian" gentlemen who thought it the very height of absurdity to believe that Peter, James and John, could "come down from heaven" and minister to a mortal man. It is astonishing that they were able to restrain their hilarity so that they "held it in till afterwards." Doubtless the explosion of merriment "afterwards" was proportioned to the time they held it in and the force of the fun thus bottled up. It was much more polite and commendable than to let it out, while in the presence of the believing guide who courteously answered their queries.

The amused and incredulous gentleman from Illinois was so tickled over the simple faith of his informant, that he did not use his eyes or ears to good advantage. The panel painting to which he refers, does not and is not intended to represent "Peter, James and John in the act of baptizing Joseph," but of ordaining him to the authority which they held; that is, the Apostleship.

And, after all, what is there so very humorous in the belief that three persons, who once lived on earth and held divine authority, have come here as ministering spirits and conferred that authority upon a chosen man in the present age? Of course it is unusual, but it is not without precedent. If these "Christian" gentlemen believe the Bible, they must be as credulous in relation to such occurrences in former times, as the guide in the Assembly Hall was in relation to the same kind of event in these latter times. And if so, why should the antiquated story of a return to earth of former inhabitants, printed in a book, be received with gravity and faith, and the testimony of a living person to a similar event, told orally, excite ridicule and be rejected as preposterous?

If it is true that Peter, James and John went up on a mount and saw Moses and Elias ministering to Jesus of Nazareth, Palestine, why must it be untrue that Peter, James and John came to earth, in their turn, and ministered to Joseph of Sharon, Vermont?

Did these hilarious "Christian" gentlemen ever reflect upon the statement of John, one of these three heavenly visitants, recorded in the last chapter of the Apocalypse? After receiving the vision and revelation accepted now by the "Chris-

tian" world as divine, he says he fell at the feet of the being who showed him these things, and was informed that his instructor was not to be worshiped, for he was only his "fellow servant and one of the prophets." There are other instances of the return to earth of God's servants for special purposes, after they had departed from mortal existence.

So there is nothing very funny in the event portrayed by the artist and explained by the guide. Neither does it require greater credulity to believe the testimony of living persons to an occurrence, of the nature described, in our own age, than to accept without question statements, said to have been made by men long since dead and gone, of similar occurrences ages upon ages ago. That which has been, may be again. In the language of the wise man of Scripture: "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done." Or to use a hackneyed modern phrase: "History repeats itself."

The position is this: Christ ordained Peter, James and John to the authority which he had received from the Father. He was an Apostle and great High Priest. It is presumable that he received his ordination from Moses and Elias on the mount of transfiguration. But whether this were so or not, he conferred the apostleship on these three disciples and gave them the keys. After performing their missions they departed from this mortal sphere, and all who held similar authority died, and the world was left without the apostleship for centuries. The New Testament teaches that Apostles are necessary in Christ's Church "for the work of the ministry and the perfecting of the Saints" and that they are first in authority. The only legitimate way by which that apostleship could be actually received in the nineteenth century, was by its restoration through those who formerly held and exercised it. Who were more proper persons to bestow it upon living men than the Apostles who held "the keys" of this ministry? Its bestowal upon Joseph Smith, by this means, welds the broken chain of divine authority on earth, and makes it complete from age to age own to this "dispensation of the fulness of times."

No amount of ridicule will turn aside the force of the evidence in regard to this restoration of the apostleship in the manner