have been many periods of time since
the creation in which the heavens, in an
especially manner, have been favorable to
the children of men, by sending commu-
nications and revelations from on high.
But a long time had intervened, dur-
ing which no such privilege had been
granted to mortal man. So far as the
nations of the Eastern Hemisphere were
concerned, upwards of seventeen cen-
turies had passed away, during which
they were left in darkness, having no
legally authorized minister, no one that
could legally baptize, or administer the
Lord's Supper, or build the Church of
God, or administer in any of the ordi-
nances of his Gospel; that was a long
time for the nations to be left in dark-
ness. So far as our Western Hemi-
sphere is concerned, they were not left
quite so long a period without informa-
tion from the heavens. Some fourteen
hundred years and upwards had passed
away, on this Western continent, during
which the people were left in darkness;
hence, the whole earth for fourteen cen-
turies, at least, had no Gospel preached
by divine authority, no Church of the liv-
ing God in any quarter thereof—so far
as we are acquainted. It is true, that
during these fourteen centuries the na-
tions had a book that contained the his-
tory of the Gospel as it was preached in
ancient times—a book called the Bible.
But a book containing the history of the
Gospel is one thing, and the power
and authority to administer the ordi-
nances of the Gospel is another thing;
they are entirely distinct. A book, it-
self, authorizes no man, under the whole
heavens, to build up the Church of Christ; it authorizes no man to preach
the Gospel. No man ever receives di-
vine authority by means of an ancient
book that was given to prophets and
inspired men centuries before he was
born. We never knew of the Lord's call-
ing men by ancient books. If the Lord
calls anyone in this day, it is by a new
revelation, not a revelation given 1,800
years ago. How inconsistent it would
be to suppose that a man is now called
to sit in the presidential chair of the
United States, because we have the his-
tory that Washington once sat in that
chair. Would that authorize any person,
among the scores of millions of the pop-
ulation of these States, to go and take
possession of that chair, and undertake
to administer in the office of a president
over this great people? The thing would
be so ridiculously absurd, that the people
would rise up universally and condemn
any such imposition. So in regard to the
things of God. God is a God of order. And
if mankind have an order in relation to
authority to administer in governmental
affairs, how much more the Lord? Has
he not as much wisdom as his creatures?
Is the Lord so much beneath his own cre-
atation that he would prefer illegality to le-
gality? That he would let anyone assume
the authority and power without call-
ing him to an account in the great judg-
ment day? "But," inquires one, "how do
you know, Mr. Pratt, but what the Lord
has called someone during the many cen-
turies that you say the people have lived
in darkness? How do you know but what
he has authorized servants and minis-
ters, to proclaim his Gospel among the
children of men?" Now this is a very
important point. I do not blame those
who have not considered this subject, in
putting such a question. It is perfectly
reasonable that they should inquire how
a person may know what grounds we
have for supposing that there has been
no one commissioned with divine autho-