

have been many periods of time since the creation in which the heavens, in an especial manner, have been favorable to the children of men, by sending communications and revelations from on high. But a long time had intervened, during which no such privilege had been granted to mortal man. So far as the nations of the Eastern Hemisphere were concerned, upwards of seventeen centuries 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 ordinances of his Gospel; that was a long time for the nations to be left in darkness. So far as our Western Hemisphere is concerned, they were not left quite so long a period without information 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 centuries, at least, had no Gospel preached by divine authority, no Church of the living God in any quarter thereof—so far as we are acquainted. It is true, that during these fourteen centuries the nations had a book that contained the history 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 ordinances of the Gospel is another thing; they are entirely distinct. A book, itself, 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 divine 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 calling 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 history that Washington once sat in that chair. Would that authorize any person, among the scores of millions of the population 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 creation that he would prefer illegality to legality? That he would let anyone assume the authority and power without calling him to an account in the great judgment day? "But," inquires one, "how do you know, Mr. Pratt, but what the Lord has called someone during the many centuries that you say the people have lived in darkness? How do you know but what he has authorized servants and ministers, 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 author-