

heard Elders preach that there was not a sectarian priest—not a man living upon the earth, or that had lived upon it, neither a reformer nor a professed Christian, from the time the Priesthood was taken from the earth until Joseph Smith came, but what went straight to hell fire when he died. Yes, I have heard them preach just as absurdly as that. I have heard many say, I will dispense with this, and I will dispense with that; and many of our Elders actually dispense with praying, and say it is nothing but a sectarian notion. Were you taught by your fathers to pray? "Yes, but that is a sectarian notion." Were you taught not to lie? "Yes, but that was a sectarian notion." Were you taught not to pilfer? "Yes, but we think, we won't say it aloud, it is nothing but a sectarian notion, and we have to learn everything over again." This is a mistaken idea. There is only one thing which the people lack on this point, in order that their traditions and former education may do them good, and that is to know how to sever the good from the bad, how to assimilate to themselves every good trait of character they have seen in their fathers and mothers, teachers and neighbors, and every good thing that has been taught them from their youth, and how to gather to themselves every good principle they have been traditionated in, and store that up as their individual property, and then dispense with every erroneous idea and every inconsistency. Many things which have been taught us in our childhood, or in our early lives, are truly inconsistent; lay them aside and cleave to the traditions which actually tend to virtue, holiness, chastity, loveliness, kindness, honesty, and truthfulness in every respect, and gather all the good into our own storehouse, and let each one say, that belongs to me.

Some imagine that they must begin

and unlearn the whole of their former education, but I say, cling to all the good that you have learned, and discard the bad. This leads me into a field, the gate to which I wish to have closed up, locked up, and passed by; I do not wish to say anything about it. I will say this much, however, if there are not all kinds of fish in this Gospel net, I should like to see the kind that is not in it, and I think that would be something new under the sun.

Treasure up in your hearts that which tends to virtue. You say, "I want an explanation upon virtue." I wish I could so give it to you, that you could understand it when I am done talking; I will do my best to do so. Learn the will of God, keep His commandments and do His will, and you will be a virtuous person. Can you understand that? If you can know the will of God and do it, you will be a virtuous person. You say, "Perhaps I should be led to do that which is contrary to my former traditions, and to do that which is really wrong." No matter anything about that; if you can know the will of God and do it, you will be a virtuous person, and will receive knowledge upon knowledge, and wisdom upon wisdom, and you will increase in understanding, in faith, and in the light of eternity, and know how to discriminate between the right and the wrong. I know the people say that they do not understand, that they do not know what the Lord requires of them. I say keep the commandments of the Lord. We were taught that the commandments of the Lord were this, that, and the other, in our former lives, but when we can know and understand, by the revelations of Jesus Christ, the will of our Father in heaven and do His will, He will make us pure and holy, and fit for the society of angels and Himself. Will we not be virtuous then? Yes, in the