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Testimony of Jacob Gates

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Abstract: Jacob F. Gates relates the interview which his father, Jacob Gates, had with Oliver Cowdery in 1849. In response to Gates' questions, Oliver Cowdery testified that the Book of Mormon "was translated by the gift and power of God" and that he had received the priesthood by an angel whose hand "I felt...as plainly as I could feel yours."

Jesus, the Son of Man, that which was delivered to him as holding the keys of the universe, and retains his standing as head of the human family. Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant. He is the great High Priest; Adam next.

From these statements, and from many others that might be quoted, it is clear that Adam and Christ are two persons—not the same person. It is erroneous doctrine to consider them one and the same person, for Jesus is the Christ, a member of the Trinity, the God-head, and to whom Adam, the father of the human family upon this earth, is amenable. Adam will have to account for his stewardship to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, whose blood atones for the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam.

Testimony of Jacob Gates.

My father, Jacob Gates, while on his way to England, in 1849, stopped at the town of Richmond, where lived at that time Oliver Cowdery. Hearing that Oliver was in poor health, and wishing to renew old acquaintance, as they had been friends in earlier days, father called on him at his home. Their conversation, during the visit drifted to early Church history, and to their mutual experiences during the troublous times in Missouri and Illinois. Finally father put this question to him: "Oliver," said he, "I want you to tell me the whole truth about your testimony concerning the Book of Mormon—the testimony sent forth to the world over your signature and found in the front of that book. Was your testimony based on a dream, was it the imagination of your mind, was it an illusion, a myth—tell me truthfully?"

To question him thus seemed to touch Oliver very deeply. He answered not a word, but arose from his easy chair, went to the book case, took down a Book of Mormon of the first edition, turned to the testimony of the Three Witnesses, and read in the most solemn manner the words to which he had subscribed his name, nearly twenty years before. Facing my father, he said: "Jacob, I want you to remember what I say to you. I am a dying man, and what would it profit me to tell you a lie? I know," said he, "that this Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God. My eyes saw, my ears heard, and my understanding was touched, and I know that whereof I testified is true.

It was no dream, no vain imagination of the mind—it was real.”

Then father asked him about the angel under whose hands he received the priesthood, to which he made answer thus: “Jacob, I felt the hand of the angel on my head as plainly as I could feel yours, and could hear his voice as I now hear yours.”

Then father asked this question: “If all that you tell me is true, why did you leave the Church?” Oliver made only this explanation; said he: “When I left the Church, I felt wicked, I felt like shedding blood, but I have got all over that now.”

State of Utah, County of Salt Lake, ss. Jacob F. Gates, of Salt Lake City, Utah, being first duly sworn, deposes and says, that he is a citizen of the United States, of the age of fifty-seven years, and that he is the son of Jacob Gates, who, prior to his death, related to affiant a conversation which he had with Oliver Cowdery, at the town of Richmond, State of Missouri, and that the above and foregoing is a true and correct statement of said conversation as given to him by his father.

JACOB F. GATES.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 30th day of January, 1912.

ARTHUR WINTERS, Notary Public.

My commission expires December 3, 1915.

Heaven and Hell.

A good student and brother has written to know where Hell is, and he asks:

“Are we to understand (as written in Matthew 25:41, ‘Depart from me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels’) that such a place as Hell really exists?”

Hell is, evidently, wherever one's mental condition would make it. Without doubt, such a place exists, but where the place is, we are not able to say, as there is no revealed word upon the subject. In this life, however, both Heaven and Hell are upon this earth, and wherever, by our acts, we ourselves make them. It is not a far-fetched guess, either, to say that Heaven for the righteous will be on this earth in the hereafter. (Read Doc. and Cov. 88:17-26.)

As to the meaning of “everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels,” we have a thorough explanation in the 19th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, beginning with the 10th