

A BLACK HOLE IN THE BOOK OF MORMON

Computer Reveals Astounding Evidence on Origin of Mormon Book

In 1828, Joseph Smith's enemies fired a shot from ambush at his translation of the Book of Mormon. As Smith looked at the gaping hole in the very heart of the document he had struggled so hard to protect, he seemed to sense that the wound could be fatal. His mother, Lucy Smith, revealed the anguish which flooded Joseph Smith's mind when he grasped the devastating implications of what had happened:

Martin Harris, having written some one hundred and sixteen pages for Joseph, asked permission of my son to carry the manuscript home with him, in order to let his wife read it . . .

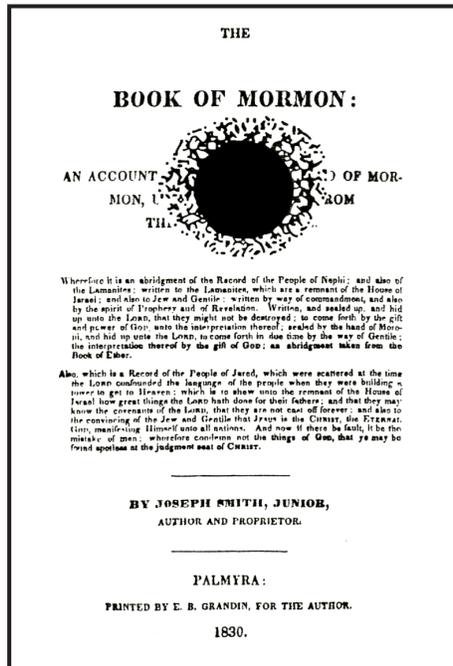
Joseph . . . inquired of the Lord to know if he might do as Martin Harris had requested, but was refused. . . . Joseph inquired again, but received a second refusal. Still, Martin Harris persisted as before, and Joseph applied again, but the last answer was not like the two former ones. In this the Lord permitted Martin Harris to take the manuscript home with him . . . Mr. Harris had been absent nearly three weeks, and Joseph had received no intelligence whatever from him . . . we saw him [Harris] walking with a slow and measured tread towards the house . . . Harris pressed his hands upon his temples, and cried out, in a tone of deep anguish, "Oh, I have lost my soul! I have lost my soul!"

Joseph . . . sprang from the table, exclaiming, "Martin, have you lost that manuscript? . . ."

"Yes, it is gone," replied Martin, "and I know not where."

"Oh, my God!" said Joseph, clinching his hands. "All is lost! all is lost! What shall I do? I have sinned . . ."

He wept and groaned, and walked the floor continually . . . what could I say to comfort him, when he saw all the family in the same situation of mind as himself,



for sobs and groans, and the most bitter lamentations filled the house. However, Joseph was more distressed than the rest . . . he continued, pacing back and forth, meantime weeping and grieving, until about sunset . . .

The manuscript has never been found; and there is no doubt that Mrs. Harris took it from the drawer . . . (*Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet*, 1853, pp. 117, 118, 120-123)

Joseph Smith's words, "All is lost! all is lost!," show the gravity of the predicament he found himself in. He realized that since he had not retained a copy of the 116 pages, he could not reproduce exactly the same material as the first part of the Book of Mormon. It would, therefore, be a book without a beginning! A Mormon

critic, M. T. Lamb, succinctly pointed out the dilemma facing Joseph Smith:

The general belief was that she [Mrs. Harris] burned it [i.e., the manuscript]. But the prophet Joseph evidently was afraid she had not, but had secretly hid it, for the purpose of entrapping him, should he ever attempt to reproduce the pages. If the work was really of God, the manuscript could be reproduced word for word without a mistake. If, however, Joseph inspired it himself, his memory would hardly be adequate to such a task, without numberless changes or verbal differences—and thus "give himself away," since he loudly professed to be all the time aided "by the gift and power of God." (*The Golden Bible*, page 119)

The theft of the 116 pages brought the translation of the Book of Mormon to a grinding halt. Joseph Smith claimed that "both the plates [i.e., the gold plates on which the Book of Mormon was supposed to have been

written] and the Urim and Thummim [a sacred device used to translate the plates] were taken” from him (*History of the Church*, vol. 1, p. 23). Later, however, the plates were restored and he received a revelation purporting to be from Jesus Christ. The Lord told him not to retranslate the missing pages because his enemies had altered them:

Now, behold, I say unto you, that because you delivered up those writings . . . into the hands of a wicked man, you have lost them. . . . you also lost your gift at the same time; and your mind became darkened. . . .

And, behold, Satan hath put it into their hearts to alter the words which you have caused to be written, or which you have translated . . .

Behold, I say unto you, that you shall not translate again those words which have gone forth out of your hands;

For, behold, they shall not accomplish their evil designs in lying against those words. For, behold, if you should bring forth the same words they will say that you have lied and that you have pretended to translate, but that you have contradicted yourself.

And, behold, they will publish this, and Satan will harden the hearts of the people to stir them up to anger against you, that they will not believe my words. (*Doctrine and Covenants* 10:1, 2, 10, 30-32)

Joseph Smith was informed that about 600 years before the birth of Christ, the Lord had anticipated this very problem. He had, in fact, inspired the ancient prophet Nephi to make another set of plates which covered exactly the same time period as that first set of plates. Mormon writers refer to these plates as the “small plates of Nephi,” and the plates which contained the material for the 116 lost pages are called the “large plates of Nephi.” One matter that is rather confusing is that in a preface to the first edition of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith referred to the 116 missing pages as being from “the Book of Lehi, which was an account abridged from the plates of Lehi, by the hand of Mormon . . .” Mormon writers, however, argue that Lehi did not actually write anything on the plates; all the writing was done by his son, Nephi: “Aside from employing his name honorifically, this work apparently was not written in any part by Lehi . . .” (S. Kent Brown, *Brigham Young University Studies*, Winter 1984, p. 21, n. 10).

However this may be, the Lord told Joseph Smith that he could translate the small plates of Nephi and they would take the place of what had come from the large plates of Nephi—i.e., the missing 116 pages. The Book of Mormon would no longer be a book without a beginning. In addition, it was made clear to Smith that the small plates of Nephi dealt more with spiritual matters than the missing pages. Consequently, the loss of the 116 pages was actually set forth by the Mormon Church leaders as a victory for the Lord because the Book of Mormon would be more spiritual than it would have been if the pages had not been stolen!

Mormon critics, on the other hand, do not accept this explanation. They point out that if Satan actually did cause Joseph Smith’s enemies to alter the words, these wicked

people would have had to produce the original pages to prove that Joseph Smith could not produce an accurate duplicate of the original. It would be almost impossible to alter the manuscript without detection. The Mormons could have taken the case to court and easily won a significant victory. Critics feel that the simple truth is that Joseph Smith could not reproduce an exact copy of what he had previously written. Therefore, he was forced to come up with the elaborate story about the Lord providing a second set of plates covering exactly the same time period to fill in the missing portion of the Book of Mormon.

GAZING INTO THE BLACK HOLE

A few years ago we published an article entitled “Probing Black Holes in Mormon History.” We noted that astronomers feel that sometimes a star will “collapse into itself and become a black hole and, in a sense, exit the universe.” One physicist said that “You can’t see a black hole. Just its effects.” We quoted one author as saying that “Since not even light can escape a black hole, one can never be seen directly.” We also quoted a statement which explained that “black holes theoretically occur when matter collapses into an exquisitely compact state. Its gravity grows strong enough to trap everything, including light, within the horizon of its gravitational field. The earth, for instance, would become a black hole, if it could somehow be squeezed to the size of a marble. . . . Medium-size black holes result from the collapse of giant stars too massive to stop at the neutron star stage. They just disappear into their dark prisons.”

We noted that although we know “very little about astronomy or the theories concerning black holes in space, we have observed a somewhat similar phenomenon in Mormon history. Important documents which could throw a great deal of light on Mormon history, seem to mysteriously “disappear into their dark prisons.”

At the time we wrote this article, we had no idea that we were going to encounter a massive black hole in the Book of Mormon itself. Significantly, this black hole appears in the very material which replaced the missing 116 pages! It seems obvious from our research that a great deal of material which was originally in the Book of Mormon has disappeared into this bottomless abyss.

We have always believed that there was something strange about this portion of the Book of Mormon, but we were not preparing to scrutinize it in more detail than the rest of the book. Recently, however, we heard of the Mormon Church’s new computer program, *The Computerized Scriptures of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. We felt that this program would help us in studying the questions of plagiarism and authorship with regard to the Book of Mormon. We installed the program and began to obtain some remarkable results. It was during this period of intense research in the Book of Mormon that a question began to arise concerning the wars in the Book of Mormon—

i.e., why were the accounts of the wars in the later portion of the book given in such great detail, whereas the material replacing the lost 116 pages was so surprisingly sparse with regard to details?

This question aroused our curiosity and we began to look at names, dates, cities, lands, directions, kings, etc. In all of these areas we found an abundance of material in the later books, but scarcely nothing in material coming from the “small plates of Nephi.” This discovery eventually led to the formulation of our theory that there is a black hole in the Book of Mormon:

1 — The first portion of the Book of Mormon originally contained a great deal of information concerning history, wars, kings, names, dates and other matters which no longer appears in that part of the Book of Mormon—i.e. the books that cover the same period. This can be inferred from Nephi’s own description of the contents of the larger plates:

Upon the other plates [the plates from which the 116 pages were translated] should be engraven an account of the reign of the kings, and the wars and contentions of my people . . . (Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 9:4)

. . . wherefore, the record of my father, and the genealogy of his fathers, and the more part of all our proceedings in the wilderness are engraven upon those plates . . . I, Nephi, did make a record upon the other plates, which gives an account, or which gives a greater account of the wars and contentions and destructions of my people. (1 Nephi, 19:1 and 4)

For I, Nephi . . . had spoken many things . . . and also my father . . . many of which sayings are written upon mine other plates; for a more history part are written upon mine other plates. (2 Nephi 4:14)

And if my people desire to know the more particular part of the history of my people they must search mine other plates. (2 Nephi 5:33)

2 — From the references cited above it would seem very likely that the 116 missing pages contained many names of people, cities and lands. It probably had the names of many kings and the years in which they reigned. Since it was concerned with wars, it would undoubtedly mention the names of the prominent leaders who took part in important battles and when they occurred. The location of where these battles took place would likely appear in the record. This would be entirely consistent with the latter portion of the Book of Mormon.

3 — Since the first 116 pages of the Book of Mormon were lost and Joseph Smith did not have another copy, it would be almost impossible for him to reconstruct all the details he had previously written concerning the ancient Nephites and Lamanites. He would undoubtedly make many mistakes with regard to names, cities, lands, kings, military leaders and battles. While the idea of having a second set of plates from which to translate released him from having to come up with the exact wording he had previously used,

it did not free him from the possibility of making mistakes with regard to names, dates, locations and other matters.

4 — Because the first part of the Book of Mormon as it was originally written was supposed to contain “a full account of the history” of Nephi’s people (1 Nephi 9:2), what Joseph Smith dictated to replace the missing pages had to be as vague as possible. To avoid contradicting the 116 pages if they should come to light, the new pages must be very indefinite with regard to details. While these pages would have to cover the same period as the original pages and give some appearance of being history, they would actually have to be very obscure when it came to particulars which Joseph Smith could not clearly remember. Many important things, therefore, which had evaporated from Joseph Smith’s memory would also have to vanish into a rayless and indefinable “black hole” in the Book of Mormon.

Joseph Smith apparently thought that some people might become suspicious that he was trying to sidestep the problem which confronted him. In an attempt to offset any criticism that he was evading the real history of the Nephites and Lamanites, Joseph Smith had Jacob, the second author who wrote upon the “small plates” of Nephi, explain that Nephi had told him that he should “write upon these plates a few of the things which I considered to be most precious; that I should not touch, save it were lightly, concerning the history of this people which are called the people of Nephi. . . he said that the history of his people should be engraven upon his other plates . . . if there were preaching which was sacred, or revelation which was great, or prophesying, that I should engraven the heads of them upon these plates, and touch upon them as much as it were possible, for Christ’s sake . . .” (Jacob 1:2-4). In 1 Nephi 9:3, Nephi explains that he received “a commandment of the Lord that I should make these plates, for the special purpose that there should be an account engraven of the ministry of my people.”

The more material that Nephi and the other writers put in the plates concerning “preaching,” “revelation” and “prophesying,” the less would have to be devoted to the history of the Nephites and Lamanites.

5 — Our theory presupposes that it would be rather easy for Joseph Smith to have remembered the major details of the first part of the 116 missing pages. This portion relates to Lehi and his family leaving Jerusalem and coming to the New World. The names of the main characters would probably be indelibly written upon his memory. As he progressed with the story, however, the names and details would become increasingly difficult to remember. There seems to be some evidence of the black hole beginning in the early chapters of the small plates of Nephi, but when Lehi and his children reach the New World (1 Nephi 18:23), the record becomes far more nebulous. The evidence for the black hole seems extremely strong from this chapter onward and continues until the book of Omni, verse 12—the last book contained in the small plates of Nephi. The black hole, therefore, extends to page 141 of the 1981 edition of the Book of Mormon and obscures over four hundred years of the history of the Nephites and the Lamanites!

TESTING THE THEORY

Mormons often quote the following words of Moroni when trying to convert others to the Book of Mormon: “And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost” (Moroni 10:4). We would challenge those who believe the Book of Mormon to read the things which follow and also to reread the first portion of the Book of Mormon which was “translated” from the small plates of Nephi. We feel that if they will do this with “a sincere heart” and a prayerful attitude, they will come to the same conclusion that we have reached.

That Joseph Smith seemed to remember a number of the names at the first part of the story becomes obvious as we examine the first book of Nephi. We find the name Nephi in the first verse of chapter one. The name of Nephi’s father, Lehi, appears in verse 5, and his mother’s name, Sariah, is found in 2:5. The names of Nephi’s elder brothers Laman, Lemuel and Sam, are also found in that verse. In 18:7 we read that Nephi had two younger brothers, Jacob and Joseph. The name of Laban appears in 3:3, and his servant, Zoram, is found in 4:35. A man by the name of Ishmael later joins with Lehi’s family in the wilderness somewhere outside Jerusalem. It appears, then, that only eleven names are given to Nephites or Lamanites within the first book of Nephi. To our knowledge no new names are given to any of these people in the second book of Nephi! This is especially strange in light of the fact that a number of Old Testament characters are referred to by name. For example, Nephi mentions Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Adam, Eve, Zedekiah, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Joseph. Moreover, he even prophetically speaks of Jesus some 600 years before his birth and claims that he knew that “the name of the apostle of the Lamb was John . . .” (1 Nephi 14:27).

Although Nephi could see far into the future and give the names of people who would live in New Testament times, he seemed to have been oblivious to the names of most of the people he lived with. For example, he did not mention the names of his brothers’ children: “. . . my father . . . called the children of Laman, his sons, and his daughters, and said unto them: Behold, my sons, and my daughters of my first-born . . . after my father had made an end of speaking . . . he caused the sons and daughters of Lemuel to be brought before him . . . he spake unto them, saying: Behold, my sons and my daughters, who are the sons and the daughters of my second son . . . (2 Nephi 4:3, 8, 9). The children of Ishmael also seemed to have no names: “. . . Laman and Lemuel, and the two sons of Ishmael and their families, did rebel against us; yea, against me, Nephi, and Sam, and their father, Ishmael, and his wife, and his three other daughters” (1 Nephi 7:6). It seems that Nephi is almost struggling to keep from giving names: “. . . one of the daughters of Ishmael, yea, and also her mother, and one of the sons of Ishmael, did plead with

my brethren, insomuch that they did soften their hearts . . .” (1 Nephi 7:19).

WOMEN MISSING?

Nephi married one of Ishmael’s daughters, but he did not give her name: “. . . I, Nephi, took one of the daughters of Ishmael to wife; and also, my brethren took of the daughters of Ishmael to wife; and also Zoram took the eldest daughter of Ishmael to wife” (1 Nephi 16:7). While Nephi never mentions his wife’s name, he uses his own name many times in the first two books of the Book of Mormon. In fact, we find the phrase “I, Nephi” eighty-six times! In all fairness, however, it should be noted that there may be more than one factor working here. It appears, in fact, that the entire Book of Mormon almost looks like a black hole when we search for specific references with regard to women. While men seem to play the major roles in the Bible, it does refer to many women. Two of its books, Esther and Ruth, are named after women. We also read of “Deborah, a prophetess” who “judged Israel” at one time (Judges 4:4) and “Huldah the prophetess” (Chronicles 34:22). Those who wrote the books of the Bible certainly felt free to mention women by name and to write concerning their achievements. For instance, we read of “Eve,” the wife of Adam. God Himself refers to Abraham’s wife as “Saria thy wife.” Isaac married “Rebekah,” and Esau “took to wife Judith.” Joseph married “Asenath,” and Moses’ wife was named “Zipporah.” Saul’s “wife was Ahinoam,” and we also read of “Michal, David’s wife.” In the New Testament we have “Mary,” “Elizabeth,” and Aquila’s “wife Priscilla.” Many of the stories concerning Jesus deal with women, and on a number of occasions Jesus openly commends them. The Apostle Paul used the names of women in his epistles. For instance, in Romans 16:1 he said: “I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea.” In the same chapter he also mentioned Mary, Priscilla, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis and Julia.

In our preliminary research we were only able to find the names of three Nephite, Lamanite or Jaredite women in the Book of Mormon—“Sariah” (1 Nephi 2:5), “Abish” (Alma 19:16) and “the harlot Isabel” (Alma 39:3). The computer revealed that the word *her* appeared only 79 times in the Book of Mormon. Twenty-six of these references are taken directly from Isaiah, Malachi and Matthew in the Bible. Of the fifty-three which remain, fifteen refer to unnamed queens; seven were used regarding an unnamed daughter of Jared; two relate to Abish; two to an unnamed maid servant; one to Mary, the mother of Jesus; one to Sariah; one to Nephi’s wife; one to the “mother” of “one of the daughters of Ishmael;” one to a widow; one to Zion; one to a goat; one to mercy; one to a sow; one to charity and one to a vessel. *Her* is also used four times to refer to the earth and twice with regard to “the face of the earth.” It is used three times with regard to cities and seven times in relationship to a “hen.”

The word *she* appears only fifty-six times, and six of these occurrences are from quotations from the Bible. Of the remaining fifty, four relate to Jesus' mother, Mary; five to Sariah; twenty to three unnamed queens; nine to Abish; one to a nameless maid servant; three to the unnamed "daughter of Jared"; one to "wisdom"; two to a "ship"; one to "the face of the earth"; one to "the harlot Isabel" and three to "the mother of abominations . . . the whore of all the earth."

The fact that the Book of Mormon story says so little about women seems to throw a serious cloud of doubt over Joseph Smith's claim that it was written by a number of ancient Jewish authors after 600 B.C. The claim is that these men had the ancient books of the Bible—books which contain the names of many women and stories concerning them. If just one of these Nephite authors broke with tradition and tried to suppress almost all information concerning women, we would not be too surprised. As it is, however, the black hole with regard to women seems to extend all the way through the book. The evidence, therefore, seems to show that the Book of Mormon was written by one author.

While Nephi's reluctance to name his wife could be explained by the theory that the author of the Book of Mormon was not really interested in the things of women, the fact that Nephi does not name any of his own children (see 1 Nephi 18:19), the children of his brothers, nor the children of Ishmael fits well with our idea that he was trying to suppress names so that he would not contradict the missing 116 pages if they should come forth. Nephi does inform us that Ishmael and his own brothers had male children, but he does not give their names. Those who examine later portions of the Book of Mormon will see that Nephi's silence is inconsistent with the rest of the book. For example, just as we come out of the black hole, we find this reference in Mosiah 1:1: ". . . king Benjamin . . . had three sons; and he called their names Mosiah, and Helorum, and Helaman."

The books included in the small plates of Nephi are named after their respective authors. It is obvious, then, that if Nephi had passed the plates on to one of his sons, the name of that son would have been revealed. Instead of doing this, however, he gave them to his brother Jacob. The third book in the Book of Mormon, therefore, is called the book of Jacob. The first new name to come into the Book of Mormon after Nephi mentioned the original eleven names appears in Jacob's record: ". . . after some years had passed away, there came a man among the people of Nephi, whose name was Sherem" (Jacob 7:1). Sherem was a wicked man who taught there "should be no Christ." Finally, in the last verse of his book Jacob informs the reader that he has a son named Enos to whom he gives the plates. The fourth book, therefore, is known as the book of Enos. Enos mentions his own name in his book and tells us that "an hundred and seventy and nine years had passed away from the time that our father Lehi left Jerusalem" (Enos 1:25). He does not, however, add a single new name to the record. After 179 years we still have only thirteen names! The next book is called the book of Jarom. In this book, Jarom informs us that he is the son of Enos and his son is Omni. He also states that 238 years had passed away. At this point we still have only

fifteen Nephite and Lamanite names recorded on the plates. Since eleven of these names were revealed within the first decade of Nephite history, this means that only four new names were added in a period of almost 230 years!

At any rate, the only name that Omni adds to the record is that of his son, Amaron. He also noted that 282 years had passed away. Amaron does not really have anything to say and continues the record in his father's book. He adds only one new name—that of his bother Chemish—and notes that 320 years had passed away. Chemish does not add any new names to the record. The next writer, Abinadom, identifies himself and says that he is the "son of Chemish." Abinadom writes two verses but adds no new names to the record.

The final writer to engrave characters on the small plates of Nephi introduces himself as Amaleki, the son of Abinadom. He writes the last nineteen verses in the book of Omni. It seems very obvious from the details that Amaleki gives in this book that Joseph Smith has arrived at or passed by the portion of the manuscript that could be contradicted by anything in the missing 116 pages. In other words, we are on the other side of the black hole. At this point Amaleki boldly introduces many new details. He, in fact, goes so far as to introduce four new names into the story. Anyone who takes the time to examine Amaleki's verses will be able to see how different they are from the rest of the writing which was supposed to have come from the small plates of Nephi. Even the dedicated Book of Mormon apologist J. N. Washburn seemed surprised by the amount of information contained in the last nineteen verses of the book of Omni. Although Mr. Washburn felt that this portion of the story was "without miscalculation or contradiction," he could not help but comment on the unusual nature of Amaleki's verses:

The last nineteen verses of the Book of Omni provide a different kind of study altogether. They constitute a unit quite unlike anything else in the entire Book of Mormon. . . . These last nineteen verses . . . give the account of the affairs of the Nephite people between the approximate dates 175 and 124 B.C. . . . Few paragraphs go together chronologically. . . .

We have now seen that at least seven important items of information some of them essential, are first brought to our attention in the last nineteen verses of the Book of Omni. This, however, does not exhaust the possibilities of this interesting little chapter. Not only are a number of prominent men first named here; not only are we first informed of movements of utmost significance; not only are the three peoples of the Book of Mormon brought together; not only is there vital material concerning records presented here; not only are other valuable matters divulged, but there are also numerous details of vast interest to be found within these three pages. . . .

It must be readily seen that these nineteen verses are unusual. Is it not surprising that so large a number of unrelated fragments are thrown together in this small space? Nowhere else in the entire book is such diverse material found in so crowded a setup. (*The Contents, Structure and Authorship of the Book of Mormon*, 1954, pp. 23, 28-29)

While Mr. Washburn was startled to find the contents of the concluding verses of the small plates of Nephi so unusual, we feel that these last nineteen verses fit very well with our theory of a black hole in the Book of Mormon. Since Joseph Smith knew that he had safely by-passed the danger of being entrapped by the missing 116 pages, he felt that it would be safe to now give historical details. He, therefore, seems to have given us a double dose of information in these last nineteen verses to set the stage for the books which follow.

MISSING KINGS

Nephi was supposed to be the first king of the Nephites (see 2 Nephi 5:18). It is very possible that Joseph Smith forgot the name he had given to the second king in the lost 116 pages. When Jacob refers to Nephi's successor, he does not give him any name:

Now Nephi began to be old, and he saw that he must soon die; wherefore, he anointed a man to be a king and a ruler over his people now, according to the reigns of the kings. (Jacob 1:9)

This is certainly a strange way to speak of the new king. It is entirely different from the way the ancient Israelites referred to their kings. Not only did they have a great deal to say about them, but they proudly gave their names and the names of their fathers. For instance, in 1 Chronicles 29:26 we read: "Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel."

In any case, Jacob went on to say that the people "were desirous to retain in remembrance his [Nephi's] name" (Jacob 1:11). Therefore, "whoso should reign in his stead were called by the people, second Nephi, third Nephi, and so forth, according to the reigns of the kings; and thus they were called by the people, let them be of whatever name they would" (*Ibid.*). In the fifteenth verse of the same chapter, Jacob informed his readers that "the people of Nephi, under the reign of the second king, began to grow hard in their hearts . . ." This terse reference to the "second king" is the last reference to any king for hundreds of years. It is only after we come out of the black hole (Omni, verse 12) that we encounter the name of another king: ". . . Mosiah, who was made king . . ." Amaleki also mentions a "king Benjamin." This seems to be the same king referred to in the book of Mosiah.

The reader will remember that kings were supposed to be called "second Nephi, third Nephi, and so forth . . . let them be of whatever name they would," yet when we come out of the black hole, they are called "Mosiah" and "Benjamin." This even puzzled the Mormon writer J. N. Washburn: "Was Mosiah one of these kings? If so, why was he not called Nephi X or Nephi XI or whatever he would happen to be? . . . Where, we must ask again, does Mosiah fit into all this? It appears almost certain that he had been a king in the land of Nephi. Why, then, was he not called Nephi?" (*The Contents, Structure and Authorship of the Book of Mormon*, pp. 24, 27).

DATING EVENTS

Although Amaleki speaks of two kings, he still does not give us many details and there is nothing in his portion of the book of Omni concerning dates. In Omni, verse 23, we find this: "Behold, I, Amaleki, was born in the days of Mosiah; and I have lived to see his death; and Benjamin, his son reigneth in his stead." This should be contrasted with the precision found in later portions of the Book of Mormon. For instance, in Mosiah 29:46 we read: "And it came to pass that Mosiah [apparently the grandson of the Mosiah mentioned by Amaleki] died also, in the thirty and third year of his reign, being sixty and three years old; making in the whole, five hundred and nine years from the time Lehi left Jerusalem."

In the period following the black hole and the reign of the three kings, the Nephites decide to have judges instead of kings. In the book of Alma the dating becomes very precise. It starts out with "the first year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi" (Alma 1:1), and verse 23 talks of "the second year of the reign of Alma." This system of dating continues until "an hundred years had passed away" (3 Nephi 2:5). Our examination of the record reveals that at least ninety of these years are mentioned in the Book of Mormon and that specific events are linked to these dates. For example, in Helaman 6:15, we read: ". . . in the sixty and sixth year of the reign of the judges, behold, Cezoram was murdered by an unknown hand as he sat upon the judgment-seat." After the hundred years had elapsed the Nephites begin dating events from the time of the birth of Christ, and this system continues until "more than four hundred and twenty years" had passed away (Moroni 10:1). The crucifixion of Christ is precisely dated as occurring "in the thirty and fourth year, in the first month, on the fourth day of the month . . ." (3 Nephi 8:5).

When we turn back to the small plates of Nephi, we find an entirely different story. The first date actually appears very early in the record and gives the impression that Nephi planned to be very precise in dating historical matters: "For it came to pass in the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah . . . there came many prophets, prophesying unto the people that they must repent, or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed" (1 Nephi 1:4). Although the next date given is very precise it does not relate to the history found in the small plates of Nephi. It simply says that Christ would come "six hundred years from the time that my father left Jerusalem . . ." (1 Nephi 10:4). The next date appears in 1 Nephi 17:4 and says that the Lehi's group spent "eight years in the wilderness." First Nephi 19:8 tells us again that Christ would come "six hundred years from the time my father left Jerusalem." The next date does not appear until 2 Nephi 5:28: "And thirty years had passed away from the time we left Jerusalem." This reference does not relate to anything of historical importance. The verse just before it states: "And it came to pass that we lived after the manner of happiness." In the 34th verse of the same chapter, Nephi informs us that "forty years had passed away, and we

had already had wars and contentions with our brethren.” No historical event is mentioned with regard to this date.

In 2 Nephi 25:19, Nephi again tells us that “the Messiah cometh in six hundred years from the time that my father left Jerusalem . . .” The book of Jacob 1:1 indicates that “fifty and five years had passed away from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem,” but it gives no historical information. In the seventh chapter, verses one and two, Jacob tells of a man who believed there would be “no Christ” coming among the people. Even this matter is not dated: “And now it came to pass after some years had passed away, there came a man among the people . . .”

A hundred and twenty-four years pass from the time that Jacob said that “fifty and five years had passed away” and finally Enos gives a date. This date only seems to relate to the fact that Enos was becoming old: “And it came to pass that I began to be old, and an hundred and seventy and nine years had passed away from the time that our father Lehi left Jerusalem” (Enos, verse 25). Jarom later noted that “two hundred years had passed away, and the people of Nephi had waxed strong in the land” (Jarom, verse 5). In verse thirteen, Jarom noted that “two hundred and thirty and eight years had passed away—after the manner of wars, and contentions, and dissensions, for the space of much of the time.” Thirty-eight more years pass away and Omni wrote: “. . . two hundred and seventy and six years had passed away, and we had many seasons of peace; and we had many seasons of serious war and bloodshed. Yea, and in fine, two hundred and eighty and two years had passed away” (Omni, verse 3). The final date appearing on the small plates of Nephi was written by Amaron just two verses after Omni’s last date was given: “. . . three hundred and twenty years had passed away, and the more wicked part of the Nephites were destroyed.” The record is then passed on to Chemish. He gives no dates and passes the small plates on to Abinadom. Abinadom, likewise, gives no dates and turns over the plates to Amaleki. While Amaleki gives some historical information, he also fails to give any dates. He did, however mention that he lived until the reign of king Benjamin. According to information given later, Benjamin reigned until 124 B.C. (Mosiah 6:4).

As far as we can determine, there is no historical date of any importance in the Book of Mormon from the time that Lehi’s group left the Old World until the reference in Mosiah 6:4, which informs us that “Mosiah began to reign . . . in the thirtieth year of his age . . . about four hundred and seventy-six years from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem.”

There were ample opportunities in the small plates of Nephi for dates to have been given, but it seems obvious that the author did not want to tie events to dates. For instance, one would think that the death of Nephi’s father, Lehi, would have been important enough for a date and perhaps some details. Instead, however, Nephi casually writes: “. . . my father, Lehi . . . waxed old. And it came to pass that he died, and was buried” (2 Nephi 4:12). The death of Ishmael, Nephi’s father-in-law, is handled in the same manner: “And it came to pass that Ishmael died, and was buried in the place which was called Nahom” (1 Nephi 16:34).

Jacob treated his brother Nephi’s death in the same fleeting manner: “And it came to pass that Nephi died” (Jacob 1:12). This is certainly one of the shorter verses in the Book of Mormon. If the words “And it came to pass that” were not present, it would leave only “Nephi died.” The death of Sariah seems to have been entirely ignored, and there is nothing concerning the death of Nephi’s wife. Although we have not made an intensive search concerning the matter, we have only found two other cases where Nephite or Lamanite people (mentioned by name in the small plates) actually die—i.e., Sherem and king Benjamin. We can infer that Jacob died because his son says that “he was a just man” (Enos, verse 1), but no details are given concerning the matter. This is certainly different from the rest of the Book of Mormon.

Another very strange thing about the small plates of Nephi is that while the story moves slowly through the years at first, as we approach the end of the plates, it accelerates in an almost slapdash manner. The first fifty-five chapters only move the story ahead “fifty and five years,” but hundreds of years fly by in the last three chapters. Even the Mormon apologist J. N. Washburn noted the “astoundingly long time” that the book of Omni encompasses (*The Contents, Structure, and Authorship of the Book of Mormon*, p. 23). Mr. Washburn seems to feel that “225 crowded years” were covered in “eleven paragraphs.” The chronology, however, is very confusing. We feel that a period of about 200 years is covered between verses one and twenty-three. The footnotes which the Mormon Church has included in the Book of Mormon indicate that Jarom ends his book in “361 B.C.” and that the book of Omni covers a period down to “130 B.C.” This would mean that 231 years elapse in one small book. Whatever the case may be, it is remarkable that this important portion of Nephite history was glossed over in one chapter.

While Mr. Washburn was astounded that so much time was covered in such a limited number of verses, this situation fits very well with our black hole theory of the Book of Mormon. Joseph Smith must have become tired of trying to fill up the missing portion of the Book of Mormon with extraneous material. He seems to have had exceptional powers of imagination and must have found it very difficult to repress his desire to give specific details concerning the characters in his book. By the time he came to the book of Omni, he had already written sixty-four chapters to replace the missing material. Therefore, as soon as he felt he had safely passed the point where he could be trapped by the 116 pages, he rapidly brought the project to a screeching halt.

A LOST PEOPLE

The earliest portion of the Book of Mormon, the part dealing with the Old World, gives one the impression that the book is going to have a good setting as far as history and geography are concerned. For instance, it mentions the fact that Lehi lived in Jerusalem; that Jerusalem was a walled city; that Zedekiah was the king; that Jeremiah was a prophet

at that time; that Lehi's group traveled by the Red Sea; that they came to "the sea" (the Indian Ocean?) and departed by ship to the New World.

As soon as Lehi's group land in the New World serious problems in the account become evident. While the account of their sojourn in the Old World does have some details about their location, things are completely different in the New World. To begin with, the account of their landing is very vague. Instead of giving the details which we would expect, Nephi seemed to be evasive: "And it came to pass that after we had sailed for the space of many days we did arrive at the promised land; and we went forth upon the land, and did pitch our tents; and we did call it the promised land" (1 Nephi 18:23). In the first place, it should be noted that no date is given as to when these people arrived. Moreover, there is no description of where they landed—it could be any place from Alaska to the tip of South America. In verse 25, Nephi gives very specific information concerning the animals which they found, but there is absolutely no information concerning the geography of the region. The same verse informs us that the people "journeyed in the wilderness," but there is nothing to indicate which direction they traveled in.

In the Old World portion of the Book of Mormon we were told that the group "traveled . . . nearly a south-southeast direction" (1 Nephi 16:13), and the next chapter, 17:1, says that they "did travel nearly eastward from that time forth." As strange as it may seem, after Lehi's people land in the New World there is not one statement concerning their traveling in any direction until after we come out of the black hole. There is, in fact, no use of the words north, south, east or west to locate any people or geographical place. The first statement to use directions was written by Amaleki and appears in Omni, verse 22. It is, however, referring to another people, the Jaredites, who were destroyed before Lehi's group landed in the New World: ". . . their bones lay scattered in the land northward." From that point on, directions are again used freely in the Book of Mormon. For example, in Mosiah 7:16 we read of "the hill which was north of Shilom . . ." In 9:14 of the same book we read of "the land of Nephi, away on the south of the land of Shilom . . ." To emphasize how dark the black hole really is we only have to examine the book of Alma. In that book alone there are over 100 places where directions are used!

Nephi not only neglected to tell us where his people landed and which way they traveled into the wilderness, but he continued to be evasive throughout his record. In 2 Nephi 5:6-8, he wrote concerning his separation from his bothers, the Lamanites: ". . . I, Nephi, did take my family . . . and all those who would go with me. . . and did journey in the wilderness for the space of many days. And after we had journeyed for the space of many days we did pitch our tents. And my people would that we should call the name of the place Nephi; wherefore, we did call it Nephi." The reader will notice that we are not told where Nephi and his people started from, what direction they went or even how long they traveled. We only know that they traveled for the "space of many days" and arrived in some other place and "did call it Nephi." Nephi went on to say he taught his "People to build

buildings . . . And I, Nephi, did build a temple; and I did construct it after the manner of the temple of Solomon save it were not built of so many precious things . . ." (verses 15-16).

It is very interesting to note that Nephi never referred to the place where he and his people lived as a "city," and he did not name even one Nephite or Lamanite city! Before he came to the New World, Nephi spoke of the "city" Jerusalem six times and referred to "the city of Nazareth" two times, but after he came to the New World, he was completely silent with regard to the names of New World cities. As a matter of fact, none of the other writers who followed Nephi through the black hole period mentioned the name of any city. Mosiah 7:1 is the first place that we find the name of a city: ". . . king Mosiah . . . was desirous to know concerning the people who went up to dwell in the land of Lehi-Nephi, or in the city of Lehi-Nephi . . ."

The LDS Church's computer program gives us some interesting information concerning the use of the word *city* in the Book of Mormon. It shows that in his two books, Nephi uses the word *city* twelve times. None of these references, however, relate to the New World. They are all Old World cities referred to by Nephi or in quotations from the prophet Isaiah of the Bible. The Book of Jacob does not contain the word *city* at all. Neither do the books of Enos, Jarom or Omni. Even the Words of Mormon, which is inserted between Omni and Mosiah, does not have the word *city* in it. When we reach the book of Mosiah we have a different story. The word *city* appears twenty times and in the book of Alma it is used 195 times! This, of course, provides a great deal of support for our black hole theory. Joseph Smith did not want to name cities during the portion of the record which replaced the missing 116 pages, but after he bypassed that portion he felt free to use the names of many cities. (Perhaps we should mention here that Mormon scholars feel that Joseph Smith did not translate the small plates of Nephi until he had finished the rest of the book—Words of Mormon through Moroni. In other words, the first part of the Book of Mormon as it presently exists was written last. While we feel that there is some good evidence to support this conclusion, it does not really affect our theory about a black hole in the Book of Mormon.)

We decided to use the church's computer program to see if we could find anything in the small plates of Nephi which would help us establish some type of geographical or historical base for the story after Lehi's people reached the New World. We asked the computer to find the following words: *shore, shores, sea, seashore, hill, hills, valley, valleys, river, rivers, mount, mountain, mountains, lake, border, borders, bordered, bordering, place* and *places*. The search proved futile. The "place Nephi," turned up, but as we have already shown, it has no relationship to any known location. The word *valley* turned up in the section in question, but the context made it obvious that it had nothing to do with geography: ". . . why should . . . my soul linger in the valley of sorrow . . ." (2 Nephi 4:26). The word *lake* is found four times in the section we call the black hole, but the lake spoken of is the "lake of fire and brimstone"—i.e., *hell*.

We find it very strange that Nephi can behold “the city of Nazareth” and the Virgin Mary within that city in vision, but he will not give the name of a single city or land in the New World. Moreover, he tells us that his father, Lehi, knew that John the Baptist would “baptize in Bethabara, beyond Jordan . . .” (1 Nephi 10:9), yet his small plates give us absolutely no information concerning rivers, lakes, hills and valleys in the New World. All of the evidence indicates that there was a deliberate attempt to suppress any details that might contradict the 116 missing pages.

UNRECORDED WARS

As we have previously noted, Nephi has informed us that the plates from which the 116 pages were translated contained “an account of the reign of the kings, and the wars and contentions of my people . . .” (Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 9:4). In another place, Nephi noted that these plates give “a greater account of the wars and contentions and destructions of my people” (1 Nephi, 19:4).

We have stated that these plates would undoubtedly mention the names of the prominent military leaders who took part in important battles and give the dates and locations of the battles. In addition, they probably would give details of the battles and the number of men lost in combat. Our theory of a black hole in the Book of Mormon suggests that Joseph Smith would not be able to accurately reconstruct all the details he had previously written concerning the wars of the ancient Nephites and Lamanites. Consequently, in the pages he wrote to replace the missing part of the Book of Mormon, he would have to steer clear of military encounters. An examination of the portion translated from the small plates of Nephi reveals that this is the case. Any meaningful details concerning battles are completely avoided.

In 2 Nephi 5:34, Nephi wrote that “forty years had passed away, and we had already had wars and contentions with our brethren.” The reader will notice that absolutely no details are given. In his book, Jacob tells us that Nephi had “wielded the sword of Laban” in the defense of his people (Jacob 1:10). Again, we find no mention of any of the battles he fought in. Jacob also informed the readers that the Lamanites “delighted in wars . . . they sought by the power of their arms to destroy us continually” (7:24). No examples, however, are given by Jacob at this time nor at any other time. The next writer, Enos, only noted that he “saw wars between the Nephites and Lamanites in the course of my days” (Enos, verse 24). Jarom commented that the Lamanites “came many times against us, the Nephites, to battle. But our kings and our leaders were mighty men in the faith of the Lord; and they taught the people the ways of the Lord; wherefore, we withstood the Lamanites and swept them away out of our lands, and began to fortify our cities, or whatsoever place of our inheritance” (Jarom, verse 7). Jarom by-passed the opportunity of giving any information about the battles.

In the next book, Omni boasts that he “fought much with the sword to preserve my people, the Nephites, from falling into the hands of their enemies, the Lamanites. . . . we had

many seasons of serious war and bloodshed” (verses 2-3). Omni, likewise, provided no relevant information about these wars. Amaron, the next writer in the book of Omni (verse 5) noted that “the more wicked part of the Nephites were destroyed.” Amaron gave us no information with regard to how they had been destroyed, but the Mormon writer John L. Sorenson speculated that it was “apparently in wars against the Lamanites . . .” (*An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, 1985, p. 145).

Chemish wrote nothing about wars, but his son, Abinadom, said he saw “much war and contention between my people, the Nephites, and the Lamanites; and with my own sword, have taken the lives of many of the Lamanites in the defence of my brethren” (Omni, verse 11). Abinadom followed the example of those who had previously written on the plates and provided no information.

Amaleki, the writer who begins to lead us out of the black hole, revealed that he had seen “a serious war and much bloodshed between the Nephites and the Lamanites. But behold, the Nephites did obtain much advantage over them; yea, insomuch that king Benjamin did drive them out of the land of Zarahemla” (Omni, verse 24). This, of course, does not give us any detailed information about the war or the year or years in which it occurred.

As we get into the book of Mosiah, we begin to get more specific details about battles. Zeniff tells of a battle with the Lamanites in which “we did slay three thousand and forty-three; . . . And behold, to our great sorrow and lamentation, two hundred and seventy-nine of our brethren were slain” (Mosiah 9:18-19). In verse 14 the date is given as “the thirteenth year of my reign,” but since we have no way of knowing when Zeniff began to reign, we can only guess as to when this war was supposed to have occurred.

As the story in the Book of Mormon proceeds, the accounts of the battles become very specific. For example, in the book of Alma we read that in the “eighteenth year of the reign of the judges” the Lamanites were “coming upon” the Nephites. The Nephites, therefore, gathered in the “land of Jershon” (Alma 43:3-4). The “Lamanites came with their thousands . . . into the land of Antionum, which is the land of the Zoramites; and a man by the name of Zerahemnah was their leader” (43:5). The “chief captain over the Nephites . . . was Moroni (43:16). The story concerning this war continues for pages and gives numerous details. For instance, it says that the Nephites concealed themselves. As “the Lamanites had passed the hill Riplah, and came into the valley, and began to cross the river Sidon, the army which was concealed on the south of the hill, which was led by a man whose name was Lehi, and he led his army forth and encircled the Lamanites about on the east in their rear” (43:35). After the fierce battle, the Nephites “encircled” the Lamanites. The Lamanite leader, “Zerahemnah retained his sword, and he was angry with Moroni, and he rushed forward that he might slay Moroni; but as he raised his sword, behold, one of Moroni’s soldiers . . . smote Zerahemnah that he took off his scalp . . . the soldier . . . took up the scalp from off the ground by the hair, and laid it upon the point of his sword, and stretched it forth unto them . . .” (44:12-13).

Zerahemnah, however, was “exceedingly wroth” and continued to urge his people to fight. As it turned out, the Lamanites “were pierced and smitten, yea, and did fall exceedingly fast before the swords of the Nephites . . .” (44:18). Finally, Zerahemnah surrendered and the war was over.

This story gives a great deal of information. We notice that it gives the date the war was fought; uses the words *east, west, north and south*; gives the names of five groups of people; mentions eight personal names; gives the names of three lands, a river and a hill. It seems reasonable to believe that this same type of detailed information was given in the 116 pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript which were stolen. Since Joseph Smith did not retain a copy of the stolen portion, he was unable to duplicate it. Therefore, he was forced to leave out any specific military matters in the pages he created to replace those that had been pilfered. It should be noted that the history of Joseph Smith’s life shows that he was fascinated with military matters, and this seems to have been reflected in the Book of Mormon.

In trying to explain why this material is now missing from the first part of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith used the Nephite characters he had created to offer an excuse. We have already shown that he had Nephi say that his other plates contained “a greater account of the wars.” Toward the end of the small plates of Nephi, he had Jarom apologize again for the missing material on the wars: “. . . ye can go to the other plates of Nephi; for behold, upon them the records of our wars are engraven, according to the writings of the kings, or those which they caused to be written” (Jarom, verse 14). The problem, of course, is that we do not have these records, and therefore there is no way that we can check the truth of this statement.

USING FILLER

One thing that strengthens the argument that there is a black hole in the Book of Mormon, is the use of a great deal of filler material in the very portion of the story created to take the place of the 116 pages. It seems rather obvious that Joseph Smith did not have any important historical Nephite-Lamanite material to fill in the gap. Consequently, he was forced to insert a conglomeration of odds and ends to use up space.

The Old World portion of the small plates of Nephi does contain some “history.” It gives the story about Lehi being warned to flee from Jerusalem, a very detailed account of how Nephi ends up slaying an evil man named Laban, the flight into the wilderness and Nephi’s problems with his unbelieving brothers. By chapter eight, however, Nephi’s interest in history seems to have dwindled away. At that point, Nephi includes an account of his father’s dream concerning the tree of life—a dream which is remarkably similar to a dream which Joseph Smith’s father had (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pp. 86-88). In chapters 9-15, Nephi includes everything but the history of his people. He prophetically speaks of many things that anyone could read in the Bible—e.g., the birth of the Son of God, how the Holy Ghost fell upon him “in the form of a dove,” and

of his being “lifted up upon the cross and slain for the sins of the world.” Nephi then goes on to predict that “a man,” obviously Columbus, would come to the New World.

Chapters 16-18 do give some information about the problems Lehi’s people had in the wilderness; how Nephi was able to build a ship and how they eventually arrive in the New World. It is, of course, at this point that we have a real blackout on meaningful details. Chapter nineteen begins with what seems to be another apology for the lack of details in the small plates of Nephi. Instead of returning to the story concerning his people, Nephi then speaks of the coming of Christ “in six hundred years from the time my father left Jerusalem,” how he would be crucified, etc. By chapter twenty, Nephi seems to have completely run out of words. He, in fact, inserts two chapters of Isaiah (see 1 Nephi, chapters 20 and 21). While he claims that he is copying them from the “plates of brass,” it is obvious to anyone who takes the time to critically examine the matter that the material really comes from the 48th and 49th chapters of the book of Isaiah in the King James Version of the Bible, first printed in 1611 A.D.

In 2 Nephi, the prophet Nephi continues to suppress anything of importance relating to Nephite history. In Chapter 4, Nephi writes his own psalm using portions of scripture from both the Old and New Testaments. Chapter 5 tells of Nephi having more problems with his brothers, fleeing into the wilderness and building a temple. It also tells how “the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon” the Lamanites. He referred to it as “a sore cursing” (verses 21-23). In chapter 6, he includes his brother Jacob’s words concerning the teachings of Isaiah and Old Testament history. Chapters 7 and 8 of 2 Nephi are copied from Isaiah, chapters 50, 51, 52:1-2. Chapters 9 and 10 of 1 Nephi are nothing but a theological exposition by Jacob and have nothing to do with the history of the Nephites or the Lamanites. In Chapter 11, Nephi tells us that both he and his brother Jacob “have seen” their “Redeemer.” In the same chapter, verse 1, Nephi also informs the reader that he is going to “write more of the words of Isaiah, for my soul delighteth in his words.” Nephi then proceeds to quote thirteen chapters of Isaiah (chapters 2 through 14) from the King James Version! This takes us from chapter 12 to 24 in 2nd Nephi.

That Joseph Smith would have to throw in so many chapters of Isaiah as filler shows that he was having a very difficult time trying to find something suitable to replace the material in the lost 116 pages. It is certainly odd that he would leave out significant portions of the history of the Nephites and yet throw in page after page of material from Isaiah. The fact that we already have this material in our Bible makes the situation even more ridiculous.

Although the two books of Nephi were supposed to have been written by a Jew living about 600 years before Christ, Chapters 31-33 contain “the doctrine of Christ.” They contain many references from the New Testament, but nothing concerning the history of Nephi’s people.

The book of Jacob begins with a discussion of the plates. In verses 2-3, Jacob claims that Nephi “commanded” him that he “should not touch, save it were lightly, concerning

the history of this people which are called the people of Nephi. . . . the history of his people should be engraven upon his other plates . . .” In this first chapter, Jacob gives us the evasive statement that it was “a man”—no name given—whom Nephi selected to be the second king of his people. It is especially strange that Jacob would not reveal the name of the new king since in chapter 7, he gives a known Antichrist the dignity of a name: “whose name was Sherem.”

Like Nephi, Jacob does not give any information which has any real historical value. In Chapter 5 he included an allegory concerning the tame and wild olive trees which was supposed to have been written by an ancient prophet named Zenos before Lehi’s people came to the New World. It was obviously taken from Apostle Paul’s writings found in Romans 11:17-24 and from statements made by Jesus. In the Book of Mormon, however, it has been expanded to take up six pages! It is probably the most repetitious and uninteresting part of the Book of Mormon. It gives the impression that the author is deliberately trying to use up as much space as possible. It is very hard to resist the idea that it is merely filler material.

The book of Enos tells how he was converted to the Lord, but adds nothing of historical importance other than “an hundred and seventy and nine years had passed away . . .” (verse 25).

While the book of Enos had 27 verses, Jarom completed his record in just 15 verses. He, of course, added nothing important but the information that “two hundred and thirty and eight years had passed away . . .”

In the the book of Omni we seem to sense a desire to rapidly bring the curtain down on the story told in the small plates of Nephi. While this book has only thirty verses, there are five different authors who write on the plates. This gives an average of just six verses per author. The first author, Omni, was “commanded by my father, Jarom, that I should write somewhat upon these plates, to preserve our genealogy.” He adds nothing of any importance, however, but the name of his son and that 282 years had passed away. He seems to have no spiritual message to write on the plates, and confesses that he is “a wicked man, and have not kept the statutes and the commandments of the Lord as I ought to have done.”

The second writer, Amaron, adds the last date given on these plates. He noted that 320 years had passed, but gave no historical information. Chemish, the third writer, obviously has nothing to say. His writing on the record amounts to only one verse and is almost comical in nature because he seems to have worked so hard to say almost nothing: “Now I, Chemish, write what few things I write, in the same book with my brother; for behold, I saw the last which he wrote, that he wrote it with his own hand; and he wrote it in the day that he delivered them unto me. And after this manner we keep the records, for it is according to the commandments of our fathers. And I make an end.” Abinadom, the fourth writer, completes only 2 verses. Other than the fact that he “saw much war” and took “the lives of many of the Lamanites in the defence of my brethren,” he had virtually nothing to say: “. . . I know of no revelation save that which has been

written, neither prophecy; wherefore, that which is sufficient is written. And I make an end.”

As we have already noted, Amaleki, the fifth and last writer, was apparently on the other side of the black hole. Although he did not give any dates and was still rather vague about some details, it seems that his role was to set the stage for the next act—i.e., Mormon’s abridgment of the large plates of Nephi. He tells of a king Mosiah who was warned by the Lord to “flee out of the land of Nephi” to the “land of Zarahemla.” Mosiah just seems to appear out of nowhere. Nothing is given about his background nor what happened in the “land of Nephi” that caused the Lord to instruct him to flee. We have already shown that the Mormon writer J. N. Washburn was puzzled that Mosiah did not fit the pattern of naming kings that Jacob mentioned. While Mosiah’s sudden appearance and flight into the wilderness may seem strange to some people, it fits very well with the theory that there is a black hole in the Book of Mormon.

Joseph Smith had undoubtedly given a great deal of information in the 116 missing pages concerning the location of cities, lands, hills, etc. in the country where the Nephites had originally settled. Smith apparently felt that this information could trip him up. He probably remembered some of the details of his previous story, but he must have felt that it would be better to wipe the slate clean and place the Nephites in entirely new surroundings. He, therefore, has Mosiah lead his people “through the wilderness” until they come into the “land of Zarahemla” where they encounter “a people who were called the people of Zarahemla.” Strange as it may seem, this people had also been in the New World for almost the same length of time as the Nephites but had not come in contact with them before. They had come .out from Jerusalem at the time that Zedekiah, king of Judah, was carried away captive into Babylon” (Omni, verses 12-15).

As in the case with Nephi’s flight into the wilderness, Amaleki does not tell us how many people he took with him, how far they traveled into the wilderness or what direction they traveled. In any case, the center of action has been moved from the land of Nephi to the land of Zarahemla. Although some Nephites return to the land of Nephi, the important part of the story moves to this new land of Zarahemla and numerous cities and lands suddenly spring into existence and become part of the military action which goes on. Mormon scholar Fletcher B. Hammond observed: “And thus the Nephites left the land of Nephi to the Lamanites; and the Nephites never again took permanent residence in that land” (*Geography of the Book of Mormon — “Where is the Hill Cumorah?”* page 9).

Even with Amaleki’s help in getting the Nephites to a new land, the small and large plates of Nephi do not come together in a very smooth manner. The first book abridged by Mormon is the Book of Mosiah. In the book of Omni, Amaleki said that he “was born in the days of Mosiah; and I have lived to see his death; and Benjamin, his son, reigneth in his stead” (verse 23). Mormon’s abridgement of the book of Mosiah mentions two kings, “Benjamin” and “Mosiah,” and the reader might assume that the Mosiah spoken of there was the same man Amaleki was talking about. This

must not be the case, however, because Mosiah 1:2 says that “Mosiah” was one of the “sons” of Benjamin. Apparently, the Mosiah spoken of in the book of Mosiah was a grandson of the Mosiah that Amaleki referred to. One verse that may indicate this, Mosiah 2:32, has Benjamin speaking of “my father Mosiah.” All the information we have concerning the first Mosiah’s reign, then, is found in the brief writings of Amaleki within the book of Omni.

The first part of the Book of Mormon from 1 Nephi to Omni, verse 11, is relatively easy to follow. Although we learn virtually nothing about Nephite history, it is easy to keep the story straight. Beginning with the writings of Amaleki, however, everything changes. From Omni, verses 12-30, to the latter part of Mosiah, the record is filled with confusion. There are so many diverse stories of people never mentioned before and other themes thrown in that the reader’s head is left spinning. While the Mormon writer J. N. Washburn firmly believed in the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, he commented that the book of Mosiah contains “the most complicated and difficult part of the whole Book of Mormon.” Washburn went on to state that there “is pyramiding of stories upon stories” and noted that the abridger of the book of Mosiah, Mormon, had “an unobstructed view of the entire series of developments. Indeed, his view is so clear that he appears at times to think that his readers will understand as well as he did, will have something of his omniscience. Lacking it we frequently find ourselves confused” (*The Contents, Structure and Authorship of the Book of Mormon*, pages 35, 37-38).

A careful examination of the Book of Mormon reveals that it is a very unusual book. The small plates of Nephi account for 142 pages in the 1981 revised edition. On these pages any specifics concerning warfare are avoided like the plague. According to Nephi, the plates from which these pages were derived were reserved so that “the more sacred things may be kept for the knowledge of my people” (1 Nephi 19:5) As soon as we get past these pages, however, we run into many detailed accounts of bloody wars. We are, in fact, given vivid details concerning the entire destruction of two great nations—the Nephites and the Jaredites. While God especially watches over the small plates of Nephi so that we only get what was considered “to be the most precious” information, when we get to the large plates of Nephi, the abridger (Mormon) considers warfare to be one of the most important things. In The Words of Mormon, verse 5, Mormon comments: “Wherefore, I chose these things, to finish my record upon them, which remainder of my record I shall take from the plates of Nephi; and I cannot write the hundredth part of the things of my people.” Now, if Mormon cannot give us even “the hundredth part” of the history of his people, it is strange that his God did not inspire him to filter out the war material as he seems to have done in the case of the small plates of Nephi. The only reasonable solution to this problem appears to be the black hole theory of the Book of Mormon. Although Joseph Smith liked to write concerning religion, he was also extremely interested in warfare. He had already written a great deal about it in the 116 pages

which were lost, but when he wrote the material to replace these pages, he was forced to suppress military matters for fear that the 116 lost pages might come to light and expose his deception. When, however, he was not shackled by this restraint, he wrote freely on the subject. There can be little doubt that if Smith had not been hindered by the fear of the lost pages coming forth, the Book of Mormon would have been more devoted to warfare and consequently less concerned with spiritual matters.

If our theory of a black hole in the Book of Mormon was only supported by a few facts, we would not advocate it so strongly. As it is, however, every test we can think to apply to it yields the same result. We feel, therefore, that it is an irrefutable argument against the historicity of the Book of Mormon.

THE FUTURE OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

In 1984, when we first publicly announced that we had some very serious reservations concerning the authenticity of Mark Hofmann’s famous Salamander letter, some Mormon scholars felt that we were making a grave mistake. We had found evidence that material which appeared in that letter could have been taken from E. D. Howe’s book, *Mormonism Unveiled*, which was not published until a few years after the Salamander letter was supposed to have been written (see *Salt Lake City Messenger*, March 1984). Hofmann, of course, later confessed that he did plagiarize from Howe’s book in forging the letter.

We feel that the evidence we now have against the authenticity of the Book of Mormon is at least a thousand times as strong as the textual evidence we had against the Hofmann document. Much evidence of plagiarism in the Book of Mormon was obtained prior to the time that we began working with a computer, but since that time new and important evidence has come to light. It seems, in fact, that the case is now absolutely devastating. We hope to publish our new findings in the near future.

On October 7, 1979, the *Provo Herald* reported that “Wordprint comparisons [made by two Brigham Young University scholars] between the Book of Mormon and the known 19th century writings of Joseph Smith and Mr. Spalding show conclusively that neither of these persons, authored the book . . . their research indicates that the book was authored by at least 24 different writers, and possibly more, whose styles bear no resemblance to that of Joseph Smith . . . or other 19th century writers whom they examined . . .” In response to the research which these men had done, we commented: “. . . we are very much in favor of computer studies with regard to the Book of Mormon. We would especially like to see a study showing the parallels between the King James Version [of the Bible] and the Book of Mormon. If a computer could actually be programmed to sort out writing styles, it would, no doubt, show more than 24 different authors in the Book of Mormon. We would probably find Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Job, David, Solomon, Ezekiel, Daniel, Jonah, Micah, Malachi,

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James, Peter, Jude, etc.” (*Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* p. 96-H).

Our recent computer research with regard to plagiarism in the Book of Mormon seems to completely invalidate the arguments set forth by the BYU researchers. The evidence of plagiarism, in fact, is so extensive that it would be impossible to make an accurate study of so-called “noncontextual words.” Such a study might be of value with regard to authors who did not plagiarize large amounts of material, but in the case of the Book of Mormon there is so much material that has been borrowed from other authors that it makes the discovery of “wordprints” almost meaningless. Until all the extraneous material has been removed, no “linguistic fingerprint” is of any real value. While it may be possible to eliminate a great deal of the material plagiarized from the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, the very presence of this material alerts us to the fact that there is likely to be extensive plagiarism from other writings which have not yet been identified.

We have used an entirely different approach than those who have worked with “noncontextual words.” We feel that our method is much more reasonable in view of the evidence of heavy plagiarism in the text of the Book of Mormon. This is to search for certain combinations of words which seem to be strewn throughout the Book of Mormon. The following are just a few of the word combinations which we found: *dwindled in unbelief; expedient that; it must needs be; save it were; sufficeth me and would that ye should*. So far we have found between three and four hundred different combinations which seem to be scattered in different parts of the Book of Mormon. The recurrence of specific word combinations seems to indicate that these patterns are part of the author’s own peculiar style rather than words borrowed from somebody else. It is true, of course, that they may have initially appeared in some other writing, but the fact that they are repeated a number of times leads us to suspect that they have become part of the author’s style.

When we find a number of different Book of Mormon writers—e.g., Nephi, Jacob, Enos, Moroni and Mormon—all using many of the same unusual word combinations, we begin to suspect that all these books were really written by one person. Our research, in fact, leads us to believe that notwithstanding the fact that the Book of Mormon is filled with portions which have been plagiarized from the Bible, one style of writing can still be identified throughout the entire book. Furthermore, the preponderance of the evidence points towards Joseph Smith as the author.

While the BYU researchers would have us believe that Joseph Smith had nothing to do with creating the text of the Book of Mormon, our computer study yielded strong evidence that Smith was indeed the author. One document which led us to this conclusion was the short account Joseph Smith wrote of his early life in 1832 (see *An American Prophet’s Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith*, 1987, edited by Scott H. Faulring, pp. 3-8). This document furnished many peculiar word combinations that matched so well with the Book of Mormon that we could not help but conclude they both were the product of the same mind.

We also compared the preface Joseph Smith wrote for the first edition of the Book of Mormon. As we have already shown, this preface, which is no longer printed in the Book of Mormon, tells the reader concerning the theft of the 116 pages. The style of this document also closely resembles the Book of Mormon. In addition, we compared Section 10 of the *Doctrine and Covenants* with the Book of Mormon. This section is also written concerning the lost 116 pages and is very important because it is rather long and was written at the very time Joseph Smith was working on the Book of Mormon. Although it was supposed to be a revelation from “Jesus Christ, the Son of God,” the style was found to be remarkably like that found in the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith’s preface to the first edition of the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith’s early account of his life. That Joseph Smith, the ancient Nephite prophets and Jesus Christ all sound the same leads us to just one possible conclusion: Joseph Smith was the author of all three documents. We hope to present the evidence concerning this matter in a forthcoming publication.

For a number of years Mormon scholars have boasted that they have detected “chiasmus” in the Book of Mormon. Noel B. Reynolds explains that “chiasmus is a peculiar and long-forgotten literary form present in the very earliest Hebrew writing as well as in other ancient Near Eastern works. In the Hebrew tradition it developed into a rhetorical device in which two sets of parallel elements are presented. The first set is presented 1, 2, 3, etc., but order of presentation is inverted in the second set, 3, 2, 1” (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Winter 1980, p. 138).

Mormon scholars go to great lengths in their attempts to identify chiasms in the Book of Mormon and reason that what they have found provides proof that the book must be “a product of the ancient world.” Even if it could be established that there are real chiasms in the Book of Mormon, it would not prove anything more than that Joseph Smith borrowed from the style of chiastic passages found in the Bible. We believe, however, that wishful thinking plays a very important role in this fervent search for chiasmus in Joseph Smith’s work. We doubt very much that there is any deliberate attempt at chiastic structure in the Book of Mormon and feel that what has been identified as chiasmus is merely evidence of Joseph Smith’s repetitive style of writing. Our examination of the Book of Mormon shows that Joseph Smith frequently repeated phrases, thoughts and even stories throughout his work. The noted Mormon historian B. H. Roberts made these revealing comments concerning this matter many years ago: “Having seen how strong parallelisms obtains between Jaredite and Nephite peoples . . . it remains in somewhat the same manner to show that a like **sameness of repetition or parallelism obtains among the Nephites at different periods** . . . I shall hold that what is here presented [concerning various accounts of Anti-Christ among the Nephites] illustrates sufficiently the matter taken in hand by referring to them, namely that they are all of one breed and brand; so nearly alike that **one mind is the author of them**, and that a young and undeveloped, but piously inclined mind. The evidence I sorrowfully submit, **points to Joseph Smith**

as their creator. It is difficult to **believe that they are the product of history . . .**” (*Studies of the Book of Mormon*, 1985, pp. 264, 271).

Since Joseph Smith was so repetitive in his style, using the same thoughts and phrases over and over again, Mormon scholars who search long enough are certain to find these recurring elements in an order which they consider to be chiasmic in nature. It is interesting to note, however, that some of the more liberal Mormon scholars claim they have found “chiasms” in Joseph Smith’s own personal writings. This, of course, would tend to strengthen our position that Joseph Smith himself was probably the author of the Book of Mormon. In any case, we hope to deal with this in another publication.

In the light of computer research and the advances that are being made in this field, the future for the Book of Mormon looks very dim indeed. There is already talk of storing the text of an untold number of books on disks so that they can be used in computers. Once this is done, researchers will be able to use “Word Cruncher” or some similar program to compare the text of religious books available in Joseph Smith’s time with the Book of Mormon. Judging from the amount of material plagiarized from the Old and New Testaments, it seems very likely that the Book of Mormon contains material lifted from other sources. We are very optimistic, therefore, that researchers will eventually be able to find many other sources (books, pamphlets or newspapers) which Smith used in writing the Book of Mormon. While we feel that the evidence that has already come to light is absolutely devastating, it will still be very interesting to learn what other material Joseph Smith used.

HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT

The serious implications of what we have found with regard to plagiarism and the black hole in the Book of Mormon cannot be overstated. There are a growing number of members of the Mormon Church who are coming to the conclusion that Joseph Smith gave an erroneous translation of the papyrus he used as the basis for his “Book of Abraham” and that the Book of Mormon is not really history. Many of these people, however, wish to remain in the fellowship of the Mormon Church. It comes as no surprise, then, that some of them have a very difficult time viewing Joseph Smith in the same class as a calculating forger like Mark Hofmann. This is certainly understandable. Who would want to belong to a church whose founder deliberately produced false documents for the purpose of deception? They, therefore, prefer to believe that Joseph Smith was sincerely deceived. They think that he really believed that an angel appeared to him and some of them feel that the Book of Mormon could have been produced through the process of “automatic writing” or “channelling.” It is claimed that some who have engaged in “spirit writing” have produced some remarkable books which seem to be far beyond their natural ability. While many people believe that those who engage in “automatic writing” are actually controlled by a spirit, others would

assert that their writings “are totally or partially the result of psychological processes.” In any case, it is asserted that if Joseph Smith was involved in automatic writing, he really could have believed that he was translating an ancient record.

One thing that is very difficult to explain if one resorts to the theory that Joseph Smith was dictating the Book of Mormon by automatic writing is that he also claimed to have ancient golden plates from which he translated. Now, certainly Joseph Smith would know whether or not he actually had these plates. If he did not have them, then it follows that he was not telling the truth. It is possible, of course, that he could have fabricated some sort of plates to fool the Book of Mormon witnesses, but this would also be deception. The suggestion that Joseph Smith was engaged in automatic writing fails to explain his many statements regarding the plates.

Our theory concerning a black hole in the Book of Mormon provides important new information concerning the question of whether Joseph Smith sincerely believed that his major work came from God. While it is very possible that some people who are engaged in automatic writing believe that it comes from some god, spirit or force, Joseph Smith’s actions with regard to the small plates of Nephite demonstrate that he knew very well that the work was spurious. If Smith was using automatic writing and really believed that the pages which he was dictating to replace the lost 116 pages were of divine origin, he probably would have let the words flow and not worried so much about the contents. As it is, however, we see evidence of the deliberate suppression of any type of material which might come into conflict with what he had previously written. Joseph Smith obviously felt embarrassed by the fact that he could not give any detailed historical material and had his characters keep reiterating that the “more history part” appears on the other plates. The whole idea of a second set of plates to replace the lost 116 pages seems to be a devious and calculated attempt to practice deception. The very complexity of the plan and the amount of time spent thinking it up argues against the idea that Joseph Smith was merely misguided.

Scott Dunn indicates that those who practice automatic writing are not engaging in “deliberate deception.” They are “very sincere individuals who are unfamiliar with the latent abilities of the human mind. When they discover that they can rapidly produce writing of a quality superior to their natural powers, they very understandably suppose that such works must come from an outside source” (*Sunstone*, June 1985, p. 21). In the case of Joseph Smith’s “translation” of the small plates of Nephi, it does not seem that he is producing “writing of a quality superior” to his “natural powers.” On the contrary, except for the first few chapters, it appears that he is setting forth something far inferior to his natural talents. Mormon historian B. H. Roberts conceded that Smith possessed “a vividly strong, creative imagination,” but in Joseph Smith’s work on the small plates we find little evidence of such an imagination. In fact, we find just the opposite; Smith seems unable to create new names, cities, lands, battles or anything very imaginative or exciting. When we pass the black hole, of course, we find all these things in abundance. Therefore, we

must conclude that Joseph Smith was deliberately suppressing his talent when he worked on the small plates. The first portion of the Book of Mormon does not seem to fit very well with the theory of automatic writing. Instead of material flowing forth, it seems that the stream has been dammed up.

With regard to Joseph Smith's integrity, it could be true that he felt that he was producing a work which would help settle doctrinal disputes and set the world straight on religion. Nevertheless, he must have had some idea that he was practicing deception. In light of the new evidence that has come forth, Smith is beginning to look more and more like Mark Hofmann. The reader will remember that Mr. Hofmann had his own theory about Mormon history and created documents to establish that point of view. Joseph Smith also seems to have had his own assumptions about religion and created books of scripture to substantiate those ideas. Much of his early theology was very good, and his desire to help the Indians was commendable. Nevertheless, as in the case of Mark Hofmann, Smith's works are not authentic and contain false concepts—e.g., that the Indians were cursed by God with a dark skin. For this reason they must be totally rejected.

We intend to pursue the matters of Book of Mormon authorship and plagiarism as well as evidence of other black holes we have detected in that book in future publications.

Although we certainly do not want to give the reader the idea that we are desperate for money or about to fold up, we are experiencing some problems at this particular time because of the lack of funds. Those who are interested in helping us through this period of intensive research on the Book of Mormon send their tax-deductible contributions to **Utah Lighthouse Ministry**, P.O. Box 1884, Salt Lake City, Utah 84110. We feel that this is some of the most important research we have ever been involved in and believe that it will provide important answers for Mormons who are seeking for the truth.



PULL THE RIP-CORD!

The following is taken from our tract, *The Worst Prison of All*:

Unfortunately, some people have been led to believe that just an intellectual consent that Jesus is the Christ is sufficient for salvation. The Scriptures, however, teach that the devils believe there is a God, but that they have no salvation (see James 2:19). The word "believe," as it is used in the Bible, has a much deeper meaning. In the Introduction to *The Amplified New Testament*, we find this information:

What does the word "believe" mean? It is extremely important, for multitudes are pinning their hope of heaven upon it . . . most people believe in Christ—that he lived; that He was a perfect man who sincerely believed Himself to be the Son of God, and that He died on the cross hoping to save sinners. But this is by no means the meaning of the Greek word . . . The Greek word is "pisteuo," and means, "To adhere to, cleave to; to trust, to have faith in; to rely

on"—which summed up in, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," means an absolute personal reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour.

Intellectual belief is not enough; we must completely rely and trust in Christ. D. Shelby Corlett has said that "We do not believe in Him unless we act on it, unless we give the whole life to Him." A sailor relies and trusts in his compass because it shows him in which direction he must sail to arrive at his destination. If he ignores his compass and goes in a different direction we would know that he does not really believe in it. A man may claim he believes in honesty, but if he continually steals people's money and possessions, we know that he does not have a sincere belief. We would, in fact, consider him a hypocrite. The same is true of a person who claims to believe in Christ but lives contrary to His teachings. Those who are in trouble with the law may say they believe in their lawyers, but if they continually disregard the wise counsel given to them, it avails them nothing.

To say we believe in Christ and to refuse to walk in His ways is more foolish than to claim to believe in a parachute and yet jump out of a plane and neglect to pull the rip-cord. Another comparison might be to a man who professes to believe in the value of a life line, but refuses to cling to one when it is offered to him in the middle of a turbulent sea. In effect, the Bible teaches that we are all lost in a raging sea of sin hundreds of miles from shore. God has offered us a life line in Jesus Christ. If we refuse to hold fast to it and try to swim to shore on our own strength, we will perish because we can never swim that far.

If, however, we pray to the Lord with a sincere heart and turn our life completely over to him, we not only escape the penalty of eternal separation from God, but we are promised a place in heaven. While some people seem to believe that heaven will be a boring place, the Scriptures give every reason to believe that it will be a place where everyone will be continually rejoicing. Sorrow, pain and fear will be absent in heaven, and we will live in a state of perfect joy which is beyond our ability to comprehend at the present time. First Corinthians 2:9 contains the following:

But as it is written: "*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love him.*"

C. S. Lewis wrote the following in his book, *The Problem of Pain*: "Be sure that the ins and outs of your individuality are no mystery to Him; and one day they will no longer be a mystery to you. The mould in which a key is made would be a strange thing, if you had never seen a key: and the key itself a strange thing if you had never seen a lock. Your soul has a curious shape because it is a hollow made to fit a particular swelling in the infinite contours of the divine substance, or a key to unlock one of the doors in the house with many mansions." Lewis goes on to say: "Your place in heaven will seem to be made for you and you alone, because you were made for it—made for it stitch by stitch as a glove is made for a hand."

It will be so pleasant in heaven that we just cannot imagine it now. The happiest times we have ever had in this life are only a preview of what is to come for those who love the Lord. Only God knows what will bring us the greatest joy, and we can be certain that he will provide that for us throughout eternity.

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We are happy to report that all of Joseph Smith's diaries are again available at Utah Lighthouse Ministry at an astoundingly low price. Many of our readers will remember that these diaries were offered earlier in a very limited hard-back edition for \$50.00 a copy. We were unable to fill all of our orders, and a newspaper recently reported that the price for those who were lucky enough to find a copy had gone up to as high as \$175.00.

Signature Books has now brought out a beautiful paperback edition of this monumental work, *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith*, edited by Scott H. Faulring. This work includes the 1832 account of Joseph Smith's life which we mentioned in our lead article. These diaries, which were suppressed for well over a hundred years, provide devastating evidence against the First Vision story as well as proof that Joseph Smith's *History of the Church*, printed by the Mormon Church, has been falsified.

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