

# Revisions in the Analysis of Archaic Expressions in the Book of Mormon

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Only a few of the expressions listed in section 7 • ARCHAIC EXPRESSIONS are inherently archaic. Much of the point of this section was to argue that expressions from Joseph Smith's time were in Early Modern English. Cases where we provided evidence for the existence of these expressions in Joseph Smith's time are each marked below with an arrow (→). We have also added to the discussion three expressions that we have considered over the past two years, namely, "after all that we can do", "be up and doing", and "instruments in God's hands". All of these additional expressions date back to Early Modern English, yet each has persisted into modern English.

## Summary for revised section 7 • Archaic Expressions

### 7 ARCHAIC

*drink in with*  
*guarded to us with an army*  
*how be it* 'however it may be'  
*never the less* 'not at all less'  
*take an oath unto* <someone>  
*what is it* 'why is it'

### 27 PERSISTENT

*after all that we can do*  
→ *against the season*  
*be up and doing*  
*beyond the mark*  
→ *bleed out their lives*  
*capital parts*  
→ *driven snow*  
 *dwell in flesh*  
*enlarge the memory*  
→ *fixed in their minds*  
 *hearts drawn out*  
*if ye have choice*  
→ *ignominious death*  
*infinite atonement*  
*instruments in the hands of God*  
*knowledge of their enjoyment*  
*lay and watch*  
*make a mock of*  
(continued on next page)

### 3 BIBLICALLY INFLUENCED

*fain be glad*  
*watchful unto prayer*  
*ye ends of the earth*

27 PERSISTENT (continued)

*make metals*

→ *must unavoidably perish*

→ *see fit*

*spiritually begotten*

*stand in their arms*

*strange to relate*

→ *sword of vengeance*

*take it upon you*

→ *upwards of*

*with a determined resolution*

+ *After all that we can do*

“it is by grace that we are saved **after all that we can do**” (2 Nephi 25:23)

Here in 2 Nephi, we have this famous statement on grace versus works in the Book of Mormon. Don Bradley argues, in an email he sent us on 16 February 2020, that the meaning of the subordinate clause “after all that we can do” is ‘**even** after all we can do’ or ‘**despite** all we can do’ (in other words, “no matter what we can do”). In his email, Bradley provided a list of nine examples of “after all we can do” that took this negative, exclusionary meaning from 1704 through 1840. Searching for the more expanded version of this phrase, the one with the *that* (“after all that we can do”), we have been able to find examples from Early Modern English up to Joseph Smith’s time, all of which mean ‘despite all we can do’:

1660, Richard Baxter, *Catholic Unity*

We have little need to cherish this disease of hypocrisy and seeming histrionical outside religiousness, when we see so many perish by it **after all that we do** for their deliverance.

1677, Richard Alleine, *A Rebuke to Backsliders and a Spur for Loiterers*

O how light do they make of all our calling upon them,  
and after all we can say to awaken them, do sleep on;  
**after all that we can do** to reduce them, do hold on their way.

1698, John Hancock, *The Great Duty of Thankfulness*

But if **after all that we can do**, the world not be amended, there is one thing still incumbent on the pious Christian.

1700, Simon Patrick, *A Paraphrase upon the Books of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon*

But **after all that we can do**, he advises to a faithful dependence upon God and his good providence; and not upon our own strength or wisdom.

1724, George and Mary Smalbridge, *Sixty Sermons*

though, **after all that we can do**, we are still but unprofitable servants

1830, *The Christian Remembrancer*

for though we are not to presume upon our own merits, being, **after all that we can do**, but unprofitable servants, still we must never lose sight of the conditions—repentance, faith, and obedience—by which we can alone make these inestimable mercies of service to ourselves

In the last two instances, the phrase “after all that we can do” occurs with the phrase “unprofitable servants”. This latter phrase derives from Luke 17:10: “so likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say: we are **unprofitable servants**; we have done that which was our duty to do”. All of these examples would argue that we should interpret 2 Nephi 25:23 as stating that “it is by grace that we are saved despite all that we can do”. This is indeed Paul’s view of grace: “for by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

+ *Against the season*

“I must lay up fruit **against the season** unto mine own self” (Jacob 5:29)

We have found numerous later examples of the phrase “against the season” in addition to the 1801 example listed in NOL; here are three more of them:

1741, *The Gentleman’s and London Magazine*

and we had lately sent near one hundred transports with some men of war there, for security **against the season**, in which we are already advanced

1795, John Whitaker and Gilbert Stuart, *The English Review*

those who enjoyed the best health, as well as those who were best able to guard **against the season**, felt severely its effects

1816, (English translation of) François Pétits, *The History of Genghis Khan the Great*

and then they were obliged to provide **against the season**

+ *Be up and doing*

“and now except ye do repent of that which ye have done and begin to **be up and doing** and send forth food and men unto us and also unto Helaman . . .” (Alma 60:24)

Anthony Vance, in an email dated 19 June 2020, suggested that we consider the expression “to be up and doing” as early usage, which indeed it is, but it also persisted (as we suspected) into modern English. Here is a sampling from EEBO, ECCO, and Google Books:

1643, *A Memento to the Londoners*

The countries will come into you, who long to **be up and doing**; they await but your leading them the way.

before 1688, John Bunyan (died 1688), “Of Anti-Christ and his Ruin”, *The Works* [published in 1736]

Know that thou also hast thy cold and chill frames of heart, and sittest still when thou shouldst **be up and doing**.

1698, Thomas Doolittle, *A Call to Delaying Sinners*

For your Savior’s sake arise, and **be up and doing**.

1765, Nathaniel Appleton, *A Discourse Occasioned by the Much Lamented Death of the Reverend Edward Wigglesworth*

May we all be quickened by this holy providence to **be up and doing**, improving our time, and our various talents, to the best advantage, working the works of him who hath sent us, whilst it is day; for the night of death cometh, wherein no man can work.

before 1780, Thomas Randall (died 1780), *Sermon* [published in 1804]

“Why stand ye here all the day idle?” Let us **be up and doing**. Souls are perishing.

1823, Charles Atmore, *The Whole Duty of Man*

Consider this, O my soul and be awakened; **be up and doing**; trifle no more;  
work whilst it is day.

+ *Beyond the mark*

“which blindness came by looking **beyond the mark**” (Jacob 4:14)

Here is another example from Early Modern English of “to look beyond the mark”, occurring in an English translation from the first decade of the 1700s:

1709, Basil Kennett (translator), Jean Louis Guez de Balzac (died 1654), *Politics*

I mean those politic heads, that commonly look **beyond the mark**.

We can find later instances of “beyond the mark”, in dictionary definitions of the verb *overshoot*, both figurative and literal in usage:

1731, John Kersey, *A New English Dictionary*, third edition

To *over-shoot*. to shoot **beyond the mark**, to go too far in a business.

1774, Thomas Sheridan, *A General Dictionary of the English Language*

To OVERSHOOT. To fly **beyond the mark**. To shoot **beyond the mark**.

We even have Parliamentary phraseology from the late 1700s that is semantically related to “looking beyond the mark”:

1797, *The Parliamentary Register*

and we know that the wisest men are sometimes seduced by their prejudices and opinions  
to push their observations **beyond the mark**

+ *Bleed out their lives*

“many have fought and **bled out their lives** because of their great desires which they had  
for the welfare of this people” (Alma 60:9)

In NOL, we quote two examples from modern English of “bled out their lives” (which is in the past tense and also in the plural). Here are a few more examples showing the variety in the use of this expression, one more from Early Modern English and several from modern English:

1608, John Fletcher, *The Faithful Shepherdess* [from an 1811 publication of the play]

There lovely Amoret, that was assur'd  
To lusty Perigot, **bleeds out her life**,  
Forc'd by some iron hand and fatal knife;

1755, James Hervey, *Theron and Aspasio*

to conquer sin and death and hell, by a person crucified in weakness,  
and **bleeding out his life** on the torturing rack, and ignominious gibbet

1781, John Brown, *An Evangelical and Practical View of the Types and Figures of the Old Testament Dispensation*

for in him are two natures, a human to die for us, a divine to live, and effectuate our purification—two states, in the one of which he **bled out his life** for our offences, and in the other he was raised again for our justification

+ *Capital parts*

“but behold the Lamanites . . . were marching through the most **capital parts** of the land”  
(Helaman 1:27)

References to the main parts of a geographical area as its “capital parts” continued into modern English, as shown by these examples from the second half of the eighteenth century:

1767, *A New Collection of Voyages, Discoveries, and Travels*

It [the Western Hemisphere] is divided into two **capital parts**, of vast extent each, distinguished into North America and South America, which are connected by a narrow neck of land called the Isthmus of Darien or of Panama.

1770, William Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye* [published in 1782]

The county of Gloucester is divided into three **capital parts**: the Wolds, or high downy grounds towards the east; the vale of Severn in the middle; and the forest of Dean towards the west.

1775, *The Parliamentary Register* [published in 1776]

this bill, by considering the colonies in America as a foreign nation, and declaring war on them in that character, has a direct tendency to effect an entire, and we fear permanent, separation between the two **capital parts** of this empire

The discussion here in the British Parliament refers to the United Kingdom and the 13 American colonies as the two **capital parts** of the British empire.

✓ *Drink in with*

“not long after their dissension / they became more hardened and impenitent and more wild wicked and ferocious than the Lamanites / **drinking in with** the traditions of the Lamanites” (Alma 47:36)

The expression “to drink in with the traditions of the Lamanites” seems to imply absorbing or fully adopting the Lamanite traditions, as if these traditions were a kind of liquor. A similar example of this usage appears to be one by James VI of Scotland, dating from 1599, cited in NOL, that refers to drinking in “a feckless arrogant conceit of their greatness and power . . . with their very nurse-milk”, that is, an arrogant conceit absorbed from infancy. Here are a couple more examples of “to drink in with”, both from ECCO and dating from the early 1700s. The first is more literal and refers to an actual drink (like James VI’s example); the second is metaphorical, like Alma 47:36:

before 1716, John Edwards (died 1716), *Theologia Reformata* [published in 1726]

Among the direful effects and consequences of extravagant drinking this must not be omitted, that the soul and all its faculties are corrupted and debauched by it. False notions are **drunk in with** the wine: undue and unbecoming apprehensions are entertained.

1726, Daniel Defoe, *Mere Nature Delineated*

Will he not **drink in with** the religion he is like to learn here such horrid and execrable blasphemies of the God he is taught to fear, as must form incongruous notions of all religion in his head?

This expression “drink in with” seems natural enough; and one would think that it should have persisted even longer in the language, but thus far we have not been able to find examples in modern English like Alma 47:36.

+ *Driven snow*

“and the whiteness thereof did exceed the whiteness of the **driven snow**” (1 Nephi 11:8)

NOL refers to numerous examples of “as white as the **driven snow**” and “whiter than the **driven snow**” prior to the 1700s (cited in EEBO) as well as in the first three decades of the 1800s (cited in Google Books). We can also find the precise phraseology of the Book of Mormon in the early 1800s:

1835, Joseph Story, *The Miscellaneous Writings*

now to imitate **the whiteness of the driven snow**, and now the loveliness of the Tyrian dyes

+ *Dwell in flesh*

“and because he **dwelleth in flesh** / he shall be called the Son of God” (Mosiah 15:2)

In NOL, we cited from EEBO a couple examples of “dwell in (the) flesh” from the early 1600s. Here are three examples from ECCO and Google Books of the same expression dating from the early 1800s:

1802, Greville Ewing (editor), *The Missionary Magazine*

the visible church of Christ on earth is composed of spirits **dwelling in flesh**

before 1826, James Davis Knowles (editor), *Memoir of Mrs. Ann H. Judson* (died 1826)  
[published in 1830]

Let heathen nations know that thou didst **dwell in flesh** and die for sinners,  
and now art able and mighty to save.

1833, Edward Bickersteth, *A Harmony of the Four Gospels*

since Christ has an universal power over all flesh, and over spirits superior to those  
that **dwell in flesh**

+ *Enlarge the memory*

“and now it hath hitherto been wisdom in God that these things should be preserved / for behold they have **enlarged the memory** of this people” (Alma 37:8)

In NOL, we cite three instances from the 1600s of “enlarging the memory”. This expression doesn’t seem to be very frequent in modern English, but there are instances of it in Google Books showing that it persisted through the 1700s and into the early 1800s:

1743, Isaac Watts, *The Improvement of the Mind*

nothing tends to confirm and **enlarge the memory** like a frequent review of its possessions, then the brain being well furnished with various traces, signatures and images, will have a rich treasure always ready to be proposed or offered to the soul, when it directs its thought towards any particular subject

1820, Elizabeth Appleton, *Early Education*

It seems then a most dangerous and unwise experiment, to **enlarge the memory**, at all risks, and leave the understanding to chance.

In today’s English, the equivalent for this expression would be something like “to expand the memory”.

\* *Fain be glad*

“and we would **fain be glad** if we could command the rocks and the mountains to fall upon us / to hide us from his presence” (Alma 12:14)

The archaic *fain* ‘gladly, willingly’ appears to be redundant here in Alma 12:14 (“we would gladly be glad”), although it will work with an expanded meaning for *fain* of ‘preferably’. As indicated in NOL, we were able to find examples of “fain be glad” in Early Modern English. And here are a couple more examples of “fain be glad” dating from the time of Joseph Smith:

1835, *Finesse*

I can promise them, however, they shall not enter my house to eat my dinners, and drink my champagne, as they would **fain be glad** enough to do— for, as I said before, they would give me no thing again.

1850, Frederic Fysh, *A Lyrical Version of the Psalms*

With my whole heart will I praise Jehovah:  
I would **fain** recount thy marvels:  
I would **fain be glad** and rejoice in Thee  
And hymn Thy Name, Most High.

The word *fain* remains known to speakers of modern English largely because of the well-known King James phrase from the Parable of the Prodigal Son: “and he would **fain** have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat” (Luke 15:16). Note, in particular, the last citation (dating from 1850) where Fysh uses the biblically styled *fain* twice in his paraphrase of Psalm 9:1–2. Here is another example of *fain* occurring in a religious text dating from the late 1700s:

1797, Walter Marshall, *The Gospel-Mystery of Sanctification Opened*

some asserters of the condition of salvation by sincere obedience to the commands of Christ would **fain** be free from the authority of the law

+ *Fixed in their minds*

“being **fixed in their minds** with a determined resolution that they would not be subjected to go against the Nephites” (Alma 47:6)

Here in Alma 47:6, the expression “fixed in their minds” is used to state that these people had really made up their minds. In NOL, we quote an 1825 example from Google Books in support of the expression “fixed in their minds” in modern English. Here are some additional examples of this expression dating from the mid-1700s up to the early 1800s:

1749, (English translation of) Madeleine Angélique Poisson de Gomez, *La Belle Assemblée*  
and this error being **fixed in their minds**

before 1770, Edward Sandercock (died 1770), *Sermons by the Late Reverend Mr. Edward Sandercock*  
[published in 1775]

Resolve now, go from hence with this resolution formed and **fixed in your minds**.

1771, William Duncan (translator), *Cicero's Select Orations*

While that continues **fixed in your minds**, I shall think myself surrounded with an impregnable wait.

1807, William Davy, *A System of Divinity*

But, if we have a deep sense of the fear of God **fixed in our minds** that there can be no comfort in this life, nor hope beyond it, but through the divine approbation of our conduct;

✓ *Guarded to us with an army*

“we did receive food which was **guarded to us with an army** of two thousand men to our assistance” (Alma 58:8)

The preposition *with* here means ‘by means of’. In NOL, we list four instances of this expression dating from the 1600s; each one has the passive form of the transitive verb *guard* along with the use of the preposition *with* meaning ‘by means of’. The most interesting of these examples has had an extended history in the English language:

1660, William Secker, *The Nonsuch Professor in His Meridian Splendor*

He who was **guarded to** the cross **with** a band of soldiers  
shall be **attended to** the bench **with** a band of angels.

Secker was a well-known Puritan preacher and author in England (in NOL his name is mistakenly transcribed as Seckep). This phraseology of Secker’s has been maintained in subsequent religious publications, right through the 1700s and up into the 1800s. Interestingly, the tendency for the writers, editors, or typesetters for these later works, unless they were careful, has been to replace the preposition *with* by the preposition *by*, which shows that “guarded to X with Y” had become archaic sometime in the 1700s:

1700, Joseph Stevens, *A Golden Chain of Four Links*

and though he was **guarded to** the cross **with** a band of soldiers,  
yet here he is **guarded with** a glorious train of angels

Stevens appears to have reworked Secker’s original language by making the verb form *guarded* in both lines, while still maintaining both instances of the preposition *with*.



1786, Joseph Stevens, *A Gold Chain of Four Links*

and though he was **guarded to** the cross **with** a band of soldiers,  
yet here he is **guarded by** a glorious train of angels

Stevens' 1700 edition is reprinted in 1786, but now the second case of the archaic prepositional *with* has been replaced by the expected preposition *by*.

1804, William Secker, *The Nonsuch Professor in His Meridian Splendor*

he who was **guarded to** the cross **by** a band of soldiers  
should soon be **attended to** the bench **by** a shining company of angels

This later edition of Secker's 1660 work obviously involved significant rephrasing of his original language; note especially that the archaic use of the preposition *with* is twice replaced by the now-expected *by*.

1816, William Dyer, *Christ's Famous Titles*

he that was **guarded to** the cross **with** a band of soldiers  
shall be **guarded to** the bench **with** a guard of angels

As with Joseph Stevens' 1700 version, Secker's passive verb form *attended* is replaced by *guarded*, thus making the second line fully parallel to the first line; yet Dyer maintained the original, archaic preposition *with* in both cases.

Beyond these examples, we have not been able to find any independent use of “guarded to X with Y” in the 1700s or 1800s. Instead, the preposition *with* is replaced by the preposition *by* in this expression. For instance, in NOL there is a 1664 instance of “**guarded to** Westminster **with** a great force”, but in Google Books we get the following parallel construction from the early 1800s except that unsurprisingly it has the preposition *by*:

1810, R. B., *Historical Remarks on the Ancient and Present State of the Cities of London and Westminster*

but the next day the five members were triumphantly **guarded to** Westminster  
**by** a great number of citizens and seamen

Thus the expression as used in Alma 58:8, “**guarded to** us **with** an army of two thousand men to our assistance”, appears to be archaic. It should also be noted that the addition of the phrase “to our assistance” at the end implies that in the Book of Mormon version the *with*-phrase also has the meaning ‘along with’; that is, the 2,000 men, not just the food supply, were sent to assist Helaman. The rest of the verse argues that the word *assistance* must include the armed forces that Parhoron sent: “and this is all the assistance which we did receive to defend ourselves and our country from falling into the hands of our enemies / yea to contend with an enemy which was innumerable”. Food does not contend with an enemy except indirectly. Elsewhere in this chapter, Helaman refers to these men as having been sent as an addition to his forces:

Alma 58:34

now we do not know the cause  
that the government does not grant us more strength  
neither does **those men which came up unto us** know  
why we have not received greater strength

Alma 58:36

behold we fear that there is some faction in the government  
that they do not send **more men** to our assistance  
for we know that they are more numerous **than that which they have sent**

In other words, the additional 2,000 men didn't go on to some other destination; instead, they were intended to come under Helaman's command.

+ *Hearts drawn out*

“let your **hearts** be full / **drawn out** in prayer unto him continually” (Alma 34:27)

There is a second instance of this expression in the Book of Mormon: “yea your **heart** is not **drawn out** unto the Lord” (Helaman 13:22). In NOL we cite two instances of this usage from the 1600s. Here are some additional examples from the 1700s and the early 1800s:

1734, William Crawford, *A Short Practical Catechism*

if we find our **hearts drawn out** through grace to forgive offences done against ourselves

1796, David Austin, *Select Discourses*

having their **hearts drawn out** in strong and sensible love to God above all things

1832, *The National Preacher*

or being grossly ignorant of His character, they may never feel their **hearts drawn out** toward Him, in any very strong affection or passion

✓ *How be it* ‘however it may be’

“for **how be it** ye cannot cross this great deep save I prepare you against the waves of the sea” (Ether 2:25)

The archaic, original meaning for *howbeit* appears in Ether 2:25, spelled as one word from the 1830 edition up to the 1920 LDS edition, when it was omitted from the LDS text. We have not been able to find this literal, original meaning in later English, in either ECCO or in Google Books. We have found, of course, instances of the much more common archaic meaning ‘however’ or ‘but’ for *howbeit*, as found in 2 Nephi 20:7: “**howbeit** he meaneth not so” (a 1611 King James quotation from Isaiah 10:7). The Book of Mormon has one literal instance of the subjunctive “how be it” which takes the meaning ‘how is it’, in 3 Nephi 23:11: “**how be it** that ye have not written this thing?”

+ *If ye have choice*

“and now **if ye have choice** / go up to the land and remember the words which I speak unto you that if ye go / ye shall also perish” (1 Nephi 7:15)

In *Analysis of Textual Variants* as well as in NOL, this unusual conditional expression is interpreted as equivalent to our modern-day “if you choose”. Another way to interpret this conditional present-tense *if*-clause is to read it as if it had the indefinite article, thus “if ye have a choice”. This expression, “to have choice”, is used when anyone is freely given or offered a choice. In NOL, four instances of conditional “to have choice” are cited from Early Modern English, and in each case the possibility of a choice is presented (here briefly repeated in summary form; see NOL for full citation):

1593 I warn thee therefore—**since thou mayest have choice**—let not thy tongue become a fiery match

1657 **when they have choice** / they will always spare man

- 1669 let him set no plants—**if he may have choice**—but those that have the bottom knobs whole  
1672 will he choose—**if he have choice**—an open riotous landman to be his instrument—  
or a sober man

Later instances of “to have choice” dating from the 1700s are in the past tense, yet they still exhibit a sense of there being a choice (or not being one), but in the past:

1771, (English translation of) Alain René Le Sage, *The History and Adventures of Gil Blas of Santillane*

Our Prince would have been very well contented with the Senora Mencia, **if he had not had choice**; but the charms of the young Catalina carried the day, as in reason they ought.

In other words, “if he hadn’t had a choice” (but apparently he did have a choice, so he wasn’t satisfied with Senora Mencia).

1779, Hannah Cowley, *Who’s the Dupe?*

“Why, if I wanted a Maccaroni, **I might have had choice**—every alley from Hyde-Park to Shadwell-Dock swarms with ’em—genuine;”

In other words, “I would have had a choice” (but apparently Mr. Doiley didn’t have a choice since he didn’t want a Maccaroni [a dandy]).

All of these examples show that the expression “to have choice” continued up into the second half of the 1700s, but thus far we have not been able to find instances of that expression in the early 1800s. The modern-day form of this expression has the indefinite article *a* before *choice*. We find evidence in EEBO of “to have a choice” in the second half of the 1600s, as in this example:

1682, *London’s Liberties*

the common council are agreed **to have a choice**

And in the first part of the 1800s, we get only “to have a choice”, not “to have choice”, as in this sampling:

1821, William Cobbett, *The American Gardener*

**if we have a choice**, we ought to take that which comes nearest to perfection

1833, Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*

you have happened to fix on the very one which, **if I have a choice**, I would rather part with and see in your possession than any other

1835, Emma Whitehead, *Pierre Falcon, the Outcast*

but **if they have a choice**, let it be blighted in its early prime, or crossed by some mischance

1837, Matthew St. Clair Clarke and Peter Force (editors), *American Archives*

it will be in your power to procure seamen and obtain a good one **if you have a choice**

1840, James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pathfinder*

I have no choice—that is—none have asked me **to have a choice**, but Pathfinder and Mr. Muir.

Thus it appears that “if you have choice” persisted up into the later 1700s (of course, “if **ye** have choice” would have become archaic considerably earlier), but by the 1800s this expression without the indefinite article had become obsolete.

+ *Ignominious death*

“and there he suffered an **ignominious death**” (Alma 1:15)

In NOL there are three citations of “ignominious death”, two dating from the 1500s and one from the early 1800s. Here’s some other examples from the intervening centuries:

1667, Richard Allestree, *Eighteen Sermons* [published in 1669]  
to embrace a crucified deity, a God put to a vile **ignominious death**

1740, William Oldys, *The Life of Sir Walter Raleigh*  
because I would bring to **ignominious death** that old pirate

1771, Paul Cardale, *The True Doctrine of the New Testament Concerning Jesus Christ*  
and then to die a painful and **ignominious death** for our good

This expression was included in section 7 • ARCHAIC EXPRESSIONS because some critics had claimed that “ignominious death” dated from Joseph Smith’s time and did not occur in Early Modern English.

+ *Infinite atonement*

“wherefore it must needs be an **infinite atonement**” (2 Nephi 9:7)

This expression occurs four times in the Book of Mormon; it is one that many critics of the Book of Mormon have declared was distinctly modern, beginning with Alexander Campbell’s 1831 claim that it is anachronistically used in the Book of Mormon. These critics were all clearly wrong on this issue, as can be seen from the 1654 citation in NOL, Anthony Burgess’s “whether the law be perfectly satisfied and an **infinite atonement** made”. Here is a sampling of additional examples of “infinite atonement” from the early 1700s up into the 1800s:

1705, George Psalmanazer, *An Historical and Geographic Description of Formosa*  
so that nothing could make an **infinite atonement**, but a sacrifice of infinite value,  
even his only Son Jesus

1748, *A Treatise of the Most Holy Trinity*  
one of them, in taking our flesh unto himself, might by his death make an **infinite atonement**  
to the majesty of the supreme lawgiver

1796, *The Theological Magazine*  
but if we deserve an endless punishment, sin is an infinite evil, and so requires  
an **infinite atonement**

1827, Bernard Whitman, *A Discourse on Denying the Lord Jesus*  
thus Mr. M’Calla, assuming the doctrine of an **infinite atonement** made by Jesus,  
inferred the infinite dignity of his person

To be sure, the expression “infinite atonement” was completely familiar to Campbell and other 19th-century readers of the Book of Mormon; they were just totally ignorant of its long history, beginning as early as the mid-1600s and continuing up into their own times.



1791, Andrew Kippis, *Sermons on Practical Subjects*

they become the instruments in the hands of God **of** spreading the arts and sciences

+ *Knowledge of their enjoyment*

“and the righteous shall have a perfect **knowledge of their enjoyment**” (2 Nephi 9:14)

What we expect here in modern English is “a perfect knowledge of their joy”. In NOL we cite this 1661 example from Early Modern English: “they have the fullest **knowledge of the enjoyment** of their happiness” (Obadiah Sedgwick). This usage persisted in English up through the 1700s and early 1800s, as long as the noun *enjoyment* with the meaning ‘joy’ continued in English:

before 1716, Robert Traill (died 1716), *The Works of the Late Reverend Robert Traill*  
[published in 1745]

the knowledge of Christ, and the enjoyment of Christ, and the **knowledge of that enjoyment**, are inseparable

1788, William Huntington, *The Servant of the Lord, Described and Vindicated*

in a word, it is an experimental **knowledge of** the happy **enjoyment** of these things that makes the servant of the Lord so apt

1836, *The Methodist Review*

the **enjoyments** themselves, the **knowledge of which** is predicated of the possession and indwelling of the Holy Spirit, are a subject of knowledge

+ *Lay and watch*

“having discovered the daughters of the Lamanites / they **laid and watched** them” (Mosiah 20:4)

This past-tense expression uses the intransitive form *lay* rather than *lie*. Thus we have here in Mosiah 20:4 the past-tense form of “lay and watch” rather than “lie and watch”. Evidence for “laid and watched” can be found in Early Modern English; EEBO has two passive instances dating from the 1600s (one of which is quoted in NOL):

1620, Thomas Shelton (translator), Cervantes, *Don Quixote*

and therefore he caused all the approaches and highways about his castle to be **laid and watched**, especially where he imagined our knight might come

1683, (English translation of) François Eudes de Mézeray, *A General Chronological History of France*

he caused them to be way-**laid and watch’d** at sea, and having taken them, distributed them in divers prisons

The original meaning of the verb *waylay* was ‘to lie in wait’ (see definition 1 under *waylay* in the OED), that is, ‘to lay by the way(side)’.

The original present-tense form of this idiomatic expression was “lie and watch”, as in these two examples in Early Modern English from EEBO:

1621, Gervase Markham, *Hunger's Prevention*

you shall . . . take up some secret and unseen place, where you may **lie and watch** the coming of the hawk

1653, Christopher Love, *A Treatise of Effectual Calling and Election*

It is said of false teachers, they lie in wait to deceive; they will be so industrious, they will **lie and watch** opportunities.

The standard, grammatically appropriate past-tense form for this expression should be “lay and watched”; here are a couple examples from ECCO of this past-tense form of the expression:

1778, Robert Linsday, *The History of Scotland*

the said captain . . . **lay and watched** Sir Andrew Wood's homecoming

1797, Mary Robinson, *Hubert de Sevras*

night after night on a few scattered rushes he **lay and watched** me

Over time the present-tense form “lie and watch” was replaced by “lay and watch”, from which we get the past-tense form “laid and watched”, thus the usage in Mosiah 20:4 of the Book of Mormon and in the two 17th-century citations listed at the beginning of this re-analysis of “lay and watch”. Thus far, the databases for modern English have not given us any examples of “laid and watched”, but this seems to be accidental because we ourselves have observed speakers of current English using the expression “laid and watched”, that is, this non-standard, ungrammatical form (so-called). Based on the database evidence, “laid and watched” should be classified as archaic, but we are reluctant to accept this classification given its acceptability in modern English. The problem here may be that the expressions “laid and watched” and “lay and watch” are so infrequent these days.

+ *Make a mock of*

“is there one among you that doth **make a mock of** his brother” (Alma 5:30)

In NOL, the write-up for this expression ends by providing various citations of the nominal form “solemn mockery” dating from 1689 to 1822, all in support in Moroni 8:9 for “it is a **solemn mockery** before God”. Only a couple examples dating from the 1500s were given in support of the verbal expression “make a mock of”, so here are some examples in support of the verbal expression, dating from the 1600s to the early 1800s:

1601, John Deacon, *Dialogical Discourses of Spirits and Devils*

the world that **made a mock of** Christ and willed him . . . to come down from the cross

1650, Samuel Willard, *The Truly Blessed Man*

**making a mock of** sin and a scoff and a scorn of the godly for their godliness

1700, John Nesbitt, *A Funeral Sermon*

as he merits the character of a fool, nay of a devil, that can **make a mock of** his own or another's sin

1742, *A Critical History of the Last Important Sessions of Parliament*

to **make a mock of** conscience

1777, Edmund Burke, *The Annual Register*

they have **made a mock of** religion, by impious appeals to God

1828, Henry Walter, *A History of England*

when William **made a mock of** it as a weakness

In addition, we should add that the King James Bible has one instance of the verbal expression but with a different preposition, namely *at*: “fools make a mock **at** sin” (Proverbs 14:9). Of course, in today’s English the verbal expression “make a mock of” has become obsolete, although it is still understood.

+ *Make metals*

“they did **make gold and silver and iron and brass and all manner of metals** and they did dig it out of the earth” (Ether 10:23)

The Book of Mormon has only this one example of the expression “make metals”, meaning ‘to extract metals’. Most citations in Early Modern English that refer to making metals involve alchemy. The Book of Mormon meaning, referring to the extraction of metals, appears to be quite rare in English. In EEBO, we found one citation dating from 1673: “but a little powder or dust to make gold”. In this case, the ultimate reference is 2 Esdras 8:2–3, which reads “but little dust that gold cometh of”. ECCO cites an Early Modern English quotation in a 1725 source:

1582, Joseph Strype, *Annals of the Reformation*

that it was devised among them that Mirsin should go over sea to **make gold and silver** and to coin dollars

But ECCO also has a genuine 18th-century example:

1775, Joseph Wimpey, *Rural Improvements*

if we **make gold and silver**, and the goods and wares manufactured from them

Thus this rare usage seems to have persisted into the 1700s, but in today’s English it is clearly archaic.

+ *Must unavoidably perish*

“or else all mankind **must unavoidably perish**” (Alma 34:9)

This expression persists from Early Modern English into the 1700s and early 1800s, as shown by the citations in NOL of “must unavoidably perish” dating from 1649 up to 1824. This expression occurs 26 times in EEBO (the 1500s and 1600s) and 58 times in ECCO (the 1700s). It strikes us that the continuing elevated frequency of this expression is likely the result of syntactic combination, namely, by inserting the adverb *unavoidably* into the verb phrase *must perish*. The Book of Mormon has three instances of “must unavoidably perish” (Mosiah 13:28 and Helaman 4:25 in addition to Alma 34:9). Moreover, the text has three other instances where *unavoidably* has been inserted within a verb phrase: “must **unavoidably** come to pass” (1 Nephi 15:4), “must have **unavoidably** remained” (Mosiah 29:19), and “should **unavoidably** have been cut off” (Alma 9:11).



✓ *Never the less* ‘not at all less’

“and Jesus saith unto them : pray on // **never the less** they did not cease to pray” (3 Nephi 19:26)

The meaning here is based on the original literal meaning for the individual words, equivalent to something like “not at all less” or “not one bit less” (that is, “by no means less”). This meaning is listed in the OED under definition 5b for the word *never*. In order to understand what is taking place here in 3 Nephi 19:26, this archaic interpretation for *nevertheless* is required; that is, the original expression (with its separated words, “never the less”) must be restored to the text. The resulting reading is a multiple negative and is equivalent to “and Jesus said unto them : pray on // and by no means did they cease to pray”. If we use the modern interpretation for *nevertheless*, we get a completely inexplicable, even contradictory, interpretation for the text: Jesus told them to pray on—and they did pray on, nevertheless.

+ *See fit*

“so long as the Lord **sees fit** that we may live and inherit the land” (Mosiah 29:32)

There are 11 instances of this expression in the Book of Mormon, including this negated example in Mosiah 21:15: “yet the Lord **did not see fit** to deliver them out of bondage”. As described in NOL, this expression is found in EEBO from the late 1500s, but not in the King James Bible. A search of ECCO identifies several thousand instances of the expression in the English of the 1700s. The OED provides this example from the early 1800s:

1802, Mary Martha Sherwood, *The History of Susan Gray*  
if God **sees fit** . . . that I should marry

This expression was discussed here in section 7 of NOL because some had claimed that “see fit” did not occur in Early Modern English.

+ *Spiritually begotten*

“this day he hath **spiritually begotten** you” (Mosiah 5:7)

This expression in Mosiah 5:7 appears to be based on Psalm 2:7: “this day have I begotten thee”, with the adverb *spiritually* inserted into the paraphrase. This is the only instance of the expression “spiritually begotten” in the Book of Mormon. It does not occur in the King James Bible, but it is ubiquitous in the databases, with 45 examples in EEBO (dating from the 1500s and 1600s) and 33 in ECCO (dating from the 1700s), although some of the ECCO examples are duplicates. Using Google Books, we can identify 11 distinct textual instances of the expression dating from 1711 up through 1839. This expression was included here in section 7 · ARCHAIC EXPRESSIONS because some had suggested that “spiritually begotten” was restricted to Joseph Smith’s time and did not occur in Early Modern English, but in actual fact it was quite frequent in Early Modern English.

+ *Stand in their arms*

“so many brave men which are at my command which do now at this time **stand in their arms**”  
(3 Nephi 3:3)

Shakespeare and Milton each use an older form of this expression, “stand in arms” (without any modifier for *arms*). In NOL, there are six examples cited from the 1600s of the fuller expression, “stand in one’s arms”. We have now found more examples of “stand in one’s arms” dating from the mid-1600s up to the early 1800s:

1637–62, Robert Baillie, *Letters and Journals* [from the time of the English Civil War]

Our general . . . made our army that night **stand in their arms** about the place of the fight.

before 1716, Robert Traill (died 1716), *The Works of the Late Reverend Robert Traill*  
[published in 1745]

what a vain thing had it been for an Israelite to **stand in his arms** at his door,  
to guard his house against the avenging angel

1773, James Macpherson (translator), *The Iliad of Homer*

Here have we **stood, in our arms**, and urged the ceaseless war, on the foe.

1794, Vecesimus Knox (translator), Erasmus, *Antipolemus*

they must lie on the ground; they must **stand in their arms**;  
they must bear hunger, cold, heat, dust, rain

1797, Robert Buchanan, *Poems on Several Occasions*

That night, too, at the palace gate,  
Among the soldiers stay’d,  
And on the morn, without debate,  
**Stood in his arms** array’d:

1817, Robert Knox, *An Historical Relation of the Island of Ceylon*

which, when he has done, he comes forth into public view, where all his militia  
**stand in their arms**; then the great guns are fired

In today’s English, the expression seems quite obsolete, but it was apparently not yet archaic in the 1700s or the early 1800s.

+ *Strange to relate*

“nevertheless it is **strange to relate**—not long after their dissensions—they became more hardened and impenitent” (Alma 47:36)

This expression occurs only once in the Book of Mormon. Some have claimed that this expression was not used in Early Modern English, but the three examples listed in NOL from the 1600s show otherwise. Here are a couple more instances of the many dating from the 1700s and the early 1800s:

1741, Charles Churchill, *The Rosciad*

**strange to relate**, but wonderfully true

1800, Mary Butham Howitt, *The Artist-Wife*

and, **strange to relate**, it was the most blessed time she had ever spent there

+ *Sword of vengeance*

“behold the **sword of vengeance** hangeth over you” (Mormon 8:41)

The expression “sword of vengeance” occurs only once in the Book of Mormon, in Mormon 8:41. In NOL, five instances of the larger expression, referring to the sword of vengeance hanging over someone’s head, are listed from the 1600s and cited in EEBO. Omitted were three more instances of this precise language:

1607, Arthur Dent, *The Plain Man’s Pathway to Heaven* [reprinted in 1643]  
because there is a naked **sword of vengeance**, hanging over our heads

1660, William Sprigg, *The Royal and Happy Poverty*  
till men look up and discern the **sword of vengeance** hanging by a small hair over their heads ready to drop upon them

1663, John Spencer, *A Discourse Concerning Prodigies*  
there is some **sword of vengeance** hanging over his head (by a thread) ready to fall down upon himself

But the Book of Mormon example in Mormon 8:41 is not precisely the same as all these examples that occur in EEBO. Instead, Mormon 8:41 refers only to the sword of vengeance hanging “over you”, not “over your heads”. When we look at the references from the 1700s and the early 1800s to how the sword of vengeance might hang, most of the time we still get references to the sword of justice hanging over people’s heads:

1762, Ellis Farnsworth (translator), *The Works of Nicholas Machiavel*  
there is a **sword of vengeance** hanging over his head by a thread

1792, *An Address to the Jacobine and Other Patristic Societies of the French*  
they see a flaming **sword of vengeance** hang over their heads

1804, *A Short Account of the Extraordinary Life and Travels of H. L. L.*  
for the **sword of vengeance** hangs over your head

1812, Thomas Braton, *Human Nature in Its Four-Fold State of Primitive Integrity*  
the **sword of vengeance** hangs over their heads, to cut them down

1814, James MacQueen, *The Campaigns of 1812, 1813, and 1814*  
and when the terrible **sword of vengeance** hung over their heads, suspended by a single thread

1820, Edward John Turnover, *Sermons on the Unerring Doctrine of the Established Church*  
despised by his wicked companions who behold not the **sword of vengeance** hanging over their own heads

1837, Thomas Laurie, *Lectures*  
the **sword of vengeance** hung over their heads

But we get a little variety, including one case of simply “over us” (which is the nearest we have to the language of Mormon 8:41):

1765, James Merrick, *The Psalms Translated or Paraphrased in English Verse*  
while the sword of vengeance hangs out of sight **above their heads**

1801, Samuel Carr, *Sermons on Practical Subjects*

we have not, indeed, like the Jews, the sword of vengeance hanging **over us**

1827, Edward Boid, *Travels through Sicily and the Lipari Islands*

but the sword of vengeance hung **over the fate of Himaera**

1836, L. O. Shaw, *The Duel, the Battle of Waterloo*

the sword of vengeance hangs **above your head**

Thus the occurrence in Mormon 8:41 of “the sword of vengeance hangeth over you” shows some degree of independence from these examples. In any event, some have claimed that this Book of Mormon expression originated in Joseph Smith’s time, but these examples show that the language of Mormon 8:41 can be generally found in Early Modern English as well as in later English.

✓ *Take an oath unto* <someone>

“we will not suffer ourselves to **take an oath unto** you” (Alma 44:8)

The expression “take an oath unto <someone>” is archaic. EEBO has 11 instances of it, dating from 1615 to 1659; and ECCO adds one more, cited in a 1707 publication but dating from 1581. In EEBO we searched for all the inflected forms of the verb *take* (that is, *take*, *taketh*, *takes*, *taking*, *taken*, and *took*) as well as common spelling variants in Early Modern English (namely, *took* ~ *tooke* and *unto* ~ *vnto*). It is clear from the resulting list that this specific expression ceased to exist in the second half of the 1600s (here the citations restore the original spelling, where recoverable):

1581, John Dunton, *The Phoenix* [as published in 1707 in ECCO]

in respect of which I should heretofore have **taken an Oath unto** him

1615, Edward Grimstone (translator), Pierre d’Avity, *The Estates, Empires, and Principalities of the World*

but the armie of Armenia detesting it, **tooke an oath vnto** the sonne

where he came vnto a pillar couered with cloth, where he **tooke an oath vnto** the Hungarians

1629, Thomas Hobbes (translator), Thucydides, *Eight Books of the Peloponnesian War*

for that they had in particular **taken an oath vnto** them

and for their Generals, they ought to chuse them few and absolute

and to **take an Oath vnto** them

1632–33, William Watts, *The Swedish Intelligencer*

that both Magistrates and people should **take an oath unto** his Majesty

and withall to **take an oath unto** him, as their Protector

1638, Gerard Langbaine (translator), Guillaume Ranchin, *A Review of the Council of Trent*

they **take an oath unto** him else where: and that a very strict one

1639, Michael Jermin, *A Commentary upon the Whole Book of Ecclesiastes*

Athalicus King of Italy did likewise **take an oath unto** his people

1642, (English translation of) Charles de La Fin, *A Letter Written upon Occasion from the Low Countries*

hereupon wee all, as well servants, as Commanders, **tooke an oath unto** His Highnesse

1648, (English translation of) Galeazzo Gualdo Priorato, *An History of the Late Wars and Other State Affairs of the Best Part of Christendom*

that he had **taken an Oath unto** the Emperour

1659, Henry Stubbe, *An Essay in Defense of the Good Old Cause*

that he who **takes an oath unto** another (as our Kings did **unto** the people) is thereby confessed to be the inferior

The alternative form of this expression takes the preposition *to* rather than *unto*. EEBO shows that “take an oath to <someone>” is just as old as “take an oath unto <someone>” (as before, the original accidentals are retained):

1588, Laurence Humphrey, *A View of the Romish Hydra and Monster*

if any haue **taken an oath to** Pope or any other

1600, Matthew Sutcliffe, *A Brief Reply to a Certain Odious and Slanderous Libel*

for so they are, **taking an oath to** the king, as they doe also **to** the pope and their superiours

1611, Ben Jonson, *Cataline’s Conspiracy*

and they **tooke an oath, to** vs

before 1610, Robert Parsons (died 1610), *A Discussion of the Answer of Master William Barlow* [published in 1612]

for the question is not, whether the Spaniards did **take an Oath to** their King or not

This form of the expression with *to* is considerably more frequent than the one with *unto*, and it remains in continuous use, up to the final citations in EEBO (dating from 1700), and then on to numerous examples in Google Books through the 1700s and into the 1800s:

□ comparison in EEBO

inflected form of <i>take</i>	frequency and dates for <i>to</i>	frequency and dates for <i>unto/vnto</i>
<i>taken</i>	22× 1588 → 1698	3× 1581 → 1648
<i>taking</i>	7× 1600 → 1694	
<i>tooke</i>	8× 1611 → 1645	3× 1615 → 1642
<i>take</i>	48× 1612 → 1700	5× 1629 → 1639
<i>took</i>	25× 1653 → 1699	
<i>taketh</i>	1× 1661	
<i>takes</i>	7× 1681 → 1693	1× 1659
TOTALS	118× 1588 → 1700	12× 1581 → 1659

□ sampling of “take an oath to <someone>” from the 1700s and the early 1800s (original accidentals)

1705, *A Collection of State Tracts*

for it might be lawful and his Duty to **take an Oath to** a lawful Prince

- 1731, Thomas Hearne, *A Vindication of Those Who Take the Oath of Allegiance*  
for otherwise any one may **take an Oath to** another to stand by him in all Cases
- 1751, Charles Lucas, *The Political Constitutions of Great Britain and Ireland*  
Does not the King **take an Oath to** his Subjects before any Subject **takes an Oath to** him?
- 1792, (English translation of) Jean-Paul Rabaut, *The History of the Revolution of France*  
their pretext hath been, that they had already **taken an oath to** the King
- 1800, John Louis de Lolme, *General Observations on Executory Devices*  
There is therefore a serious degree of illegality in an Executor actually **taking an Oath to** his Testator or private Employer.
- 1820, *A Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason*  
I **took an oath to** my captains, and received an oath from them.
- 1825, Joaquín Lorenzo Villaneuva, *Misapprehension of the Right Reverend Patrick Curties and the Right Reverend James Doyle*  
not all the Clergy **take an oath to** their Bishop

In modern English, we also have the alternative expression “make an oath”. The Book of Mormon has examples of both “take an oath” and “make an oath”. NOL briefly describes how each is used in the Book of Mormon. The specific archaic form “take an oath unto <someone>” occurs only once, in Alma 44:8; otherwise, the text has eight examples of “make an oath unto <someone>”.

+ *Take it upon you*

“O remember and **take it upon you** and cross yourself in these things” (Alma 39:9)

This expression occurs twice in Alma 39:9–10: “O remember and **take it upon you** and cross yourself in these things // and I command you **to take it upon you** to counsel your elder brothers in your undertakings”. NOL lists three instances from Early Modern English of “take it upon you”. We note in NOL that the Book of Mormon lacks the reflexive forms for this expression (that is, forms like “take it upon yourself”). This consistency, however, does not mean that “take it upon you” is necessarily archaic, for we can find considerable evidence for this non-reflexive form of the expression from the 1700s and early 1800s:

- 1721, Andrew Welwood, *Meditations, Representing a Glimpse of Glory*  
Did you **take it upon you** to shape out the government of my church according to foolish fancy?
- 1781, Correspondence, Robert Livingston to Benjamin Franklin  
I cannot but flatter myself that you will **take it upon you**.
- 1791, James Bowell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*  
“Nay, if you will **take it upon you**, I am sure I shall be very happy to see them both here.”
- 1802, *The Evangelical Magazine*  
“And though the Redeemer’s yoke is easy, yet it is a yoke.”  
“O **take it upon you**, and you shall find rest to your soul.”

1803, *The Weekly Entertainer*

Why did you **take it upon you** to enter alone into the temple?

1833, Peter MacKenzie, *An Exposure of the Spy System Pursued in Glasgow*

and you cannot **take it upon you** to touch the life of a fellow creature upon grounds so precarious

+ *Upwards of*

“we did slay **upwards of** two thousand of them” (Alma 57:14)

The OED states that “upwards of”, meaning ‘somewhat more than’, has been “in frequent use from about 1760”. The OED lists two examples from the first part of the 1700s. In NOL, we list three examples of this expression from the early 1600s, to provide evidence against the notion that this expression dated solely from modern English times (the OED says nothing about the frequency of the expression prior to 1700). Here’s a couple interesting examples from the subtitles of books published in the late 1700s and early 1800s:

1789, John Bewick, *Emblems of Mortality; Representing, in **Upwards of Fifty Cuts, Death***

1813, John Bailey, *Sion’s Melody: A Selection of **Upwards of Six Hundred Hymns***

In Joseph Smith’s time, the expression “upwards of” frequently appeared in the subtitles of books.

\* *Watchful unto prayer*

“yea and I also exhort you my brethren that ye be **watchful unto prayer** continually” (Alma 34:39)

This distinctive expression occurs twice in the Book of Mormon, here in Alma 34:39 and in Moroni 6:4: “to keep them continually **watchful unto prayer**”. 1 Peter 4:7 has a verbal version of the expression: “be ye therefore sober and **watch unto prayer**”, while the Book of Mormon uses the adjectival “watchful unto prayer”. In NOL we cite four examples from Early Modern English of “watchful unto prayer”, all dating from the 1600s. This phrase persisted in English, undoubtedly under the influence of the apostle Peter’s language in 1 Peter 4:7, as can be seen in these examples from the late 1700s and early 1800s:

1710, Thomas Dutton, *Warnings of the Eternal Spirit to the City of Edinburgh*

Be thou **watchful, unto prayer**.

1722, William Sewel, *The History of the Rise, Increase, and Progress of the Christian People Called Quakers*

He will set thy sins in order before thee, and make thee **watchful unto prayer**.

1793, *A Circular Letter, from the Congregational Churches in Warwickshire*

Let us, in the power of grace, be **watchful unto prayer**, with all perseverance and importunity.

1799, John Townsend, *Nine Discourses on Prayer*

It is by fervent and persevering prayer that the believer finally obtains the victory in every conflict. Peter had not been awfully foiled if he had been less confident, and more **watchful unto prayer**; nor had he been restored from his backslidings, if Christ had not watched over and prayed for him.

1823, Charles Davy, *A Plain Discourse on the Nature, Evidences, and Means of Edification*

Very many, who pray, and pray sincerely, know but little prosperity of soul for want of being  
“**watchful unto prayer.**”

1838, Alexander Young, *A Discourse on the Life and Character of the Reverend  
John Thorton Kirkland*

Be sober and **watchful unto prayer.**

The last three of these citations show connections with 1 Peter 4:7: (1) Townsend is referring to the apostle Peter and to Christ’s watching over and praying for him, as we read in Luke 22:31–32; (2) Davy places the phrase “watchful unto prayer” in quote marks, which must therefore be a quotation of “watch unto prayer”; and (3) Young’s citation is a paraphrase of “be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer”. The Book of Mormon’s “watchful unto prayer” is based on the language of 1 Peter 4:7, and this use of the adjectival paraphrase can be dated from the 1600s, but it continued up into Joseph Smith’s time.

✓ *What is it* ‘why is it’

“**what is it** that thy marvellings are so great” (Alma 18:17)

We have found nothing in the standard databases later than the 1640 quotation from Henry Burton (found in EEBO and cited in NOL) as evidence that *what* can take on the adverbial meaning ‘why’. We list in NOL all the OED examples of this usage from Early Modern English, with none dating after 1677 (see definition 19 under *what*). From ECCO and Google Books we have not been able to find any instances of “what is it that S” that take the meaning ‘why is it that S’ (here *that* is the subordinate conjunction, and S stands for an independent clause—a sentence S, so to speak). Of course, there are a huge number of examples of “what is it that” to review, so maybe a modern instance of its usage is lurking out there. What we consistently find is that in modern English the *that* in “what is it that” is the relative pronoun *that*, not the subordinate conjunction, which is what we find in the two other Book of Mormon instances of “what is it that”:

3 Nephi 28:1            **what is it that** ye desire of me after that I am gone to the Father  
Moroni 7:41            and **what is it that** ye shall hope for

The OED’s claim that *what* is obsolete when it means ‘why’ seems to be holding for the reading in Alma 18:17. Their evaluation is based on the lack of examples after the 1600s, in conjunction with the intuitions of the OED editors (who worked on this entry in the early 1900s).

+ *With a determined resolution*

“being fixed in their minds **with a determined resolution** that they would not be subjected to go  
against the Nephites” (Alma 47:6)

As explained earlier under the write-up for “fixed in their minds”, this expression existed in Early Modern English (see the 1595 quote from Lansperger) as well as in modern English (see the 1783 quote from Crawford). It seems that “with a determined resolution” has an independent syntactic existence, and is related to similar phrases in English like “with a firm resolution” or “with an iron resolution”, for which we can find examples in English after 1700:



1741, Charles Gobinet, *The Instruction of Youth in Christian Piety*

For true contrition requires a great regret for what is past, **with a firm resolution** for the time to come.

1800, Charles Reade, *The Works of Charles Reade*

He said this **with an iron resolution** that promised a long and steady struggle.

\* *Ye ends of the earth*

“come unto me / all **ye ends of the earth**” (2 Nephi 26:25)

As explained in NOL, the expression “ye ends of the earth”, with its use of *ye*, is definitely a set one. It does not occur in the King James Bible; instead, the King James Bible has “the ends of the earth”. The Book of Mormon has both expressions, 14 with *the* and 9 with *ye*. Examples of “ye ends of the earth” in Early Modern English date from the 1535 Coverdale Bible up through Thomas Manton’s 1684 *A Practical Exposition of the Lord’s Prayer*. The expression “ye ends of the earth” was able to last that long because it was so well supported by the parallel “the ends of the earth” in Isaiah 45:22. By that time, the archaic pronoun *ye* had long since dropped out of standard English, yet it remained in the set expression “ye ends of the earth”. Google Books has eight instances of it between 1800 and 1829, but all eight of them cite Isaiah 45:22. This archaic phrase persisted into modern English, but its use during Joseph Smith’s time is pseudo-biblical.