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2 Nephi 27:20, 22, 24
>   wherefore thou shalt **read** *the* WORDS which I shall give unto thee.
>   . . .
>   Wherefore when thou hast **read** *the* WORDS
>   which I have commanded thee[1]
>   . . .
>   the Lord shall say unto him that shall **read** *the* WORDS
>   that shall be delivered him:

THIS STUDY EXAMINES the assertions of two investigators who have discussed the nature of the translation of the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith's role in it: Brant Gardner and Orson Scott Card. Their writings on the subject have declared that Smith's own language frequently made its way into the wording of the Book of Mormon. However, a comparison of the earliest text with the textual record tells us that this is an incorrect view of the translation. The linguistic fingerprint of the Book of Mormon, in hundreds of different ways, is Early Modern English. Smith himself — out of a presumed idiosyncratic, quasi-biblical style — would not have translated and could not have translated the text into the **form** of the earliest text. Had his own language often found its way into the wording of the earliest text, its form would be very different from what we encounter. It is still appropriate to call Joseph Smith the translator of the Book of Mormon, but he wasn't a translator in the usual sense of the term. He was a translator in the sense of being the human involved in transferring or re-transmitting a concrete form of expression

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1. There is no ellipsis of a verb phrase after "commanded thee". This is biblical usage conveying the important notion that Christ was to cause words to come to Joseph Smith. See the Oxford English Dictionary, definition 6b of **command**, *v.* I used the 2nd edition on CD-ROM, version 4 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009).

(mostly English words) received from the Lord.[2] The above language of 2 Nephi 27 indicates such a state of affairs as well. And so I have undertaken to critique some of the observations that have been made with respect to Book of Mormon translation, and to lay out an entirely different view of the text, which has been argued for by Royal Skousen for quite a while now.

Card and Gardner represent the latest iteration of a line of proponents of the theory that Smith himself, from his own language, was responsible for much of the wording of the text. They are in good company. Former advocates of this view include B. H. Roberts, John A. Widtsoe, Sidney B. Sperry, Daniel H. Ludlow, and Robert L. Millett.[3]

A general problem with this approach has been that it restricts a divine translation to what the analyst has deemed to be probable, having decided that divine action would not have proceeded in certain ways. A driver of this has been the perceived ungrammatical nature of the dictation, the earliest text. For the first time, however, we can carefully compare it with earlier English, and we now find that the matching is extensive and surprisingly solid. As a result of this newly available evidence, in the future critics would do well to forbear giving grammatical opinions till they have examined the Early Modern English textual record.

Many researchers, including Brant Gardner, have gone beyond the grammatical and considered other, related features of the text, arguing that they point to Smith acting as an English-language translator. Gardner writes, "We see a clear dependence on Joseph's language culture when idiomatic expressions occur that emphasize cultural content from Joseph Smith's time rather than that of the ancient text."[4] In other words, Gardner (2011) asserts that various textual features found in the Book of Mormon necessarily point to Joseph's own linguistic knowledge directly influencing word selection. There are problems with this

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2. See OED **translate**, *v.* definition 1a, which includes a sense of 'transfer'; definition 5 has the sense of 're-transmit', as is implicit in the term "TRANSLATION station".

3. See B. H. Roberts, "The Translation of the Book of Mormon", *Improvement Era* 9.6 (April 1906), 428–29; John A. Widtsoe, *Joseph Smith: Seeker after Truth, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City, Deseret News, 1951), 42; Sidney B. Sperry, *Answers to Book of Mormon Questions* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967), 184–86; Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1976), 141–42, 163; Robert L. Millett, "The Book of Mormon, Historicity, and Faith", *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2.2 (1993): 1–13, 5.

4. Brant Gardner, *The Gift and Power: Translating the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford, 2011), 187.

view. To begin with, it must be admitted that a divine faculty could be responsible for such items since we cannot reasonably limit the reach and ability of such an undertaking. A divine translation could have carried out a functional/conceptual translation[5] of some of the plate script into English (as opposed to a literal translation). Therefore, evidence of functional/conceptual equivalence in the translation is not a conclusive argument in favor of Smith being the English-language translator. A divine translation is possible with the same textual evidence that Gardner presents, which he thinks indicates that Smith acted as a translator (in the usual sense of the term).

Part of the problem is that misinformation about Book of Mormon language has accumulated for decades, continuing to this day. Not only has the grammar been declared to be faulty, but often language has been taken to be of more recent origin than it actually may be. In particular, phrases like "mighty change" and "song of redeeming love" arose at least in the Early Modern period. Consequently, we cannot say with certainty that these came from burnt-over-district revival language of the early 19th century, when and where correspondence has been noted.[6] Hence, there is not necessarily dependence on Smith's language culture in these cases, nor with many other similar phrases that have been investigated, such as "infinite atonement":

> Alma 34:12
>
> Therefore there can be nothing which is short of an **infinite atonement** which will suffice for the sins of the world.

> **1654** GOOG Anthony Burgess (or Burges) *The True Doctrine of Justification Asserted & Vindicated*, p.432
>
> So that the two opinions about active and passive obedience differ not in this, Whether the Law be perfectly satisfied, and an **infinite atonement** made, but only Whether the passive doth solely concurre, or active and passive both.

From the above Google books excerpt we plainly see that "infinite atonement" was used as early as the middle of the 17th century (by a nonconformist English clergyman who died in 1664).

Here is an example of the phrase "mighty change" from the early part of the same century, paired with a Book of Mormon passage containing the same accompanying verb:

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5. See, for example, Gardner, *The Gift and Power*, 144, 150, 156.

6. Gardner, *The Gift and Power*, 190; Mark D. Thomas, *Digging in Cumorah: Reclaiming Book of Mormon Narratives* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1999), 132–34.

1612 EEBO A10931 Richard Rogers [1550?–1618] *Certaine sermons preached and penned*

> And how doth God WORKE this **mightie change** in men?

Alma 5:12

> And according to his faith there was a **mighty change** WROUGHT in his heart.

In addition, a Puritan divine, *no later than the year 1680*, used the striking phrase "sing the song of redeeming love", which is also found in the Book of Mormon:

1699 GOOG Stephen Charnock (d.**1680**) *God the author of reconciliation*, p.29

> and see the saints there, in their white robes, with their harps in their hands, and hear them **sing the song of redeeming love**;

Alma 5:26

> and if ye have felt to **sing the song of redeeming love**,

We see that it continued into the early 18th century:

1721 GOOG Joseph Perry *The glory of Christ's visible Kingdom in this world*, p.188

> It is true the Saints do **sing this Song of Redeeming Love** in a measure now;

This next excerpt from the late 18th century indicates that the usage stems from Revelation 5:9 and 14:3:

1776 GOOG John Gill, D.D. *An Exposition of the Revelation of S. John the Divine*, p.176

> the same song of which mention is made, chapters v. 9. and xiv. 3. the **song of redeeming love**,

One can find quite a few examples in the early 19th century, so that we have a textually verified chain of use from the 17th century on.

Gardner also asserts that imagery such as the following, which involves a hanging sword, means that Smith was translating from ideas into his own words:

Alma 60:29

> except ye do bestir yourselves in the defense of your country and your little ones, the **sword of justice doth hang** over you; yea, and it shall fall upon you

As noted, functional/conceptual equivalence is also possible in a divine translation, so the presence of this imagery in the text does not

convincingly argue for Smith being a translator (in the usual sense of the word). This language is also found in an earlier time:

> **1587** EEBO A12622 Robert Southwell [1561?–1595] *An epistle of comfort to the reuerend priestes*
>
> The **sword of gods justice hangeth** over our soules,
> ready for our sins to divyde

Gardner has chosen to believe that every instance of apparently obsolete lexis found in the earliest text was current in Smith's dialect.[7] It is important to note that there are more than 30 instances of apparently obsolete, nonbiblical vocabulary found in the earliest text, so it is highly likely, in the absence of comprehensive, specific evidence to the contrary, that at least one of them was not part of his dialect. Here I provide a quick list of possibles, many of them mentioned before by Royal Skousen (Oxford English Dictionary definition numbers provided):

become = 'begin to act' (**come**, *v*. 63m; **be**, *v*. 23c) (3 Nephi 1:29)
break = 'stop' (†27) (Ether 6:10)
but if = 'unless' (†C10b) (Mosiah 3:19)
by the cause of = 'on account of, by reason of' (†6a) (Alma 7:5; 15:3)
captivate = 'subjugate' (†2) (2 Nephi 2:29)
choice = 'judgment' (†6) = 'sound judgment, discernment'
    (1 Nephi 7:15)
commend = 'recommend (to do a thing)' (†2d) (Ether 12:41)
counsel = 'ask counsel of, consult' (†4) (Alma 37:37; 39:10)
curious = 'ingenious' (†4) (Alma 63:5)
depart = 'divide' (*intr*.) (†1b) (Helaman 8:11)
desire = 'require' (†3) (1 Nephi 6:3)
desirous = 'desirable' (†5) (1 Nephi 8:12)
detect = 'expose' (†2a) (Helaman 9:17)
do away = 'dismiss, reject' (†44a) (Moroni 10:26)
extinct = 'dead (individual)' (†3) (Alma 44:7)
for this cause that = 'in order that' (†4, †6a)
    (*eg* 1 Nephi 4:17; 2 Nephi 10:15; Alma 9:25)
give = 'describe' (25, *rare*) (Alma 46:17)
go by = 'pass without noticing' (†57a) (2 Nephi 3:20)
hurl = 'drag' (†6) (Helaman 7:16)
manifest = 'expound' (†2) = 'declare' (2 Nephi 1:26)
mar = 'hinder' (†1) (Ether 6:10)
obtain = 'reach (a place)' (5b, *Obs*. or *arch*.) (1 Nephi 8:21; Alma 14:27)
pitch (battle) = 'set in array' (†11) (Helaman 1:15)

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7. Gardner, *The Gift and Power*, 164–65.

rebellion = 'opposition, variance' (†2c) (Mosiah 10:6)
retain = 'hold back, check, stop; prevent, hinder' (†1a)
    (Alma 11:25; 24:13; 59:10; 3 Nephi 3:10; Moroni 7:8)
scatter = 'separate (from the main body)' (†2d) (TITLE PAGE)
scorch = 'burn, consume' (†2) (Mosiah 17:13,14)
stripe = 'whip, beat' (†2) (Alma 11:2)
suppose = 'expect' (†4) (Words of Mormon 1:2; Moroni 1:1)
suppose = 'suspect' (†3a) (Alma 54:11)
to that = 'until' (†C1b) (1 Nephi 18:9)
turn upon = 'fall upon' (32, *rare* or *Obs.*) (1 Nephi 22:13)
withstand = 'oppose, deny, contradict' (†1b) (Alma 1:9; 5:53; 8:13)

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again = 'back' ([†]1) (*eg* 1 Nephi 22:12 & 1 Chronicles 21:12)
cast = 'shoot (arrows)' (†2) (Alma 49:4,19 & Proverbs 26:18)
errand = 'message (for a third party)' (†1a) (Jacob 1:17 & 2 Kings 9:5)
establish = 'confirm' (†1b) (1 Nephi 13:40 & Numbers 30:13)
for = 'because of, on account of' (21a & 23c)
    (*eg* 3 Nephi 17:10 & Mark 2:4)
frankly = 'freely' (†1) (1 Nephi 7:21 & Luke 7:42)
require = 'request' (5, †*of* one) (Enos 1:18 & Ezra 8:22)
suffer = 'endure, consent' (*intr.*) (†15b) (Alma 48:24 & Mark 10:4)
turn again = 'return' (†66b) (Alma 8:25 & Ruth 1:11)
wrap together = 'roll up' (9) (3 Nephi 26:3 & 2 Kings 2:8)

This is powerful evidence since semantic shifts in sense are unpredictable and not recoverable for later speakers when prior usage has become obsolete. Just one truly obsolete instance forces Smith to be a reader of that lexical item of English. Furthermore, one instance means that it is reasonable to think that others were obsolete as well, and that they were given to Joseph Smith. And of course some nearly obsolete words would have been rare in his time and unlikely to have entered his mind as well. It is therefore probable that such words would have been read.

    Textual evidence suggests that some senses were dead **before** American colonization. Consider, for instance, *depart* = 'divide' (intransitive):

    Helaman 8:11
        Moses [smote] upon the waters of the Red Sea
        and they **departed** hither and thither,
            'and the waters **divided** to the left and right'

The last-dated example in the OED is 1577, and the latest one that I have found in a 500-million-word corpus is the following:

> **1615** EEBO A19628 Helkiah Crooke [1576–1635] *Mikrokosmographia a description of the body of man*
>
> but the Axillary veine **departeth** into two branches,

Obsolescence before American colonization also appears to be the case with *counsel* = 'ask counsel of, consult' (last-dated OED example is 1547) and *but if* = 'unless' (the last-dated OED example is from Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, a 1596 poem that is full of language that was archaic by its year of publication). There are other possibilities beyond these three examples.

In addition, even under the unlikely scenario that every apparently obsolete lexical instance was part of Smith's dialect, the view of Smith *qua* translator almost certainly fails because of abundant and pervasive syntactic evidence that demands a non-dialectal, Early Modern English view (a small subset of this evidence is mentioned immediately below). This in turn supports the (probably) obsolete lexical evidence. It is apparent that Gardner continues to ignore this substantial syntactic evidence which argues directly against Smith being a translator.[8]

Yes, there is plenty of language in the earliest text that had been used for centuries and which continued into Smith's time. However, because there is a considerable amount of language that we find exclusively in the Early Modern era, either Smith had read widely in older literature — some of it virtually inaccessible to him — and had mastered its syntax, or he must have read words off the instrument in those instances. Different types of systematic usage — for example, 16th-century past-tense syntax with *did*; heavy *that*-complementation with verbs like *command*, *cause*, *suffer*, and *desire*; the completely consistent use of the short adverbial form *exceeding* with adjectives; and morphosyntactic patterns and variation involving the {-th} plural[9] (and even the {-s} plural) — only match the systematic usage of the Early Modern period and are found throughout the text. As a result, the approach of Gardner (2011) and others ends up being one in which Smith continually switched during the dictation — thousands of times — between reading and translating. The

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8. Gardner, *Traditions of the Fathers: The Book of Mormon as History* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford, 2015), 32–34.

9. See the discussion in Roger Lass, "Phonology and Morphology", *The Cambridge History of the English Language, Volume III: 1476–1776*, ed. Roger Lass (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), 165–66; and in Charles Barber, *Early Modern English* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1997 [1976]), 169–70.

view that Smith consistently read a concrete form of expression and did not translate (in the usual sense of the word) is an accurate, consistent, comprehensive view that is asserted by the scripture itself.

Gardner discusses biblical use, implicating Joseph Smith in the process of altering Isaiah passages and employing New Testament phrasing in Old Testament passages. He writes, "It is easy to see how Joseph could be so heavily influenced by the KJV New Testament; it is harder to explain why a divine interpreter would be."[10] That is a speculative statement to which one might reasonably respond, Why couldn't a divine interpreter choose to mix Old Testament and New Testament language? To my mind, a divine translation could quite understandably mix biblical language in conveying important truths. What agency could more properly and judiciously do so than a divine one? Biblical quoting, in all its variety, was possible as part of a divine translation, and more likely than Joseph Smith doing it. Otherwise we must imagine that he had a truly masterful command of biblical language in 1829, and the ability to incorporate it extensively during a short dictation period.

The switch in this Isaiah passage is interesting:

2 Nephi 8:16

And I **have** put my words in thy mouth
and **hath** covered thee in the shadow of mine hand,

Isaiah 51:16

And I **have** put my words in thy mouth,
and (I) **have** covered thee in the shadow of mine hand,

The distinctive morphosyntactic form of the Book of Mormon passage — "I have + ‹PAST PARTICIPLE› . . . and **hath** + ‹PAST PARTICIPLE›" — is just like these two examples from the 1660s:

1662 EEBO A53060 Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle [1624?–1674] *Playes*

I think I **have** made my self a scorn,
and **hath** indangered my reputation.

1666 EEBO A47379 Sir William Killigrew [1606–1695] *Fovr new playes*

I **have** chid him for his lewd life,
and **hath** with-drawn my self from his ill company

The close inflectional contrast — driven by syntactic context — and the matching Book of Mormon usage are noteworthy. There are other examples to be found in the earliest text like this one. But 2 Nephi 8:16 is interesting for another reason. The 1611 King James Bible has "and

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10. Gardner, *The Gift and Power*, 257.

have covered" while the 1769 Blayney update inserted the pronoun *I*; the Book of Mormon has the 1611 wording in part, with a nonbiblical Early Modern English tweak, *hath*. Earlier Bibles do not use the verb *cover* here. So the Book of Mormon follows the lexical usage of the King James Bible, employing, however, an inflectional option of the Early Modern era that is not clearly found in King James English.

Also, Smith seems to have been given the Septuagint/Coverdale language "upon all the ships of the sea" found in 2 Nephi 12:16 but missing in the King James Bible.[11] He certainly didn't refer to that version of the Bible in that instance. By continuing to maintain the strained view that Smith consulted a Bible during the translation, which there has never been any eyewitness testimony of, Gardner (2011:257) has unfortunately cemented prior damage done to our understanding of the book's translation.

Smith was also likely to be a reader in the following passage, which is substantially different from the corresponding Isaiah language:[12]

> 2 Nephi 7:2
>> I make the rivers a wilderness and their fish to stink
>> because the waters are dried up and THEY **dieth** because of thirst.

> Isaiah 50:2
>> I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh,
>> because there is no water, and dieth for thirst.

Nowhere does the King James Bible use *they* with the {-th} plural. Smith would not have known that it was occasional Early Modern English usage:

> **1565** EEBO A07396 Thomas Stapleton, tr. [1535–1598] | Venerable Bede [673–735] *The history of the Church of Englande*
>> the ship drawing nere unto the land, as sone as they ar towched wyth the smell of the ayer, THEY **dieth** owt of hand.

Lest the reader think that this was merely a case of Smith overdoing the biblical, I would point out that the {-th} plural isn't used stupidly in the Book of Mormon: it isn't overused or underused, and the earliest text manifests inflectional variation and differential usage rates typical

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11. See Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon*, 6 parts (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2004–2009), 660 (2 Nephi 12:16). See also Sidney B. Sperry, *Answers to Book of Mormon Questions* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967), 92–93.

12. See also Sperry, *Answers to Questions*, 94–96.

of Early Modern English.[13] The match is solid. More examples of this are provided below.

The arguments found at Gardner (2011:184) about tense usage with respect to 1 Nephi 15:13 and 1 Nephi 19:13 are without merit. They do not hold up to scrutiny because these are prophetic contexts where earlier future events are referred to as if they have already occurred, and later future events are referred to as yet to occur. Abinadi implemented this approach, stating it explicitly here:

Mosiah 16:6

And now if Christ had not come into the world
— *speaking of things to come as though they had already come —*
there could have been no redemption.

Emphasis added.

In addition, Gardner misses Skousen's treatment of this issue in his *Analysis of Textual Variants*.[14] There Skousen has argued that the tenses employed are appropriate in their contexts. Even if we skew the matter in favor of Gardner's view, it can only be inconclusive.

Moreover, discussions about textual anachronisms are meaningless from the perspective of a divine translation that was able to include English-language cultural terms that had been in use for centuries, and often all the way up to the year 1829. Finally, Gardner wrote the following: "The problem of positing Joseph Smith as a reader is that it tells us next to nothing about the translation itself."[15] I don't think that viewing Smith as a reader creates a problem (see the 2 Nephi 27 language set forth at the beginning of this article), but since an examination of Early Modern English syntax tells us that the earliest text is similar to it in form in hundreds of instances, then it is accurate to state that it appears that Smith read revealed words to his scribes. And that is simply because it is highly likely that a significant amount of Early Modern English lexis and syntax found in the text was unknown to him. And in the near future we will learn a great deal about the English-language translation by studying the earliest text in relation to the textual record of earlier English.

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13. See Lass, "Phonology and Morphology", 165–66, for background. These observations stem from research that I have carried out (article forthcoming) using two large corpora of Early Modern English: one of 400 million words (Mark Davies, *Early English Books Online: 400 million words, 1470s–1690s*, 2013–), and one of my own elaboration with 500 million words.

14. Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants*, 319–20 (1 Nephi 15:13).

15. Gardner, *The Gift and Power*, 164.

In summary, Gardner's position must be abandoned in light of substantial textual evidence which makes it untenable; Skousen's TIGHT CONTROL position is the correct one. Not only does Gardner (2011:192) generally mislead us by a blanket assertion that the Book of Mormon was formed in imitation of King James language and style (when hundreds of pieces of lexical and syntactic evidence clearly say otherwise), but the book is also ultimately wrong about Smith being the English-language translator of the plate script. The data that follow give further evidence of this position.

■   ■   ■

IN THIS SECTION I address and elucidate various arguments made by Orson Scott Card more than 15 years ago in favor of Joseph Smith being the English-language translator.[16] Gardner (2011:184n2) mentions Card's analysis and agrees with his assessment that there are (many) grammatical errors in the translation. While there are grammatical errors in the earliest text, there are not many of them from the perspective of Early Modern English. That is its language, but its true character has been obscured over the ensuing decades by thousands of edits.

Card asserts that the *be* usage in the following passage is a case of "double use of future subjunctive on both sides of the logical assertion":

> 2 Nephi 2:13
>> And *if there be no* righteousness, **there be no** happiness.

The second use of *be* may be viewed as an extension of the present-tense subjunctive from "if there be", or as a case of indicative *be* — either way we view it, it is attested usage of the Early Modern period:

> **1591** EEBO A05025 Henry Barrow [1550?–1593] *A brief discouerie of the false church*
>> and so deferr and put off their comming out, either until the winter of Gods wrathful judgmentes circumvent and inclose them, or the saboth of his final indignation fal and rest upon them, and then **there be no** space granted them to flie, or grace to be preserued.

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16. Orson Scott Card, "Joseph Smith: Reader or Translator?" *Vigor: Advice & Commentary on Mormon Life* 16 [extra] (September 1998) ‹http://www.nauvoo.com/vigor/issues/16-extra.html› [accessed 24 July 2015]. As Card indicates at the outset of his article, this is a review of Royal Skousen, "Translating the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript", *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins*, edited by Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1997), 61–93.

> **1645** EEBO A57675 Alexander Ross [1591–1654] *The philosophicall touch-stone*
>
> Fifthly, *if there be no* accidents in the soule, *then* **there be no** habits, nor actions, nor intelligible species in her;

The following biblical passage might employ the phrase "he be" due to closely preceding usage:

> Numbers 5:30
>
> Or when the SPIRIT of jealousy *cometh* upon him, and HE **be** jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before the Lord,

Sixteen verses earlier there are two instances of "and he be jealous" after a hypothetical. In the above verse, however, *be* is clearly paired with indicative *cometh*.

Discussing Early Modern English, Barber wrote, "In the present plural, we often find indicative *are* and subjunctive *be*, but some writers use *be* for both, especially early in the period. Indicative *be* is also common in the construction 'There be'."[17] This observation further explains "there be no happiness" seen in 2 Nephi 2:13. It also explains why the plural is the typical biblical use of what Barber calls indicative *be*. (The usage carried over from earlier English into modern dialects and colloquial speech.) In the following excerpts, *be* takes the place of indicative *are*, as is explicitly shown in the first and last examples:

> Isaiah 2:6
>
> because THEY **be** replenished from the east, *and* **are** soothsayers like the Philistines,

> Matthew 7:13
>
> and *many* THERE **be** which go in thereat:

> Acts 19:26
>
> this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that THEY **be** no gods, *which* **are** made with hands:

Next Card points out a passage that appears to be "ungrammatically (not just stylistically) redundant":

> Alma 9:16
>
> For there are many PROMISES *which* **is** extended to the Lamanites, for it is **because** of the traditions of their fathers that **causeth** them to remain in their state of ignorance.

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17. Barber, *Early Modern English*, 172.

Before the apparent redundancy, which involves *because* and *causeth*,[18] we see the {-s} plural of Early Modern English[19] — "promises which **is**" — as in the following examples:

> **1652** EEBO A49252 Christopher Love [1618–1651] *The naturall mans case stated*
>
> > he that is without the Lord Jesus Christ the foundation of hope, and without the PROMISES *which* **is** the pillar of hope, must needs be without all true hopes of heaven.
>
> **1663** EEBO A44832 Richard Hubberthorn [1628–1662] *Works*
>
> > but the Saints baptism we own, and the believers, and the PROMISES *which* **is** to the seed, thou hast cleared thy self from,

We also see the {-th} plural of Early Modern English[20] used right after the relative pronoun *that*, as in the following examples:

> **1479** EEBO A19333 Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers, tr. [1442?–1483] | Jean Miélot, tr. [d.1455] | Gerard van Vlierderhoven [14th cent.] *Cordyale, or Four last things*
>
> > which answerd that of al THINGES *that* **causeth** moost payne to a dampned sowle was losse of tyme,
>
> **1634** EEBO A68954 Robert Bolton [1572–1631] *A three-fold treatise containing the saints sure and perpetuall guide*
>
> > it is mens CORRUPTIONS, and prophane HEARTS, *that* **causeth** all the stirre.

Both the {-th} plural and the {-s} plural were more often found after relative pronouns in earlier English, and so it is in the Book of Mormon.

Interestingly, it is reasonable to interpret the relative pronoun *that* in Alma 9:16 as non-restrictive. We expect the relative pronoun *which* in such a reading, since in modern English non-restrictive *that* is rarely seen. But in Early Modern English it was more common. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, by the modern period it was confined to poetic and rhetorical use (see OED **that**, *rel. pron.*, definition 2). Barber (1997:209–10) discusses this syntax, giving a Shakespearean example of non-restrictive (or continuative) *that*: "My foolish Riuall **that** her Father likes," (*Two Gentleman*). Recast for clarity, the relevant part of this Book of Mormon verse could read as follows:

---

18. This reads *caused* in the current LDS text. See Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants*, 1760–63 (Alma 9:16), for a thorough discussion.

19. See the discussion in Lass, "Phonology and Morphology", 165–66; and in Barber, *Early Modern English*, 169–70.

20. *Ibid*.

Alma 9:16

> *Their current condition* is because of the traditions of their fathers,
> *which traditions* cause them to remain in their state of ignorance.

I have replaced the pronoun *it* with the first italicized phrase, placing a comma before the relative *which*. As is made explicit above, their forefathers' traditions caused them to remain in their state of ignorance. Here are similar examples with *that* and *which*:

1593 EEBO A14178 John Udall [1560?–1592] *A commentarie vpon the Lamentations of Ieremy*

> The use is, to teach us, that whensoever the Lord dealeth so with us, it is **because of** the hardnes of our HARTS **that** otherwise wil not be thorowly softned;

1602 EEBO A09809 Sir Thomas North, tr. [1535–1601?] | Simon Goulart, tr. [1543–1628] | Emylius Probus *Lives*

> it was **because of** the PLAGUE **that** tormented them much:

1627 EEBO A11649 Henry Ainsworth [1571–1622?] *Annotations upon the five bookes of Moses, the booke of the Psalmes, and the Song of Songs*

> for the Church did it not **because of** their TEACHING
> **which** caused them to erre:

As Skousen points out,[21] we find this same construction elsewhere in the earliest text:

Mosiah 7:20

> And behold, it is **because of** our INIQUITIES and ABOMINATIONS,
> **that** *has* brought us into bondage.
>
> > I have added a comma after *abominations* to indicate a non-restrictive reading.

In other words, their iniquities and abominations brought them into slavery. The current LDS text has it wrong here:

Mosiah 7:20

> *that* ***he** has brought us into bondage.

Skousen writes:

> For the third printing of the 1905 LDS Chicago edition (in 1907), the pronoun *he* was added to the last clause of this passage. All subsequent LDS editions, from 1911 on, have followed this reading with the *he*. The selection of *he* is consistent with the verb form *has*, which is found in all the (extant) textual sources. The editing here suggests the possibility that *he* might have been accidentally lost during the early transmission of the text.

21. Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants*, 1212–14 (Mosiah 7:20).

The verb form *has*, however, is a likely instance of the Early Modern English {-s} plural after non-restrictive *that*. Recast we have:

Mosiah 7:20

Our current condition is because of our iniquities and abominations, **which** *have* brought us into bondage.

For those who doubt that *has* might have been used by the literate with plural antecedents in Early Modern English, I provide the following examples, along with an exact Book of Mormon variational match:

1653 EEBO A70988 F.G., tr. | Madeleine de Scudéry [1607–1701] *Artamenes*

it must be an entire heart, and none of THOSE *that* **has** been pierced with a thousand Arrows;

1658 EEBO A40227 George Fox [1624–1691] *The papists strength, principles, and doctrines*

and strike down all THOSE *that* **has** got the words but not the power,

1668 EEBO A47152 George Keith [1639?–1716] *Immediate revelation*

And now a few words by way of tender advice, to THOSE *who* **has** been long seeking a pure Church, not a mined confused Rabble of godless Atheists,

■   ■   ▪

Mosiah 8:17

But a seer can know of THINGS *which* **has** passed, and also of THINGS *which* **is** to come;

1696 EEBO A34770 tr. | Gatien Courtilz de Sandras [1644–1712] *The memoirs of the Count de Rochefort*

'twas not that I was really present there, or that I am troubled with that itch of scribbling, to write of those THINGS *which* **has** already employ'd the Pens of so many worthy men

■   ■   ▪

1681 EEBO A47819 Sir Roger L'Estrange [1616–1704] *The character of a papist in masquerade*

the whole strain of THEM *that* **has** been taken off by the hand of Justice, . . . **have** so behaved themselves at the last cast,

Alma 57:36

and I trust that the souls of THEM *which* **has** been slain **have** entered into the rest of their God.

The last pair of examples provide strong, striking evidence of correspondence because we see the same principled variation: the normal singular verb form is used after the relative pronoun, and the

normal plural verb form is used after the complex subject. The reason for the variation is that there was a greater tendency in Early Modern English to use the {-s} plural after relative pronouns than after noun phrases. Occasionally the difference ended up being expressed overtly in a compact, contrastive passage. And that is what we see in Alma 57:36 — the intriguing variation of the Early Modern era. We find it also with *hath ~ have*, *was ~ were* (Mosiah 24:15), and *is ~ are*. Here are two examples of the latter, along with a related pair:

> **1588** EEBO A01864 R. Parke, tr. | Juan Gonzáles de Mendoza [1545–1618] *The historie of the great and mightie kingdome of China*
>
> > that [the most part of these RIVERS], those which do distil and run from the MOUNTAINES *which* **is** towardes the west, **are** very rich of gold,

> **1607** EEBO A13820 Edward Topsell [1572–1625?] *The historie of foure-footed beastes*
>
> > for [the LIPS of the WOUNDS *which* **is** made by contusion], **are** cut off, and burned.

<div align="center">▪ ▪ ▪</div>

> **1615** EEBO A23464 Edward Grimeston, tr. | Pierre d'Avity, sieur de Montmartin [1573–1635] *The estates, empires, & principallities of the world*
>
> > It is true in my opinion, that they[r] distrust of all THINGS *which* **is** stil recommended unto them (by reason of the infinit number of CHEATERS *which* **are** seen in Paris) is the greatest pollicie they have.

> Alma 32:21
>
> > ye hope for THINGS *which* **is** not seen, *which* **are** true.

Next Card mentions that the Book of Mormon contains some ungrammatical gerundive constructions, a structure that lacks the preposition *of* before the object, as in the following example:

> 2 Nephi 3:24
>
> > and do that thing which is great in the sight of God, unto *the bringing to pass much restoration* unto the house of Israel and unto the seed of thy brethren.

Card thought that the above phrasing should have been "the bringing to pass **of** much restoration". Yet this is not ungrammatical but Early Modern English usage found in Shakespeare and elsewhere:

> **1601** SHAKES. *All's Well That Ends Well* IV. iii. 4–5
>
> > for on **the reading it** he chang'd almost into another man.

1566 EEBO A11445 Nicholas Sander [1530?–1581] *The supper of our Lord set foorth according to the truth of the Gospell and Catholike faith*

> because as the truth of the body was to be eaten,
> so the maner of **the eating it**, was determined.

The construction actually carried into the modern period.

The co-referential use of *you* right before *thou* is also fairly typical Early Modern English:

2 Nephi 2:1

> And now Jacob, I speak *unto* **you**: **Thou** art my first born in the days of my tribulation in the wilderness.

1496 EEBO A19336 Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers, tr. [1442?–1483] | Jean Miélot, tr. [d.1455] | Gerard van Vlierderhoven [14th cent.] *Cordyale, or Four last thinges*

> all that is comyn unto them may happen *unto* **you**. **Thou** arte but a man

1668 EEBO A30582 Jeremiah Burroughs [1599–1646] *Gospel remission, or, A treatise shewing that true blessedness consists in pardon of sin*

> Now know and consider this day, what from God shall be said *unto* **you**, **thou** much dishonourest the pardoning grace of God.

1668 EEBO A74977 Richard Alleine [1611–1681] *The world conquered, or a believers victory over the world*

> when will it say *unto* **you**, **thou** hast served me long enough; **thou** hast serv'd *thy* pleasures, and *thy* estate,

It is even found in the King James Bible:

Ezekiel 36:13

> Because they say *unto* **you**, **Thou** land devour*est* up men, and *hast* bereaved *thy* nations;

Second-person pronoun usage in the Book of Mormon shows extensive variation. Virtually everything in this domain that has been objected to (by many critics) can be found in either the Bible or the textual record: *thou*, etc. used with plural referents (e.g. Isaiah 65:11, 15), *you* used as a subject (e.g. the 1611 KJB), *ye* used for singular (e.g. Shakespeare), *ye* used as an object (e.g. Shakespeare), co-referential *ye ~ thou* (e.g. Tyndale), *ye ~ you* alternation (e.g. Shakespeare), co-referential *you ~ thou* (e.g. Ezekiel 36:13), close objective and subjective *ye* and *you* usage (e.g. Marlowe), as well as no {-st} inflection in the past tense. As one example, the following passage exhibits multiple switching between *thou* and *you*:

1674 EEBO A54126 William Penn [1644–1718] *The counterfeit Christian detected; and the real Quaker justified*

> Here again **thou** lettest drop [and **you** wrest the Scriptures to **your** own Destruction] (as the Unlearned and Unstable do; and is not this Dangerous in them?) Then **thou** bringest in this, And to **you** it is Dangerous to read or speak of them;

Next up for criticism is the use of the {-th} plural in the text, as in this example:[22]

Mosiah 12:20

> What **meaneth** the WORDS which *are* written
> and which *have* been taught by our fathers,

As mentioned, Lass discussed this Early Modern English phenomenon around the same time that Card wrote his article (other linguists such as Barber had discussed it previously):

1585 EEBO A09063 Robert Parsons [1546–1610] *A Christian directorie guiding men to their saluation*

> what **meaneth** the WORDS, Grace and Mercie brought with him?

■ ■ ■

1530 EEBO A13203 William Tyndale, tr. [d.1536] *[The Pentateuch]*

> What **meaneth** the WITNESSES, ORDINAUNCES *and* LAWES which the Lorde oure God hath commaunded you?

1580 EEBO A19272 Thomas Cooper [1517?–1594] *Certaine sermons wherin is contained the defense of the gospell nowe preached against such cauils and false accusations*

> What **meaneth** the terrible THREATNINGS, against wicked and vitious livers?

The earliest text is full of Early Modern English — that is why the {-th} plural is found throughout it.

Next Card confronted the use of *what* as a simple relative:

2 Nephi 32:3

> the words of Christ will tell you ALL THINGS **what** ye should do.

---

22. The particular verse that Card referred to — 1 Nephi 22:1 — has an error made by the 1830 typesetter that has persisted into the 1981 edition (he changed "what mean these things" to "what meaneth these things"). See Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants*, 3657 (Mormon 8:14), for some discussion.

Although it isn't biblical, we do find this in the textual record of earlier English (as well as in later dialectal and colloquial speech):[23]

> **1496** EEBO A08937 Henry Parker [d.1470] *Diues [et] pauper*
>
> Is the people bounde to obeye to the pope / to theyr bysshop / to theyr curate in AL THYNGES **what** they wyll byd them do

> **1643** EEBO A46823 Arthur Jackson [1593?–1666] *A help for the understanding of the Holy Scripture*
>
> the Levites, whom God hath set over you to teach you in ALL THINGS **what** ye should do, lest otherwise ye provoke God to punish you,

The matching between the last example and 2 Nephi 32:3 is excellent — "all things what ye should do".

Card mentions the following as failing to employ the subjunctive:

> Mosiah 4:16
>
> and ye will not SUFFER *that* the beggar **putteth** up his petition to you in vain and turn him out to perish.

The subjunctive was usually observed in this type of context in Early Modern English:

> **1551** EEBO A08444 Lady Anne Cooke Bacon, tr. [1528?–1610] | Bernardino Ochino [1487–1564] *Certayne sermons*
>
> God wil not SUFFER *that* they **be** tempted above their power,

> **1550** EEBO A13758 Thomas Nicolls, tr. | Thucydides *The hystory . . . of the warre, whiche was betwene the Peloponesians and the Athenyans*
>
> But if he SUFFRED *that* the ONE of the parties **were** destroyed,

And we even find it in the Book of Mormon with bare verbs:

> Mosiah 11:24
>
> Yea, and I will SUFFER them *that* they **be** smitten by their enemies.

---

23.   See OED **what**, *pron., a.*[1]*, adv., conj., int. (n.)*, definition C7:

1557 OED NORTH *Gueuara's Diall Pr.* 244
They do al thinges **what** they lyst, and nothing **what** they ought.

1645 OED FULLER *Good Th. in Bad T.* (1841) 36
For matter of language there is nothing **what** grace doth do, but wit can act.

1657 OED S. TITUS *Killing no Murder* 9
They . . . thought it not adultery **what** was committed with her.

1740 OED RICHARDSON *Pamela* xxiii. I. 57
Do you think that so dutiful a Son as our Neighbour . . . does not pride himself, for all **what** he said at Table, in such a pretty Maiden?

Alma 39:11

> Suffer not *that* the devil **lead** away your heart again after those wicked harlots.

But the subjunctive was not always used in this context:

> **1517** eebo A13670 William Atkinson, tr. [d.1509] | Giovanni Gersen [14th cent.] *A full deuoute and gostely treatyse of the imytacyon and folowynge the blessed lyfe of our moste mercyfull Sauyour cryste*
>
> > Howe may this be that man by pacience suffereth *and* desireth *that* nature **fleethe**

Moreover, in the past tense the verb *suffer* did not always trigger subjunctive *were*, or an auxiliary functioning as a subjunctive marker, such as *should* or *might*:

> **1550** eebo A13758 Thomas Nicolls, tr. | Thucydides *The hystory . . . of the warre, whiche was betwene the Peloponesians and the Athenyans*
>
> > he suffred *that* the paymente of the souldyars **was** delayed by the sayd Tyssaphernes.

> **1607** eebo A11931 Edward Grimeston, tr. | Jean de Serres [1540?–1598] *A general inuentorie of the history of France*
>
> > And seeing that God had suffred *that* the bond of their coniunction **was** disolued,

In addition, the use of the syntax "would not suffer" with finite complementation and the auxiliary *should* is fairly common in the Book of Mormon (8 times) and not hard to find in Early Modern English, but found only once in the King James Bible:

> Mark 11:16
>
> > And **would not suffer** *that* any man should carry any vessel through the temple.

> 2 Nephi 30:1
>
> > for I Nephi **would not suffer** *that* ye should suppose that ye are more righteous than the Gentiles shall be.

■ ■ ■

> **1481** eebo A03047 William Caxton, tr. [ca.1422–1491] *Godfrey of Boloyne*
>
> > Thenne the lord sende worde to peter that he **wold not suffre** / *that* they shold entre in to the toun

> **1541** eebo A21318 Sir Thomas Elyot, tr. [1490?–1546] *The image of gouernance compiled of the actes and sentences notable, of the moste noble Emperour Alexander Seuerus*
>
> > he **wolde not suffer** *that* any of them shulde be apprehended or punished:

1674 EEBO A26796 William Bates [1625–1699] *The harmony of the divine attributes in the contrivance and accomplishment of man's redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ*

> Therefore the Eternal Law that annexes Immortality to Innocence, **would not suffer** that He SHOULD remain in the state of Death.

Also, there is rare layered syntax (involving doubled pronominals) with *should* found in the Book of Mormon:

Alma 56:8

> But I **would not suffer** THEM THAT THEY SHOULD break this covenant which they had made,

1473 EEBO A05232 William Caxton, tr. [ca.1422–1491] | Raoul Lefèvre [fl.1460] *Recuyell of the historyes of Troye*

> but Jupiter **wold not suffre** [T]HEM THAT THEY SHOLD helpe hym in ony maner

All this is more evidence that the Book of Mormon is a well-formed Early Modern English text that would have been difficult to derive from the Bible by a non-expert.

Next up for consideration is the resumptive *that* in this passage:

Mosiah 8:4

> And it came to pass **that** *after* he had done all this
> **that** king Limhi dismissed the multitude

Resumptive *that* continues to this day, but the following excerpts match the usage well, with a repetition of *that* along with "it came to pass" and a time conjunction:

1677 EEBO A65369 John Webster [1610–1682] *The displaying of supposed witchcraft*

> And it came to pass, **that** *when* the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, **that** David took an harp,

1680 EEBO A66701 William Winstanley [1628?–1698] *The new help to discourse or, Wit, mirth, and jollity*

> Now it came to pass **that** *when* the Executioner had smitten off Saint Denis his head, **that** he caught it up, between his Arms,

Finally, Card discusses *has/hath* variation in the Book of Mormon. He understandably didn't know it, but the earliest text employs *has* slightly less than 10% of the time (the current LDS text is roughly ⅓ *has*, ⅔ *hath*). Similarly, Shakespeare employed *has* a little more than 15% of the time. Also, in EEBO we find that the decade of the 1660s matches the *has* usage rate found in the earliest text. Card mentions closely occurring *has/hath* variation in Mosiah 4:8–9 as a slip-up of Smith's,

but it was not present in the printer's manuscript or in the 1830 first edition. Still, the following example (and there are others) exhibits the close variation that he was trying to point out:

Alma 29:10

then do I remember what the Lord **has** done for me,
yea, even that he **hath** heard my prayer.

Here are some 17th-century examples of this variation:

1637 EEBO A07832 Thomas Morton [1564–1659] *New English Canaan, or New Canaan containing an abstract of New England*

on a sodane a thunder clap **hath** bin heard that **has** amazed the natives, in an instant hee **hath** shewed a firme peece of Ice to flote

1651 EEBO A43998 Thomas Hobbes [1588–1679] *Leviathan, or, The matter, forme, and power of a common wealth, ecclesiasticall and civil*

and memory to retain, digest and apply what he **hath** heard. The difference and division of the Lawes, **has** been made in divers manners,

1652 EEBO A47682 Person of quality, tr. | Gaultier de Coste, seigneur de La Calprenède [d.1663] *Cassandra the fam'd romance*

by those injuries he **hath** done thee, he **has** violated all manner of rights,

1653 EEBO A67462 Izaak Walton [1593–1683] *The compleat angler or, The contemplative man's recreation*

as I know an ingenuous Gentleman in Leicester-shire **has** done; who **hath** not only made her tame, but to catch fish,

And so we see that the blunders which Card thought that Smith had made as a translator are actually instances of Early Modern English. In some cases Smith would not have been familiar with the language. It is possible to present and discuss scores of questionable bits of grammar found in the earliest text; in virtually every instance we find them in the textual record of Early Modern English:

"Here is" with plural noun phrases

Mosiah 18:8

Behold, *here* **is** the WATERS of Mormon, for thus *were they* called.

Alma 11:22

Behold, *here* **is** six ONTIES of silver; and all *these* will I give unto thee

1603 EEBO A09800 Philemon Holland, tr. [1552–1637] | Plutarch *The philosophie, commonlie called, the morals*

> But *here* **is** the HEIGHTS of their folly and errour,

1653 EEBO A86328 Henry Haggar *The foundation of the font discovered to the view of all that desire to behold it*

> observe *here* **is** the WORDS of the Prophet Jeremiah fulfilled

1656 EEBO A44342 Thomas Hooker [1586–1647] *The application of redemption by the effectual work of the word, and spirit of Christ*

> And *here* **is** the LIMITS and BOUNDS of that comfort the Spirit is sent to bring,

Singular and plural *riches*

Helaman 13:31

> the time cometh that he curseth your RICHES,
> that **it** becometh slippery, that ye cannot hold **them**;

1598 EEBO A06447 Francis Meres, tr. | Luis de Granada [1504–1588] *The sinners guyde*

> Consider that where much RICHES **is**, there are many that eate and devoure **them**, many that covet **them**, and many that lye in waite to steale **them**.

Switching from *that*-complementation to an infinitive

Mormon 6:6

> And knowing it to be the last struggle of my people and having been commanded of the Lord that I should not SUFFER **that** the records which had been handed down by our fathers, which were sacred, **to** fall into the hands of the Lamanites

1598 EEBO A02364 A.M., tr. [fl.1598] | Jacques Guillemeau [1550?–1613] *The Frenche chirurgerye*

> which was alsoe an occasione of his resanation, because he SUFFERED, **that** the tronchone of the Launce, which stucke clean through his heade, **to** be with force, and violence drawne therout.

1485 EEBO A21703 Sir Thomas Malory [15th cent.] *Le morte darthur*

> And anone the kynge COMMAUNDED **that** none of them upon payne of dethe **to** myssaye them ne do them ony harme

> > [mis-say = 'speak evil against, revile']

Plural "have + ‹PAST PARTICIPLE›" followed by the {-th} plural in a conjoined predicate

Mosiah 24:23

> for the LAMANITES **have** awoke *and* **doth** pursue thee.

1673 EEBO A26892 Richard Baxter [1615–1691] *A Christian directory*

> when the Churches **have** felt such dreadful concussions,
> *and* **bleedeth** to this day, by so horrid divisions,

1535 EEBO A07430 William Marshall, tr. [fl.1535] | Marsilius of Padua [d.1342?] *The defence of peace*

> And afterwardis it is to be shewed how They **have** used hetherto, *and* **doth** use, and hereafter wyll use these powres,
>
> . . .
>
> They **have** hetherto disceyved, *and* **doth** newe dysceyve *and* **gothe** aboute more and more to begyle and dysceyve,

■   ■   ■

1697 EEBO A58807 John Scott [1639–1695] *Practical discourses upon several subjects*

> and afterwards when *having* **awoke** his Disciples, he returned to his Prayer again,

> This passage has the same past participial leveling seen in Mosiah 24:23.

A large amount of textual evidence — and the foregoing discussion contains only a sliver of it — tells us that Joseph Smith did receive and read a revealed Early Modern English text. Understandably, he may not have been fully aware of it.

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