issues of individual freedoms. She also has interviewed extensively and brought to light the role LDS leaders play in the numerous battles for civil liberties. Indeed, she describes recent cooperative efforts as a tremendous step forward on the part of the ACLU and the LDS church. The volume is a major contribution to Utah history and deserves to be thoughtfully considered.

Similar yet Different

How Wide the Divide? By Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997).

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How Wide the Divide? is a nice change from the typical literature published by evangelical publishing houses concerning the subject of Mormonism. This book attempts to enter into an open dialogue on the basic differing theological backgrounds of two biblical academicians. Blomberg, an Evangelical, and Robinson, a Mormon, dialogue on four primary issues: (1) scripture, (2) God and deification, (3) Christ and the Trinity, and (4) salvation.

These four issues are dealt with in four individual chapters in which each author takes turns explaining his own position. Every chapter begins with an author breaking up his discussion into four sections: (1) what his own religious tradition believes about the particular issue to be discussed, (2) clearing up misconceptions primarily from those in the other's tradition, (3) misgivings about the other tradition's beliefs, and (4) concluding on a positive note towards the other's beliefs. After both authors' expositions, there is a joint conclusion which lists the areas of agreement as well as disagreement.

The focus of the remainder of this review is to comment on and critique the first chapter on "Scripture." Contrary to their joint conclusion, the authors may *not* in fact share the same understanding of inerrancy.

Blomberg explains how more conservative Evangelicals, among whom he includes himself, believe in the inerrancy of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament as they were *originally* given via their writers. He points out that we do not have the original autographs today, but manuscripts or copies of the originals. It is these manuscript variants which allow scholars to reconstruct what the original autographs *most likely* said. Although these manuscripts mostly vary in spelling and grammar, there are variants in which it is not always clear which reading is to be understood as belonging to the original. In

this regard, it is important to note that no Evangelical doctrine rests on any disputed manuscript.

With all this, Robinson claims to be in virtual agreement. He even cites the Mormons' own 8th Article of Faith ("We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly") as having precisely this meaning. It is not the translations *per se* that are the inspired, inerrant word of God, but it is the *correct* translations that count as such.

However, for Latter-day Saints, not only the correct translation, but the correct interpretation ultimately rests on the living prophet to determine. (This is reminiscent of St. Ignatius, ca. sixteenth century, founder of the Society of Jesus, who said of one who lacked obedience of judgment that "[h]e loses the much praised simplicity of *blind obedience* ... perhaps blaming his superior because he commands that which is not to his mind. ... Do not look on the superior as on a man subject to errors and miseries, but look at what you obey in the man, which is *Christ the highest wisdom* ... so, using the inner eyes of the soul rather than the outer eyes, you will be able to confirm your will and judgment" [Paul Van Dyke, *Ignatius Loyola*, 227-28, emphasis added].) For Evangelical Protestants, there is no living prophet to guide the whole church to the correct translation or the correct interpretation. Instead, there are only fallible scholars who would presumably come closer to the truth rather than any nonscholar. Protestants may see what good a living prophet would do for getting the correct translation, but when it comes to interpreting scripture correctly, we each must still fallibly interpret the prophet. If, as Robinson notes, "it is possible to mistranslate or to misinterpret the Hebrew and Greek (or Nephite) texts" (57), then surely it is possible to mistranslate (i.e., inaccurately give the prophet's word in another language) or to misinterpret the living prophet (whether there is maliciousness involved or not). If individuals misinterpreted the living apostle's words to their own destruction in the first century, other individuals would probably do the same today (compare 2 Pet. 3:15-16). Contrary to Robinson, epistemologically there is never any "guarantee of doctrinal correctness" (57) for the church, nor any assurance that "the written word will be interpreted and applied correctly to new contexts" (58), not even if God himself were to state the same thing in a more contemporary way. Here the best kind of "certainty" might be a practical one from inductive verification (compare Paul Helm, *The Divine Revelation*, 76-88). As Dallas Willard has reminded us, "The infallibility of the messenger and the message does not guarantee the infallibility of our reception. Humility is always in order" (*In Search of Guidance*, 31).

Now for Robinson, although prophets are the agents of revelation, could they still be fallible in communicating that revelation? It is this crucial question that Robinson never directly answers, and it is this question that raises ambiguity in his presentation (particularly pp. 56-58). Robinson could really be agreeing or disagreeing with Blomberg and other Evangelicals that the prophets and apostles were infallible in communicating that revelation. For example, Robinson says, "Scripture, including the Book of Mormon, is in our view recorded by men who can and do make mistakes, and it is possible to mistranslate or to misinterpret the Hebrew and Greek (or

Nephite) texts" (57). Who exactly are these men who recorded scripture? Further, do these men, who make mistakes, make mistakes when they record scripture? And who exactly are those who may mistranslate or misinterpret the texts? Are they different from the ones who record the scripture? Could they be the prophets and apostles in either case, or are they merely scribes in both cases?

The understanding that would affirm the former seems to fit with Robinson's next paragraph. Here he says that prophets and apostles receive direct and primary revelation. This is the purest sense of the word of God—"as *word* and *hearing* rather than as *text*" (57). It is the latter which is accompanied by "*recording*, transmission and interpretation" (57, emphasis added). Robinson says that this all depends on fallible reason and language. This all seems to imply a distinction between the original, pure revelation that the individual receives (WORD-1) and the impure, or at least potentially errant (Robinson never claims they were *de facto* initially errant), writings or scriptures that he, or she (at least, in terms of a prophet [e.g., Acts 2:17, 21:9]), records (WORD-2).

Now who must initially *record* the revelation? The prophet or apostle who receives it must initially record it in one's memory and then upon the text by either oneself or via dictation. In either case, Robinson would seem to imply that the recording or communicating would have to be at least potentially fallible. This may be why Robinson says, "The *record* of revelation cannot logically be more authoritative than the *experience* of revelation" (58). This may also explain his understanding of the 8th Article of Faith. Here WORD-2, initially or further along the way, could only be *de facto* the word of God inasmuch as it corresponds to WORD-1.

Again, who determines this correspondence? The living prophet decides to what extent his own revelations, as well as those of former prophets (WORD-2), actually correspond to the pure revelation of God (WORD-1). But if the prophet can record WORD-2 fallibly, it is not at all clear how he "ensures the written word will be interpreted and applied correctly to new contexts" (58).

If one should read Robinson as allowing for the possibility that the initial WORD-2 could have erred, it does not seem to be very congruent with Blomberg's understanding of inerrancy. He said, "We believe that God superintended this process so as to *guarantee* both *the accuracy of the results* and the specific nature of the *content* God wished the *inspired text* to include" (37, emphasis added). Blomberg seems oblivious to this distinction between his understanding of an inerrant original text and Robinson's possible understanding of an inerrant direct revelation with a resulting possible fallible text, since Blomberg affirmed in his joint conclusion, "We hold the same understanding of 'inerrancy,' though the LDS would use different terms to say the same things" (75). Granted this possible understanding of Robinson, Blomberg needed to ask him how he could affirm this understanding of the origin of scripture, while at the same time affirm the abbreviated version of the "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy" that Blomberg quoted: "Inerrancy means that when all facts are known, the Scriptures in their *original autographs* and properly interpreted will be shown to be *wholly true in every-*

thing that they affirm, whether that has to do with doctrine or morality or with the social, physical or life sciences" (35, emphasis added).

It may be surprising to many (both LDS and non-LDS) to read how Robinson may have extended this same logic to the Book of Mormon (compare 56-57). Thus the current edition, as well as the original recording of the Book of Mormon, may not, strictly speaking, be the word of God. They may simply be the words of fallible men who were the recipients of a pure, inerrant word of God, which they consequently attempted to record to the best of *their* ability (this view would seem to fit best with such passages as 1 Nephi 19:6 and Mormon 8:12, 14, 17, 9:33). Concerning the Book of Mormon, Robinson is again far from clear. He says in endnote 7, "See, for example, the title page of the Book of Mormon where the prophet declares, 'And now, if there are faults, they are the mistakes of men.' That is, the revelation itself is not at fault but may be vulnerable to human error in the course of transmission" (205). Given the distinction already discussed between WORD-1 versus WORD-2, we need an account of what type of "revelation" and what type of "human error" (prophets/apostles or merely scribes) are being referred to.

The rest of the discussion of this chapter primarily centers on the question of canonicity, and some of the problems and rebuttals for the supposed latter-day scriptures. Blomberg claims that the canon is open in principle, but closed in terms of practice. Robinson, on the other hand, rejects the canon being closed in any sense. As one who holds to latter-day scriptures, he continually wants to stress that they are in no way contrary to the original *revelation* God gave in the Old and New Testaments simply because they were added to them. The extent to which Robinson succeeds in supporting this claim is something each reader must decide. In so doing, each will determine for him- or herself *How Wide the Divide?*