

Avenues toward Christianity: Mormonism in Comparative Church History, by Christian Gellinek and Hans-Wilhelm Kelling (Global Publications, 2001)

This is not a book to be read in one session. Its title is well chosen because of the richness in diversity and tradition that is reflected in this work. The book does not address a narrow issue, but, as the word *avenues* indicates, takes a broader perspective on the Restoration, Mormon history, and doctrines. The authors, with their heritage in Germany, provide appropriate insights into Mormonism for German readers. At the same time, any reader unfamiliar with Latter-day Saint history in Germany will find that this work provides valuable information, especially about the early days of the Church in Germany and Denmark. The book also covers much of the historical development of Mormonism in the United States, and selective issues and key Mormon doctrines are thoughtfully discussed. Such discussions include perspectives on the Book of Mormon as an extension of the canon of scripture testifying of Christ.

Because they have intimate familiarity with the doctrines of the Reformation, the authors provide the reader with solid arguments about the historical context of Mormonism. Gellinek's previous research of Hugo Grotius demonstrates similarities between the thinking of pre-Renaissance European scholars and doctrines associated with the Restoration. The comparison between Reformed Christianity and Mormon Christianity gives context to views about the purpose of life in both Calvinism and Mormonism.

This is a book that deserves more than one reading. Many of the issues discussed have to be studied and con-

templated; one sitting will not do justice to the intended reach of this scholarly work.

—Jacques du Plessis

In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How It Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture, by Alister McGrath (Anchor Books, 2001)

This thoroughly informative and completely enjoyable volume really tells a story. And what a story it is! The triumphant tale of the King James Bible is complete with political twists, religious controversies, national pride, royal machinations, scholarly posturing, economic opportunism, technological inventions, vested interests, profound compromises, and, ultimately, phenomenal success. The author, who is Professor of Historical Theology at Oxford University and Principal of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, knows this rich story inside and out, and he elucidates every stage and detail with captivating clarity.

Major players in this intriguing story include such notables as Johannes Gutenberg, John Wycliffe, Erasmus of Rotterdam, Martin Luther, Henry VIII, William Tyndale, Miles Coverdale, Richard Grafton, John Calvin, William Whittingham, Queen Elizabeth I, James I, John Reynolds, Richard Bancroft, six companies of translators (two each from Westminster, Cambridge, and Oxford), Charles I, Archbishop William Laud, Oliver Cromwell, and Charles II. How can you lose with a cast like that?

The plot thickens time after time as Bibles battle Bibles, as religious crises hinge on the meanings of single words and phrases, and as fortunes and reputations are made or lost over one fortuitous

or fateful decision after another. As tensions mount, comic relief gratefully arrives as surprising ironies, humorous errors, and remarkable coincidences all line up to yield the King James Bible.

The authorized version of the Bible not only changed the English nation, enthroned the English language, and shaped the English culture; it also was the product of English honor, piety, and stubborn determination. Anyone interested in knowing how the KJV came to be will have a hard time putting this readable book down. And a harder time not picking it up again.

—John W. Welch

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