

EXPANSION AND OPPOSITION, 1851-52

After Lorenzo Snow left Italy in 1851, several large families converted to Mormonism. This development enabled the missionaries to begin meeting in members' homes, obtain their assistance in navigating through the labyrinth of the valleys, take advantage of their networks to make further connections, and overcome language barriers. These conversions also caused the local clergy to take a closer look at the Mormons and their message, and their increasing opposition sometimes led to open confrontations.

Eventually the Waldensian pastors received written material, published by Protestant ministers in Switzerland, which was dismissive of the Mormons. Thus, when Snow returned to Italy, the mission had matured, the church began distributing its own literature, and he contemplated expansion of missionary work beyond the valleys.

A Turning Point

In early February 1851, shortly after Snow's departure, an unplanned and unremarkable meeting took place in Mary Malan Gaydou's home that turned out to be pivotal for the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Italy.¹ Mary, twenty-two years old, had married a local tailor, Anthony Gaydou, the previous September and had settled in Torre Pellice. She was raised several kilometers away in the village of Prassuit, at the mouth of the Angrogna valley, where members of the Malan family were prominent leaders in community affairs and the Waldensian church. Her parents, John Daniel Malan and Pauline Combe Malan, and their seven children spent the winters in Prassuit, where they operated a press to produce cooking and lighting oil from the chestnuts, hazelnuts, walnuts, and seeds that were staples of Waldensian life.

At some point following her marriage and move to Torre Pellice, Mary heard Jabez Woodard preaching to a group of religious seekers (including her younger brother, John Daniel Jr.) during a meeting in a private home. She later described his message as "something that sounded good to me," and her religious curiosity led her to invite Woodard to visit the Gaydou home on several occasions. During one of those visits in early February 1851, Mary introduced Woodard to her father and to her sixteen-year-old brother, Stephen. They invited him to accompany them to their home in Prassuit for religious discussions. Stephen described the events that followed a simple meal together in the Malan home:

[Woodard] told father that inasmuch as he was commissioned to preach the gospel in the same manner as Christ's apostles, and preached the same doctrine, he desired to do so if he could obtain a house wherein he could have the neighbors to assemble. We were able to gather some twenty-five or more of the nearest,

1. This account is based on Malan, "Autobiography and Family Record, 1893"; *Millennial Star*, 15 March 1851, 89-90; Madeleine Malan Farley, "John Daniel Malan Sr.," and James Barker, "Mary Catherine Malan Barker," in *Malan Book of Remembrance*, vol. 1, comp. James Barker Knighton, Lisa Knighton Delap, and J. Malan Heslop (1992), Family History Library; original spellings have been preserved.

and there, for the first time, we heard the gospel in its true light. We were so edified and elated that we could not do otherwise than to invite him to come again, [and] he did not fail to respond some few days after.

After “pondering upon” Woodard’s message, the Malans “were convinced of the truth,” and following their next discussion with him, several family members and friends accepted baptism. “We then proceeded each one of us to testify to the truth, and the spirit of God was made manifest for we were all filled with joy unspeakable,” Stephen recalled. “My mother for the first time spoke in tongues, and this took place exactly three years after the holy day celebration of the emancipation of the Waldenses, viz, the 25th day of February, 1851, eight months to the day when Elder Snow landed in Genoa.”²

Other accounts provide more precise detail about these significant events. Woodard’s correspondence confirms that on 24 February, a few days after the initial meeting of twenty-five people, two young men requested baptism, one of whom was John Daniel Malan Jr.³ After a descent from Prassuit in dense fog and heavy sleet, the group gathered on the bank of the Angrogna River, and Woodard baptized the young men in the ice-covered waters: the second and third converts to Mormonism in Italy (following Bose’s baptism the previous October).

Back in Malan’s home that evening, a rather unruly congregation gathered to hear Woodard’s second sermon. After getting rid of the “chaff” by refusing to speak until the troublemakers left, he recommenced preaching to the “good grain” that remained, with positive results: “The power of God rested upon us. Many a tear rolled down those weather-beaten faces. The next day I baptized ten persons.”⁴ Those ten converts included John Daniel Malan Sr.; his wife, Pauline; their son, Stephen; their twin daughters, Madeleine and Emily, age eleven; and five married members

2. Malan, “Autobiography and Family Record,” 54–58.

3. Mission records, however, list only Malan’s baptism on that date. See “Record of the Italian Mission, Branch of Angrogne,” in Daniel B. Richards, *The Scriptural Allegory* (Salt Lake City: Magazine Printing, 1931), 297.

4. *Millennial Star*, 15 March 1851, 89–90; see also Snow, *The Italian Mission*, 25–26.

of the Malan extended family. The list of converts, however, did not include Mary Malan Gaydou, who had moved to Marseille, France, with her husband following the meeting in her home and before the conversion of her family.⁵

The conversion of the Malan family was a turning point in Latter-day Saint missionary efforts in Italy. The benefits of converting an entire family—especially one of means and prominence in the community—cannot be overstated. Woodard moved out of the Hôtel de l’Ours and resided in a mountainside house in order to live closer to the people and learn their customs and culture. Thereafter, the Malan home became the unofficial headquarters of the mission, providing a foothold, albeit tenuous, that allowed the missionaries to move about more freely and become acquainted with the inhabitants of the other Waldensian valleys. In addition, Woodard ordained John Daniel Sr. and his two sons, John and Stephen, to leadership positions immediately following their baptisms. Their ordinations established the first local leaders and missionaries. The Malan family’s facility with the local languages and cultures, their intimate knowledge of the terrain and trails of the surrounding mountains, and their logistical and emotional support opened up a whole new range of possibilities for proclaiming the message of Mormonism.

The Social Milieu: Waldensian Family and Religious Life

Given the obstacles described by the Mormon missionaries upon their arrival in Torre Pellice, including the Waldensians’ loyalty to tradition and the lack of religious liberty, it is important to consider the factors that influenced the decision of some Waldensians to risk the social opprobrium associated with leaving the faith of their forefathers and embracing a foreign religion transplanted into their insular alpine culture. These factors can only be understood by employing a wide-angle lens to situate specific events

5. Mary joined the church two years later, however, having returned to her family in Prassuit after the disappearance of her husband and the death of her first child in France. During the emigration to Utah in 1855, she obtained an official divorce from her husband (who had unexpectedly reappeared at Liverpool); she married James Barker in 1856. See Barker, “Mary Catherine Malan Barker,” 1:54–55.

within the broader cultural and religious climate of the Waldensian valleys.

Waldensian life in the mid-nineteenth century was centered geographically in four main valleys—the so-called “alpine ghetto,” within which the community’s activities had been confined for nearly three hundred years by the House of Savoy.⁶ The population of the valleys in 1848–49 had reached about twenty-two thousand, a figure that would gradually decline over the next century due to steady emigration.⁷ Due to the legal restrictions, the majority of the inhabitants did not live in towns (like Torre Pellice) on the valley floors but in rock homes built on the mountain slopes and often grouped together in small hamlets. These restrictions stifled the Waldensians’ economic development by severely limiting their access to industrial and commercial activities on the plains of Piedmont and elsewhere on the Italian peninsula.

As a result, most Waldensians were reduced to an agrarian subsistence lifestyle centered on farming modest plots of land and herding sheep and cows on steep, rocky terrain. Besides the pressures of political and religious persecution, daily life was a constant struggle against hunger, health problems, harsh weather conditions, and scenic though perilous natural surroundings. Statistics provide tangible evidence of the grim realities. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Italian peninsula was one of the poorest areas in Europe, life expectancy was only about thirty-five years, and nearly one-fourth of infants died in their first year. The rural population subsisted primarily on cereals, legumes, and fruit, which sometimes consumed more than nine-tenths of income.⁸

On the south-facing, less-steep plots of land, the Waldensians typically planted wheat, rye, and vegetables such as potatoes, cabbage, and turnips. A characteristic feature of the annual planting

6. Claudio Tron et al., “Credo Religioso, Istruzione e Progresso Civile,” in *Civiltà Alpina e Presenza Protestante nelle Valli Pinerolesi* (Turin, Italy: Priuli and Verlucca, 1991).

7. Fiorella Massel, “Contributo alla Storia del Giornalismo Valdese” (bachelor’s thesis, Università degli Studi di Torino, 1980–81), 21.

8. Gianni Toniolo, *An Economic History of Liberal Italy, 1850–1918*, trans. Maria Rees (London: Routledge, 1990), 32–33.

process was the laborious and repetitive task of transporting topsoil and manure in large, shoulder-carried baskets (Italian *gerla*) from lower levels to upper levels of the steep fields to counter the effects of erosion. Water was provided both by rainfall and by irrigation that required a high degree of technical and organizational skill. The grain was harvested by hand with a scythe (most fields were too steep for mechanical equipment), ground into flour in river-powered mills, and used to bake loaves of hard bread that would keep for long periods.⁹ Vegetables were commonly stored in cellars under a layer of moist sand for consumption during the extended winter season. Fruit was harvested from small orchards, and grape vineyards were highly prized and carefully cultivated, wherever possible, for the production of wine. Nuts were collected and stored for culinary use or processed for lighting oil.

Unlike many peasants in Italy, Waldensians were able occasionally to supplement their basic diet of cereals, fruit, and vegetables with meat provided by hunting wild animals in the mountains. If a family could afford a few sheep or goats or cows, they enjoyed the added nutritional benefit of butter, cheese, and milk. Vegetable soup and hardened bread often were the only daily foods, with a side dish of a little cheese and a piece of fruit.¹⁰

While daily life from April through September focused on the production and preservation of food, Waldensian families faced other challenges year-round. The government's denial of access to medical schools for Waldensians meant a scarcity of competent health care, so most illnesses and diseases were left unchecked or were attended to with traditional folk remedies. A high incidence of physical deformities, the natural result of centuries of inbreeding among an isolated population, was noted by visitors to the valleys. The success of the annual harvest that determined to a large extent the quality of life for the entire year was completely at the mercy of Mother Nature. Thus the line between starvation

9. At the beginning of the cold season, every family baked many loaves of bread in order to have enough for the whole winter—bread that became extremely hard and so dry that there was no danger of it becoming moldy. See Teofilo G. Pons, *Vita Montanara e Folklore nelle Valli Valdesi* (Turin: Claudiana, 1992), 197.

10. Pons, *Vita Montanara e Folklore nelle Valli Valdesi*, 21, 103–4, 197.



Examples of Waldensian homes, typically built on the mountain sides of the Cottian Alps rather than on the valley floors. Reprinted from Papini, Come Vivevano.

and satiation was always tenuous. Just one period of drought or a torrential rainfall, a severe hailstorm, or an early snowfall—all of which were common in this alpine climate—could destroy an entire summer crop and create untold suffering during the ensuing winter months. Waldensian records cite perilous natural surroundings as another source of threat and hardship: drownings in the swift-flowing mountain streams, fatalities from falling down steep inclines, and in winter the ever-present danger of avalanches sweeping away entire homes and families. Waldensian tradition contains many stories detailing the constant fear of being devoured by the wolves that infested the valleys, attacked by brigands and murderers roaming the mountains, harmed by supernatural powers such as fairies and witches lurking in the forests, and kidnapped by the Catholics.¹¹

In light of the religious and social discrimination and daily travail, it is not surprising to find in Waldensian folklore “a sense of congenital sadness,” to use one scholar’s phrase. Proverbs and legends reveal a people whose nature is “serious, melancholy, resigned, sad: more inclined to pain than to joy, to anxiety than to being carefree, and to pessimism than to optimism. . . . In fact, when one thinks of our ancestors’ troubled past, one is amazed at the fact that they were able to maintain themselves at an elevated level of resignation, without falling into desperation or the blackest fatalism.”¹² This is evident in Waldensian proverbs:

L'uomo è nato per soffrire (Man is born to suffer);

Chi muore ha finito di tribolare (Whoever dies ceases to know tribulation);

Iddio non vuole contento nessuno, su questa terra (God doesn’t want anyone to be content, on this earth);

11. On Waldensian folklore and oral traditions, see Arturo Genre and Oriana Bert, eds., *Leggende e Tradizioni Popolari delle Valli Valdesi* (Turin: Claudiana, 1977); Fabio Mugnaini, “Narrativa di Tradizione Orale,” in *Gens du Val Germanasca: Contribution à l’Ethnologie d’une Vallée Vaudoise* (Grenoble: L’Université de Provence et Centre Alpin et Rhodanien d’Ethnologie, 1994); Pons, *Vita Montanara e Folklore nelle Valli Valdesi*, and *Vita Montanara e Tradizioni Popolari Alpine (Valli Valdesi)* (Turin: Claudiana, 1979).

12. Pons, *Vita Montanara e Folklore nelle Valli Valdesi*, 41–42.



The Chiot d' l'Aiga mill in Angrogna is an example of water-powered mills and presses often situated on rivers in the Waldensian valleys during the nineteenth century. This mill was one of the last ones to remain active in the region. Reprinted from Papini, Come Vivevano, image 105.

Quando il povero vuol fare il pane, crolla il forno (When the poor man wants to make bread, the oven falls into pieces).¹³

The family played a central role in helping Waldensians cope with the political, economic, and natural vicissitudes of life. Family members of all ages participated in the labors of the farming season (from April to September), cultivating the fields, caring for the animals, and harvesting and preserving the crops. A focal point of Waldensian life was the traditional *veglia*, the family gathering each evening following the day's activities. In larger homes, extended family and neighbors often joined the family for the *veglia*, which was often held in the animal stable (*stalla*)

13. Pons, *Vita Montanara e Folklore nelle Valli Valdesi*, 42, 44.



SCUOLA VALDESE

IL TORO DEL SIGNORE
E IL "APPOCALISSA" 1872

The Waldensian Church, with the help of General Beckwith, created a capillary network of small elementary schools to teach basic literacy skills to children in remote mountain areas at a time when such education was generally not provided by the municipal or state government. Above the door of this school is a biblical quote from Proverbs 1:7: "Il timor del Signore è il capo della scienza." [The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge]. Reprinted from Papini, Come Vivevano, image 96.

that was typically constructed to adjoin the house.¹⁴ The *veglia* played a vital role in maintaining the fabric of Waldensian society, providing a regular time for relaxing, exchanging social pleasantries, planning work, doing school assignments, teaching children artisanal skills, shelling chestnuts, discussing religion and politics, and telling stories.¹⁵

With the arrival of the cold season (October through March), the pace and activities of life took on a new complexion. The family lived almost exclusively in the *stalla* during this period in order to benefit from the heat produced by the animals.¹⁶ In the house there were one or more rooms, but they did not always suffice to provide sleeping space for all family members, some of whom slept in the kitchen, in the hay manger, or on the floor of the *stalla*. This was the time to repair equipment, weave baskets, sew and mend clothes, make plans for the coming year, court, sing, and recount stories and legends.¹⁷

Winter was also the time of education: The Waldensian focus on Bible study provided strong motivation to teach children basic literacy in French. Until the nineteenth century, children were taught to read and write in a *stalla* by a literate adult. With the help of foreigners like Charles Beckwith, all 169 Waldensian hamlets by 1848 had a one-room school with trained teachers and an expanded curriculum,¹⁸ with the result that literacy rates among Waldensians were much higher than among the surrounding

14. Mugnaini, "Narrativa di Tradizione Orale," 244–45.

15. Pons, *Vita Montanara e Tradizioni Popolari Alpine*, 10, 12.

16. Snow, *The Italian Mission*, 18–19.

17. Notes taken at the Museo delle Valli Valdesi, Torre Pellice, 6 May 1999.

18. Giorgio Tourn, *I Valdesi: La Singolare Vicenda di un Popolo-Chiesa (1170–1976)* (Turin: Claudiana, 1999), 216. See also Gian Vittorio Avondo, "Scuola e Scolarità,"

Catholic population.¹⁹ During winter many Waldensian men traveled to the forbidden plains of Italy, even as far as Turin, to accept menial jobs in order to augment the family's scanty resources. More commonly, they crossed the Alps to work in Marseille or Lyon or Geneva, returning to their families around Easter each year. Sometimes even the women and teenagers undertook this migration to bring home hard-earned savings to help pay family debts.²⁰

This annual migration and the historical ties between Waldensians and Protestants opened the "alpine ghetto" to liberal ideas that were flowing throughout Europe in the nineteenth century. The relatively higher rates of literacy among Waldensians and their exposure to voices advocating political and religious reform helped bring about a "cultural revolution" in the valleys between 1825 and 1850, just prior to the arrival of the Mormon missionaries.²¹ One aspect of this revolution was the Waldensian drive for education; another was the social and religious crisis that emerged in the Waldensian community after the month-long visit of a charismatic young Swiss preacher, Felix Neff, in 1825. With great passion and oratorical flair, he introduced the ideas of the European evangelical revival, known as the *Réveil* (awakening), to the residents of the Pellice valley.

Initially, only a small number of individuals joined the revivalist movement, but soon even leading Waldensian officials and families embraced the new ideas. In contrast to services in the established church, revivalist meetings were held both on Sundays and weekday evenings (fitting nicely into the tradition of the *veglia*). Heavily influenced by the Pietist movement in Germany and Switzerland, the revivalists called for a more personal, spontaneous form of worship emphasizing the authority of scripture and Bible study, the priesthood of all believers, individual experience with the Divine, and charismatic spiritual manifestations such

in Claudio Tron et al., *Civiltà Alpina e Presenza Protestante nelle Valli Pinerolesi* (Turin: Priuli and Verlucca, 1991).

19. Massel, "Contributo alla Storia del Giornalismo Valdese," 27.

20. Pons, *Vita Montanara e Tradizioni Popolari Alpine (Valli Valdesi)*, 130–31.

21. Tourn, *I Valdesi*, 214–17.



The Waldensian school in the Odin quarter of Angrogna, showing some school children and their teacher, Maria Monastier. Notice the goat on the far right, a reminder that the Waldensians referred jokingly to these schools as the “Universities of the Goats” because of the surrounding steep mountain terrain. Reprinted from Papini, Come Vivevano, image 92.

as visions, speaking in tongues, prophesying, and faith healing. They denounced the church’s reliance on rationalism and formalism and hierarchy that, in their view, deprived worshippers of the charismatic influence of God’s Spirit.²²

The revivalists’ critique extended to Waldensian culture—popular forms of entertainment such as shooting, dancing, and singing—that they deemed to be immoral. But these denunciations aroused the ire of many in the community who viewed the new movement as fanatic and foreign and its criticism as a betrayal and an insult to the Waldensian way of life. The leadership of the Waldensian Church, faced with the prospect of schism, discharged several pastors from their positions, who thereafter formed a separate church in 1831. But when the Waldensians

22. See Giorgio Spini, *Risorgimento e Protestanti* (Turin: Claudiana, 1998). Also Hans J. Hillerbrand, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Protestantism*, vol. 4 (New York: Routledge, 2004), 709–10, 962–63, 1608–11, 1839–40.

instituted reforms, including greater participation of lay members and more focus on Bible study, prayer meetings, and missionary work, the revivalist “faction was gradually reabsorbed into the mainstream.” However, tension remained “between ‘traditionalists’ and the ‘converted,’ between people bound to past forms of Protestant life and those open to renewal.”²³

These cultural and religious factors may have influenced the Waldensians’ reaction to Mormon missionaries. Centuries of repression and persecution within the confines of the alpine ghetto, together with traditional lore about the perils of the local surroundings, fostered a natural suspicion of strangers’ motives and a fierce loyalty to tradition as a means of personal and communal survival.²⁴ Restricted economic opportunity and a grueling subsistence lifestyle were a hindrance to missionary efforts because, as the missionaries themselves often noted, the arduous daily routine left little time for people to engage in prolonged religious discussions with outsiders.

But economic hardship (particularly the crisis of the mid-1850s) and social turmoil also worked in the missionaries’ favor. Empty stomachs and aching backs rendered people more amenable to the prospect of emigration and financial betterment which conversion to the LDS Church seemed to offer. Accounts of the early converts demonstrate that many of those who had been influenced by the dissident revivalist questioning of the religious status quo sought a purer form of Christianity and experienced personal spiritual manifestations such as visions, dreams, prophesying, and speaking in tongues. Stephen Malan recalled the spirit of the revivalist movement and the social ferment it engendered in the Waldensian valleys during his boyhood and saw the religious discontentment, accompanied by spiritual manifestations experienced by adult family members, as preparing the ground for the coming of Mormonism.²⁵

23. Tourn et al., *You Are My Witnesses*, 162–63; and Tourn, *I Valdesi*, 214–15.

24. Pons, *Vita Montanara e Tradizioni Popolari Alpine (Valli Valdesi)*, 168.

25. Malan, “Autobiography and Family Record,” 31–36, 54–58.



A Waldensian farmer shouldering a gerla, commonly used to transport topsoil and fertilizer to erosion-depleted fields high in the mountains. Reprinted from Papini, Come Vivevano, 44.

Other Malan family members recorded similar experiences, and these suggest why some Waldensians were prepared to embrace religious alternatives such as Mormonism, even after a brief exposure. Mary Malan, who introduced Jabez Woodard to

her family, reports in her autobiography an injunction given by her grandfather: “The old may not, but the young will see the day when the Gospel will be preached in its purity, and in that day Mary, remember me.” Her mother, Pauline Combe Malan, also recalled a vision she had at age fifteen while working seasonally with her father in a sericulture business in the Piedmont plains. One day, while she was pondering some verses in the Bible, twelve personages appeared in a bright light and sang a hymn with her. Her mother, upon learning of the vision, proclaimed it a fulfillment of the prophecy in Acts 2:17, that in the last days God would pour out his spirit on all flesh and that men and women, young and old, would prophesy and see visions. The Malans, like many other Waldensians, lived in a home and in a time when “everyone was talking more freely and we were looking for some change.”²⁶

It is clear, then, that the timing of the first mission to Italy was propitious. When Mormon missionaries arrived in the Waldensian valleys, there existed a spirit of revival and spiritual seeking, and some inhabitants of the isolated mountain enclave remained more willing to risk the social consequences of religious conversion. The issue of timing, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, emerges as a crucial factor in determining the progress of future Latter-day Saint missionary efforts in Italy.

Expanding Deeper into the Waldensian Enclave

In the late fall of 1850, Marie Madeleine Cardon, age sixteen, was living with her parents, two sisters, and four brothers near Prarostino.²⁷ Originally the Cardon family came from the borgata Cardon near Roccapiatta, located high up on the western flank of the Turinella River valley. But Philippe Cardon had moved his family down from the mountainsides to the plains of Piedmont following the Edict of Emancipation in 1848 so that he could expand his

26. Barker, “Mary Catherine Malan Barker,” 53–55.

27. This discussion of the Cardon family is from Guild, “Autobiography”; and letter of Marie Madeleine Cardon Guild, 12 January 1903, “Correspondence 1898–1903,” MS 894, Church History Library.

business. The family was devout in its religious observances, and Philippe cherished the one book in his possession, a family Bible more than two hundred years old from which he instructed his wife and children each evening during the *veglia*.

Years later, Philippe recounted that he came home early from work one day in a state of excitement and asked his wife to prepare his Sunday clothes. He had just heard from one of his employees at the building site that three strangers in Torre Pellice were preaching curious new religious doctrines. Marie also recalled after her conversion that she had experienced a vision at age six in which she saw three strangers who approached while she was tending cows. They introduced themselves as servants of God and spoke to her of a young prophet named Joseph, through whom God had revealed the fullness of the gospel. After offering her some books to read, “they said the day would come when my parents and family would embrace this Gospel and others of the house of Israel would also embrace this Gospel and the day was not far when we would repent and be baptized . . . and would be called to Zion. They spoke of our journey on the desert plains and many a thing which pertained to our future.” When she awoke, Marie recounted her dream to her parents, who “did not let one word escape their mind, and though neither one of them could write this wonderful warning or vision, yet they knew that this was something worth to be felt excited over what I had told them. They treasured up every word in their memory.”²⁸

Philippe recalled hearing his daughter’s report and reflecting on it many times. After the long walk over the mountain and through Val Angrogna to Torre Pellice, he arrived on Sunday morning just in time to hear three missionaries preach Mormonism.



Marie Madeleine Cardon as a young woman. Courtesy of lds.org.

28. Guild, “Correspondence.”

Afterwards, he invited them to return home with him and along the way recounted his daughter's vision. When the Mormon missionaries arrived at the Cardon home, they asked to see Marie, who was sitting in a field. "Upon being introduced," she recalled, "I shook hands with each of them. They took some tracts or small books from their pockets and spoke the very same words I had heard in the dream or vision."²⁹ After this meeting at the family farm in San Secondo, the Cardons became convinced that the Mormon missionaries were the messengers bearing a divine message foretold in Marie's vision, and she reported that "somewhere near the 9th of May 1851" her parents were baptized.³⁰

Marie recorded in her autobiography that her father was "the first man to join in that part of the country." Marie, though not yet baptized, sought zealously to persuade her two older sisters to embrace the missionaries' teachings. The married daughter, Anne, age twenty-nine, desired baptism but was forbidden by her husband from visiting her parents' home or meeting with the missionaries. After that, to avoid causing marital strife, Marie reluctantly agreed to refrain from discussing religion with Anne. The other sister, Catherine, was working as a governess for the wife of a local Waldensian pastor and "heard so much opposition to Mormonism that she hardly knew what to believe."³¹ After much urging from Marie, however, she quit her job in the minister's home and was soon baptized.

29. Guild, "Autobiography," 5.

30. Guild, "Correspondence." It is difficult to construct a clear picture of the chronology of these events and who participated in them because the sources are at times contradictory. Church records indicate that Marie Madeleine's parents, Philippe and Marthe Marie, were baptized in San Secondo by Elder John Daniel Malan in January 1852 and that Malan baptized Marie Madeleine and three of her siblings later that year (in October and November 1852). See "Record of the Italian Mission, Branch of Saint Bartholomew," in Richards, *The Scriptural Allegory*, 307. We also know that Stenhouse left Italy by December 1850; Snow left by February 1851; Toronto returned to Piedmont from Sicily in August 1851 and stayed until March 1852; and Woodard remained in Piedmont until January 1854. The Cardon family genealogist acknowledged that "there is some confusion about the actual dates" of the baptisms and related events. Boyd Louis Cardon, email to author, 24 August 2014. See the discussion of these issues at www.thecardonfamilies.org.

31. Guild, "Autobiography," 5, 7.

Ironically, Marie, the ardent advocate of the new faith, was one of the last members of her family to join, deferring baptism “for over a week or so.” Her explanation reveals a young woman of intellectual and spiritual independence: “Despite the dream or vision I had when a child, I felt that I must be entirely sure and satisfied of that which I was about to embrace. I determined to fast and pray in secret. . . . I would often go into my room, fasten the door, kneel down and pour out my soul to God, beseeching [*sic*] Him to look down upon me with His love and tenderness and to reveal unto me His truth. Not disheartened, but hopeful, I kept on day after day at intervals, until I did receive an answer from God that this gospel was true and that once more it was re-established upon the earth never more to be taken away.”³²

Woodard’s wry observation in May 1851 that “I am still . . . able to climb mountains, if I cannot move them” hints at how the focus of Mormon missionary efforts had gradually shifted from the village setting of Torre Pellice to the rural mountainsides and rock homes of the inner Waldensian enclave.³³ It became common practice for the Waldensian converts to accompany the missionaries as they trekked up and down the rugged, unfamiliar trails from one remote hamlet or home to another.

Woodard’s account of his travels in early May with “a teacher from the mountains” (perhaps Stephen Malan, who had been ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood after his baptism three months earlier) provides a glimpse of the harsh conditions that were the daily reality of life for mountain dwellers and the missionaries who worked among them.³⁴ For days they walked, often going long periods without seeing “anything but the winding torrent and barren mountains” and sleeping in small cottages lacking

32. Guild, “Autobiography,” 7.

33. *Millennial Star*, 15 June 1851, 186.

34. *Millennial Star*, 15 June 1851, 186. Malan had been assigned to assist the missionaries in their proselytizing activities. He reported accompanying them “partly as guide through the mountain passes, [and] sometimes when a new recruit was not thoroughly master of the language.” He adds, with a note of pride, that he also played an active role in the religious discussions: “I was so far informed in the line of our principles that I was often requested to discuss them with the sectarian ministers and invariably brought them to the wall.” Malan, “Autobiography and Family Record, 1893,” 59, 65.

basic amenities.³⁵ Woodard counted it a miracle to find glass windows one night because it had been “near a month since I had slept where there was a pane of glass.” Another night, during a violent thunderstorm, the rain seeped through the slate rock roof and dashed in big drops on his face as he lay in bed. In stoic fashion, he thought to himself, “I am not so bad off now as the brethren who have slept under a hedge.” With only rudimentary shelter available, dealing with the snow and cold at high elevation, even in early spring, was a struggle. “I could not get warm,” Woodard noted, only partially in jest, “till I got a small congregation, and warmed myself with preaching.” He also commented on the constant peril of avalanches and high winds in the area, citing several recent incidents in which houses and their occupants had been crushed or blown over the sides of cliffs.³⁶ Snow had observed that during wintertime heavy snowfall made travel almost impossible, isolating the people from each other: “At this season they are surrounded with snows from three to six feet deep, and in many instances all communication is cut off between one village and another.”³⁷

The missionaries were ill prepared for the linguistic barrier they encountered as they left the valleys and pushed deeper into the interior regions of the mountain community. It became necessary for Stephen Malan, Marie Cardon, and other local converts to accompany them because neither French nor Italian—the two languages with which the missionaries had some facility in early 1851—was an adequate means of communication. Snow had observed that even though French was generally understood in the valleys, “in many parts it is spoken imperfectly, and with an admixture of Italian and provincialism. The latter is understood by a considerable number of persons; but it is not extensively used. In fact, this is a place where there are at least five distinct dialects

35. Some homes, especially those in the more populous areas of the valleys, were more spacious and accommodating. But a Waldensian scholar, Teofilo Pons, observes that the higher up one goes on the mountainsides, where many of the people live, the more poor and miserable the dwellings become. See Pons, *Vita Montanara*, 156–57.

36. *Millennial Star*, 15 June 1851, 186; see also *Millennial Star*, 1 April 1854, 205.

37. *Millennial Star*, 1 April 1852, 108.

spoken by different classes.”³⁸ Marie Cardon also commented on why native interpreters were required: “The humble mountaineers could speak neither English, French or Italian. They had lived apart on the mountains so long that they had developed a dialect of their own. Thus it was almost impossible for the elders to make themselves understood. It was my good fortune to be able to speak both French and Italian. I could also speak and understand the dialect of the mountaineers. I therefore was selected to travel with the elders on their journeys and act as their interpreter.”³⁹

Thus, the missionaries were stymied until the new converts could provide assistance in dealing with the quadrilingual reality: French was the language used for educational and ecclesiastical purposes, Italian was the medium for government and legal transactions, Piedmontese was the spoken dialect of the Catholics, and the Waldensian dialect was virtually the sole means of communication for the majority of the ghetto’s peasantry.⁴⁰ The Waldensian dialect, called *patouà*, was primarily an oral rather than written language, thus making study of it problematic. To add to the complexity, there were (as Snow suggested) at least five major variations of the dialect corresponding to major regions of the valleys: Germanasca, Chisone, Angrogna, Pellice Superiore, and the “external” areas including Torre Pellice.⁴¹

By the beginning of August 1851, there were thirty-one converts to Mormonism. Joseph Toronto, having found no success during the past year in converting his family in Sicily, had returned to labor with Woodard in Piedmont.⁴² Snow, still in England

38. Snow, *The Italian Mission*, 13.

39. Guild, “Autobiography,” 5.

40. *Millennial Star*, 28 January 1854, 61.

41. See Teofilo G. Pons, *Dizionario del Dialetto Valdese della Val Germanasca* (Torre Pellice: Collana della Società di Studi Valdesi, 1973); and Rossana Sappé, “La Situazione Linguistica,” in *Civiltà Alpina e Presenza Protestante nelle Valli Pinerolesi*, Claudio Tron et al. (Turin: Priuli and Verlucca, 1991).

42. In his oral report to church leaders in Salt Lake City in 1853, Toronto gave a brief but poignant explanation for his fruitless efforts to convert his family in Palermo: “[Toronto] gave an account of his mission to his native Sicily, of his reception by his relatives, who imagined he was very rich, but on finding him poor, treated him coldly.” More than twenty-five years later, in January 1876 at age sixty, Toronto embarked on a second mission to Sicily, returning to Salt Lake City in May 1877 with fourteen Sicilian relatives, none of whom joined the church. *Journal History*, 2 January 1853; see also

supervising the translation of the Book of Mormon, reported that “several intelligent and influential Italians have lately been ordained to the priesthood” and were assisting with the missionary efforts. Woodard had sent at least one of the local members to proselytize in Pinerolo, the first major Catholic settlement located at the mouth of Chisone valley, and he was pondering how to expand the missionary campaign into other parts of Italy: “Turin does not present any opening, but towards the Mediterranean it seems that amid the goings and comings of commerce, some of the seeds might travel far.”⁴³ The Malan and Cardon homes had become centers of church activity in Angrogna and Prarostino, and both families housed and fed the elders and hosted religious gatherings. These two homes also served as twin bases of operation for proselytizing forays into other parts of the enclave during the week and as official places of worship for church services on Sunday.

The growing interest in the new religious movement from America was particularly strong among those who sought the reform of their own church. Stephen Malan observed that the conversions in his family “soon awoke a considerable excitement in the neighborhood. Some for curiosity to see a foreigner, a new doctrine proclaimed, others who theretofore were intimately acquainted with Father and his religious views were earnest [*sic*] in seeking the truth.” His record underscores the point that the climate of religious agitation between reformist and traditionalist factions in Waldensian society was undoubtedly a contributing factor in Mormonism’s attractiveness. Those who had denounced corruption in the Waldensian Church, Malan observed, had been “ostracized by the community,” and they were “the ones who were eager to investigate our principles.”⁴⁴

Marie Cardon noted that members and investigators would “arise early Sunday mornings and travel for miles, arriving at our home in time for meeting in the afternoon. Many were sincere in

Brigham Young History 1853:4, Church History Library; and Toronto, “Giuseppe Efisio Taranto,” 138, 142.

43. *Millennial Star*, 1 October 1851, 302.

44. Malan, “Autobiography and Family Record, 1893,” 63.

their search and worship, while others came merely to find fault and satisfy their curiosity. All were welcome at my father's home, whether friend or foe. . . . We had a large brick oven. It was a usual occurrence to bake up one hundred pounds of flour and large quantities of meat, etc. to feed the people. It was our pride to see that all were satisfied and that none went hungry."⁴⁵

The Clergy Intensify Their Opposition to Mormon Proselytism

After the Mormon missionaries decided in September 1850 to commence public preaching in Torre Pellice, they began to encounter resistance from Waldensian clergy. The missionaries reported that anti-Mormon literature was circulated, public debates were organized, and the missionaries' activities were denounced from the pulpits. By the end of summer 1851, with the missionary campaign reaching ever deeper into the heartland of the Waldensian enclave and with the conversion of prominent families, the concern and opposition of local ministers intensified. An excerpt from Marie Cardon's autobiography describes "an exciting and intensely interesting day" following her family's baptism, and provides an example of the tensions stirred up in the close-knit mountain community by the emergence of the new religious group:

As soon as it became known that my parents and most of my family had embraced the gospel and joined the church of Christ, my minister united with other ministers of the Vaudois faith and incited the whole country against us. . . .

When Sunday came, large crowds of people gathered around our house. We were holding our meeting as usual. I was standing by the elders interpreting what they had spoken from the Bible. Suddenly four or five ministers and a number of illboding men began yelling and shrieking most hideously. They cried, "Where are those wolves in sheeps clothing?" "Bring them out." . . .

Just as the mob were shouting to bring the elders and myself out, I had the Bible in my hand. I walked out of the building and

45. Guild, "Autobiography," 5.

approached [them] with the Bible opened. The mob commenced ridiculing the Bible saying that it was a false one and that it had been written by the elders, to deceive the people.

As the situation became more unruly, Marie raised her right hand in which she held the Bible and demanded that they depart because “the elders were under my protection.” The ministers then turned and asked the crowd to leave, and “they dispersed with sullen faces.”⁴⁶

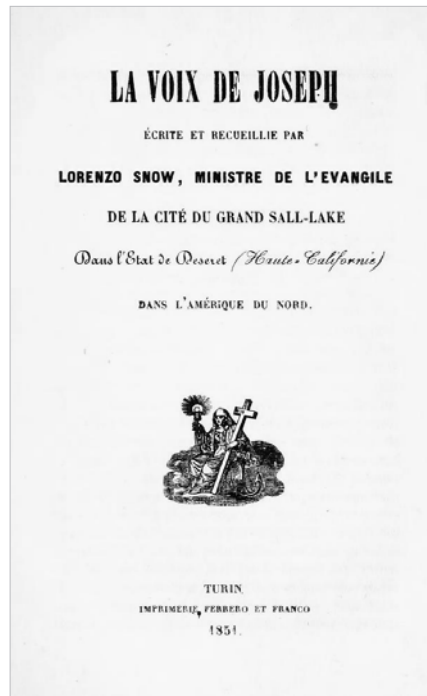
At that point, Marie later recalled, her former minister asked her to visit his home that afternoon at four o'clock so that he and other ministers could question her. After the church service was concluded, she walked three miles to the minister's home—the same one that her sister Catherine worked in as a governess. Catherine met her at the gate and pleaded with her not to go in because she had heard the ministers conferring and there was a possibility that the inquisition could result in Marie's incarceration. The meeting, however, went ahead as planned, and Marie reported that the ministers treated her courteously even while asking her many questions about the Bible that were, for a young woman of relatively limited education, difficult to answer. But, having studied the Bible carefully and memorized “a great portion of it,” she responded ably to every query posed by the ministers, and the meeting ended on a cordial note: “Their attempts to confound me were futile. All they could say in conclusion was that they were sorry for my family and me, that we were being led away by those deceivers. They expressed a desire that God would be with us and guide us in the truth. I very earnestly thanked them and left the room.”⁴⁷

Stephen Malan attributed the pastors' opposition to fear of losing their flock and thus their livelihood. He contended that, to dissuade the people from listening to the missionaries, pastors resorted to writing diatribes in newspapers and spreading rumors that the missionaries were hired by Brigham Young to find slaves and polygamous wives for Mormon leaders in the “Western deserts of America.” And often, according to Malan's account, the tac-

46. Guild, “Autobiography,” 5–7.

47. Guild, “Autobiography,” 6.

tics were successful. He reported that a pattern emerged in the missionaries' preaching. After the first meeting, they generally were complimented and "hospitably received, fed and lodged handsomely with an earnest invitation to come again." But afterward the ministers made their rounds and "with intensity of bitterness reviled us," and the people, "looking upon these ministers as being invulnerable to utter any falsehood, were astounded at our cunning art of deception—we had appeared unto them by our language as angels of light." One minister's "tirade" against the missionaries was so effective "that upon our promised visit, anticipating to do a good work among willing ears, we found all the doors closed and not a living soul in sight, as sheep hiding from the ravenous wolves as we were looked upon in this instance."⁴⁸



Title page of Lorenzo Snow's La voix de Joseph. Courtesy of Church History Library.

Pamphleteering and the Press: The Mormon Question in Print

The clergy's opposition was supported by pamphleteering in Switzerland. On 1 August 1851, Woodard reported to Snow that "a tract of forty-six pages has been issued against us in Switzerland, and a plentiful supply has arrived here [in Italy]."⁴⁹ This pamphlet,

48. Malan, "Autobiography and Family Record, 1893," 59–62.

49. *Millennial Star*, 1 October 1851, 301.

and others that followed, responded to Snow's *La voix de Joseph* (printed in Turin the previous January) as well as his *Exposition de premiers principes* that was printed in both Turin and Geneva. The tract, entitled *Lettre sur les Mormons de la Californie* (Letter on the Mormons of California), was written by Louis Favez, who championed the Spaulding theory of the origin of the Book of Mormon and criticized selected portions of Snow's pamphlets.⁵⁰ Then in 1853, Emile Guers wrote *L'Irvingisme et le Mormonisme jugés à la lumière de la parole de Dieu* (Irvingism and Mormonism Tested by the Light of the Word of God), in which he compared Mormonism and Irvingism and criticized "the corpus vile" of Snow's "paltry pamphlets."⁵¹

Stenhouse replied to Favez and Guers in a pamphlet entitled *Les Mormons (Saints des Derniers Jours) et leurs ennemis* (The Mormons [Latter-day Saints] and their enemies), which was published in Lausanne in 1854 and was distributed in Switzerland and Italy. Both Favez and Guers responded to Stenhouse. Favez wrote a two-volume response in 1854 and 1856 entitled *Fragments sur les Mormons* (Fragments on the Mormons); and in 1855, Guers wrote *Le Mormonisme polygame* (Mormon polygamy). Both authors also commented on the newly announced doctrine of plural marriage.⁵² Another Protestant minister, Frédéric Desmons, wrote and published a thesis in 1856 concerning the Mormons in

50. Louis Favez, *Lettre sur les Mormons de la Californie* (Vevey: E. Buvelot, 1851).

51. Emile Guers, *L'Irvingisme et le mormonisme jugés à la lumière de la Parole de Dieu* (Geneva: Émile Beroud, 1853). In 1854, the book by Guers was translated into English and published in London. See Guers, *Irvingism and Mormonism Tested by Scripture* (London: J. Nisbet and Co., 1854).

52. See T. B. H. Stenhouse, *Les Mormons (Saints des Derniers-Jours) et leurs ennemis. Réponse à divers ouvrages contre le Mormonisme par MM. Guers, Favez, A. Pichot, comte de Gasparin, etc.* (Lausanne: Larpin et Coendoz, 1854). Further responses were published by Louis Favez in *Fragments sur les Mormons*, 2 vols. (Lausanne: Delafontaine et Comp., 1854–56). The first volume (1854) is entitled *Joseph Smith et les Mormons ou examen de leurs prétentions relativement à leur bible, à leur prophète et à leur église*. The second volume (1856) is entitled *Le mormonisme jugé d'après ses doctrines, exposé succinct des notions mormonees et de leur valeur relativement à la sainte écriture*. Emile Guers's responses were published in *Le mormonisme polygame* (Geneva: Émile Beroud, 1855). See also Wilfried Decoo, "The Image of Mormonism in French Literature, part 1," *BYU Studies* 14, no. 2 (Winter 1974): 157–75.

which he cited Lorenzo Snow's pamphlets as well as Stenhouse's reply to Favez and Guers.⁵³

In addition, Count Agenor de Gasparin, a French Protestant who had relocated to Switzerland, wrote a series of articles between December 1852 and May 1853 criticizing the Mormons (to which Frédéric Monod made two small contributions) that were published in *Archives du Christianisme au dix-neuvième siècle*.⁵⁴ Both were prominent evangelicals and founders of the *Union des Églises Évangéliques* (Free Churches) in France, but in 1850, after Louis Napoleon's coup, de Gasparin settled in Geneva. Although de Gasparin was a strong advocate of religious freedom (as a result of his experiences in France where the government limited protestant evangelization) he reminded his fellow evangelicals that Mormonism was an "imposture" and warned them to be more vigilant in their evangelization since "there are [Mormons] who disturb and compromise the evangelical movement in Piedmont."⁵⁵

During the same period, the Religious Tract Society, which published the book that attracted Snow to the Waldensians, published four tracts about Mormonism shortly after the commencement of the Italian Mission.⁵⁶ Then in 1854, William John

53. Frédéric Desmons, *Essai Historique et Critique du Mormonisme* (Strasbourg: Imprimerie de Veuve Berger-Levbault, Imprimeur de L'Académie, 1856).

54. Agenor de Gasparin, "Les Mormons I," *Archives du Christianisme au XIXe siècle*, Serie 2, Tome 20, no. 23, 11 December 1852, 185–87; de Gasparin, "Les Mormons II," *Archives*, Serie 2, Tome 21, no. 2, 22 January 1853, 15–18; Frédéric Monod, "Les Mormons III," *Archives*, Serie 2, Tome 21, no. 4, 26 February 1853, 41–45; de Gasparin, "Les Mormons IV," *Archives*, Serie 2, Tome 21, no. 7, 9 April 1853, 66–69; de Gasparin, "Les Mormons V," *Archives*, Serie 2, Tome 21, no. 8, 23 April 1853, 74–77, the last part of this article, "Polygamie des Mormons" is by Monod; de Gasparin, "Les Mormons—Sixième et dernier article," *Archives*, Serie 2, Tome 21, no. 9, 14 May 1853, 83–86.

55. de Gasparin, "Les Mormons I," 185.

56. See *Mormonism* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1851), Tract no. 598; *The Doctrines of Mormonism* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1853), Tract no. 599; *Is Mormonism True or Not?* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1853), Tract no. 600; and *Reasons I Cannot Become a Mormonite* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1851), Tract no. 765. During the same decade, The Religious Tract Society published a book in its "Monthly Volume Series" (the same series that included *Sketches of the Waldenses*) that devoted seventeen pages to the "Mormonites." See *Remarkable Delusions, or Illustrations of Popular Errors* (London: The Religious Tract Society, n.d.), 171–88. In 1852 this volume was revised by Daniel Parish Kidder and published in the

Conybeare, a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, published an article in the *Edinburgh Review* in which he criticized the teachings and proselytizing tactics of Lorenzo Snow.⁵⁷ This article was published in Denmark, France, and India in 1855 and in Italy in 1865.⁵⁸ Conybeare criticized the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, polygamy, and doctrinal works by various Mormon writers, including Lorenzo Snow's *The Italian Mission*, which he characterized as "grotesque."

Conybeare charged that the Mormon apostle had "contrived to deceive the Roman Catholic authorities, by publishing a tract under the title of 'The Voice of Joseph,' with a woodcut of a nun for a frontispiece and a vignette of a cross upon the title page. Under these false colors, they hope soon to win their way."⁵⁹ In fact, Snow recognized that he had "published books at the risk of coming into collision with the government. The Catholic priests called upon the minister of state to prevent their sale, but in spite of every obstacle, we have disposed of nearly all we printed."⁶⁰

There is little doubt that these articles and pamphlets eventually found their way into the hands of Waldensian pastors because of the close contacts between the reformed churches in Switzerland and Piedmont. Following the alignment of the Waldensians with the reformed churches in Switzerland in 1532, most Waldensian pastors were educated in Geneva and Lausanne. According to Ebenezer Henderson, "That town [Lausanne] has always formed a link of connection between the churches of the valleys, and the Protestant churches of Switzerland and France."⁶¹ Although the Waldensians were initially unprepared for the Mormon mission-

United States. See *Remarkable Delusions, or Illustrations of Popular Errors* (New York: Lane & Scott, 1852).

57. William J. Conybeare, "Mormonism," *Edinburgh Review*, April 1854. This article was reprinted in William J. Conybeare, *Essays Ecclesiastical and Social* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1855), 280–376.

58. William J. Conybeare, "Il Mormonismo dall' *Edinburgh Review*," in *Origini Europee—religioni—viaggi—studi etnografici*, vol. 5, *Saggi e riviste* (Milan: G. Daelli e C., 1865), 159–239.

59. Conybeare, "Il Mormonismo dall' *Edinburgh Review*," 229–30.

60. "Letter from Lorenzo Snow," *Millennial Star*, 1 April 1852, 107.

61. Ebenezer Henderson, *The Vaudois* (London: John Snow, Paternoser Row, 1845), 200.

aries in 1850, this changed after they received these publications from their network of Protestant ministers. This created new difficulties for the Mormon missionaries whose mission was opposed not only by the Catholics in the cities but also by the Protestants in both the cities and in the Waldensian valleys.

“Sweeping the Nations”: Early Latter-day Saint Strategy for Evangelization

Lorenzo Snow had been “searching the mind of the Spirit,” as the missionaries often said, formulating a much grander vision of how and where evangelization efforts should proceed.⁶² His duty as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was not merely to look after Italy, but to expand the missionary campaign to countries throughout the world: “Lately my mind has been greatly impressed with the idea of introducing the Gospel to India,” he reported to President Franklin D. Richards. “I have counselled with my brethren of the Twelve on the subject matter, and we all feel alike the importance of such a step. Upon the Twelve devolves the responsibility of introducing the Gospel to the nations.” To this end, he intended to return to Italy soon and then to continue on to Calcutta with “one or two good and faithful Elders” and letters of introduction to commence missionary labors there.⁶³

While Snow was in England, he ordered the printing of *The Only Way to Be Saved* (1851) and *The Voice of Joseph* (1852) in English, published *The Italian Mission* (1851), and arranged for the translation and printing of *The Book of Mormon* (1852).⁶⁴ In August 1851, Snow reported, “I am getting forward very well with the translation of the ‘Book of Mormon.’ I shall commence with the printing shortly, and will soon be able to present it to the people of Italy in their own language.”⁶⁵ The translation was completed

62. One example of this phrase is found in Snow’s letter to Richards in Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow*, 202.

63. *Millennial Star*, 15 August 1851, 252–53.

64. Lorenzo Snow, *The Only Way to Be Saved* (London: W. Bowden, 1851); Lorenzo Snow, *The Voice of Joseph* (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1852); Snow, *The Italian Mission*; *Il Libro di Mormon* (London: Guglielmo Bowden, 1852).

65. *Millennial Star*, 15 August 1851, 252.

by October, and in December William Bowden, a London printer, began printing *Il Libro di Mormon*.

In January 1852, Snow left England and arrived in Geneva for a brief visit with his old companion, Elder Stenhouse, and some of the church members. In Lausanne they met with Costantino Reta, an Italian journalist and former member of the House of Deputies in the Kingdom of Sardinia, who resided in Switzerland after being forced into exile in 1849 because of his involvement with republicans in Genoa. The three men discussed the Italian translation of the Book of Mormon. Snow wrote that “I presented him the four hundred pages of the Book of Mormon that I had with me, which he pronounced ‘a correct and admirable translation, and in a very appropriate style of language.’”⁶⁶

To this day, the identity of the translator remains unknown, for it appears in none of the records—private or ecclesiastical—from that era. In April the printer finished a print run of 1,000 copies. Out of this print run, 167 copies were bound in the same type of green, blue, and brown sheep binding that was used for the third English edition of the Book of Mormon published in Liverpool during the same year, and 25 copies were bound in blue-purple morocco binding as presentation copies for the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Deseret University, and the Territorial Recorders Office.⁶⁷

On 9 February 1852, Elder Snow departed Geneva and began the perilous crossing of the Alps to Piedmont. His record of the crossing is descriptive and helpful in understanding the difficulties associated with travel during this time period:

As we approached the towering Alps there came on a heavy snow-storm, which rendered our journey very gloomy, dreary, and altogether disagreeable. About six o'clock in the evening of the following day, we commenced the ascent of Mount Cenis, and reached its cloudy summit, 6,700 feet in height, at one o'clock the next morning. Though but one passenger beside myself saw

66. Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow*, 206.

67. See L. R. Jacobs, *Mormon Non-English Scriptures, Hymnals, and Periodicals, 1830–1986: A Descriptive Bibliography* (Ithaca, NY: n.p., 1986).

proper to venture over the mountain, it was found that ten horses were barely sufficient to carry us forward through the drifting snow which had fallen to the depth of nearly four feet since the last post had passed, a circumstance that rendered it very dangerous making our way up the narrow road, and short turnings. One stumble, or the least unlucky toss of our vehicle, would, at very many points of our path, have plunged us a thousand feet down rocky precipices. . . . We descended the mountain with much more ease to our horses, and more pleasure to ourselves, and I felt thankful that my passage over these rocky steeps was completed, and hoped it might never be my lot to cross them a third time, at night, in the winter season.⁶⁸

Once in Turin, Elder Snow enjoyed a happy reunion with Woodard and Toronto and with the members of the Angrognia Branch the next day. He was gratified—and relieved—to see the reaction of the members to the first Italian translation of the Book of Mormon: “After many anxieties with regard to that work, it was no small pleasure to find it welcomed by the brethren in Italy as a heavenly treasure, and the translation so highly approved of.” He also expressed his delight in seeing again Mount Brigham, “on whose rocky brow we had organized La Chiesa di Gesù Cristo dei Santi degli Ultimi Giorni, in Italia.”⁶⁹

While Elder Snow was in Piedmont, he may have commissioned an Italian translation of *The Only Way to Be Saved*, which was published in Malta during the same year.⁷⁰ Although no copy of this pamphlet is known to have survived, it was mentioned by Wilford Woodruff as one of the documents deposited in the foundation of the Salt Lake Temple several years later.⁷¹ Snow also turned his attention to the strategic plan for evangelization he had formulated

68. *Millennial Star*, 1 April 1852, 107.

69. *Millennial Star*, 1 April 1852, 107.

70. Lorenzo Snow, *Restaurazione dell'antico Evangelio, ossia esposizione dei primi principi della dottrina della Chiesa di Gesù Cristo dei santi degli ultimi giorni* (Malta, 1852).

71. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833-1898* (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1984), 5:77 (13 August 1857). The pamphlet is also mentioned in *Millennial Star*, 5 June 1852, 236 and 26 June 1852, 282 as well as “Chi stia meglio in Piemonte? I Cattolici o I Mormoni?” *L'Armonia*, Supplemento no. 94 (8 August 1852), 465.

in England. The plan called for the mission, “carried on in rather a narrow sphere” until then, to expand to Nice and other areas of Italy, and from there to what Snow referred to as his eastern mission: Malta, Greece, Turkey, Russia, Egypt, and India.⁷²

Before leaving the valleys, Snow assigned John Daniel Malan Sr., the president of the Angrogna Branch, to take charge of the mission temporarily and released Toronto to return home to Utah. Snow and Woodard left Genoa on 20 February 1852 bound for Malta, having decided “on mature consideration” that the two should go there together rather than sending Woodard alone to Nice. The two missionaries viewed Malta, under British rule at the time, as a key cog and “a Central Book Depot” in the church’s future expansion in the Mediterranean littoral: “The organization of a branch of our Church [in Malta] would loosen the spiritual fetters of many nations, as the Maltese in their commercial relations, are spread along the shores of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Nearly all speak the Italian, and at the same time, by the peculiarities of their native dialect, they make themselves easily understood by those using the Arabic and Syriac, which are exceedingly difficult for most other Europeans.”⁷³

While the overall strategic goal may have been clear, the missionaries were less certain about what tactical approach would work in each country. Writing from Malta on 10 March, Snow observed, “What will be precisely our mode of operation, as yet, we scarcely have had time to determine, but shall endeavour to do as prudence and wisdom may dictate, on becoming more acquainted with the characteristic features of our position.”⁷⁴ Eventually, however, he adopted proselytizing methods that had been used with good results in Italy, Switzerland, and England: “forming acquaintances through one to another, and persuading one here and another there to attend our re-unions.”⁷⁵ Apparently, the approach proved successful in Malta too: “People are now constantly making calls to inquire concerning this ‘strange religion;’ a few evenings since, we had at one time, at our private

72. *Millennial Star*, 1 April 1852, 107–8.

73. *Millennial Star*, 24 April 1852, 142, and 5 June 1852, 236.

74. *Millennial Star*, 24 April 1852, 141.

75. Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow*, 204.

lodgings, gentlemen from eight different nations, having come from various parts of the city to hold conversation in reference to our doctrines.” Snow noted that Greece was among the nations represented in that meeting and that shortly thereafter “two intelligent and enterprising young men” were baptized.⁷⁶

While in Malta, Snow published both an English translation of *La voix de Joseph* as well as a second French and Italian edition of *The Only Way to Be Saved* with the title *Restoration of the Ancient Gospel*.⁷⁷ This explains why he referred to the later pamphlet as *The Ancient Gospel Restored* in a letter to Orson Hyde (written when he departed for Turin in December 1850) even though the pamphlet published in Turin was entitled *Exposition des premiers principes*. Shortly thereafter he received instructions from church headquarters to return to Utah. Reluctantly, he postponed his plans to visit the missionaries in India and made preparations for the voyage home. Sometime in May 1852, Snow departed Malta, intending to stop in Spain for a time to initiate “an opening as wisdom may direct.” He left the “European Mission” in the charge of Woodard (Italy), Stenhouse (Switzerland), and Obroy (Malta), and the “Eastern” or “Indian Mission” in the charge of Elders Findlay, Willis, and Richards—all of whom would report directly to the offices of the British Mission presidency in Liverpool.⁷⁸

In a biography written as a paean to her brother three decades after his return home, Eliza R. Snow commented on the grand scale of Lorenzo’s missionary vision and activities in Italy: “It would seem that the most indifferent reader must feel an interest

76. *Millennial Star*, 5 June 1852, 236.

77. Lorenzo Snow, *The Voice of Joseph* (Malta, 1852); Lorenzo Snow, *Restauration de L’Évangile ancien ou Exposition des premiers principes de la doctrine de l’Église de Jésus-Christ des Saints des Derniers Jours* (Malta, 1852).

78. *Millennial Star*, 5 June 1852, 236–37. For more on the history of the Latter-day Saint missions in the Mediterranean area and in India, see Ralph L. Cottrell Jr., “A History of the Discontinued Mediterranean Missions of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1963); R. Lanier Britsch, “A History of the Missionary Activities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in India, 1849–1856” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1964); Britsch, *Nothing More Heroic: The Compelling Story of the First Latter-day Saint Missionaries in India* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999); and Britsch, “The East India Mission of 1851–56: Crossing the Boundaries of Culture, Religion, and Law,” *Journal of Mormon History* 27, no. 2 (Fall 2001): 150–76.

in the gigantic movements of my brother—this broad platform for missionary work—a parallel of which is not to be found on record, either ancient or modern.”⁷⁹ Whether one agrees with this assessment or dismisses it as sibling devotion mingled with Victorian hyperbole, one cannot help but be impressed by the wide trajectory of these early missionaries and the zeal with which they pursued their evangelical vision in the face of daunting legal, economic, health, and transportation challenges.

The completion of Snow’s three-year mission to Italy and the Mediterranean offers an opportunity to contemplate some questions related to the “broad platform” and “gigantic movements” of the Mormon missionary strategy during this early phase of Latter-day Saint evangelization. Why was Snow, after only one year of proselytizing and with just three full-time missionaries and a handful of converts in Italy, so anxious to expand the scope of missionary work to include many more countries covering a vast geographical expanse? What basis can be found in Mormon doctrine and practice to explain his decision—one that seems hard to justify strictly in terms of timing and available resources—to look far afield even before the seeds planted in the Waldensian field had taken full root? Would it not have made more sense to consolidate the work of the meager missionary force in a limited geographical area in order to establish stronger branches of the church and a more permanent presence?

The answer lies in understanding the doctrine of the election and gathering of Israel that permeated Latter-day Saint thought during early church history and provided the philosophical foundation for the expansive missionary strategy pursued by Snow. The essence of this doctrine, as generally explained in nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint sources, is that the twelve tribes of Israel have been scattered throughout the world and that literal descendants of these dispersed groups will have a natural inclination to recognize and embrace the truths of Mormonism. Therefore, the goal of missionary work was not to convert masses of people who

79. Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow*, 201.

would then form congregations and establish the church's presence in countries around the world, as was the case in evangelization efforts carried out by Catholics and most Protestant groups.⁸⁰ Rather, it was to find the few, scattered elect in the world having the blood of Israel and then bring them to the spiritual and temporal Zion in Utah—all in preparation for the Second Coming of Jesus, which was near at hand.

Woodard referred to this strategy as “sweeping the nations,” and Snow, in his parting epistle from Malta, articulated its doctrinal rationale as he reflected on his experiences of the past three years: “It is hardly our expectation to convert all these Catholic nations, but we can scarcely expect any better or more favourable time to furnish them an opportunity for life and salvation, and we feel that there are a few among them at least who . . . will come forth, fulfilling the words of the holy Prophets, that a remnant shall come to Zion, gathered from every nation, kindred, and language.” He predicted that in these Catholic countries, as in some areas of America and England, it would take many more months, even years, for the church to realize this goal but that eventually it would succeed through faith, prayer, and hard work. “Besides,” he added, “we also ourselves shall have the gratification that we have done our duty, and cleared our garments of the blood of all men.”⁸¹

In sum, the missionaries' work of sweeping the nations was buttressed by a sense of duty to God, devotion to the church, compassion for one's fellow beings, and urgent millenarian zeal to gather the elect “remnant” in every nation before Jesus' return ushered in the end of time. This strategy of evangelization—gathering converts to a central location rather than fortifying branches throughout the world—was unusual in the nineteenth-century world of missiology and remained in place until the turn of the twentieth century.

80. See, for example, Stephen O'Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (London: Penguin Books, 1990).

81. *Millennial Star*, 5 June 1852, 236–37. For Woodard's phrase “sweeping the nations,” see Richards, *The Scriptural Allegory*, 58.