
Mission to the Fatherland, 1867–70

I know (I don't merely say I believe), that Joseph Smith is a prophet of the living God! I have proof for it.

—Karl G. Maeser¹

On July 29, 1866, while attending a meeting in the bowery in Springville, Brigham Young motioned to Franklin D. Richards to come and sit by him. Richards recorded, “He asked me how I would like to go on a mission to England.”² Richards had already served eight missions, three of which were in the British Isles. At the time, he had thirteen wives³ and dozens of children.⁴ He was serving in the territorial legislature and had established families in Ogden, Farmington, Nephi, and Idaho. He told Young that “if it was his wish that I should go I would do so though to human calculation it seemed difficult.”⁵ Richards asked Young if he should prepare to leave in the fall, and Young “reckoned [he] could get ready and be off in four or five days.”⁶ Richards dropped everything else and left at 4:00 a.m. on August 13 to preside once again over the missions in Europe.

Such was the way of operating for those who had consecrated their lives to build Zion, and the Maesers were also familiar with it. They had settled in Salt Lake and were finally attempting to build a home of their own. Their family had grown to six; Reinhard was now twelve, Ottillie



Old Tabernacle and Bowery in Salt Lake City, ca. 1850. Maeser was attending general conference in the Bowery in 1867 when he learned he had been called to the Swiss-German Mission. Courtesy of LDS.org.

seven, Camilla four, and Emil had just turned one. Karl's articles in the *Juvenile Instructor* had increased his influence and reputation. He had enjoyed the security of his teaching position and had become the beloved teacher of Brigham Young's own children. Young had openly expressed how pleased he was with the progress his family had made under Karl's tutelage. Then during the Monday afternoon session of general conference on April 8, 1867, George Q. Cannon read the names of fifty-six elders who were being called on full-time missions, including Warren N. Dusenberry, Heber Young, Octave Ursenbach, and Karl G. Maeser.⁷ Maeser was being asked once again to give up the security he had obtained and to return to Europe. There was no time for hesitation.

Departure

On April 21, Brigham called together all the available missionaries to give them instructions before he left on a tour to southern Utah. He "exhorted them to cleave to the Lord and let their minds cleave to God and their mission" and warned them that "the habit of going to

the theaters, race courses, Cathedrals,” and other curiosities would too easily “detract from the spirit of their mission.”⁸ He promised them that if they served faithfully, they would be blessed with joy and peace. Going in the name of the Lord “will be a shield to your souls.”⁹ He encouraged them to work hard, not to worry about when they would be released, and to keep themselves chaste. He also warned them to keep together “when going through Indian country.”¹⁰ Sixteen were set apart that day, and they left the next.

Wagon

A second group of elders left Salt Lake on May 17; Karl was a part of this group. He wrote, “When I left home, I gave my wife Anna, a fifty-cent ‘shin plaster’, which was all the money I had at that time. She told me that she would give that ‘shin plaster’ back to me on my return.”¹¹ This farewell was not an easy one. In his words to Franklin D. Richards, Karl said that a missionary “ought to recognize in all things the workings of the Lord’s hand, . . . having been called away from his home, his vocation, his family, and his friends, to travel over mountains and deserts, through many countries, and across the wide ocean, without means, without learning, and to go where he will be probably without friends.”¹² Because he had made arrangements with the *Deseret News* to write a series of articles describing his journey “from the Rocky Mountains to the Alps,” we have a chronicle of some of his feelings as he bid farewell to that which he loved so much in Utah. The first article recorded his thoughts as he left to meet up with the wagon train of missionaries:

I remember myself walking briskly with one of my traveling companions towards Emigration Canyon to join our train, which had left already in the morning. Before me lay my mission in the far off Europe as a witness of the truth of the latter-day work, as a messenger of the gospel of peace and good will to all men; behind me the home of my family and of my people! I found myself at another turn of my life’s path, not knowing what sights would present themselves to my eye around the corner; and I knew nothing of

the future, but the aim and purpose of the journey, and a safe return if I would be faithful. . . . I cast, at the mouth of Emigration Canyon, my last glance back to "The city I love so well," wishing, as a farewell benediction to my people, them to become in strength and independence as their mountains, in loveliness and beauty like their valleys, and in purity to resemble their clear atmosphere, transmitting unbroken and undiminished the rays from the source of light. . . . The first night camp, although our company was not quite complete yet, terminated my home life, and with the waking hours next morning commenced that great journey which should carry me across the continent, the Atlantic and around several countries of Europe, until after some years I may return again to my dear mountain home.¹³

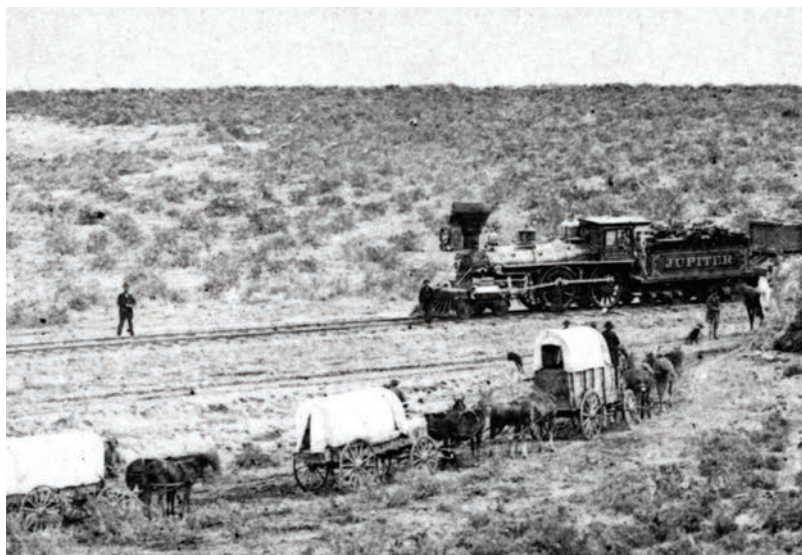
As he joined the wagon train, Karl wrote how he cherished the beautiful vistas of the journey, especially Parley's Park, now called Park City, which reminded him "of the grand valley around Kulm and Arbesau in Bohemia" and how he was touched by the scene of the seventeen elders "collected together in that little train."¹⁴ They were added to "Bishop Sharp's ox train, the first train eastward that season,"¹⁵ and they would go as far as the northeastern corner of Colorado, where they would switch to travel by railroad. Few of them knew each other previously. They had been gathered from various parts of the territory, "born in different climes and nations; of various occupations, matters, education and age but united now for one purpose and in one spirit which soon was manifested in their friendly, unrestrained and social intercourse."¹⁶ The trail became a great equalizer, and the gospel became the great unifier. He noted the druggist experimenting on his cooking or the professor remembering his "former botanical excursions"¹⁷ while gathering buffalo chips for the fire. The bookkeeper struggled to wake up before daybreak, and all faced the trials of mosquitoes, sleeping on the ground, rain, or accidentally dropping their pancakes into the ashes, but the Scottish elder offered the less-than-comforting assurance that through these tribulations, "the Lord was preparing them only for something worse."¹⁸

The missionaries had organized the wagon train into a little traveling branch of the Church, with evening and morning devotionals. They sang and prayed together, held testimony meetings, and practiced their public speaking. There were even some non-Mormons among them at times: “Many of the Gentile teamsters used to attend our meetings, swearing and bad language among them decreasing considerably, and finally two of them, when sick, asked to be administered to and were restored to health.”¹⁹ Karl spared his Salt Lake readers some of the most serious challenges that he and his group faced in their journey. In a letter to Franklin D. Richards, for example, Karl described in great detail an attack by twenty Sioux men that killed a man named Christian Jensen who had joined the ox train in order to purchase machinery for his father’s farm.

Railroad Train

After a seven-week trek, the missionaries reached the safety of Julesburg, Colorado, the terminus of the Pacific Railroad. The party rejoiced when they caught their first glimpse of a “steam engine hooting and whistling along the track,” and some of the “mountain boys” were astonished.²⁰ Over the next several days and nights, they would travel “through Omaha, across Iowa, through Chicago, Toledo, Cleveland, and Buffalo to New York City.”²¹

While Maeser saw much to compliment as he traveled across the States, especially the “beautiful farms and villages covering that which was a few years ago the wild prairies of Iowa,”²² he did not see much to entice him in the big cities, where “everyone can see ‘something foul’ on every street corner, in every hotel and store, and on so very many of the fairer portion of mankind; when it sounds in the sermons of the priests of the day, and stares at you from the newspapers; when it reigns in the halls of the legislature, and is hovering in the atmosphere of executive mansions; when it has penetrated to almost every fireside, and poisons, already, the youth in the schools and valleys of the land.” Maeser observed that modern America had attracted “the poor, enterprising and industrious of the overpopulated countries” of Europe by providing them “new homes, where nobody but themselves have a right to enjoy the fruits of their labors.” By

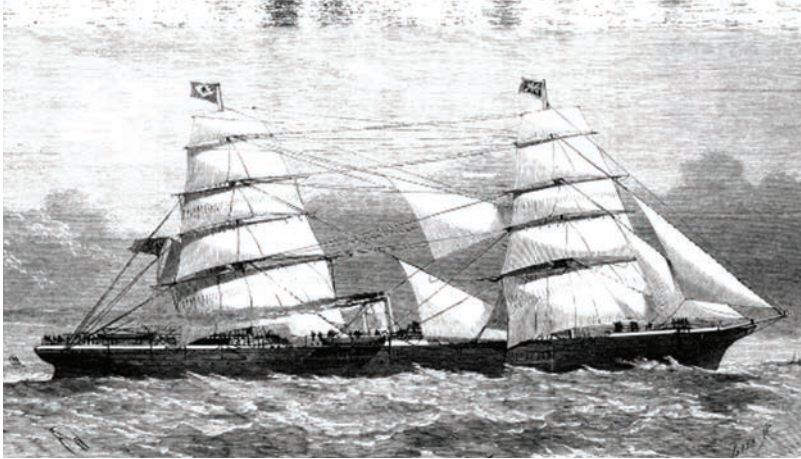


Maeser described how happy the band of missionaries were to reach the railroad line in 1867. This is a picture taken of the Jupiter locomotive at Monument Point, Utah, May 1869. Photo by Alfred A. Hart, courtesy of Library of Congress.

contrast in Europe, thousands upon thousands hover in big cities, “where poverty serves them for breakfast, filth for dinner, and misery sits down with them to supper.” Here there was space for whole nations to come while still allowing plenty of room between “their dwelling-places.” While the big cities in America may have been progressive, attractive, and flourishing, one glance below the surface revealed quite another dimension. The missionaries spent the Fourth of July in Chicago and arrived in New York on the sixth. If asked to compare the two cities, Maeser would have replied, “To find a distinction between New York and Chicago, one would have to know first, which was worse, Sodom or Gomorrah.” He concluded that America, “the land of hope and promise,” would yet only be “freed from unbelief and corruption” and “rise high over the nations under the benign rule of the Latter-day Kingdom.”²³

Ship

The missionaries spent a week in New York City to gather sufficient funds to board the steamer *Manhattan* for Liverpool, and they departed



Maeser was pleased with the efficiency of traveling to Europe on the steamship Manhattan. Picture from the Illustrated London News, August 1866, courtesy of Google Books.

on July 13.²⁴ In his article regarding the journey across the sea, once again Karl observed how the standards of the world paled in comparison with the gospel. On the ship, even modern political ideals of the world were put on hold once you board the “old monarchical system.” The captain sat atop “the aristocracy of the little kingdom,” associating only with the officers and passengers of the first cabin. Each class had its “distinct caste,” “while the steerage passengers (including all the missionaries), as the plebeians, are left to the care of under stewards,” who treated them according to their whims.²⁵ Because the missionaries were considered to be at the bottom of the social hierarchy, the only privileges allowed had to be arranged through someone with higher social status.

One unusual benefactor was found in a Methodist minister, Charles C. Kimball. Twenty-four Mormon elders on a ship attracted the curiosity of fellow travelers. Kimball took particular interest in Maeser and held regular discussions, sometimes lasting several hours, with him and several other gentlemen from the first cabin. Maeser had been instructed to keep his teaching to the basic principles of the gospel, so while he did his best to avoid such topics as polygamy, his interrogators were most curious to push him to this topic especially. Reverend Kimball wrote in his journal about his discussions with

the chief of the Mormons in the steerage. He seems to be a Christian but a wild enthusiast. His name is Carl Masser. . . . He had been the teacher of Brigham Young's children. His father disinherited him for becoming a Mormon and he has had a hard time, been near starving, but always true to the Mormons. . . . This man appears with all his errors to be a Christian. He had a peace of mind. I asked where it came from. He lifted his eyes and said, "If God does not give it, I do not know."²⁶

Karl asked if the minister would speak to the captain to get permission to hold a Mormon meeting on the deck. He did so, and they gathered in a prayer of thanksgiving on a pile of ropes in the most secluded part of the deck. The reverend even participated by speaking "in words that not very often may have been spoken by a Methodist minister to a 'Mormon' congregation, and which did honor to his heart and principles as a man." Even though they had had a great deal of stormy weather on the voyage, spent nearly all their time in the steerage, and ate "ship-crackers for supper every day and hard dumplings for dinner three times a week,"²⁷ Karl felt little reason to complain of the steamer voyage, which took one-third of the time that a sailing vessel would have taken.

Arrival in Liverpool

The party arrived in Liverpool on July 26, where they were greeted by Franklin D. Richards. Much had changed since Maeser was last in Liverpool, but the English had such "well regulated channels and forms of thought, philosophy, law and interest" that they were able to maintain a continuity in spite of "the ever changing floodtides of new ideas."²⁸ Maeser was particularly disturbed by the contrast between rich and poor:

You may be shocked at the moment of landing in Liverpool with the filth, dirt and forsaken aspect of misery meeting you at every street you pass through on the one hand, and be astonished on the other, with the rows of dark-looking houses that, notwithstanding

their aristocratic exclusiveness, permits the spirit of comfort and quietude to peep out upon the many-colored stream of struggling humanity on the busy streets below; be at a loss to reconcile the multitudes of whiskey shops here assuming the shape of palaces, with the countless number of churches, chapels and similar institutions.²⁹

However, Maeser was pleased to be greeted by Richards. It was a significant reminder to Maeser that “when twelve years ago, I, with two friends of mine, joined the covenant of the everlasting truth, it was Franklin D. Richards, whose watchful eye for the propagation of truth” had planted the seeds of testimony in “far off Saxonland.” He continued:

Now I stand once more on the threshold of my native land, and whatever bitter trials have been our share since both of us left Europe, here we are both again; and judging from my own heart and the words of blessings he uttered on meeting me in Liverpool, both of us are burning to take up the thread where it was dropped. We pray, however, that the Lord of hosts, who gives the seed and the soil, the sunshine and the rain, may give the increase also for Christ’s sake. Amen.³⁰

The task of a few faithful elders scattered among the houses of the poor to proclaim the gospel to the world “may seem like a child playing with pebbles on the sea-shore to build with them a bridge across the ocean,” but Maeser was convinced that “the Lord God of Israel will make strong the arm of the weak and multiply the works of those that trust in Him . . . that it shall grow and overshadow the forest, yea, spread its branches over the whole earth forevermore.”³¹ Franklin D. Richards also rejoiced at the reunion with Maeser. Richards was especially thrilled to see how firmly the gospel had taken root in Maeser. He recorded that on the journey, “A German stranger engaged Bro. Maeser and occupied his attention near two hours often unruly. I am sure there three men got testimonies of truth today that they will never get rid of.”³² Assignments were then

made: Maeser and Octave Ursenbach were appointed to Switzerland, Maeser to the German speakers and Ursenbach to the French.

To France

Maeser left England for France with Ursenbach on August 7. He was disappointed in his inability to cope with seasickness in their crossing the channel from New Haven to Dieppe. The stormy night reminded Maeser that he was not particularly fit for seafaring when he joined “in the general misery . . . of a first visitor at sea.”³³ He quickly recovered on land, where he admired the beauty of the French scenery. He was less impressed, however, with “the moral, social and political state of the nation.” He believed Napoleon had phrased it well: “The misfortune of France is that it has no mothers!” Maeser wrote:

The only sure and true foundation of a nation’s prosperity, purity and the stability of its institutions, is the solidity of family life, consisting in the everlasting principles of truth, honesty, integrity, industry and affection; where these are wanting, either wholly or in part; where the café or public house robs the home of its rightful share of attention; where patriotism had degenerated to the idolatry of glory; where, it is fearful to tell, women are considered foolish, when they become mothers more than twice or three times; . . . there no revolution will bring liberty, and freedom will not grow out of barricades, nor can they accuse any despots of their tyranny—the people themselves stand guilty before the heavens and the world.

Maeser and Ursenbach spent four days in Paris. They hunted for scattered members and formed a small branch, though none of its members were French but rather Swiss and German.³⁴ They visited the Exposition Universelle (the 1867 Paris World’s Fair) attempting to see in one day what would require a month to do justice to. Both were impressed by the displays. However, they were also struck by the contrast between



This is a bird's-eye view of the Exposition Universelle of 1867. On the way to his mission in Switzerland, Maeser and Octave Ursenbach visited the 1867 Paris World's Fair. Lithograph by Eugene Ciceri, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

the lavish splendor of the higher classes in Paris and “the wretched condition of the poor artisan, borne down with fatigue and want.”³⁵ Maeser left Paris, “that great laboratory of revolutions,”³⁶ on August 12, and Ursenbach remained a few more days. Maeser’s role as correspondent to

the *Deseret News* thereby finished, and his work as a missionary began in earnest.

Switzerland and Germany

Karl's reputation had preceded him; Joseph S. Horne was serving as the president of the Swiss-German-Italian Mission and was thrilled to find out that Maeser and Ursenbach were coming to him. Horne wrote, "Bro. Karl G. Maeser arrived here on the 13th inst., safe and sound, and looking much better than when I last saw him in Salt Lake City. . . . You can imagine how gladly br. Maeser and I met each other, and how much we had to say."³⁷ Later he wrote that although Maeser was on his first trip to Switzerland, he "is known to a certain extent, by my Saints and others in this portion of the vineyard by his writings, which are read with a great deal of satisfaction, and are cherished by many lovers of truth."³⁸ A special meeting was immediately arranged (on August 16) in St. Imier with "Bruder Mäser" as the *Hauptspreeher* (the main speaker).³⁹ Over the next few weeks, Maeser traveled with Horne, visiting members and holding meetings. He wrote, "I have not staid two nights in any one place."

When Maeser and Ursenbach arrived in Germany, cholera was raging in some of the cities. In Zürich, the two men had a train car "all to ourselves, as the fear of the cholera has stopped all trade, commerce, and travel, and we went through comparatively desolate streets of that city of mourning without entering one house."⁴⁰ They were not particularly concerned for themselves, "having placed our trust in the God of Israel, and being here in the discharge of our duty." Nevertheless they followed principles of care. Of greater concern was the risk of being quarantined for a week if authorities found out that they had been in the home of an infected person. Maeser reported that in the week previous to their visit, forty to fifty deaths occurred each day. The poverty amongst the Saints was concerning, but their faith was inspiring. "If sometimes my heart feels heavy when I see their poverty, (working when work they have, from early morn to late eve, for scarcely one franc and a half a day,) I feel rejoiced and lifted up again with great hope in my own faith, when I see their

cheerfulness and readiness to obey the counsels of the servants of God.”⁴¹ One woman walked eighteen miles to attend her baptism, only to immediately walk all the way back to be at work the next morning.

After the arrival of Maeser and Ursenbach, Horne saw a marked improvement in the mission. Because of the two missionaries’ experience in the Church and facility with the languages and customs, their instruction benefitted the Saints greatly, and the Church was “gradually increasing in numbers.”⁴²

In 1867, the political forces that would eventually unify the German states were gaining the support that had not been possible during the attempted revolution of 1848. Marx published his first volume of *Das Kapital* in 1867, and after violent confrontation, the Danish duchies of Schleswig-Holstein, where many German-speakers lived, had been annexed to the German Federation. A new constitution proclaimed freedom of religion, freedom of the press, and freedom of speech, as well as the right to assemble, to join associations, and to own property. To see if the newly declared religious freedom would actually be upheld, President Widerborg of the Scandinavian Mission requested German Church materials from President Richards.⁴³ Widerborg thought it worth trying “to see or learn if they mean it literally.” The new political policies in the German Federation may have been what encouraged Maeser to ask President Richards for permission to return to Saxony to visit his family and attempt to revive the work there. His request was granted, and he left Switzerland on November 5, 1867.⁴⁴

Saxony

In a rare excerpt from a journal which can no longer be found, Reinhard recorded Karl’s description of his arrival:

I left Leipzig at twelve o’clock and arrived at Coswig 2:30 o’clock. Brother Gustav⁴⁵ was there. Both were much affected. We had to wait twenty minutes for the train. The new train brought us in thirteen minutes to Calen [Cölln]. Father was there. No words were spoken for a long time, but there were tears and kisses. The God of Israel, my Father in Heaven, has been good to me! amen.

We walked home, all three, arm in arm. On my entrance, a choir of gentlemen, stationed in the hall, sang three pieces of welcome, and Alma, my sister-in-law, greeted me with tears and kisses. We were all much affected. We spent the evening in conversation and narrating to one another the things that have occurred since I left Germany. Poor Uncle Focher died three weeks ago. Peace be with him, and if God will, I shall remember him in the Holy House. Amen.

November 10th, Sunday; Went with father to the old church in Calen my Mother's grave! Attended Lutheran Church services; nothing in it. After dinner I went for a walk with Gustav around Vorbrücke, later with father to Felsenkeller. In the evening we stayed at home, and I had to tell some episodes of my life.⁴⁶

Maeser regularly informed President Richards of his experiences for the first couple of weeks of his journey to Meissen and Dresden. Richards was pleased to see the work being rekindled in that part of the world.⁴⁷ However, Richards was apparently worried about political toleration for a returning Mormon refugee, because after a period of nearly a month without contact, he became uneasy about Maeser's safety: "Feeling concerned about the safety of Br. Carl G. Maeser from whom I have had nothing for about a month. They may perhaps have got him in Prison."⁴⁸ Three days later, another letter came, relieving him of his anxiety.⁴⁹

By February 1868, Maeser reported that thirty people were ready for baptism, though he was frustrated that he could not interest his own family members very much.⁵⁰ He was excited that the local press had published details of the Birmingham Conference of the Church, and he believed that he had been successful in helping to overcome some of the "prejudice against our people and doctrine" in Saxony. He felt he might have stayed longer if not because of the difficulties made by "some of my own relations, who would have liked to keep me ever so long, if I would not speak of 'Mormonism' to anybody. I had some very interesting conversations with former colleagues of mine, who, with few exceptions acknowledge that ours are the logical and consequent carryings through

of the religious principle—but they considered it doubtful yet, if a religion were necessary at all, except for the great mass of the people, where it had its convenience in regard to the public morals, etc.”⁵¹ He hoped to make another visit to Germany later in the summer to organize some branches.

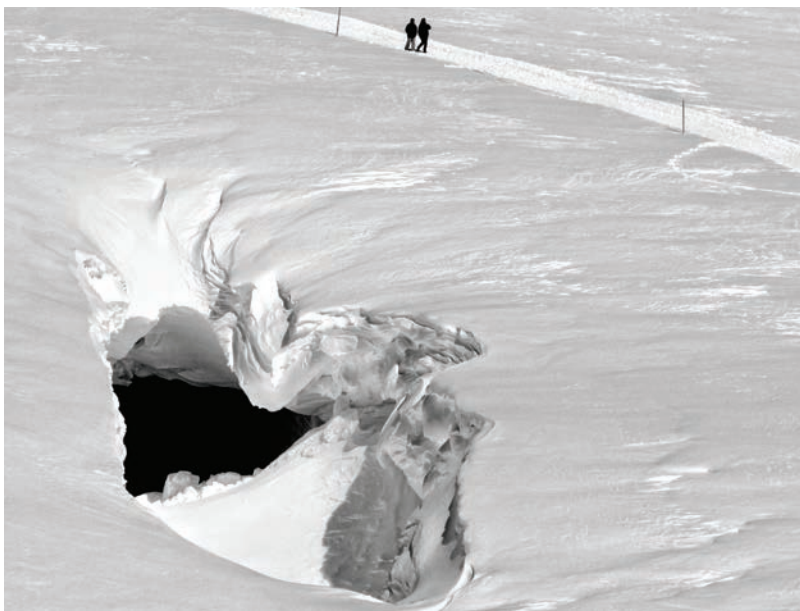
Back to Switzerland

In April 1868, Karl was back in Switzerland and busily engaged in the work. On June 7 he helped plan a special conference near Bern atop a peak in the Jura Alps, with the French Saints climbing up from one side of the mountain and the German Saints from the other. Ursenbach wrote, “It was a moving spectacle to see them coming by groups along the hills, or emerging from the dense forest of pine, singing the songs of Zion in their native language, for here we have songs composed by K. G. Maeser and arranged to the tunes of some of our English hymns.”⁵² “Sweetened by many a song of Zion and merry laughter,” they met at the rendezvous point at about noon “on a beautiful spot almost near the clouds.”⁵³ Here fifty-three members sang, bore testimony, and shared instruction, spending “one of the finest days of pure enjoyment they ever had in their lives.” This trip would be repeated annually by the Swiss Saints on Pfingsten Sunday (Pentecost) for several years.

Later Karl would often relate a story to his family about traveling through the Alps, an anecdote that illustrates the way he taught through objects. Once, while traveling with the missionaries, he observed the sticks that marked the path across the mountains and snowdrifts. He recognized their importance and used the occasion to teach: “Brethren, there stands the Priesthood. They are just common sticks like the rest of us—some of them are even crooked, but the position they hold makes them what they are to us. If we step aside from the path they mark, we are lost.”⁵⁴

Called as Mission President

Two weeks after their outing in the Alps, Joseph Horne was released to return home to Zion, and Karl G. Maeser was called to be the president of the newly renamed Swiss-German Mission.⁵⁵ He had been notified of



Jungfrauoch, Switzerland (a mountain saddle between two mountains in the Alps). Crossing a snowfield in the Alps, Maeser pointed to the sticks in the snow and compared them to the men of the priesthood. Sticks are still used at Jungfrauoch to protect hikers from significant dangers that are only yards from the path. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

the call by a detailed letter from Franklin D. Richards saying, “It is your duty to consider, to advise, and to administer in all matters which affect the prosperity of that Mission both temporal and spiritual as you may be directed by those who preside over you and as you may be aided by the Holy Spirit of God.”⁵⁶

The priority of his service was defined first to the Saints, then to the world. To the Saints he was to be a “faithful shepherd” by nurturing them and preserving “them from all discord.” He was enjoined to learn of “the conditions and circumstances of the Saints . . . to look to the poor,” instruct them, help arrange their emigration, and make “every effort to promote the interests of Zion in the gathering of the poor and the redemption of the oppressed.” He was to extend the teachings of the *Star* to the various branches of the mission, call and ordain men to preach the Gospel, and ensure that “no doctrines are taught but such as are authorized by the First Presidency.” He was also to see that the



Zürich, Switzerland, from Peter Church, ca. 1890–1900. Maeser was called to serve in the Swiss-German-Italian Mission in 1867. In 1868 he was called to be the president of the newly renamed Swiss-German Mission. The mission home was in Zürich. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

leaders conducted themselves so as “not to become oppressive.” Those refusing to “walk worthily of their holy profession” after “faithful admonition”⁵⁷ were to be severed from the Church.

His duty to the world was to extend the preaching of the gospel to new places and to organize new branches. He was to oversee the mission finances and tithing, to report regularly, and to rely upon the Spirit of God to “be filled with words of life . . . that you may always be able to administer salvation to the people and greatly extend the Church of Christ in those countries.”⁵⁸

Before his return to Utah on September 12, 1868, Franklin D. Richards visited Switzerland at the end of July, his trip culminating in a series of special conferences with the Saints.⁵⁹ All nine hymns sung during these sessions had been either translated into German or written by Maeser.⁶⁰ The presidents of the various branches spoke, reporting on their progress. The sacrament was administered in the afternoon, and the Church authorities were sustained by the members present. President Richards then spoke, with Maeser as interpreter. He related prophecies made by

the Prophet Joseph “that thousands and tens of thousands of the promised seed of Israel were among the German nations and that the time was near at hand in which the blessings of the kingdom of God should be offered to them.”⁶¹ He rehearsed his first visit to Germany, when Maeser was baptized and the branch in Dresden was formed.

At the conference it was reported that 532 Swiss members comprised four conferences and seventeen branches. Heber Young, Brigham Young’s son, was in attendance and reported to George Q. Cannon that “our mutual friend ‘Karl’ is wide awake to the work. . . . The saints love him as a father.”⁶² This conference was so successful that two more were quickly scheduled before President Richards returned to Liverpool—one in Bern, where nearly one-fourth of the large congregation were investigators of the Church, and the other at Herisau, in a part of the country no member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles had ever previously visited.⁶³

Maeser was thrilled with Richards’s three-week visit to the mission and wrote, “There is a spirit of animation filling the hearts of the Saints which is quite refreshing to behold. We baptize weekly here in many branches now, and more have been baptized than have left with the Spring’s emigration.”⁶⁴ Unwilling to take personal credit for reenergizing the mission that some would attribute to him, Karl wrote an article for the *Deseret News* introducing the revitalization of the mission with an allegory: “There was a ship becalmed at sea, on board of which the idle sails were flapping against the scarcely rocking masts.” The crew on board could do little to make the ship move except to prepare in every way for a breeze when it would come again. For some time, the mission had been “dull” and “unpromising”—the membership had fallen off, and few were being baptized—but his predecessors had been faithful and dedicated and “by their integrity have earnestly endeavored to mend a state of things for which they were not responsible.”⁶⁵ Changing captains didn’t cause the wind to blow, “but the God of Israel was moving the hearts of men like water.” Because of their previous preparations, when “the breeze came, the sails filled up, the ship put out, and harrah on she goes!” The conferences had demonstrated that the winds had returned and that the Lord was bringing the increase.

In reality, Maeser's personal impact on the mission was profound. After Franklin D. Richards visited the mission in Switzerland, he reported to Brigham Young regarding the progress of the work there. He had been surprised at the "deficiency of organization" that Maeser had inherited, but despite initial conditions, the missionary work under Maeser's leadership became remarkably successful. Some had even supposed that the work of gathering in Switzerland was almost finished and that the remainder would be only fit for judgment and destruction. Richards told Young that he and Maeser had no such feelings. "On the contrary every indication about us gave the most cheering promise that a greater and more glorious work was about to be accomplished than yet had been."⁶⁶ Richards did not go into details of the problems he had observed, but he did explain his suggested remedies. During his time in Switzerland, he counseled Maeser on how to organize the local priesthood and extend calls to members as quickly as possible. They formed more branches of the Church, organized a third mission conference, and opened up new areas for the work.

Richards spoke very positively about Maeser's ability to relate to the people and to present the gospel message: "In nearly every place he visits he baptizes some."⁶⁷ Richards wrote that there were no German copies of the Doctrine and Covenants and only one English copy in the whole mission. No access to some of the major sections of that work might have been part of the reason for the lack of proper organization. He reported that Maeser was willing to translate a copy and publish it quite quickly, one sheet at a time if he were permitted, adding that he knew of "no one better qualified to render a translation correctly than he." Maeser said he would like Young's counsel on whether to proceed. Richards had asked him to begin by translating the portions that "define the duties of the Priesthood" and the basic ordinances to "furnish the various officers of the Priesthood throughout the mission with manuscript copies in their own language."⁶⁸ Maeser began translating sections of the Doctrine and Covenants immediately.

Immigration to Zion

Another of Maeser's duties as mission president was to orchestrate the immigration of the Saints to Zion. Ever sensitive to the plight of the poor,

Maeser invited the members to be generous in their contributions and to save whatever means they could, even though most were considered well off if they could barely “manage, by the utmost frugality to make both ends meet.”⁶⁹ Most were living on meager portions of bread and potatoes. He appealed to outside sources to help as many as possible to make the journey because, in his words, “the great mass of Saints are without any hope, to all human appearances, if the Saints at home do not help them.” He even negotiated with local parishes for contributions to rid them of some of these unwanted, needy former parishioners.⁷⁰ In conferences, he spoke about “the poor, scattered Saints and friends of the truth” who were unable to attend, and he “called upon the Lord, in His mercy to remember them and to open His path to them that they may fully enjoy His blessings.”⁷¹ Details of the journey and the costs involved in emigrating were published in *Der Stern*, and Karl did his best to prepare the Saints to understand that gathering to Zion would not solve all their worries.⁷²

Writings during His Mission

Maeser published many articles and other writings while on his mission. Not only did he write articles for the *Deseret News*, but he also contributed to the *Millennial Star* and *Der Stern*, including his own editorials, his translations of sections of the Doctrine and Covenants, and hymns that he translated and wrote. In his commentary he included insights into some of his experiences, his opinions of political and social issues, and his defense of the Church against its enemies. His writing was an important extension of his mission in Switzerland and Germany.

Deseret News

As mentioned, Maeser produced a series of articles describing his journey from Salt Lake to Switzerland, “From the Rocky Mountains to the Alps.” This may have been a way to help fund his mission or to help provide income for Anna at home. Several of his letters were also published in the *Deseret News*. One, in particular, deserves special attention. In 1868, Maeser wrote an article that showed keen awareness of the

observations of Karl Marx entitled "The Social Question"⁷³ that carefully examined "the great contention between capital and labor," but it offered the gospel as an alternative to Marx's violent revolution. In it he argued that "state organizations originated from the necessity, through combined action of all the members of society, to gain amelioration of the condition of the individual" but that most often this aim had given way to the "building up of an artificial establishment at the expense of the individual rights of man." The principle of master and servant had filled the pages of history. Governmental power was typically centralized in the shape of a monarch, a privileged class, or aristocratic republics. With the development of complicated mechanisms and means of production, capital was forced to concentrate itself and to engage workmen by the hundreds, bringing "them into a degrading dependency through low wages and long working hours; and by depriving them of every chance for self thinking action in their work."⁷⁴ This transformed laborers into a mere part of the machine. Maeser pointed to great industrial districts of England, France, Germany, and Switzerland where

millions of people derive their subsistence entirely through work at factories and mills from early dawn until late at night at a mere pittance; . . . young children already lose their health by it and sacrifice every chance of mental and moral development; . . . young women become unfit for the duties of housekeeping and only too often worse than even that; . . . men sink down, the helpless slaves of a governing bourgeoisie, and all of them subject to the dangers of a sudden stagnation of business and forced suspension of work, for which their regular time of full employment permits them not to make any provisions.⁷⁵

In response to such oppression, Maeser pointed out that the privileged class attempts to ignore it, while "systems and professed political and social Messiahs . . . are pretending to bring relief to the groaning multitude." Secret societies had been organized, strikes were becoming more common, politicians from every nation like Napoleon, Cavour, Bismark,

and von Beust, were proposing various “isms,’ that occasionally spring up here and there like toadstools overnight, . . . but still the flood keeps steadily rising, like in the days of Noah.” Most often, their efforts quickly sink into insignificance, because they fail to touch the root of the disease. Men continue to build their Babel, but ignore “the words of everlasting truth, which could bring peace upon earth and good will to all men.”⁷⁶ They mock the servants of God and ridicule Joseph the Prophet.

Maeser then asked, “Where is the rock which the honest in heart must stand upon, the staff the humble can lean against, the star of light for the lover of truth to go by, the ray of hope for down-trodden and deceived humanity to cling to, at the coming crisis?” No reformation would be sufficient if the whole foundation of the system was wrong. Maeser’s answer was bold:

Turn to Him who can alone remove existing evils, the God of Israel! Repent of your sins, humble yourselves before Him, ye nations, for the day of His judgment draweth nigh; ask His servant, the prophet, what you shall do, ye kings and mighty men on the earth, and he will tell you in the name of Israel’s God the only things that will save you and your peoples from utter destruction.

But Pharaoh never was blinder than are the people of this generation; and so it goes—until the end comes. Amen.⁷⁷

As he traveled, Karl carefully observed what was happening, then discovered gospel insights from which lasting solutions could be found. Maeser was ever sensitive to the issues of pride and social prejudice; he watched how smug mortals often become because of their skills in worldly matters. For example, the bullwhackers who prided themselves in their skill at driving oxen reminded Karl of previous feelings of insignificance he had experienced from other “experts.” He well remembered how he felt when he boarded the *Tuscarora*: “What airs of supremacy you are looked upon by the sailors as a greenhorn.” He was also reminded of a coachman in Birmingham, “some 12 years ago, who finding that I did not understand English, turned with disdain away from me as from an Idiot,

who did not understand a language that he himself spoke already when a child.” In time, these men’s mortal status would become as outdated as their professions. In the article, Karl encouraged the youth of Zion to aspire to something that “will make higher and greater demands on the intelligence and capacity of every man in our people than mere bullwhacking.” The greatest scenes of beauty are often ignored by those so enamored by their present status or, worse yet, are transformed by those who would seek to exploit them for personal gain, like the “Yankee who, in beholding the Niagara Falls, deplored that such great water power could not be turned into canals for working mills, where it would be at least of some use. Such people would cut up the blue heavens, if possible, and sell it by the yard to make pants.”⁷⁸

Millennial Star

Reminiscent of Hegel,⁷⁹ Maeser wrote an essay for the *Millennial Star* briefly tracing the “Footprints of Providence in the Development of the Human Race.”⁸⁰ In it he claimed that a true Latter-day Saint saw “the Kingdom of God . . . to be the all-embracing object and motive of all his thoughts, views, words, and actions.” The sectarian world, by contrast, made a sharp distinction between sacred and profane history. He proposed that if man had not, through apostasy, redefined history in this way and filled it with his own notions, everything would be sacred and would reveal “the hand of the overruling Providence in all things.” Reviewing the major events of history, Maeser concluded that the developments in science and technology, the political advancements that destroyed the systems of blind obedience to ill-founded authority, the Reformation, and the American Revolution were all precursors to the Restoration of the gospel of Christ. He concluded by claiming that even though the Constitution had been trampled underfoot, “the decrees of God have gone forth; the angel has sounded the trumpet,” and “the plans of the Almighty are about to be consummated.”⁸¹

While in England, Maeser wrote an editorial for the *Millennial Star* titled “Faith & Reason.”⁸² So often, philosophers, theologians, scientists, and politicians had presumed the principles of faith and reason to

be antagonistic to one another. Voltaire, Rousseau, and many German philosophers celebrated reason and tended to denounce faith as superstition. At the other extreme, however, were those like the pope, who condemned Hegel for trying to prove the truth of Catholicism by argument of reason. Maeser argued “if these various parties in their zeal would have examined the principles they are defending, [they would have] found that they did not possess the real article, but only its counterfeit, for the true principles have emanated from God, the foundation of all truth, and cannot contradict one another.” For Maeser, true faith was “revealed from heaven, and kept alive by constant revelation, like a river whose fountain you cannot stop without drying up the entire stream.”⁸³

Maeser concluded his discussion by suggesting to the missionaries “the knowledge of God and his word can be obtained through faith alone by revelation, and reason bears testimony to it by showing its harmony with the eternal laws of nature and of thinking.” Missionaries, therefore, should learn that argument will not bring conversion; instead, the starting point must be the testimony of Jesus Christ as revealed within the heart. Thereafter, arguments from scripture and nature can unite all three. Applying the principles of a Pestalozzian education to missionary work would mean that the missionary’s priority would be to challenge and invite the investigator to seek his own revelation rather than to convince him through logic or evidence. “We cannot reason a man into the kingdom of God, either by writing or preaching; but the testimony of Jesus Christ, as revealed within our own heart, must and can be alone the starting point; . . . you cannot convince him of the truth of the Latter-day work, if you had even all the science and learning of this world, and the eloquence of angels at your command.” Anything else becomes nothing more than “a sparring exhibition of the smartness in argument of both parties.”⁸⁴

“Sketches from the Book of Mormon”

During his travels, Elder Maeser began a series of eight articles for the *Millennial Star* entitled “Sketches from the Book of Mormon.” Building on his earlier claim that reason is not the most fundamental part of a testimony, Maeser wrote character sketches for the main figures in the Book

MILLENNIAL STAR.

"ARISE YE, AND LET US GO UP TO ZION, UNTO THE LORD OUR GOD."—Jeremiah.

No. 43. Vol. XXIX.

Saturday, October 26, 1867.

Price One Penny.

SKETCHES FROM THE BOOK OF MORMON.

BY ELDER KARL G. MAESER.

NEPHI.

One of the most striking peculiarities of the Book of Mormon, which it has in common with the Scriptures is, that without giving a direct des-

a hero in battle to execute some commandment of God that required the nerve of a man, we see him on other occasions as gentle as a child, forgiving at once his repentant brothers the

Before leaving England for Switzerland, Maeser wrote a series of articles on the Book of Mormon for the Millennial Star. This particular issue was published October 26, 1867. Courtesy of HBLL.

of Mormon from Nephi to Alma. Maeser brought careful insights into the personalities; Nephi was compared to Moses, Jacob to Joshua, King Noah to Louis XIV, and Abinadi to Stephen and Jan Hus. Applying Pestalozzi's principles of *Anschaung*, Maeser taught that such an analysis provided "so clear and distinct a conception of the various persons, that each of them becomes as it were a living witness of its truth, and conviction of its authenticity steals upon the mind of the reading skeptic in spite of himself."⁸⁵

Maeser noted how often critics of the Book of Mormon, "these hunters after small game," needed only to read a few verses further to see their objection resolved.⁸⁶ Throughout these articles, Karl inserted aphorisms that would become a trademark of his teaching style:

"Man grows with his higher aims."⁸⁷

"Without union with his Creator, no mortal can walk in safety and fulfill his destiny upon the earth."⁸⁸

"Discontented individuals and ambitious spirits want to strike out on their own account, contrary to the will of the Lord and his servants."⁸⁹

“A sound mind in a sound body.”⁹⁰

“The storm shook the young tree to make its roots fasten the stronger into the ground.”⁹¹

“The father’s prayers and faith will be a foundation for the children’s safety.”⁹²

“Stability is one of the first requisites of a state organization.”⁹³

“Persecution is the grand argument of all tyrants.”⁹⁴

“Soft is the pillow of the man whose life’s labor is faithfully done.”⁹⁵

Taken as a whole, the articles bear Karl’s witness that the Book of Mormon will withstand all careful scrutiny and belie all claims that a young, unlearned boy could have dreamed up this work by an overactive imagination.

Der Stern

In October 1868, Brigham invited Karl to begin “printing little by little” some of the major sections of the Doctrine and Covenants” and extract from discourses and other matter that you consider will help to accomplish the good you desire. Be very careful to examine them and see that whatever you print is translated correctly.”⁹⁶

With these instructions, Maeser began the publication of *Der Stern*, a monthly sixteen-page magazine. Each issue of the first year began with a German translation (by Maeser) of a section of the Doctrine and Covenants, followed by an article or address given by one of the Church leaders. The third article in each issue was written by Karl to those investigating the Church. Correspondence from Utah was then included, along with an article to the French Saints by Octave Ursenbach. Finally, a section of questions and answers was included, followed by a poem, usually the German translation of an English hymn.

The first issue appeared on January 2, 1869, with five hundred copies paid for in advance.⁹⁷ Maeser knew from personal experience that the Church had been portrayed unfairly by the journalists of the time. Moritz Busch had sarcastically introduced him to Mormonism fourteen years

Der Stern.

Eine Monatsschrift zur Verbreitung der Wahrheit.

Audiatur et altera pars.

I. Band.

1. Januar 1869.

Nr. 1.

Die Bündnisse und Befehle des Herrn an seine Diener der Kirche Jesu Christi der Heiligen der letzten Tage.

(Doct. and Cov. Sect. I.)

1. Höre, o du Volk meiner Kirche, sagt die Stimme dessen, der in der Höhe wohnet, und dessen Augen auf allen Menschen ruhen; ja, wahrlich ich sage, höre o du Volk von ferne, und ihr, die ihr seid auf den Inseln der See, merket auf, Alle! Denn wahrlich, die Stimme des Herrn ergeht an alle Menschen, und da ist Keiner, der entfliehen und kein Auge, das nicht sehen, noch ein Ohr, das nicht hören, oder ein Herz, das nicht durchdrungen werden könnte, und die Halsstarrigen sollen mit großem Kummer gepeinigt, ihre Sünden auf den Dächern verkündigt, und ihre verborgenen Thaten offenbar werden; und die Stimme der Warnung soll an alle Völker ergehen durch den Mund meiner Diener, die ich in diesen letzten Tagen erwählt habe, und sie werden ausgehen, und Niemand soll sie hindern, denn ich, der Herr, habe es ihnen befohlen.

2. Siehe, das ist meine Vollmacht und die Vollmacht meiner Diener, und mein Vorwort zu dem Buche meiner Gebote, welche ich ihnen zur Veröffentlichung an Euch gegeben habe, o ihr Bewohner der Erde! Darum habet Furcht und zittert, ihr Völker, denn was ich, der Herr, in ihnen erklärt habe, soll erfüllt werden. Und, wahrlich, ich sage Euch, daß denen, welche ausgehen, diese Botschaften den Menschenkindern zu bringen, Macht gegeben ist, die Ungläubigen und Verstoßenen auf Erden wie im Himmel zu binden; ja, wahrlich, sie zu versiegeln bis auf den Tag, wenn der Born Gottes soll ausgegossen werden über die Bösen ohne Maaß; auf den Tag, wenn der Herr kommen wird, Jedem zu vergelten nach seinen Werken, und Jedermann zu messen mit dem Maaße, mit dem er seinen Nächsten gemessen hat.

3. Darum ertönt die Stimme des Herrn an alle Enden der Erde, daß Alle, welche hören wollen, hören mögen: Bereitet Euch! Bereitet

The first issue of *Der Stern* was published in January 1869. Maeser translated sections of the Doctrine and Covenants and wrote all the articles in the first few issues. Courtesy of HBL.

previously.⁹⁸ Maeser also knew that few readers possessed the ability to see through biased rhetoric without coaching. Therefore, he selected as *Der Stern*'s motto "Audiatur et altera pars" (The other side must be heard) to appeal to the readers' "sense of justice and to foster a proper and fair judgment."⁹⁹ He invited the readers to investigate the missionaries' words for themselves, and not to dismiss them because of the interpretation of some king, prince, or government-supported clergyman. He challenged the justification for the prejudice and ostracism shown to the missionaries:

Did these scoffers discover the hollowness and absurdity of our doctrine and testimony through careful examination? . . . Did those journalists, clerics, and officials, after testing our principles with arduous diligence and praiseworthy exertion, recognize the foundation to be false, and therefore consider themselves called for the good of mankind to condemn those who hold them? Have they meticulously weighed the evidence of our enemies against our own principles and actions and found the latter to be too lacking? Reader! You know that it is not so, not even in one single case.¹⁰⁰

Mormonism had confronted constant persecution from the early days of the Church while Joseph Smith was translating the plates through the persecution faced in Missouri and Illinois, the Utah War, and the government's attack on polygamy as one of the "twin relics of barbarism." Like Martin Luther, Maeser wrote boldly:

Unless we are convinced with bright and clear evidence from the Holy Scriptures, we cannot recant; here we stand, we cannot do otherwise. . . . We therefore warn you all, to be careful and to prove, before you condemn, that you may not discover that you were fighting against God; so when others speak evil of us, consider and hear the other side."¹⁰¹

Ironically, in 1869, Moritz Busch was completing a sequel to his 1855 *Die Mormonen*, entitled *Geschichte der Mormonen* (*History of the Mormons*,

1870). Demonstrating exactly the prejudiced journalism Maeser was criticizing, it expanded on Busch's earlier research but hardly updated anything. Without even referring to his previous book from which he quoted large sections, Busch almost completely disregarded the contemporary growth of the Church in Germany and Switzerland, where more than six hundred members resided. Citing a statement in Jacob Schiel's 1859 book, *Reisen durch den Felsengebirge*,¹⁰² that only three German members could be found in Utah, Busch claimed, "The Mormon efforts for German souls has nearly completely failed." According to Busch, only a poet, a city engineer, a barber, and a few other isolated individuals had found their way into Latter-day Saint congregations—including "a school teacher in Dresden, who was suddenly converted and left for Zion."¹⁰³ It would have shocked this self-appointed expert on Mormonism to learn the significant role that he himself had played in the sudden conversion of that schoolteacher, who was at the very time bringing German converts to the message Busch was disparaging. With all his love of detail, Busch ignored the contemporary success the Church was having in his own country and in his own language.

Before Busch had signed the preface of his book in August 1869, Maeser had visited Leipzig, Meissen, and Dresden; traveled through Bavaria twice; organized two branches in Germany (one in Bavaria and another in Wurttemberg); and published eight issues of *Der Stern*. (By May 1869, six hundred copies of *Der Stern* were printed per month.) By August, Karl had been the mission president for just over one year and had recorded great progress with a small handful of missionaries. The *Deseret News* published Maeser's letter to Brigham Young¹⁰⁴ announcing that 225 people had been baptized in his mission in the past twelve months alone. In spite of Busch's best efforts to dissuade and in spite of incredible prejudice and pervasive political oppression, the Church was growing among German-speaking people. Busch's critique of Mormonism had even helped it spread—for example, through Maeser's conversion. In the second issue of *Der Stern*, Maeser quoted Brigham Young: "Do you want to know what we want? We want to conquer the world if you will let us; however, if you persecute us we will do it even faster!"¹⁰⁵

In his writings, Maeser challenged “the summersaults of logic” often used by opponents of the Church.¹⁰⁶ He defied those who dismissed the Church because of its small number of members:

Striving for the purity of the Gospel of the Son of God has always been ignored. Deny it if it were possible, you religious scholars, as you call yourselves, you clerics, pastors, ministers, priests and the like! The churches in the cities are becoming more and more empty, except where some brilliant orator knows how to captivate the crowd for an hour, while thousands either huddle together to worship in private homes, where they often fall prey to fanatics and religious demagogues, or the bulk who seek fulfillment by throwing themselves at the pleasures of this world through violating the Sabbath, who could reach true spiritual nourishment a million times better through proper Sabbath Day observance. Why this condition? You want to serve God, without harming Mammon. That is the reason. Your bells chime for the rich; you reserve seats in your churches for the princes, the noble and the mighty; fine speeches and long prayers are offered at the graves, of those who can pay, and so it goes in all your official performances; money and the esteem of the world is the measuring rod, toward which you organize your zeal.¹⁰⁷

In other issues of *Der Stern*, Maeser wrote about baptism, testimony, revelation, and the persecution of the true Church; discussed Church policies; wrote a character sketch of Jesus Christ; answered doctrinal questions; and continued to write poetry and translate hymns.

Hymns

In August 1869, Maeser published a revised hymnal, having translated some of the most beloved hymns into German himself, including “The Spirit of God,” “The Time Is Far Spent,” “Ye Elders of Israel,” “How Firm a Foundation,” “Praise to the Man,” “O My Father,” “O Ye Mountains High,” “Come, Come, Ye Saints,” and “We Thank Thee, O God, for

a Prophet,” with more included in future issues of *Der Stern* (e.g., “Do What Is Right,” “Oh Say, What Is Truth?”).¹⁰⁸ In total, twenty-seven of the published hymns of Zion were sung to Karl’s words, and most of these translations are still found in the German *Gesangbuch*.

Conclusion of Maeser’s Mission

During Maeser’s presidency, conferences were held, outings were planned, and the Church continued to grow in spite of “the devil fussing around, trying to raise some dust, wherever the smallest opportunity presents itself to him.”¹⁰⁹

Towards the end of his mission, Maeser praised the diligence of his missionaries and noted the progress they made with the language to the “astonishment of many strangers when the latter heard that none of these brethren understood one word of German eight months ago.”¹¹⁰ At the same time, he pleaded for more missionaries who could come already with a “thorough knowledge of customs and language”:¹¹¹ too much “precious time is lost in obtaining those necessary qualifications.”¹¹² Maeser instituted a system of reporting that increased the efficiency of the mission, but he knew that effectiveness relied upon the nature of the people more than the system. Maeser pointed to Theodore Brandley (Brändli), a young Swiss convert who was called as a local missionary in April of 1869 and who by August had “converted and baptized since then a score or two, and [labored] with great fire in the Canton of Bern, although no more than eighteen years old.”¹¹³ Everywhere Maeser traveled, he encouraged the Saints to be faithful and to “trust in the Lord God of Israel, who will take care of His own; and we shall prevail, if we will only be faithful to our covenants.”¹¹⁴

On January 14, 1870, Karl left Switzerland for his final visit to Germany. On January 22, he was invited to present a lecture, “The Country of the Great Salt Lake and Its People,” for a large audience at the *Meissen Handwerkskammer* (chamber of commerce). At the conclusion of his lecture, Maeser was unanimously elected an honorary member of the association. He wrote, “I have not failed to improve the opportunity thus



In 1867, Maeser was able to return to his family home in Meissen. Unfortunately, he could not interest his family in the Church. The plaque on the wall was placed there at a special ceremony in 1925. Courtesy of Cathy Froerer.

offered me to give them the right side of the picture for once, as they had been furnished with falsehoods about us long enough.”¹¹⁵ He knew, of course, that the interest shown was primarily out of social curiosity more than out of religious interest, but he was pleased he had been given the opportunity to dispel some of the prejudices “among the German nation, in spite, or rather in consequence of the bigoted measures the various governments are adopting.”¹¹⁶

Unfortunately, Maeser’s German relatives continued to resist the message he so wanted to share with them. “Steeped in the traditions held by their progenitors for generations back, [they] were such dyed-in-the-wool Lutherans, and so full of prejudice against the Mormon people in general that everything he said fell on unlistening ears.”¹¹⁷ They saw the success of his lecture at the chamber of commerce¹¹⁸ as evidence of the prominence he could have attained had he not sacrificed it all by leaving in the first place. They pleaded with him to stay, but he knew his calling. The March issue of *Der Stern* contained a sweet poem that he wrote in Meissen.¹¹⁹

Obviously written to his family in Germany,¹²⁰ it portrayed a young boy exclaiming, “Dear father, you are so far away and have left us here alone with only your picture. How we would love to climb on your lap and snuggle into your chest. Sometimes we forget you are gone and rush to tell you things or dream that you are here, only to feel the disappointment when we awaken. Troubled, we ask mother why you don’t come home.” Her gentle reply, with a trembling voice and tears moistening her face, was to read the words of the Lord: “Whosoever leaves father, mother, wife and children for the sake of my kingdom, he is my disciple.’ That is why he has left us. The angels will be with him until his work is completed and he returns again to us. Therefore, children let us hope, wait and pray for his joyous return.”¹²¹

Maeser’s brother-in-law, Edward Schoenfeld, had been called to the Swiss-German Mission at the October 1869 general conference. It must have been a grand reunion on March 28, 1870, when Elders Maeser and Schoenfeld greeted one another in Switzerland. The two men immediately began to work together. In April, a special conference was held as President Carrington came from England, with Maeser and Schoenfeld acting as interpreters. May marked Maeser’s third year as a missionary, and he was given permission to return home. Schoenfeld replaced Maeser as the editor of *Der Stern* and president of the mission.

In June 1870, before leaving his position as mission president, Maeser had a noteworthy experience with one of his young missionaries. Theodore Brandley, the Swiss convert who had proven himself such a powerful missionary, felt terribly discouraged by the persecution they had received. To make matters worse, he had felt unjustly accused by his mission companion; therefore, he had resolved to abandon his mission. Maeser, whom Brandley viewed almost as a father, invited both missionaries to meet with him in Zürich and helped them resolve their differences. He persuaded young Brandley to remain and complete his mission. It was painful parting for the young missionary when Maeser bid farewell to his mission on July 2, but it left Brandley with a renewed desire to serve and eternal gratitude for his president and friend. Brandley wished him well, “with the happy hope to meet Br.



Theodore Brandley (1851–1928) was a young Swiss convert who was helped to remain on his mission by President Maeser. He later served as mission president. This photo was taken after his third mission, ca. 1890.
© Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Maeser again in a better place in the land of Zion.”¹²² Years later, Brandley would return to the Swiss Mission as president (1890–91).

Leaving the Mission

In the July issue of *Der Stern*, Maeser bid farewell to the Swiss and German Saints. He explained that when he had left his family in May of 1867,¹²³ he had no idea of the difficulties that he would have to endure while engaged in

his assignment, but he knew that “if I remained faithful to the pledge of my covenant I would return joyfully again to Zion.”¹²⁴ He was pleased by the growth of the Church, by the converts who had already left for Zion, and by the power that *Der Stern* had brought. Twenty well-ordered branches were then operating in the Swiss-German Mission, and investigators were attending their meetings, reading their literature, hearing their testimonies, and “causing the people more headaches than any other religious group, by constantly leading away new citizens into the Kingdom of God through baptism.” He expressed his gratitude to the Lord for doing everything “to bring us to our duty.”¹²⁵

He was reminded of the “severe sorrow, toil and pain” that he had witnessed the Saints endure. “I think of the many tears that I have shed, complaints that pressed upon the innermost part of my heart, sighs for the destitution I tried in vain to calm.” He had witnessed “the bitter injustices that here and there has been heaped upon my brothers, because they were saints, the ruthlessness, with which the children of light were treated without regard either for the white hair of venerable age or the untarnished eyes of the young and innocent.”¹²⁶ He remembered those “false members,” those who had joined the Church with less than honorable

intentions, and the plans planted by “the prince of darkness in the hearts of men, to impede the progress of the truth,” but these memories paled in comparison to “the memory of the marvelous testimonies of faithfulness, brotherly love and virtue” that lay as “precious gems in the sanctuary of my heart.”¹²⁷ He was grateful for the valiant examples of the “heroes of Israel” and for the hundreds of opportunities to bear witness of “the divine origins of the Church” during “this beautiful and meaningful period of my life.”¹²⁸

On July 13, 1870, Maeser left Liverpool on the *Manhattan*, bound for New York with 269 members of the Church,¹²⁹ 89 of which were from the Swiss-German Mission and 17 of which were returning elders. Maeser had been called to be the president of the company, with L. W. Shurtliff and Winslow Farr as his counselors. Meetings were held daily—English meetings in the front of the ship and German in the middle of it.¹³⁰ Some of the poor travelers suffered seasickness from the moment the ship began to move until they reached Castle Garden at New York, seeming “determined to feed the fishes, if possible.”¹³¹ Except for a couple of stormy nights, the trip was quite pleasant, and they celebrated as they approached the shore with song and “festive merrymaking.”¹³² William C. Staines, the Church’s superintendent of emigration, met them on July 26 at New York with the arrangements to travel by train all the way to Ogden.¹³³ After a day of recovery and sightseeing in the city, they boarded a train and headed west to Zion. It was quite a change for them in crossing the plains by rail:

We stormed through the valleys of the Rocky Mountains, flew through the deserts, as if their terrors were only the pictures of an exciting fantasy, and finally came down through the beautiful Weber valley to Ogden. Here hundreds of friends, acquaintances and brethren were already awaiting led by Elders Franklin D. Richards, Octave Urnsbach and Penrose. The first brought us the instruction from President Brigham Young that we should stay seated, because the train would take us directly to Salt Lake City. After a half-hour wait we then went to Salt Lake City on our own Mormon railroad. In Farmington, the First Presidency of the Church awaited us, namely Brother Brigham Young, George A.

Smith and Daniel A. Wells followed by some other elders. While the train traveled further, I had the honor to introduce the presidency to the travelers in the various cars, as they greeted each with a friendly hand of welcome to Zion. What a crowd of humanity, as we arrived at the station! It was nearly 5 o'clock in the evening. My son, Reinhard, jumped onto the car to hug me; he has become as tall as I; my daughter Ottilie stood below and stretched out her arms to me; my wife with the little one, that I didn't recognize any more, grandmother and your family [the Schoenfelds], they all were there rejoicing and tears of joy were shed by all. The majority of the saints swept away by old friends and acquaintances, faster than warm bread from the bakery, and the few who had no one, were brought to quarters prepared for them in the tithing office.¹³⁴

On August 7, Maeser reported on his mission in the new Salt Lake Tabernacle. He was deeply impressed by its grandeur. He then threw himself with renewed energy to his commitment to educate the youth of Zion, with deep gratitude for the lasting memories of his labor.

Notes

1. Karl G. Maeser to John L. Smith, published in *Darsteller*, June 1857, 11–13; English translation by A. LeGrand Richards.
2. Franklin D. Richards, journal, July 29, 1866, 1, MS 1215 2, CHL.
3. When Franklin's uncle Willard died in 1857, he took the responsibility of Willard's seven wives and children.
4. The oldest living child at the time was Franklin S. Richards, who had just turned seventeen.
5. Richards, journal, July 29, 1866, 1.
6. Richards, journal, July 29, 1866, 1.
7. Church Historian's Office journal, April 21, 1867, CR100, 29:184, CHL.
8. Church Historian's Office, "History of the Church, 1839–circa 1882," April 21, 1867, 468, CR100 102, vol. 37, CHL.
9. "History of the Church, 1839–circa 1882," April 21, 1867, 469.

10. "History of the Church, 1839–circa 1882," April 21, 1867, 469.
11. Reinhard Maeser, *Karl G. Maeser: A Biography by His Son* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, 1928), 51.
12. Karl G. Maeser to Franklin D. Richards, *Millennial Star*, August 10, 1867, 509.
13. Karl G. Maeser "From the Rocky Mountains to the Alps: The Departure," *Deseret News*, September 18, 1867, 1.
14. Maeser, "From the Rocky Mountains to the Alps: With the Train," *Deseret News*, November 20, 1867, 6.
15. Karl G. Maeser to Franklin D. Richards, *Millennial Star*, August 10, 1867, 509.
16. Maeser, "With the Train," 6.
17. Maeser, "With the Train," 6.
18. Maeser, "With the Train," 6.
19. Maeser to Richards, 509.
20. Maeser to Richards, 510.
21. Maeser to Richards, 510.
22. Karl G. Maeser, "From the Rocky Mountains to the Alps: Through the States," *Deseret News*, December 4, 1867, 7.
23. Maeser, "Through the States," 7.
24. While writing the history of BYU, Ernest L. Wilkinson came across a story of Maeser "calling on a certain man in Philadelphia to plead for money for his trip to Germany." In a letter to Leonard J. Arrington on October 9, 1974, Wilkinson wrote, "Fortunately, I found my notes and I find that a grandson of this same Greenwell, whom Maeser called on, is now living in Ogden, and he verified the story." Leonard J. Arrington Papers, LJAHA 1, series 9, box 101, folder 8, Special Collections and Archives, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University.
25. Maeser, "From the Rocky Mountains to the Alps," 4.
26. "Charles C. Kimball, journal—1867, July–August," MS 6959, May 23, 1867, 7, CHL.
27. Maeser, "Across the Sea," 4.
28. Maeser, "Through England," *Deseret News*, January 1, 1868, 7.
29. Maeser, "Through England," 7.
30. Maeser, "Through England," 7.
31. Maeser, "Through England," 7.
32. Franklin D. Richards, journal, MS 1215, box 2, vol. 15, July 28, 1867, 213, CHL.

33. Karl G. Maeser, "From the Rocky Mountains to the Alps: France," *Deseret News*, May 13, 1868, 3.
34. Octave Ursenbach to Franklin D. Richards, *Millennial Star*, September 21, 1867, 605.
35. Ursenbach to Richards, 605.
36. Karl G. Maeser, "France," 3.
37. Joseph S. Horne to William Clayton, "From Switzerland," *Deseret Weekly*, September 18, 1867, 3.
38. Joseph S. Horne to Franklin D. Richards, *Millennial Star*, November 2, 1867, 700.
39. Albert Riedel, *Die Geschichte der deutschsprachigen Missionen der Kirche Jesu Christi der Heiligen der Letzten Tage* (Salt Lake City: Service Press, 1971), 1:243.
40. Karl G. Maeser to Franklin D. Richards, *Millennial Star*, October 12, 1867, 652.
41. Maeser to Richards, *Millennial Star*, October 12, 1867, 652.
42. Horne to Richards, *Millennial Star*, November 2, 1867, 700.
43. Joseph S. Horne to Franklin D. Richards, in *Millennial Star*, November 2, 1867, 702.
44. Joseph S. Horne to Franklin D. Richards, November 6, 1867, Swiss-Italian Mission, letter-press copybooks, LR 8884 23, vol. 2, 451, CHL. "The permission to go and visit his [Maeser's] relatives was hailed with joy and thankfulness by Bro. M. he was to leave Constance about noon yesterday en route to Leipsic, expecting to arrive in the latter sometime today. He will write to you soon after arriving at his father's and give you a synopsis of his trip and how he finds things in Meissen."
45. He is referring to his brother Ernest Gustav Maeser (1835–83).
46. Reinhard Maeser Papers, MSS 1841, box 2, folder 8, 21, LTPSC. Unfortunately, the location of the actual journal is currently unknown.
47. Franklin D. Richards, journal, December 10, 1867, "Found a pile of letters awaiting my attention among others one from broth[er] Karl G. Mazer [sic] informing me of his very interesting visit to Dresden, seeing br[other] Martin whom I baptized in Oct 1855 when I baptized Mazer & Schonfeld & others. I thank the Lord that he has preserved the spirit of truth which I was enabled to kindle there & I hope the same may yet prove life unto life to many."
48. Franklin D. Richards, journal, January 7, 1868, 10.
49. Franklin D. Richards, journal, January 10, 1868: "Received an interesting letter from Br. Carl G. Maeser which very much relieved me of my anxiety concerning him also a very interesting letter from brother Moses Thatcher."

50. Franklin D. Richards, journal, February 9, 1868, 42: "Got a letter from Karl G. Maeser dated Wednesday Feb 5 at Meissen in which he states 'last Saturday brought the local paper quite a favorable report of our Birmingham Conference and you were reported to have said that Brigham Young was the greatest benefactor of mankind now upon the Earth . . . Since then, I am crowded with inquiries and all very respectfully made, . . . even the Lutheran ministers here, a former teacher of mine is very cordial.' He says there are some 20 beside some before in all about 30 ready for baptism."
51. Karl G. Maeser to Franklin D. Richards, "Correspondence," *Deseret News*, May 6, 1868, 1.
52. "Alps," *Evening Telegraph* (Philadelphia), July 31, 1868, 6.
53. "Report of a Conference: of the Saints of Canton Bern, held on the Tenerstein Mountain between St. Imier and Biel, Switzerland, Sunday June 7, 1868," *Millennial Star*, June 27, 1868, 6.
54. Eva Maeser Crandall, interview with Alma T. Burton, March 25, 1950, in Alma T. Burton, "Karl G. Maeser: Mormon Educator" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1950), 34. Elder Boyd K. Packer has often referred to this story; see Boyd K. Packer, *BYU Speeches*, March 23, 1965, 5; "It Is the Position That Counts," *New Era*, June 1977, 51; "Follow the Brethren," *Liahona*, September 1979, 53; "From Such Turn Away," *Ensign*, May 1985, 33–35.
55. "Releases and Appointments," *Millennial Star*, June 20, 1868, 395.
56. Franklin D. Richards to Karl G. Maeser, FDR Correspondence, June 10, 1868, MS 1215, reel 9, box 7, folder 1, vol. 1, CHL.
57. Franklin D. Richards to Karl G. Maeser, June 10, 1868.
58. Franklin D. Richards to Karl G. Maeser, June 10, 1868.
59. A detailed report of the first conference, August 2, was made by Maeser in the *Millennial Star* so that the Swiss Saints in Utah would have "an idea of the condition of the Saints in the old fatherland." Three sessions were held beginning at 10:00 a.m. in Riesbach, near Zurich. "Minutes of a General Conference of the Swiss and German Mission, held at the Latter-day Saints' Hall, Reisbach Near Zurich, Sunday, August 2, 1868," *Millennial Star*, August 15, 1868, 518–20.
60. They were "Von neuem strahlt mit großer Pracht," "Was zweifelst du?," "O ihr Berges, höhn!," "Die Zeit ist noch kurz," "Dein Volk, ach, segne Herr," "Erhebe dich mein Geist," "Preiset den Mann, der verkehrt mit Jehovah," "Ertöne Lied, mit mächt'gem Feierklange," and "Der Geist aus den Höhen gleich Feuer und Flammen."
61. "Minutes of a General Conference of the Swiss and German Mission," *Millennial Star*, August 15, 1868, 520.

62. Heber Young to George Q. Cannon, *Deseret News*, September 2, 1868, 7.
63. Karl G. Maeser, "Correspondence: Three Weeks in the Swiss Mission," *Deseret News*, October 21, 1868, 7.
64. Karl G. Maeser to William Clayton, "From Switzerland," *Deseret News*, September 30, 1868, 3.
65. Maeser, "Correspondence," 7.
66. Franklin D. Richards to Brigham Young, September 2, 1868, Franklin D. Richards correspondence, MS 1215, reel 9, box 7, folder 1, vol. 1, 196, CHL.
67. Richards to Young, September 2, 1868, 196.
68. Richards to Young, September 2, 1868, 197.
69. Karl G. Maeser to Albert Carrington, April 12, 1869, in *Millennial Star*, April 24, 1869, 276.
70. Karl G. Maeser to Albert Carrington, in *Millennial Star*, April 24, 1869, 276.
71. Riedel, *Die Geschichte der deutschsprachigen Missionen*, 261.
72. He translated the hymn "Denk nicht, wenn du kommest nach Zion" (Think Not When You Gather to Zion), *Der Stern*, October, 1869, 160.
73. Karl G. Maeser, "The Social Question," *Deseret Evening News*, May 23, 1868, 5.
74. Maeser, "Social Question," 5.
75. Maeser, "Social Question," 5.
76. Maeser, "Social Question," 5.
77. Maeser, "Social Question," 5.
78. Maeser, "With the Train," 6.
79. Compare Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Philosophie der Geschichte* (Berlin, 1837).
80. Karl G. Maeser, "Footprints of Providence in the Development of the Human Race," *Millennial Star*, September 21, 1867, 596–98.
81. Maeser, "Footprints," 596.
82. Karl G. Maeser, "Faith & Reason," *Millennial Star*, September 28, 1867, 615.
83. Maeser, "Faith & Reason," 615.
84. Maeser, "Faith & Reason," 615.
85. Karl G. Maeser, "Sketches from the Book of Mormon: Nephi," *Millennial Star*, October 26, 1867, 673.
86. Karl G. Maeser, "Sketches: Jacob, the Brother of Nephi," *Millennial Star*, November 2, 1867, 696.
87. Karl G. Maeser, "Sketches: Alma the Great," *Millennial Star*, February 1, 1868, 70.
88. Karl G. Maeser, "Sketches: Seven Prophets of the House of Jacob," 759.

89. Maeser, "Sketches: Seven Prophets of the House of Jacob," 760.
90. Maeser, "Sketches: Nephi," 674.
91. Maeser, "Sketches: Alma the Great," 70.
92. Karl G. Maeser, "Sketches: The End of the Kings," *Millennial Star*, February 8, 1868, 83.
93. Maeser, "Sketches: The End of the Kings," 84.
94. Karl G. Maeser, "Sketches: The End of the Kings," *Millennial Star*, January 4, 1868, 7.
95. Maeser, "Sketches: Alma the Great," 71.
96. Brigham Young Copybook, October 9, 1868, CHL. Brigham also reported on the health of Maeser's family and the status of his school.
97. Karl G. Maeser to William Clayton, "Correspondence," *Deseret News*, February 10, 1869, 9.
98. For a further discussion of Mortiz Busch's contribution to Maeser's conversion, see A. LeGrand Richards, "Moritz Busch's *Die Mormonen* and the Conversion of Karl G. Maeser," *BYU Studies* 45, no. 4 (2006): 46–67.
99. Karl G. Maeser, "Audiatur et altera pars," *Der Stern*, January 1, 1869, 10; translation by A. LeGrand Richards.
100. Maeser, "Audiatur et altera pars," 10.
101. Maeser, "Audiatur et altera pars," 11.
102. He was referring to Jacob Heinrich Wilhelm Schiel, who accompanied the Gunnison expedition (1853–54). Schiel published a book of his experience with Gunnison in 1859, *Reisen durch den Felsengebirge* (Travels through the Rocky Mountains) (Schaffhausen: Brodtmann'schen, 1859), 124. Schiel mentioned that he only met three Germans during his 1853 trip to Utah. Busch's numbers regarding Germans in Utah, then, were completely outdated even by 1859. To use this book as evidence in 1870 was extremely misleading.
103. Busch, *Geschichte der Mormonen*, 326.
104. Karl G. Maeser to Brigham Young, August 11, 1869, "Correspondence," *Deseret News*, September 8, 1869, 9.
105. Karl G. Maeser, "Unser Zeugnis," *Der Stern*, February 1869, 24.
106. Karl G. Maeser, "Eine Stimme der Warnung," *Der Stern*, 39–42.
107. Karl G. Maeser, "Die Taufe," *Der Stern*, May 4, 1869, 86–87; translation by A. LeGrand Richards.
108. In the 1869 *Gesangbuch*, 21 of the 119 hymns were his translations or original lyrics. Most of his translations are still used in the German *Gesangbuch*. "Come, Come, Ye Saints" has been replaced, probably because he did not include "all is well"; he used "zage nicht," which means "don't hesitate" or "don't be apprehensive."

109. Karl G. Maeser, "Correspondence: The Swiss, German and French Mission," *Millennial Star*, September 11, 1869, 598.
110. Karl G. Maeser report to Carrington, *Millennial Star*, April 24, 1869, 276.
111. Karl G. Maeser to Brigham Young, "Correspondence," *Deseret News*, September 8, 1869, 9.
112. Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, August 28, 1869, 3, CHL; hereafter cited as Journal History.
113. Journal History, August 11, 1869.
114. Karl G. Maeser report of mission to Albert Carrington, in *Millennial Star*, September 11, 1869, 598.
115. Karl G. Maeser to Albert Carrington, letter, April 5, 1870, *Millennial Star*, 220.
116. Maeser to Carrington, 220–21.
117. Maeser, *Karl G. Maeser*, 65.
118. This was also referred to as a *Gewerbeverein*.
119. Karl G. Maeser, "Stimmen aus der Heimat eines reisenden Ältesten" (Voices from Home to a Traveling Elder), *Der Stern*, March 1870, 63–64. It was dated February 27, 1870, Meissen.
120. His correspondence to his family in Utah was in English, and he wrote Reinhard, his oldest son, encouraging him to learn German.
121. Maeser, "Stimmen aus der Heimat eines reisenden Ältesten," July 1870, 63–64; translation by A. LeGrand Richards.
122. Brandley, journal, July 2, 1870, 50.
123. In this letter, Maeser recorded that he left on May 10, but the Church Historian's Office listed it as the seventeenth.
124. Karl G. Maeser, "Abschiedsadresse: An alle Heiligen dieser Mission," *Der Stern*, July 1870, 101; translation by A. LeGrand Richards.
125. Maeser, "Abschiedsadresse," 101.
126. Maeser, "Abschiedsadresse," 101–2.
127. Maeser, "Abschiedsadresse," 102.
128. Maeser, "Abschiedsadresse," 103.
129. "Departures," *Millennial Star*, July 19, 1870, 456. Maeser wrote that it was 245 members (see "Mitteilungen," *Der Stern*, March 1871, 2:45–47). The *Deseret News* reported 286 members aboard (see "The Emigrants per the 'Manhattan,'" August 10, 1870, 4).
130. Karl G. Maeser, "At Sea," *Millennial Star*, July 19, 1870, 460–61.
131. Maeser, "At Sea," 461.

132. "Mitteilungen," *Der Stern*, March 1871, 45.
133. Staines (1818–81) served as the Church's emigration agent for eighteen years to the end of his life. See Fred E. Woods, "The Knights at Castle Garden: Latter-day Saint Immigration Agents at New York," in *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: New York and Pennsylvania*, ed. Alexander L. Baugh and Andrew H. Hedges (Provo, UT: Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 2002), 103–24.
134. "Mitteilungen," *Der Stern*, March 1871, 45–47; translation by A. LeGrand Richards.