

Seeking Primitive Christianity in the Waldensian Valleys

Protestants, Mormons, Adventists
and Jehovah's Witnesses in Italy

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ABSTRACT: During the nineteenth century, Protestant clergymen (Anglican, Presbyterian, and Baptist) as well as missionaries for new religious movements (Mormons, Seventh-day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses) believed that Waldensian claims to antiquity were important in their plans to spread the Reformation to Italy. The Waldensians, who could trace their historical roots to Valdes in 1174, developed an ancient origins thesis after their union with the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century. This thesis held that their community of believers had preserved the doctrines of the primitive church. The competing churches of the Reformation believed that the Waldensians were "destined to fulfill a most important mission in the Evangelization of Italy" and that they could demonstrate, through Waldensian history and practices, that their own claims and doctrines were the same as those taught by the primitive church. The new religious movements believed that Waldensians were the best prepared in Italy to accept their new revelations of the restored gospel. In fact, the initial Mormon, Seventh-day Adventist, and Jehovah's Witness converts in Italy were Waldensians. By the end of the century, however, Catholic, Protestant, and Waldensian scholars had debunked the thesis that Waldensians were proto-Protestants prior to Luther and Calvin.

In June 1850 Mormon Apostle Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901) opened the Italian Mission in the Kingdom of Sardinia. He chose this location because he believed, based on a tract he read in England, that the

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Waldensians—a small group of Protestants with settlements in several Piedmont valleys—were “like a rose in the wilderness.”¹ The tract *Sketches of the Waldenses*² advanced an ancient origins thesis which claimed that the Waldensians had rejected the corruption of the Catholic Church after Constantine embraced Christianity and that they had successfully preserved the beliefs and practices of the primitive church in their remote mountain settlements. Snow was convinced, after reading *Sketches*, that the “the Lord has there hidden up a people, amid the Alpine mountains, and it is the voice of the Spirit that I shall commence something of importance in that part of this dark nation.”³ Although he acknowledged that “the night of time has overspread their origin,” he still believed that in the Waldensian valleys “Protestantism is not the offspring of boasted modern reformation; but may fairly dispute with Rome as to which is the oldest in apostasy,” and that “[e]very man holds a creed [in Italy] which has been transmitted from sire to son for a thousand years, whether he be Protestant or Catholic.”⁴ Snow and other Mormon leaders hoped that they could demonstrate to the Waldensians that Joseph Smith (1805–44) had completely restored the primitive church which their ancestors had attempted to safeguard for centuries.

Snow was not the first Christian missionary who was attracted to the Waldensians because of their ancient origins. Protestant clergymen—Anglican, Presbyterian, and Baptist—also believed that Waldensian claims to antiquity were important in their plans to spread the Reformation to Italy. Shortly after Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821) went into exile and the previous regimes were restored on the Italian peninsula, Baptists, Anglicans, and Presbyterians established missions and began their efforts to convince the Waldensians to align with their particular brands of Protestantism. After the Kingdom of Italy was proclaimed in 1861, other mainstream Protestant denominations also established missions there: Wesleyan Methodists in 1861, Adventists in 1864, English Baptists of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1866, American Baptists of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1870, and American Episcopalian Methodists in 1873. During the 1890s, the Salvation Army arrived in Italy and Bible Students (the name was changed to Jehovah’s Witnesses in 1931) followed after 1900.⁵

These missionaries were attracted to the Waldensian valleys because of an ancient origins thesis. Some believed that the Waldensians had been “preserved for a special purpose in the Divine Counsels; destined to fulfill a most important mission in the Evangelization of Italy” and that they “are not Protestants, but primitive Christians.”⁶ Some even claimed that the Waldensians had “remained on the old ground” and were entitled to “the indisputably valid title of the True Church.”⁷ They believed that they could demonstrate, through Waldensian history and practices, that their own claims and doctrines were the same as those taught by the primitive church.

THE WALDENSIANS

During the late twelfth century, a merchant named Valdes or Waldesius organized a Catholic reform movement in Lyons, France.⁸ Valdes, and his “poor of Lyons,” believed that the Roman Catholic clergy had become worldly and sinful, and he urged lay parishioners to set a better example for the church by living in poverty and preaching repentance, even though they were not ordained and they had not received permission to preach from their bishop. Valdes initially believed in the doctrines and sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church—he signed a statement of faith in 1180—but the clergy resented the “Poor Men” not only because they were uneducated but also because they seemed to usurp priestly prerogatives.

In 1184, Valdes and his followers were excommunicated when they refused to cease preaching, and the movement was thereafter included in a list of schisms. Expelled from Lyons, they established communities in Languedoc and Lombardy. In 1215 the Fourth Lateran Council condemned the Waldensians for heresy. In 1218 Waldensians from Languedoc (in France) and Lombardy (in Italy) met in Bergamo, in northern Italy, where they discussed the Fourth Lateran Council. During this meeting they rejected selected church doctrines, including purgatory, masses for the dead, and the intercession of Mary and the Saints. Thereafter they became increasingly radical in their opposition to the clergy and developed their mission to live in poverty and to witness as itinerant preachers.

The Waldensians eventually established settlements in Piedmont, Puglia, Calabria, Provence, Languedoc, and Bohemia. For the next three hundred years, they lived in isolated rural communities in Italy, France, and Germany where they attended mass publicly but practiced their true religious convictions surreptitiously. Although they were occasionally subjected to religious persecution, they were for the most part left alone and targeted for political and religious persecution only after the start of the Reformation.

When Waldensian pastors (known as “barbes” or “uncles”) became aware of the religious reformation launched by John Calvin, they began to confer with Swiss Reformers. Although the barbes were deeply divided about aligning themselves with the reformers, some believed that such an alignment would help them emerge from their geographical and cultural isolation. In 1532 the Waldensians held a synod in the Angrogna Valley, attended by William Farel and other Swiss reformers. Some historians claim that the barbes voted to align the Waldensians with the Swiss Reformed Church during this synod. Such an alignment, which naturally required the modification of many historical beliefs, practices, and organization, took years to implement.⁹

THE ANCIENT ORIGINS THESIS IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

As the Waldensians gradually completed their alignment with the Swiss Reformed Church, they were increasingly subjected to persecution. Thereafter, Protestant apologists (including Waldensians) formulated an official historiography and began to institutionalize a cultural and ethnic identity. As historian Euan Cameron explains, their historiography was based not only on “the real people who had suffered persecution in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in the Alps” but also on “idealized hypothetical antecedents of the reformed church” through which they attempted to trace their origins back to primitive Christianity.¹⁰ They argued that both church and state had marginalized and persecuted the Waldensians for centuries and they also constructed an ancient origins case from oral traditions and documents which they believed predated Valdes.¹¹ Protestant writers in England, Switzerland, and Italy believed that the “true church,” including doctrines and priesthood, “had survived within dissenting movements from the Dark Ages up to the time of Luther’s first schism.”¹² As they became increasingly known as “forerunners of the Reformation,” their valleys became identified as the safe haven in which the pure gospel had survived.

In 1619 Jean-Paul Perrin, a pastor in the French Reformed Church, published a history claiming that the Waldensians were direct descendants of primitive Christians.¹³ Also during the seventeenth century, two Waldensian pastors, Pierre Gilles and Jean Léger, advanced the same thesis.¹⁴ One historian has referred to these three books as “the first three most important histories of the Waldensians” which “make up the ideological foundations of the official Waldensian historiography. . . . They propounded the correct view that was to be held regarding the Waldensian past. . . . History was not being written for itself but to serve a certain idea and a certain cause.”¹⁵

Léger’s book had the most significant impact in Europe because it was written following the infamous Easter Massacre of 1655 when troops loyal to the Duke of Savoy massacred hundreds of Waldensians. Protestants in Europe—including Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658)—vigorously protested the massacre. John Milton (1608–74), one of Cromwell’s ministers, penned a sonnet (“Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter’d Saints”) to call attention to the Waldensian cause.¹⁶ Thereafter “the thesis of the Waldenses as antecedents of the Reformation . . . was . . . not confined, either to the authors native to the Dauphiné, or to those with a particular polemical interest in the Waldenses.” They “earned inclusion, if only in passing, in the works of nearly all the major religious writers of the early Reformation era.”¹⁷ Milton was convinced that the Waldensians had existed “pure since the Apostles” and that they “held the same doctrine and government since the time that Constantine with his mischievous donations poisoned . . . the whole church.”

Samuel Morland (1625–95)—a diplomat dispatched to Torino by Cromwell after the massacre—repeated the thesis in his *History of the Evangelical Churches*.¹⁸ He claimed that he had consulted documents which proved that the Waldensians existed before Valdes and that they had taught and practiced “Protestant” doctrines and rituals before the Reformation. The propaganda value of these books was enormous. Within a few years the British government began dispensing financial assistance and the Duke of Savoy reaffirmed the Treaty of Cavour which memorialized his dynasty’s policy of Waldensian toleration.¹⁹

Still, the Waldensians continued to be verbally attacked and physically persecuted.²⁰ When Louis XIV, the Sun King (1638–1715), revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685, he pressed Duke Vittorio Amedeo II of Savoy to convert or exile his Protestant subjects. In January 1687, the duke forced approximately twenty-five hundred Waldensians to march to Geneva in thirteen contingents. More than two hundred perished en route. While in Switzerland the Waldensians, unlike other exiles, preserved their ethnic identity, maintained separate communities, and resisted assimilation with the Protestants. In 1689, after Vittorio Amedeo II aligned his duchy with Britain, the Waldensians completed a “glorious return” to their valleys. Under the leadership of Pastor Henri Arnaud (1641–1721), they reclaimed most of their confiscated lands.²¹

Arnaud recorded these events and repeated the claim: “Neither has their church been ever reformed, whence arises its title of *Evangelic*.”²² In 1694, the duke issued a new edict reconfirming toleration for Waldensians in their valleys. This new edict was never revoked. In July 1706, the duke demonstrated his confidence in his Waldensian subjects when he took refuge in their valleys during a French siege of Torino.²³ Thereafter Protestants in England, Holland, and Switzerland began sending aid to the Waldensians. Queen Mary granted a royal subsidy to support the pastors in the valleys and to subsidize education. During the eighteenth century, “the debate rested” concerning Waldensian claims that they were “forerunners of the Reformation.”²⁴

NINETEENTH-CENTURY ELABORATIONS OF THE ORIGINS THESIS

At the opening of the nineteenth century, the Waldensians were granted religious freedom when Napoleon annexed Piedmont and made it a French department. Under French rule, they were absorbed into the French Reformed Church, and Britain suspended its financial aid. After the Treaty of Vienna (1815) restored the House of Savoy and other European dynasties, the British renewed financial assistance to the Waldensians. British missionary societies, organized during the 1790s, began planning missions in Italy and Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Baptists were all anxious to proselytize the Catholics.

As British missionaries began their labors in Italy, French and Swiss clergymen introduced a religious revival which had some similarities to the Second Great Awakening in the United States. During this reawakening, Waldensian pastors advanced a more elaborate version of the ancient origins thesis. In 1834 Alexis Muston argued that the “Waldenses have been the means of preserving the doctrines of the gospel in their primitive simplicity” but he also advanced the notion that “they were doubtless designed to preserve the germ of another spring, through the winter of the middle ages; like the leaven hid in three measures of meal, or the precious seed set aside by the husbandman to produce a future harvest.”²⁵ This thesis reflected the strongly-held belief of most Waldensian pastors that their ancestral church provided a “chain by which our Reformed Churches are connected with the first disciples of Christ” and that their new mission was to evangelize Italy.²⁶

ANGLICAN, PRESBYTERIAN, AND BAPTIST MISSIONARY EFFORTS

Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Baptists had many doctrinal and organizational disagreements; but even during the denominational wars of the nineteenth century, they agreed that the Waldensians were the best beachhead for their missions in Italy. Robert Baird (1798–1861), founder of the Society for the Preservation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) and a prominent Presbyterian minister, reported in 1847: “There are nearly forty Protestant ministers of the gospel in Italy at present, about one half of whom are laboring as pastors and professionals in the valleys of the Waldensians.”²⁷ One Baptist minister observed, “There is scarcely a sect in Christendom, which, during the last dozen years, has not laid claim to them as their rightful kindred, in one way or other.”²⁸ A Presbyterian cleric conceded, “There is hardly a Protestant denomination of Christians which has not set them up as a kind of exemplar of primitive purity, and boasted of a conformity to their ecclesiastical character.”²⁹ The Mormons would soon join this chorus.

MORMONS AMONG THE WALDENSIANS

While Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Baptists disagreed on many subjects, they agreed that the American-born churches were neither Protestant nor Christian. Although the Protestants were restorationists they could not embrace churches that claimed new revelations and believed in an imminent millennium. For their part the American-born churches, like the “radical reformers,” believed that the Catholic Church could not be reformed and that the mainline Protestants were therefore daughters of the “mother of harlots.” The Mormon hierarchy taught that “nothing but direct revelation from God could set in order

the Church, place them in that state of dignity from which they fell, and prepare them for the glorious appearing of God our savior.”³⁰

Nevertheless, Mormons, Adventists, and Jehovah’s Witnesses shared the Protestants’ enthusiasm for the ancient origins thesis. They believed that the Waldensians’ history of persecution, their refusal to submit to papal authority, and many of their doctrines and practices, supported the thesis that they had withstood centuries of persecutions and had preserved many of the pure doctrines of the primitive church. Although these American churches believed that the small Italian church had rejected many of the innovations introduced by the Catholic hierarchy during centuries of apostasy, they did not believe that any priesthood authority had been preserved through the Waldensian clergy.³¹

Brigham Young (1801–77) dispatched missionaries to Italy in 1849 because the Mormon Church hierarchy was convinced that, after two years of revolutionary activity, the European continent was ready for the introduction of the gospel. Lorenzo Snow organized the Italian Mission in the Waldensian valleys.³² Even before Snow read about the Waldensians other church leaders had commented on their ancient origins. Sidney Rigdon (1793–1876), a former Campbellite Baptist preacher, one of Joseph Smith’s most trusted confidantes, and a future counselor in the not-yet-organized First Presidency, was sympathetic with William Jones’ conclusion that the Waldensians “were doubtless the remains of the apostolic church.” Rigdon also wrote that he was struck by the “persecutions” and “outlandish falsehoods” that had been perpetrated against them.³³ John C. Bennett (1804–67), another former Campbellite preacher, also a member of the First Presidency and a confidant of Smith, compared persecutions perpetrated against the Mormons and Waldensians, and concluded that persecutions against Mormons were worse.³⁴ Other Church leaders compared Waldensian teachings—particularly those which they believed were taught in the primitive church—with Mormon doctrines.³⁵

Lorenzo Snow and his companions did not “actively and publicly engage in communicating the great principles which I had come to promulgate” during the initial phase of the mission and that “all the jealous policy of Italy has been hushed into repose by the comparative silence of our operations.”³⁶ During this phase it is unlikely that any Waldensians understood that Mormons were not traditional Protestants and Snow and his small band of missionaries were initially welcome to preach before Waldensian congregations. In December 1850, Snow initiated another phase of his mission when he published two pamphlets in French: *Exposition des premiers principes de la doctrine de l’Eglise de Jésus-Christ des Saints des Derniers Jours* and *La voix de Joseph*. He first wrote *Exposition des premiers principes* (a translation of *The Only Way to Be Saved*) a decade earlier as a missionary in England. These described the first principles of the gospel without mentioning either Joseph Smith or the Book of Mormon.³⁷ *La voix de Joseph*

emphasized those aspects of Mormonism that eventually convinced some French-speaking Waldensians to change denominations.³⁸ It described Joseph Smith's revelations, explained the Mormon doctrine of gathering converts to America in anticipation of the millennium, presented the Perpetual Emigrating Fund (PEF) that assisted those who could not afford to emigrate on their own, and depicted the beautiful natural conditions in the Salt Lake Valley.

Waldensian pastors, some of whom had lived through the dissension which accompanied the reawakening, cooled toward Snow and his missionaries when *La voix de Joseph* made them aware of Mormonism's finer points and established clearly that Mormonism was not part of mainstream Protestantism. Pastors of the Reformed Church wrote most of the negative information concerning Mormonism which circulated in the valleys, including attacks on Snow's pamphlets.³⁹ Waldensian pastors also became hostile after Mormon missionaries baptized a few of their members. Since Snow recognized that the Waldensians comprised less than one percent of the total population of the Italian peninsula he made plans for another phase of the mission—to expand to the Italian-speaking Catholic cities. In January 1851 he returned to England where he hired a scholar to translate the Book of Mormon into Italian. The following year he published both *Il Libro di Mormon*⁴⁰ and an Italian edition of *The Only Way to Be Saved*. Thereafter Snow encouraged his missionaries to use these publications and proselytize in the largest Italian-speaking cities in the Kingdom of Sardinia: Torino, Nice, and Genoa.

When Mormon missionaries arrived in Torino in July 1852 they quickly realized that though they were tolerated, or at least ignored, while they labored in the Waldensian valleys, they were forbidden to proselytize in the rest of the kingdom. The Catholic Church was the state religion under the Statuto [constitution]. Although the Waldensians were sometimes overlooked, to the exasperation of Catholics, no minority religion was authorized to assemble, publish religious propaganda, or seek converts among the Catholic population. The Catholic Church also opposed separation of church and state. Even when the Prime Minister Count Cavour (1810–61) eventually proclaimed that there would be “a free church in a free state” and that the state had the right to dismantle many of the prerogatives of the Catholic Church, he also recognized that “the King's government cannot tolerate proselytization or public acts in locations where they could produce popular tumult and disorder.”⁴¹

In Torino the local newspapers used Mormonism to focus their arguments concerning religion and politics in Piedmont and made comparisons between Mormonism, Waldensians, and other Protestants. On 1 August 1852, *L'Armonia*, a conservative Catholic newspaper, published a supplement with a headline for its lead story that announced “Mormons in Torino.” The article discussed, for the first time in an

Italian newspaper, the history and contents of the Book of Mormon. It also provided information on church history and doctrines, and labeled Joseph Smith “a new Muhammad.” This was a common tactic employed during the nineteenth century to malign opponents by comparing them with the vilified prophet of Islam. Since Mormons practiced polygamy this comparison seemed particularly appropriate.

L'Armonia also claimed that both Mormons and Waldensians were conducting missionary work and publishing religious pamphlets, contrary to the constitution and other laws in Piedmont, and that the government was complacent in allowing the Catholic Church to be undermined. The article specifically noted that Carlo Boncompagni (1804–80), the Minister of Justice, had proposed a bill to legalize civil marriages, which made it attractive for Mormons to come to Piedmont:

For what reason did the Mormons come to Torino? They got word of the Boncompagni law . . . and since it does not prohibit plurality of wives, they believe that our Minister of Justice is a good Mormon. They saw that the wind among us was favorable to their doctrine, and that we would embrace their brethren with open arms, so they sent two of them [to Torino].⁴²

A week later, *L'Armonia*'s lead article was headlined “Who is better off in Piedmont? The Catholics or the Mormons?”⁴³ The newspaper complained that “unfortunately the Mormons, about whom we wrote last Sunday, are in Torino beginning their mission in the shadow of liberty, under the beneficial influence of the three-colored flag, protected by those great and spastic Catholics who are our state ministers.” The article discussed Snow's pamphlet *Restaurazione dell'antico Evangelio* and warned readers not to be surprised if the missionaries began publishing a newspaper in Torino or even built a temple, because the government's ministers would allow such activities with a “nod of the head” because of their “agreed upon love of liberty.” These Catholic writers were also wary because the Waldensians were not only publishing a paper but also building a temple (which is how the Waldensians refer to their houses of worship) in Torino.

In the same article *L'Armonia* also noted that the government had mistreated the Catholic Church while Mormon missionaries were permitted to conduct their activities without fear of legal action: “The Mormons introduce in Piedmont thousands of copies of a pamphlet by their elder Lorenzo Snow, full of heresies against the Catholic Church. Although the Statuto [constitution] prohibits the introduction of such materials, the ministry still permits the pamphlets to be distributed. The Catholics wait for *La Civiltà Cattolica*, a newspaper printed in Rome under the eyes of the Pope, and the ministers stop it at the borders.”

The article also compared Mormon prerogatives with limitations placed on the Catholics:

Mormons can teach, combat the state religion, and promote apostasies. The Catholics cannot . . . freely profess their faith in public; they cannot even (who would have believed it!) pray to the Virgin Mary. The Mormons come to Torino and are accepted in a brotherly way. [But] various Catholic priests, including the Archbishop of Torino and the Archbishop of Cagliari, have been denied the right to return to their headquarters, to their homeland. The Mormons are in Piedmont, and no one insults them. The Catholic priests are derided in print, insulted, and persecuted on the public streets. . . . Thus does one live in Piedmont! Thus a liberal ministry treats the Catholic religion that, according to the first article of the Statuto, is the only religion of the state.

In 1853 *L'Armonia* continued to report on Mormonism, including political events in Utah, and to point out parallels between Mormonism and Protestantism. For example, on 5 March 1853 *L'Armonia* published an article which questioned whether “the Apostle Lorenzo Snow, who works very zealously in the capital, could administer enlightenment to others.” Specifically it wanted to know if

the Christians of *La Buona Novella*, [the Waldensian newspaper published in Torino] who like the Mormons want nothing but the Bible, feel like them concerning polygamy. The Saints of Utah do not find anything contrary in the Bible and in the revelations. . . . It is natural that since they all have the same rules of faith, that is the Bible, and being all inspired by heaven, the Christians of *La Buona Novella*, of Utah Lake, and of the Lutheran congress, must have the same feelings. We hope therefore that *La Buona Novella* will not wait to bring this issue to parliament and the ministers, which is now considering another law concerning matrimony. . . . Polygamy and divorces are acknowledged by Lutherans as by Mormons. . . .⁴⁴

The Catholic newspaper then set forth a challenge: “So tell us if the *La Buona Novella* is right to give us only one rule of faith, the Bible.”

On 7 September *L'Armonia* published another article, which originally appeared in the *New York Journal*, which argued that Mormon practices were contrary to the laws of the United States. *L'Armonia* gleefully concluded:

What? The Mormons incompatible with the principles and essence of the United States? . . . And they are so compatible with the principles and essence of Piedmont!! And how can they not be compatible with their heresies and schisms with Piedmont, since they are compatible with their sacred Bible, which is the only rule of their faith? What does *La Buona Novella* say?⁴⁵

This time the Waldensian newspaper took the bait. The Waldensians had almost completed their temple in Torino, which was dedicated in December, and they did not want there to be any ambiguity concerning the differences between their church and Mormonism. On 28 October 1853 *La Buona Novella* republished an article which first appeared in a Paris newspaper concerning Mormon missionaries. It noted that:

This account does not speak of Mormon missionaries that are in Italy: and we know that there are some in Piedmont, and that they recruit persons in order to take them to America. We love religious liberty for all; but if it is true that the Mormons teach immorality and polygamy, we do not believe that they have a right to be tolerated.⁴⁶

In 1854 Mormon missionaries, supplied with copies of *Il Libro di Mormon* and *Restaurazione dell'antico Evangelio*, continued their efforts to find converts in Torino and other cities in the Kingdom of Sardinia. The missionaries' activities again attracted the attention of *L'Armonia* which on 16 August connected Mormonism and Protestants:

We have on other occasions spoken about the sect, which calls itself Mormons, when a certain Lorenzo Snow, a self-styled minister of the gospel, came from the United States of America, and attempted to transplant that sect in our country. For some time they have swarmed in Piedmont and there are so many diverse sects and heretics that each one makes us forget about the other. We must recognize that the liberal exchange inaugurated by our ministers, which also favors the exotic gods of Protestantism, has acquired new momentum. It is impossible to hold back all of the progress that this new commerce is achieving.⁴⁷

The Waldensians continued to react negatively to these comparisons. On 29 August Joseph Malan, a Waldensian and a member of the House of Deputies, wrote a letter to the Waldensian Moderator, Jean Pierre Revel, in which he inquired whether Mormon missionaries were attempting to “seduce the people” and whether “it should not be difficult . . . to drive them out immediately.”⁴⁸ On 18 September he continued to be anxious concerning the activities of the Mormons and wondered whether he should “apply the principle of freedom of conscience” or take a position that does not “completely approve the decision to expel them [from the valleys], a role that I would personally prefer, rather than . . . adopt coercive measures.”⁴⁹

Despite the adverse publicity generated by newspapers in Torino and Deputy Malan's anxiety about the Mormon presence in Piedmont, the missionaries continued their efforts to establish branches in Torino. In June 1856 Mormon elder Samuel Francis reported that he would establish “a Turin Branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, before the close of 1856.”⁵⁰ In order to prepare for this expansion

Francis and his colleague Jean Jacques Ruban, exchanged language lessons with Esther Weisbrodt “mixed with a little Mormonism.”⁵¹ In July Francis arrived in Torino where he attended Protestant services and distributed tracts (*Restaurazione dell’antico Evangelio*) to people as they emerged from the chapel.⁵² Within a month Weisbrodt came to Torino and encouraged Francis to contact Luigi Desanctis (1808–69), a former Waldensian pastor she had met while teaching in Torino. Desanctis had become a pastor in the Società Evangelica (Italian Free Church) which he helped organize after seceding from the Waldensian Church. Francis attended two sermons given by Desanctis on the subject of Mormonism in which he warned his congregation that “this sect, an embarrassment to the society that supports it,” had begun to spread even in Italy.

For around six years a few Mormon missionaries have spread their poison in a few towns in Piedmont. . . . But not being content to seduce simple mountain people [in the Waldensian valleys], they have dared to come down to the plain [of Torino] to spread their impiety under the veil of religion.

Like *L’Armonia* Desanctis compared Mormonism to Islam and attacked the practice of plural marriage, noting that it “is not just tolerated, not just permitted, it is not a privilege that may or may not be exercised, it is a requirement.” He then asked:

Why have these men . . . been able to find converts in Italy, and pull families to their land in Salt Lake? The response is not easy. They are not from a church that teaches, in fact they have avoided all discussion, they are directed to poor farmers, lovers of the miraculous [in the Waldensian valleys], who are easily led to believe in their miraculous pretenses that support the prophecies that exist in their sect, they describe their land as a terrestrial paradise, they have promised these poor farm families, that suffer in misery, to take them to their colony, where in a short time they will become rich landowners. . . . In Italy about a hundred of these poor people, seduced by the promise of rapidly obtaining a fortune, have left for Salt Lake.

He predicted, however, that “God will always liberate us even as he has from the cholera and the potato rot.”⁵³

After the second sermon Francis distributed Mormon pamphlets to the congregation as they left the church. Desanctis was furious and he went to Francis’ room where he confronted him. The Protestant pastor challenged the Mormon missionary to a debate in Italian. Francis refused the challenge but he did agree to debate Desanctis in French on any subject except polygamy.⁵⁴ Although there was apparently no debate, the discussion between Francis and Desanctis caught the attention of

Torino's newspapers.⁵⁵ *Il Risorgimento*, a political newspaper which began publication in 1847, reported that Mormons and Protestants held a conference in Torino to attempt to reconcile the laws of Piedmont with Mormon polygamy.⁵⁶ *La Buona Novella* quickly denied that any such conference had taken place, warned against "false Mormon doctrines," and characterized polygamy as "anti-Christian" and inconsistent with the laws of Piedmont.⁵⁷ *L'Armonia* also joined the fray. It criticized Protestants for supporting civil marriage and asserted that *La Buona Novella* was active in spreading not only Protestant propaganda but also Mormon propaganda. It wrote that: "Those who propose civil marriage in Piedmont cannot shut the door on Mormonism."⁵⁸

The Utah War—which began in 1857 when President Buchanan sent U.S. troops to Utah to replace Brigham Young as territorial governor—reignited bad publicity for the Mormons in the Torino press. During 1857–58 *L'Armonia* published a series of articles about the conflict between Mormons and the federal government. It also warned that such calamities, and the practice of polygamy, were the natural consequences of religious liberty.⁵⁹ It continued to use the unpopular image of Mormonism to criticize all non-Catholics. One article noted that the Utah War was a "war of religion" just as the Catholics waged religious wars against the Albigensians, Huguenots, and other heretics, but that the sects who have marched against the Mormons castigated the Catholics for similar acts.⁶⁰

Most of the articles were adapted from British and American press accounts of the conflict and did not draw parallels to political developments in Piedmont. During this same period Margotti, the general editor of *L'Armonia*, published a book entitled *Roma e Londra* in which he criticized the Mormons. He noted that the *London Times* had opined that "the Mormons gather more women in England than in America." He also compared the Mormons with other Protestants as an example of what happens to religions outside of Catholicism.⁶¹ These articles were eventually noticed at the Vatican and *La Civiltà Cattolica* published several articles which criticized the American-born church.⁶²

MORMON CONVERTS IN ITALY

Despite Mormon attempts to organize branches in the Italian-speaking cities of Torino, Nice, and Genoa, they only converted one Italian-speaking Catholic during the nineteenth century.⁶³ The other 171 were all Waldensians.⁶⁴ Many of these converts were attracted by Mormonism's claim that the primitive church had been restored through the revelations of Joseph Smith and that the Mormon Church was endowed with continuing revelation, spiritual gifts, and priesthood authority. These teachings were attractive to many Waldensians, especially veterans of the reawakening who had encouraged the Waldensian church for many years to return to its roots of preaching, witnessing, and spiritual gifts.

The Mormon mission also coincided with overpopulation and declining economic conditions in Waldensian valleys. Some converts were attracted by the doctrine of “gathering” and PEF, which subsidized those who could not otherwise afford to emigrate.⁶⁵ Some Mormon missionaries candidly admitted that “in these valleys, a great many lovers of emigration join the church, expecting to get free emigration to America.” In January 1854, the first group of Mormon converts from Italy immigrated to Utah. By the end of the decade, seventy-three converts—almost half of the 171 total—had emigrated. Most of the others returned to the Waldensian church. The Waldensian clergy tried to counter the attraction of free emigration—out of genuine concern for their flock—by offering Mormon converts alternative emigration to Waldensian colonies being established abroad.⁶⁶ The Venerable Table (the governing council of the Waldensian Church) eventually instituted a program of emigration to Sardinia, Algeria, the United States, Australia, and Argentina.⁶⁷

Mormon missionaries underestimated both the Waldensians’ and Catholics’ dedication to their religious and ethnic heritage. They seemed most surprised that the Waldensians retained a strong ethnic identity and a passionate connection with their history. Snow complained that the Waldensian pastors could discourage prospective converts by simply referring to that “dear church which is consecrated by so many glorious remembrances, and for which your fathers have died.”⁶⁸ Church leaders criticized the Waldensians after it became clear that the Italian mission would produce only meager results. In 1854, Young reminisced in a sermon that he had reminded a missionary who had returned from Italy that, even though “the Baptists say they received their authority or priesthood [from the Waldensians]. . . . their priesthood is no better than the Catholic priesthood.”⁶⁹ While Lorenzo Snow originally believed that the Waldensians were a “Branch of the House of Israel,” he became discouraged because they “regard any innovation as an attempt to drag them from the banner of their martyred ancestors.” Mormon authorities also criticized Protestant attempts to claim priesthood authority through the Waldensians.

No LDS leaders believed that the Waldensians possessed priesthood authority or that there was an “unbroken chain of apostolic succession.”⁷⁰ They were particularly critical of Baptist claims that they were Waldensians and that they had therefore inherited the title of primitive Christianity.⁷¹ When a Protestant minister told John Taylor that Protestants could trace their priesthood authority either through the Waldensians or the Albigensians, Taylor reminded him that “the whole of England was under the dominion of the Pope . . . and all submitted to his authority.”⁷² George A. Smith (1817–75) also criticized what he perceived as Baptist claims to priesthood through the Waldensians.⁷³

In 1867 Brigham Young stopped sending missionaries to Italy, which had been part of the Swiss Mission for more than ten years. Five years later when Apostles Snow and Smith visited Italy they spent only one night in Torino and did not visit the Waldensian valleys.⁷⁴ For the next one hundred years there were only periodic attempts to find converts in Italy and even then the missionaries returned to the Waldensian valleys rather than Torino or other large Catholic cities.

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Adventists were also restorationists who were convinced that Waldensians had preserved some of the doctrines of the primitive church. In 1885 Ellen G. White (1827–1915), leader of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, visited the Waldensian valleys. She revisited the valleys in April 1886. She was convinced that the Waldensians were a “remnant of the early apostolic church of Italy” who had “succeeded in maintaining their independence of Rome many years after others had yielded to her power.”⁷⁵ She was also persuaded by Anglican canon Stephen Gilly’s prediction that the valleys would become the location from which “the great Sower will again cast his seed, when it shall please him to permit the pure Church of Christ to resume her seat in those Italian States from which Pontifical intrigues have dislodged her.”⁷⁶

White believed that the Catholic Church had lost its divine authority, that “in every age there were witnesses for God,” and that the Waldensian Church was “the true church of Christ, the guardian of the treasures of truth which God has committed to His people to be given to the world.” In “their purity and simplicity, [the Waldensians] resembled the church of apostolic times,” had successfully “contended for the faith of the apostolic church” before the rise of Protestantism, and had “resisted the encroachments of the papal power” because “their religious belief was founded upon the written word of God, the true system of Christianity.” According to White, they “maintained the ancient faith” because they translated the scriptures and observed the “Bible Sabbath,” even though their faithfulness brought upon them physical attacks and legal persecution.⁷⁷

In 1888 White wrote *The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan: The Conflict of the Ages in the Christian Dispensation*, in which she devoted an entire chapter to the Waldensians. She even praised them, despite her obvious disappointment that only a few had embraced her Adventist message.

JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES

The first Jehovah’s Witnesses in Italy (known until 1931 as Bible Students) were disillusioned Waldensians. In 1903 Fanny Stefania Balmas Lugli (1866–1926), a Waldensian dissident who lived in *frazione*

Gondini (*frazione*: a small neighborhood) in San Germano Chisone, read Charles Taze Russell's *The Divine Plan of the Ages* (1886). Russell (1852–1916) was the founder of Zion's Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society (the forerunner of the Jehovah's Witnesses) in 1881.

Official Jehovah's Witness publications have claimed that Russell visited the Waldensian valleys in 1891 and that he returned to the valleys in 1912.⁷⁸ Although this claim has recently been repeated in *The Watch Tower*, some Jehovah's Witnesses in Italy now dispute this claim because contemporary articles published in *The Watch Tower* did not document any visits to the valleys, report any encounters with Waldensians, or acknowledge that Russell, or anyone else in the United States, knew that there were Jehovah's Witnesses in the valleys.⁷⁹ The claim was apparently constructed from local folklore—statements by Jehovah's Witnesses who were not affiliated with the movement until the 1930s—rather than from Russell's memoirs.

The construction of this claim may reflect some Jehovah's Witnesses' conviction that Russell's injunctions to read the Bible and witness to Catholic neighbors answered the prayers of Waldensian dissidents who, following their own reawakening, remained disappointed because the Waldensian leadership failed to return to its original proselytizing mission and had abandoned the ancient origins thesis. Although Jehovah's Witnesses during this period may not have believed that Waldensians were the literal descendants of the primitive Christians because they (the Waldensians) were "too far afield doctrinally," they did believe that they were "the torchbearers for the cause of freedom" during the "gross darkness of the Middle Ages."⁸⁰ Their most important activity during these years of darkness was translating and distributing Bibles, deriving authority from the scriptures, and witnessing as missionaries.⁸¹

The publication of a controversial book shortly after Russell's death may have been another catalyst for the claim that Russell visited the valleys. Russell wrote six books in a series entitled *Studies in the Scriptures*. Within a year of his death a seventh volume, entitled *The Finished Mystery*, was published under his name. It is now acknowledged that it was written by Clayton J. Woodsworth and George H. Fisher. The book reflects Russell's teaching that the Catholic Church became corrupt and lost the power of God. It also advanced a dispensational view of human history and taught that God had chosen various messengers to be witnesses after the Catholic Church introduced false doctrines and practices. Valdes "was the messenger to the fourth epoch of the Church," he and his followers "complained that the Roman church had degenerated from its primitive purity and sanctity," and Valdes attempted to return the church to that "amiable simplicity and primitive sanctity."⁸² The book also concluded that Russell was the "seventh messenger."

It seems reasonable to hypothesize that these early Jehovah's Witnesses constructed a story to connect Russell with the establishment of the first congregations in the Waldensian valleys. Such a story corrects

Russell's apparent neglect of the Waldensians' ancient practice of Bible reading and preaching, and connects the success of Jehovah's Witnesses among dissident Waldensians who recognized this deficiency in the Waldensian Church and replaced it with Russell's teachings. Eventually, however, both Valdes' and Russell's roles as messengers have been revised in official Jehovah's Witness publications. *The Finished Mystery* "was allowed to go out of circulation" and the claim that Russell was a messenger has been discarded.⁸³

ABANDONMENT OF THE ANCIENT ORIGINS THESIS

Catholic, Protestant, and even Waldensian scholars eventually debunked the thesis that Waldensians were proto-Protestants prior to Luther and Calvin. While most Catholic writers ignored the ancient origins thesis during the seventeenth century, they targeted it in the nineteenth century, particularly after Alexis Muston wrote:

Romish writers are unwilling to admit the antiquity of the Waldensian church, which would go far to contradict the doctrine of the papal supremacy, therefore they have endeavored to prove that the origin of these Christians is traced to the eleventh or twelfth century.⁸⁴

Catholic clergymen in Piedmont were particularly aggressive in attacking Waldensian claims of antiquity. Andrea Charvaz (1793–1870), the bishop of Pinerolo with jurisdiction over the Waldensian valleys, wrote a rebuttal to Muston's book two years after it was published.⁸⁵ He demonstrated that the Waldensians began as a Catholic reform movement, that they originally adhered to Catholic doctrines and practices, and that the documents which Morland and others claimed established the ancient origins of the Waldensians were actually written after Valdes organized the movement.

Like the editors of *L'Armonia*, other Catholic writers compared Waldensian beliefs and practices, including their claims of ancient origins, to the claims of mainstream Protestant groups, and other new religious movements, such as the Mormons. In 1861 a Catholic writer ridiculed Waldensian claims and asked if the Confession of Faith consisting of 33 articles, had been subscribed to by "Lutherans, Mormons, Zwinglians, Anabaptists, Quakers, Illuminati, the rebaptized, etc."⁸⁶ Giovanni Bosco (1815–88) made similar comparisons in his *La Storia d'Italia*.⁸⁷ Bosco observed that the Waldensians attended Catholic Mass before the Reformation and became anti-Catholic and belligerent following their union with Swiss Protestants.⁸⁸ In a second work, *Il Cattolico nel secolo*, he observed that the Waldensians failed to produce any evidence that their movement began before Valdes and that their history had been falsified by Waldensian pastors such as Léger, Peyran, Muston, and Bert and by

anti-Catholic Protestant writers.⁸⁹ He also noted contradictions among these historians. Léger claimed that the movement began with the Old Testament prophets, Bert with the New Testament apostles, Peyran with the disciples of Christ after the death of the apostles, and Muston during the third century after the Constantine embraced Christianity.⁹⁰ Bosco concluded that the Waldensians had no priesthood lineage and that no Protestant church could claim one through them.⁹¹

Bosco also noted that Amedeo Bert, the Waldensian Pastor of the French-speaking congregation in Torino, was, like all Protestants, nothing more than an imposter.⁹² When Bert, who claimed to be the “chaplain of the Protestant legations,” worshipped with the Prussian legation he became a Lutheran; when he met with the Swedes he was an Evangelical; when he worshipped with the Danes he became a follower of Zwingli; when he met with citizens of Wurtemberg he became a Moseimiano; if he worshipped with the Swiss he came a Calvinist; when he met with the Badese he was an Anabaptist; and when he was with the legation of the United States he “had to become a Mormon.”⁹³

But the most devastating rebuttals of the ancient origins thesis were written by Waldensian scholars. In 1870 Pius Melia (1800–83) severely criticized Jean Léger as having “misled nearly all who wrote on the subject after him.” He concluded that “the Waldenses had their first origin in the second half of the twelfth century, and that Peter of Vaud, the rich merchant of Lyons, was their founder.”⁹⁴ Two decades later Emilio Comba (1839–1904) reached the same conclusion: the Waldensians did not claim “an ancient origin, prior to Waldo until more than one hundred years after Waldo’s death,” and this “tradition . . . was still more perverted by the men of the Reformation. Adopting the Waldenses as their precursors, they endeavored, by that means, to create for themselves ‘a secret perpetuity during the middle ages, vying with Catholic perpetuity.’” Comba also observed that “Legend, like Pharaoh’s lean kine, swallowed up history; the dates of Waldensian writings were confused, and false quotations did the rest.”⁹⁵

CONCLUSION

Historian Euan Cameron has noted that the ancient origins thesis “would not now be taken seriously by any modern scholarly historian.”⁹⁶ Sectarian Waldensians, Anglicans, Presbyterians, and most Baptists no longer accept it. Cameron and French historian Gabriele Audisio have observed that when the Waldensians aligned themselves with Calvinists they abandoned many of their own doctrines and their ecclesiastical organization; but neither has argued that Waldensian beliefs and practices, before these changes were made, could be linked to the primitive church, as some modern-day Baptists claim.

In retrospect, it is not surprising that the Waldensians could not resist the temptation to claim that they originated much earlier than the twelfth

century after they began developing, advancing, and refining their own identity and historiography. Restorationist churches in the nineteenth century were seduced by this thesis because they were desperate to find support for the concept that the Reformers were not innovators and, in fact, that the Reformation had not completely restored the church to its primitive purity. The thesis that the Waldensians remained faithful to the doctrines and practices of the primitive church during centuries of innovations by the Catholic Church and that many of their doctrines before the Reformation were identical to those of the reformed churches, seemed to support the Protestant argument that the Catholic Church—not the Protestants—was the real innovator.

Mormons, like the Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses, also flirted with the ancient origins thesis. They were hopeful that if the Waldensians believed there was a link between their church and the primitive church, that they would also recognize the complete restoration of the primitive church, which Waldensian dissidents had unsuccessfully sought to restore during their own reawakening, in the new American religion. After achieving some success in the Waldensian valleys, Mormon authorities withdrew from Italy because they were frustrated in their efforts to expand into Torino and other Italian cities. Thereafter, they did not mention the Waldensians' contribution to the Restoration or comment on the ancient origins thesis.

Ironically, only the descendants of Italian converts continued to pay any attention to this thesis. During the last two decades of the nineteenth century four Waldensians who converted to Mormonism during the 1850s returned as missionaries where they unsuccessfully tried to convert their valley people.⁹⁷ In 1947 religious liberty was recognized for the first time in Italy but it was not until Vatican Council II that minority religions began to proselytize in the large urban areas without government interference.⁹⁸ When the Italian Mission was reorganized in 1966 missionaries concentrated their efforts on a bigger prize, Catholics who live in large metropolitan areas.⁹⁹ Since then only descendants of Mormon converts travel to the Waldensian valleys—not to proselytize—but to make pilgrimages to their ancestors' homes and other Waldensian sites. Most recently an official delegation from Salt Lake County, which included descendants of the first Mormon converts, visited Torre Pellice in September 2002 where it was hosted by the Waldensian Moderator Gianni Genre.¹⁰⁰

Some Waldensians have also remained interested in their lost flock. The total group remains small—there are still less than 25,000 Waldensians worldwide—and it is relatively easy to find those who left the valleys during the last fifty years of the nineteenth century. When Waldensian pastor David Bosio (1885–1950) came to Utah in 1913, he visited Mormon converts from the first Italian Mission (1850–67) as well as Waldensians who immigrated to Utah (1892–1912) and were members of the Presbyterian Church. He encouraged the Mormons to return to the church of their

ancestors and he attended church with his fellow parishioners.¹⁰¹ During the 1940s, George Watts, a French professor in North Carolina, published two books in which he recorded the names of all of the Waldensian immigrants who came to the United States, including Mormon converts.¹⁰² Waldensian Moderator Ermanno Rostan visited Utah in February 1965 “to make friends for the Waldensian Church” and spoke to a group of Waldensian descendants. Most recently, representatives of the Società di Studi Valdesi toured the United States in 1997 where they visited their fellow Waldensians in Salt Lake City and Ogden.¹⁰³

Nevertheless, despite good feelings generated by these encounters, Mormons, Waldensians, Protestants, and Catholics continue to do battle in Italy. One year after Moderator Rostan visited Utah he published *Chi sono i Mormoni?* (Torino: Claudiana, 1966), in which he sharply criticized Mormonism. In contrast, most Waldensian authors who have mentioned Waldensian emigration to Utah have ignored the Mormon mission.¹⁰⁴ These authors do not consider the Mormons to be Christian and even though the Mormon mission was the most successful mission in their valleys during the nineteenth century they have largely ignored this episode in their history.¹⁰⁵

Roman Catholics are much less concerned about the Mormons than they are about Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Assemblies of God. Mormonism grows slowly in Italy even if its membership is now almost equal to the number of Waldensians in Italy (20,000). But it trails badly behind Jehovah’s Witnesses (400,000) and Assemblies of God (400,000). Nevertheless, Roman Catholics occasionally publish material about Mormonism.¹⁰⁶ While much of the material continues to be in the nature of “cult bashing” there are notable exceptions. In 1993 Massimo Introvigne wrote a book about Mormonism, which was published by the Vatican Press, that has been favorably reviewed for its accuracy and impartiality.¹⁰⁷ In 1994, when *La Civiltà Cattolica* published a new article very critical of Mormonism, Introvigne reviewed the article in another Catholic journal, *Cristianità*, in which he noted a myriad of inaccuracies.¹⁰⁸

Mormon missionaries only rarely encounter Waldensian, Methodist, or Presbyterian competitors on the streets of Rome, Florence, Torino or Milan. Instead they compete with old rivals like the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists, and Baptists, and with newer contenders, including members of Assemblies of God, Pentecostal churches, The Family, and the Unification Church. Like the Mormons, these new competitors all claim to be the only true church. There are very few conversions made among the Catholics, however, who remain confident that they are members of the true church. While no church has seriously challenged the Roman Catholic Church in Italy, these new missionaries are outstripping the mainstream Protestant churches that stress ecumenism and no longer dispute with one another concerning which is the closest in practice and doctrine to the primitive church.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Lorenzo Snow, *The Italian Mission* (London: W. Aubrey, 1851), 10.
- ² *Sketches of the Waldenses* (London: Religious Tract Society, ca. 1846). It relied heavily on Alexis Muston, *Histoire des Vaudois* (Paris: F. G. Levrault, 1834), for Waldensian history and the ancient origins thesis.
- ³ See, Snow, *The Italian Mission*, 10; and Eliza R. Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Co., 1884), 121.
- ⁴ Snow, *The Italian Mission*, 10, 21.
- ⁵ Massimo Introvigne, PierLuigi Zoccatelli, Nelly Ippolito Macrina, and Verónica Roldán, *Enciclopedia delle religioni in Italia* (Leumann [Torino]: Elledici, 2001), 201–4.
- ⁶ Mrs. William Fison, *The Evangelists of Italy: or the Mission of the Apostolic Waldensian Church* (London: Werthein & Macintosh, 1855), 4–5, 19–23.
- ⁷ James A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, 3 vols. (London: Cassell & Company, Limited, 1880), 1:25.
- ⁸ Recent academic histories of the Waldensians include Euan Cameron, *The Reformation of the Heretics: The Waldensians of the Alps, 1480–1580* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); idem, *Waldenses: Rejections of Holy Church in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000); Gabriel Audisio, *The Waldensian Dissent, Persecution and Survival, c. 1170-c. 1570* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 161–88; Carlo Papini, *Valdo di Lione e i "Poveri Nello Spirito": Il Primo Secolo del Movimento Valdese (1170–1270)* (Torino: Claudiana, 2001); and Peter Biller, *The Waldenses, 1170–1530: Between a Religious Order and a Church* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate Publishing, 2001). The church published a three-volume history by Amedeo Molnar, *Storia dei Valdesi I: Dalle origini all'adesione alla Riforna (1176–1532)* (Torino: Claudiana, 1974); Augusto Armand Hugon, *Storia dei Valdesi II: Dal sinodo di Chanforan all'Emancipazione (1532–1848)* (Torino: Claudiana, 1984); and Valdo Vinay, *Storia dei Valdesi III: Dal Movimento Evangelico Italiano al Movimento Ecumenico (1848–1978)* (Torino: Claudiana, 1980). Other surveys include Giorgio Tourn, *I Valdesi: La Singolare Vicenda di un Popolo Chiesa* (Torino: Claudiana, 1977); idem, *You are my Witnesses: The Waldensians across 800 Years* (Torino: Claudiana, 1989); and Prescott Stephens, *The Waldensian Story* (Lewes, U.K.: Book Guild, 1998).
- ⁹ Cameron, *The Reformation of the Heretics*, 252–53, notes that the synod occurred in September 1832. In 1847 Antoine Monastier identified the location of this synod as Chanforan. In 1932 a monument was placed at Chanforan to commemorate this event.
- ¹⁰ Cameron, *The Reformation of the Heretics*, 237.
- ¹¹ Cameron, *The Reformation of the Heretics*, 242, notes that Samuel Morland repeated the claims of Matthias Flacius Illuricus (in *Catalogus*, 1608) and James Ussher (in *Gravissimae quaestionis de christianarum ecclesiarum . . . continua successione et statu, historica explicatio*, 1613).
- ¹² Cameron, *The Reformation of the Heretics*, 247.
- ¹³ Jean-Paul Perrin, *Histoire des Vaudois divisée en trois parties . . .* (Genève: Chouet, 1619). Perrin was severely criticized by Alexis Muston (*The Israel of the Alps*, 2:388–89) and by Cameron who observed that Marc Vulson's *De la puissance du*

Pape (Genève, 1635) made in a few pages “a rather more coherent contribution to the thesis of the Waldensians as antecedents of the Reformation than Perrin had in several hundred.” Cameron, *The Reformation of the Heretics*, 236.

¹⁴ Pierre Gilles, *Histoire ecclésiastique des Eglises Réformées . . .* (Genève: Jean de Tournes, 1644); Jean Léger, *Histoire général des Eglises Evangéliques des Vallées du Piémont ou Vaudoise* (Leyde: Jean Le Charpentier, 1669).

¹⁵ Audisio, *The Waldensian Dissent*, 203. See Muston’s discussion of these writers in *Israel of the Alps*, 2:398–402.

¹⁶ Stephens, *The Waldensian Story*, 182. In 1638 Milton visited Galileo at his farm outside Florence in Arcetri where Galileo was under house arrest.

¹⁷ Cameron, *The Reformation of the Heretics*, 236.

¹⁸ Samuel Morland, *The History of the Evangelical Churches of the Valleys of Piedmont* (London, 1658). Cameron, *The Reformation of the Heretics*, 242, 251, argues that Léger shamelessly plagiarized Morland.

¹⁹ Cameron, *The Reformation of the Heretics*, 243.

²⁰ The Catholic hierarchy argued that the Waldensians were founded in the twelfth century by Valdes, thus disposing of the ancient origins thesis. Waldensians who converted to Catholicism also challenged the thesis. See, Marco Aurelio Rorengo, *Breve narrazione dell’introduzione degli heretici nelle valli de Piemonte . . .* (Torino: Tisma, 1632); and his *Memorie storiche dell’introduzione dell’heresie nelle Valli di Lucerna, Marchesato di Saluzzo et altre di Piemonte* (Torino: Tarino, 1649).

²¹ *Histoire de la persécution des valées de Piedmont* (Rotterdam, 1688).

²² Henri Arnaud, *The Glorious Recovery by the Vaudois of their Valleys* (London: John Murray, 1827), xiv, quoted in William Sime, *The Waldenses: Sketches of the Evangelical Christians of the Valleys of Piedmont* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1853), 28. Arnaud’s book was first published in 1710.

²³ For a contemporary description of this episode, see the Baron of Saint-Hippolyte, Letter to the King of Prussia, in Davide Jahier, “Vittorio Amedeo II ripara preso I Valdesi udrante l’assedio di Torino nel 1706,” *Bolletino della Società di Studi Valdesi* (17 February 1937). The dukes of Savoy became kings when Vittorio Amedeo II became King of Sicily in 1713 and King of Sardinia in 1720. In 1861 Vittorio Emmanuele II became King of Italy.

²⁴ Cameron, *The Reformation of the Heretics*, 251.

²⁵ Alexis Muston, *Histoire des Vaudois* (Paris: F. G. Levrault, 1834).

²⁶ Amedeo Bert, *I Valdesi, ossiano i Cristiani Cattolici secondo la chiesa primitiva . . . cenni storici* (Torino, 1849); Antoine Monastier, *A History of the Vaudois Church from Its Origin, and of the Vaudois of Piedmont to the Present Day* (New York: Lane & Scott, 1849).

²⁷ Baird, *Sketches of Protestantism in Italy*, vii.

²⁸ William Jones, *History of the Christian Church* (Dover, England: Trustees of the Freewill Baptist Connection, 1837), viii.

²⁹ Samuel Miller, “Recommendatory Letter, addressed to the publishers,” in Jean Paul Perrin, *History of the Old Waldenses Anterior to the Reformation* (Philadelphia: Griffith & Simons, 1847), 4.

³⁰ “Letter from John Taylor,” *Messenger and Advocate* 3, no. 9 (June 1837): 513–15. Similarly, on June 16, 1844 Joseph Smith said [original punctuation and spelling]: “By all apos[tates] since the world began—I testify again as God never will

acknowledge any apost: [sic] any man who will betray the Catholics will betray you—& if he will betray one another, he will betray you—all men are liars to say that they are of the true—God always sent a new dispensatn. into the world—when men come out & built upon o[the]r men's fondatn." Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, ed. and comp., *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Religious Study Center, 1980), 381–82.

³¹ The proselytizing activities of the three American religions in Italy have been ignored by many secular and religious historians. One reason is their alleged "non-Protestant" and "cult" status. The history of Adventism in Italy is better documented than that of the Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses. See Giuseppe de Meo, *"Granel di Sale": Un secolo di storia della Chiesa Cristiana Avventista del 7° giorno in Italia (1864–1964)* (Torino: Claudiana, 1980). In contrast, Waldensian authors have emphasized Waldensian emigration to Utah rather than the Mormon mission. Giorgio Spini, *Risorgimento e protestanti*, 2d. ed. (Milano: Il Saggiatore, 1989), 425 n. 3; Bruno Bellion, Mario Cignoni, Gian Paolo Romagnani, and Daniele Tron, *Dalle Valli all'Italia: I Valdesi nel Risorgimento, 1848–1998* (Torino: Claudiana, 1993), 122. The only substantive reference to the presence of Jehovah's Witnesses in the valleys is Paolo Piccioli, "Due pastori valdesi di fronte ai testimoni di Geova," *Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi* no. 186 (giugno [June] 2000): 76–81. A rationale for overlooking the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Christian Scientists is given in Giorgio Bouchard, *Chiese e Movimenti Evangelici del Nostro Tempo* (Torino: Claudiana, 1992), 149–52; and Giorgio Girardet, *Protestanti perché* (Torino: Claudiana, 1983), 111.

³² Snow, *The Italian Mission*, 14. See Diane Stokoe, *The Mormon Waldensians* (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, December 1985); Michael W. Homer, "The Italian Mission, 1850–1867," *Sunstone* 7, no. 3 (May-June 1982): 16–21; idem, "The Church's Image in Italy from the 1840s to 1946: A Bibliographic Essay," *BYU Studies* 31, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 83–114; idem, "Gli Italiani e i Mormoni," *Renovatio* 26, no. 1 (Gennaio-Marzo [January-March] 1991): 79–106; idem, "LDS Prospects in Italy for the Twenty-first Century," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 139–58; idem, "L'azione missionaria in Italia e nelle valli Valdesi dei gruppi Americani 'non tradizionali' (Avventisiti, Mormoni, Testimoni di Geova)," in *La Bibbia, la Coccarda e il Tricolore: I Valdesi fra due Emancipazioni (1798–1848)*, ed. Gian Paolo Romagnani (Torino: Claudiana, 2001), 505–30; idem, "'Like a Rose in the Wilderness': The Mormon Mission in the Kingdom of Sardinia," *Mormon Historical Studies* 1, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 25–62; idem, "An Immigrant Story: Three Orphaned Italians in Early Utah Territory," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (Summer 2002): 196–214; idem, "Il Libro di Mormon: Anticipating Growth beyond Italy's Waldensian Valleys," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 11 (2002): 40–44; Flora Ferrero, *L'Emigrazione Valdese nello Utah nella Seconda Metà dell'800*, Tesi di Laurea, l'Università degli Studi di Torino (giugno [June] 1999); and idem, "Dalle Valli Valdesi al Grande Lago Salato: Un Percorso di Conversione," in *La Bibbia, la Coccarda e il Tricolore*, 531–38;

³³ [Sidney Rigdon], "Faith of the Church of Christ in these Last Days," *Evening and Morning Star* 2, no. 21 (June 1834): 162, quoting William Jones, *The History of the Waldenses: Connected with a Sketch of the Christian Church from the Birth of Christ to the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1811). See also John Taylor, 9 December 1883, *Journal of Discourses of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. and S. W. Richards, 1854–86), 24:352.

³⁴ “Correspondence Between C. V. Dyer and Gen. J. C. Bennett,” *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 10 (15 March 1842): 723.

³⁵ “Faith of the Church in these Last Days”; “Prospectus for a New Paper,” *Messenger and Advocate* 3, no. 11 (August 1837): 546; Parley P. Pratt, *Mormonism Unveiled* (New York: O. Pratt and E. Fordham, 1838); Brigham Young, 18 October 1857, *Journal of Discourses*, 5:342; Moses Thatcher, 28 August 1885, *Journal of Discourses*, 26:306.

³⁶ Snow, *The Italian Mission*, 14, 22.

³⁷ Snow, *Exposition des premiers principes de la doctrine de l’Eglise de Jésus-Christ des Saints des Derniers Jours* (Torino: Louis Arnaldi, 1851).

³⁸ Snow, *The Italian Mission*, 13–4; Snow, *La Voix de Joseph* (Torino: Ferrero et Franco, 1851).

³⁹ Valérie Boissier, Count Agénor de Gasparin, of the French Reformed Church, wrote six articles in 1852–53—all titled “Les Mormons”—which criticized Mormonism. They appeared in the following issues of *Archives du Christianisme au dix-neuvième siècle. Journal Religieux*: IId Serie Tome XX, no. 23 (11 December 1841), 185–87; Tome XXI, no. 2 (22 January 1853), 15–18; Tome XXI, no. 4 (26 February 1853), 41–44; Tome XXI, no. 7 (9 April 1853), 66–69; Tome XXI, no. 8 (23 April 1853), 74–77; Tome XXI, no. 9 (14 May 1853), 83–86. Two Protestant ministers in Switzerland disputed Mormon doctrine set forth in Lorenzo Snow’s *Exposition des premiers principes*: Louis Favez, *Lettre sur les Mormons de la Californie* (Vevey, Switzerland: E. Buvelot, 1851); and Emile Guers, *L’Irvingisme et le Mormonisme* (Genève, Switzerland, 1853). Stenhouse responded in *Les Mormons et leurs Ennemis* (Lausanne, 1854). Both Favez and Guers replied in Favez, *Fragments sur les Mormons*, 2 vols. (Lausanne, 1854–56); and Guers, *Le Mormonisme Polygame* (Genève, 1855).

⁴⁰ *Il Libro di Mormon* (Londra: Stamperia di Guglielmo Bowen, 1852).

⁴¹ Camillo Cavour, quoted in Valdo Vinay, *Storia dei Valdesi*, 3:65.

⁴² “I Mormoni a Torino,” *L’Armonia*, Supplemento al no. 91, 1 August 1852, 451.

⁴³ “Chi stia meglio in Piemonte? I Cattolici o i Mormoni?” *L’Armonia*, Supplemento al no. 94, 8 August 1852, 465.

⁴⁴ “Un problema di buon costume sciolto dai mormoni,” *L’Armonia*, 5 March 1853, 133–34. See also, “Lo stato dai mormoni,” *L’Armonia*, 21 June 1853, 383.

⁴⁵ “Prosperità dei mormoni,” *L’Armonia*, 7 September 1853, 559.

⁴⁶ “I Missionari Mormoni,” *La Buona Novella*, 28 October 1853, 823–24.

⁴⁷ “I Mormoni,” *L’Armonia*, 16 August 1854, 463–64;

⁴⁸ Joseph Malan to Jean Pierre Revel, 29 August 1854, *Lettres de M. Joseph Malan*, 1850–59, Lettera n. 67, in Archivio della Tavola Valdese, Torre Pellice, Italy.

⁴⁹ Joseph Malan to Jean Pierre Revel, 18 September 1854, *Lettres de M. Joseph Malan*, 1850–59, Lettera n. 69, 134–35, in Archivio della Tavola Valdese, Torre Pellice, Italy.

⁵⁰ Samuel Francis, “Piedmont—Italy,” *Millennial Star*, 2 August 1856, 491. Earlier that summer he speculated that the “Catholics have been much more civil to us than the Protestants for some time, perhaps it has been because we have not menaced their positions heretofore.” Samuel Francis, “Italy,” *Millennial Star*, 21 July 1855, 455.

⁵¹ Weisbrodt had been a teacher in the Waldensian school in Torino until September 1854 when she was terminated from her position. She returned to the Waldensian valleys where she eventually obtained a new teaching position in Prarostino. See, "Our Heritage," (Morgan, Utah: Samuel and Esther Francis Family Organization, 1984), 29–30.

⁵² "Foreign Correspondence—Swiss and Italian Mission," *Millennial Star*, 5 April 1857, 218–19.

⁵³ Desanctis delivered these sermons at the same time he was preparing an article which was published, without attribution, by the Waldensian-owned press Claudiana, in the 1857 almanac of *L'Amico di Casa*. See, [Luigi Desanctis], "I Mormoni," *L'Amico di Casa*, IV, 1857 Almanac (Torino: Claudiana, 1856), 109–22. Ironically, the article was published at the recommendation of Costantino Reta, who four years earlier complimented Lorenzo Snow on the fine Italian translation of the Book of Mormon. See, "Letter of Lorenzo Snow," *Millennial Star*, 1 March 1852, 78. Reta later claimed in a letter to Desanctis that he did not know the Mormons were in Italy and expressed his opinion that they should be expelled from the country. See Letter from Costantino Reta to Luigi Desanctis, September 1856. See also other correspondence from Reta to Desanctis (23 March 1855, 3 April 1855, 11 May 1855, and 26 January 1857), all in the MS Comba at the Archives of the Facoltà di Teologia Valdese a Roma (in Rome, Italy). See also Antonella Grimaldi, "Un Evangelico Protagonista del Risorgimento Italiano: Costantino Reta," *Bolletino della Società di Studi Valdesi*, no. 191 (December 2002): 87–117.

⁵⁴ Samuel Francis, "Foreign Correspondence—Swiss and Italian Mission," *Millennial Star*, 5 April 1857, 218–19; and *Francis Journal*, 23 June 1856, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.

⁵⁵ "I Missionari Mormoni," *La Buona Novella*, 28 October 1853, 823–84. Like *L'Armonia* the Waldensian press criticized Mormonism even after the decline in convert baptisms: "America—Il Mormonismo," 26 September 1856; "Danimarca—I Mormoni," 3 October 1856; and "America—I Mormoni," 5 December 1856, n.p.

⁵⁶ *Il Risorgimento*, 28 July 1856, n.p.

⁵⁷ "Torino—Il Risorgimento, giornale," *La Buona Novella*, 1 August 1856, n.p.

⁵⁸ "La Buona Novella e I Mormoniti," *L'Armonia*, 15 August 1856, 729.

⁵⁹ "Guerra di Religione degli Stati Uniti—Contro I Mormoni," *L'Armonia* no. 186 (14 August 1857), 744; "I Mormoni," no. 207 (15 September 1857), 829; "Nuovi Timori dei Mormoni e loro cieca obbedienza," no. 249 (29 October 1857), 1000; "Notizie Religiose d'America," No. 1 (1 January 1858), 2–3; "Polizzino Politico," no. 18 (25 January 1858), 69; "Il Divorzio e la Poligamia" no. 99 (2 May 1858), 596; "Notizie d'America—I Mormoni," no. 200 (2 September 1858), 812–13; "Notizie d'America, Continuazione sulla setta dei Mormoni," no. 201 (3 September 1858), 816; "I gran dignitari del Mormonismo," no. 209 (14 September 1858), 849.

⁶⁰ "Guerra di Religione degli Stati Uniti—Contro I Mormoni," *L'Armonia*, no. 186 (14 August 1857), 744.

⁶¹ Giacomo Margotti, *Roma e Londra—Confronti* (Torino: Tipografia Fory e Dalmazzo, 1858), 225–26, 229–30.

⁶² In 1859 *La Civiltà Cattolica*, a journal published by the Society of Jesus, which supported Pope Pius IX and opposed the Risorgimento, published an article, based on information supplied by *L'Armonia*, which criticized

Mormon polygamy, and noted that both divorce and polygamy were the natural consequences of domestic liberty. “La Libertà di fatto nella terra classica,” *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 4th Series, 1 (17 February 1859): 516. The next year, Cardinal Carl Von Reisach, a German prelate who had a close relationship with Pius IX, delivered a speech before the Accademia di Religione Cattolica, entitled “Mormonism and its relationship with modern Protestantism.” Like *L’Armonia* he compared the Mormons to Protestants but, like *La Buona Novella*, he also compared them to the Catholic Church. For example, Cardinal Reisach noted that Mormonism “mixes and unifies the church with the state . . . and [in] this horrifying and iniquitous, religious, social, and political system, I ask myself, can one find a confirmation of Catholic truth. Without doubt . . . isn’t it a Catholic principle that the church must not be separated from the state; . . . these principles are recognized in substance by the Mormons.” Similarly the Cardinal wrote that Mormons “resort to primitive revelation, through their inspired, infallible prophet. . . . [N]o one can deny, that in this . . . there comes a testimony concerning the truth of Catholic principles. . . . Mormonism recognizes . . . it must teach with infallibility.” [Cardinal Carl Von Reisach], “Il Mormonismo nelle sue attinenze col moderno Protestantismo,” *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 4th Series, 6 (3 May 1860): 391–413.

⁶³ The Italian convert, Giovanni Battista Paganinni soon left the Church. “The Italian Mission,” *Millennial Star*, 5 April 1853, 282.

⁶⁴ Homer, “The Italian Mission,” 19–21.

⁶⁵ Homer, “The Italian Mission,” 19.

⁶⁶ Homer, “The Italian Mission,” 19–21.

⁶⁷ George B. Watts, *The Waldenses in the New World* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1941); and George B. Watts, *The Waldenses of Valdesse*, rev. ed. (Valdesse, N.C.: n.p., 1980).

⁶⁸ Snow, *The Italian Mission*, 19.

⁶⁹ Brigham Young, 3 December 1854, *Journal of Discourses* 2:141–42.

⁷⁰ In 1883 John Taylor recalled that, when Joseph Smith sent his apostles to England in 1837, he instructed them: “If you come across a people who have even the first principles of the Gospel of Christ correctly you need not baptize them, for the possession of those principles will be a sign that they have some portion of the Holy Priesthood.” John Taylor, n.d. 1883, *Journal of Discourses* 24:228–29. In a subsequent discourse, John Taylor reported that he had never encountered such a group. 17 August 1884, *Journal of Discourses* 25:263.

⁷¹ “Extract from Elder John Taylor’s Journal,” *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 8 (15 February 1842): 694; “Letter to the Editor,” *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 9 (15 March 1843): 140; “Letter to the Editor,” *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 11 (15 April 1843): 165; Brigham Young, 3 December 1854, *Journal of Discourses* 2:142; Orson Pratt, 25 January 1874, *Journal of Discourses* 16:348.

⁷² “Extract from John Taylor’s Journal,” *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 8 (15 February 1842): 693–95, quoting John Taylor, Journal, Liverpool, England, 5 May 1839. See also John Greenhow, “Letter to the Editor,” *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 11 (15 April 1843): 165–66.

⁷³ George A. Smith, 24 June 1855, *Journal of Discourses* 2:325; 1 November 1857, *Journal of Discourses* 5:363; 20 November 1870, *Journal of Discourses* 13:293–94.

⁷⁴ George A. Smith, et. al., *Correspondence of Palestine Tourists* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Steam Printing Establishment, 1875).

⁷⁵ White, *Historical Sketches*, 239.

⁷⁶ White, who was quoting Gilly, *Waldensian Researchers*, 158, quoted in Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, 206.

⁷⁷ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan: The Conflict of the Ages in the Christian Dispensation* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1888): 61, 68, 64, 577.

⁷⁸ For claims of Russell's visit, see *1982 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: International Bible Students Association, 1982), 113–243; *Annuario dei Testimoni di Geova di 1983* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: International Bible Students Association, 1983), 113–243; "Two Pastors Who Appreciated Russell's Writings," *The Watchtower*, 15 April 2002, 28–29; "Due pastori che apprezzavano gli scritti di Russell," *Torre di Guardia*, 15 aprile 2002, 28–29; Paolo Piccioli, "Due pastori valdesi di fronte ai Testimoni di Geova," *Bolletino della Società di Studi Valdesi* no. 186 (giugno [June] 2000), 76–81. See also, "The Waldenses: From Heresy to Protestantism," *The Watch Tower*, 15 March 2002, 20–23; "I Valdesi, Dall'eresia al protestantesimo," *La Torre di Guardia*, 15 marzo 2002, 20–23.

⁷⁹ Official contemporary accounts of Russell's trip to Europe in 1891–92 (which lack references to the Waldensians), are "Your Representatives Abroad," *Zion's Watch Tower*, July 1891, 95; "View from the Tower," *Zion's Watch Tower*, November 1891, 145–49; Mrs. C. T. Russell, "Views Abroad," *Zion's Watch Tower*, 1 March 1892, 1375–77; and Mrs. C. T. Russell, "Views Abroad," *Zion's Watch Tower*, 15 February 1892, 53–58. His trips to Europe in 1910 and 1912 are documented in "Brother Russell in Europe and Africa," *Zion's Watch Tower*, 15 March 1910, 106; "Brother Russell's Foreign Tour," *Zion's Watch Tower*, 1 June 1910, 179–80; "Brother Russell's European Tour," *Zion's Watch Tower*, 15 June 1910, 190; "Brother Russell's Round-the-World Itinerary," *Zion's Watch Tower*, 1 December 1911, 445; and in *International 1912 Bible Students Souvenir Convention Report* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: International Bible Students Association, 1912), 107. For the now-official view that Russell did not visit Pinerolo or meet Rivoir, see Luca Zucchini, correspondence to Massimo Introvigne, "Nota sulla cosiddetta 'strategia valdese,'" CESNUR Archives, Torino, Italy. See also Massimo Introvigne, *I Testimoni di Geova: già e non ancora* (Leumann [Torino]: Elledici, 2002), 56–58.

⁸⁰ Marley Cole, *Jehovah's Witnesses: The New World Society* (New York: Vantage Press, 1955), 30–34.

⁸¹ Cole, *Jehovah's Witnesses*, 36.

⁸² Charles Taze Russell, *Studies in the Scriptures*, Series VII, *The Finished Mystery* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: International Bible Students Association, 1917), 37–38.

⁸³ "Then Is Finished the Mystery of God" (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Watchtower Bible and Tract Association of Brooklyn, 1969), 110–13. This book reminds its readers that the inaccuracy of the claim that Russell was a messenger has been corrected in the *Watch Tower* in 1927, *Light* in 1930, and *Vindication* in 1931.

⁸⁴ *Sketches of the Waldenses*, 15.

⁸⁵ [Andrea Charvaz], *Recherches Historiques sur la Véritable Origine des Vaudois* (Paris: Perisse Frères, 1836); Andrea Charvaz, *Origine dei Valdesi* (Torino: G. Bocca, 1838).

- ⁸⁶ *Popolo all'erta un Valdese ti ucella* (Livorno: Tipografia Fabbreschi, 1861).
- ⁸⁷ Giovanni Bosco, *La Storia d'Italia*, 5th ed. (Torino: Oratorio di San Francesco di Sales, 1866).
- ⁸⁸ Bosco, *La Storia d'Italia*, 351.
- ⁸⁹ Giovanni Bosco, *Il Cattolico nel Secolo*, 2d ed. (Torino: Tipografia e Libreria Salesiana, 1883), 206, 217.
- ⁹⁰ Bosco, *Il Cattolico nel Secolo*, 412.
- ⁹¹ Bosco, *Il Cattolico nel Secolo*, 224. Giovanni Perrone, a member of the Salesian order in Torino, also wrote a rebuttal to the ancient origins thesis: *I Valdesi. Primitivi, Mediani e Contemporanei* (Torino: Tip. Dell'Oratorio di San Francesco di Sales, 1871).
- ⁹² Bosco, *Il Cattolico nel secolo*, 208.
- ⁹³ Bosco, *Il Cattolico nel secolo*, 409–10.
- ⁹⁴ Pius Melia, *The Origin, Persecutions, and Doctrines of the Waldenses* (London: James Toovey, 1870), 52, 130.
- ⁹⁵ Emilio Comba, *History of the Waldenses of Italy, from their Origin to the Reformation* (London: Truslove and Shirley, 1889), 9, 11.
- ⁹⁶ Cameron, *Waldenses: Rejections of Holy Church*, 6.
- ⁹⁷ Jacob Rivoire (1879–80), James Beus (1882–83), James Bertoch (1892–93), and Paul Cardon (1900) each proselytized in the valleys. Bertoch returned to his birthplace in San Germano Chisone where his father had served as the first Mormon branch president. James Bertoch, *Missionary Journal and Letters to His Family* (Salt Lake City: Prairie Dog Press, 2004); Daniel B. Richards, *The Scriptural Allegory* (Salt Lake City: Magazine Printing Company, 1931).
- ⁹⁸ See, Michael W. Homer, “New Religions in the Republic of Italy,” in *Regulating Religion: Case Studies from Around the Globe*, ed. James T. Richardson (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2004), 203–12.
- ⁹⁹ Apostle Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) initially planned to dedicate the new mission in Florence but was forced to change plans due to a flood in the city. He moved the dedication to Torre Pellice where Lorenzo Snow had ascended Monte Casteluzzo 166 years earlier. But mission headquarters remained in Florence.
- ¹⁰⁰ Davide Rosso, “Da Salt Lake City alle Valli Valdesi,” *L'Eco delle Valli Valdesi*, 27 September 2002, 11.
- ¹⁰¹ Several families migrated to Utah between 1891–93 and after the turn of the century. David Bosio, “Nos Vaudois dans L'Utah,” *Echo des Vallées*, 11–13 September 1913.
- ¹⁰² Watts, *The Waldenses in the New World*, 229–32; and Watts, *The Waldenses of Valdesa*, 140–41.
- ¹⁰³ Renzo Turinetto, “Sulle tracce dei valdesi del Nord-Ovest degli Stati Uniti d'America,” *L'Eco delle Valli Valdesi*, 17 October 1997, 8.
- ¹⁰⁴ Giorgio Spini, *Risorgimento e protestanti*, 2d. ed. (Milano: Il Saggiatore, 1989), 425, n. 3; Bellion, et al., *Dalle Valli all'Italia*, 122.
- ¹⁰⁵ For the Waldensians' own rationale see, Giorgio Bouchard, *Chiese e Movimenti Evangelici del Nostro Tempo* (Torino: Claudiana, 1992), 149–52; and Giorgio Girardet, *Protestanti Perché* (Torino: Claudiana, 1983), 111.

¹⁰⁶ For a list of Roman Catholic publications concerning Mormonism in Italy see, Michael W. Homer, "LDS Prospects in Italy for the Twenty-first Century," *Dialogue* 29, no. 1 (spring 1996): 139–58.

¹⁰⁷ Massimo Introvigne, *I Mormoni* (Schio [Vicenza]: Interlogos/Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993).

¹⁰⁸ "I Mormoni. Chi sono? In Che Credono?" *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 16 July 1994, 107–20. This article was reviewed by Massimo Introvigne in "La Civiltà Cattolica e i Mormoni," *Cristianità* Anno XXII, 234 (October 1994): 17–27.