

A Voice from the Land of Zion: Elder Erastus Snow in Denmark, 1850 to 1852¹

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A FEW YEARS AGO WHILE VISITING a used bookstore in the Old City (Gamla Stan) section of Stockholm, I asked the proprietor whether he had any materials about Mormons. He brought out a small and likely unique (3½" x 5½") 39-page pamphlet titled, "Om Mormonerne" (About the Mormons), by S. B. Hersleb Walnum, a "Prison Priest," published in Bergen, Norway, in 1852.² A brief review of the pamphlet revealed a heartfelt alert to the "faithful" of Norway from a Lutheran priest, warning of the newly arrived Mormon threat. Here was a contemporaneous window through which one could glimpse the missionary messages

1. This paper was presented in part at the Mormon History Association Conference in Aarhus, Denmark, June 27, 2000.

2. S. B. Hersleb Walnum, *Fængselspræst, "Om Mormonerne. Efter Opfordring aftrykt efter Søndagsblad for Lutherske Christne, No 29, 30, 31, og 32"* (Bergen: F. D. Beyers Forlag, 1852). This pamphlet is not listed in Mormon bibliographies. A different pamphlet, probably by the same author, is listed in Flake's bibliography as an 1855 anti-Mormon pamphlet: "Vogt Eder for de falske Profheter: Et Advarsels-ord imod Mormonerne" (Flake, citing Jørgen W. Schmidt, *Oh, Du Zion i Vest* [København: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1965], 251, in Chad J. Flake, *A Mormon Bibliography, 1830-1930: Books, Pamphlets, Periodicals, and Broadsides Relating to the First Century of Mormonism* [Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1978]). Svend Borchmann Hersleb Walnum, *Sognepræst* (parish priest) is listed in the 1875 Census (*Digitalarkivet*) for Bergen, Norway. This S. B. H Walnum was born in 1816 in Alstahaug in Helgeland, Norway. His wife was Anne Elizabeth Lovise, maiden name "Suur." Three children are listed: Svend Borchmann Hersleb, Jacob Rosted Suur and Anna Ludia Lovise. Also, in the Norwegian State Church record of "Baptisms in Bergen" for 1815-1894 is a listing for an April 22, 1855 baptism of Jørgen Svendrup Hersleb Walnum, son of *Fængselspræst* Svend Borkman Hersleb Walnum and Anne Elisabeth Lovise. (See <http://www.hist.uib.no/cgi-win/webcens.exe>.) No further information was found about Walnum.

brought by Erastus Snow and his companions to mid-nineteenth century Scandinavians.

Pastor Walnum concluded his pamphlet with a plaintive plea³:

We pray, therefore, for each of your dear souls! Pray in God's holy name; stay firm with what you have; let no one take your faith. Hold firm with the simple enfolding word of God found in the Bible. Stay firm in the faith you received at your baptism and your confirmation! With this faith and the Bible you shall collect consolation in life, hope in death and salvation provided by Him who purchased it with His blood! To this end help us all dear Lord and God! Amen in the name of Jesus Christ.⁴

Walnum's sober warning makes one wonder about the gospel messages heard and read by early Scandinavian Mormon investigators, converts, or by their detractors. Why did so many Danes, Norwegians, and Swedes, often at substantial personal risk, heed the call to Zion? While these questions can never be fully answered, a rehearsal of some early history of the Scandinavian Mission and a comparison of the contents of Walnum's pamphlet with early Scandinavian missionary tracts such as "A Voice of Truth to the Pure in Heart"⁵ or "A Voice from the Land of Zion,"⁶ published between 1850 and 1852 by Elder Erastus Snow, would be instructive.

Brigham Young's October 1849 missionary call for Elder Erastus Snow⁷ to carry the message of the restoration to Denmark would dramatically alter the ethnic heritage of Mormon Zion. The faith, energy, commitment, and resourcefulness of Snow and his co-workers and successors ensured that, in the twentieth century, Zion would be home to thousands of Saints with Scandinavian surnames.

On October 19, 1849, a nearly penniless company of 35 missionaries departed Great Salt Lake City for their missions to the eastern United States, to Britain, and to Europe. One could have reasonably doubted

3. Note that the author translated the documents and is solely responsible for any errors in the translations.

4. *Ibid.*, 39.

5. Erastus Snow, "En Sandheds-Røst Til de Oprigtige af Hjertet" (Kjøbenhavn: F. E. Bording, no date [1850?]). Xerox copy available in the LDS Church Historian's Office.

6. Erastus Snow, "En Röst från Landet Zion: Vittnesbörd af de Levande och de Döde," *Samlad af Erastus Snow från Stora Saltsjö Staden i Nord Amerika* (Köpenhamn: Trykt vid E. Snöws Bekostnad hos Sally B. Salomon; 1852).

7. Andrew Jenson, "Erastus Snow" in *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company, 1901), 103-115. See also Andrew Karl Larson, *Erastus Snow: The Life of a Missionary and Pioneer for the Early Mormon Church* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1971). Snow was born in 1818 and was just past thirty years of age when ordained to the Council of the Twelve. He already had nearly fifteen years of experience as a Mormon missionary and teacher.

that when Elder Snow returned to Salt Lake City thirty-three months later, he would leave behind a successful and well-organized Scandinavian Mission with hundreds of committed Saints. Also, with the assistance of several of his colleagues, he would have written, translated, and published in Danish or Swedish several pamphlets, the Book of Mormon,⁸ the Doctrine and Covenants,⁹ a hymnal, and a monthly Mormon journal called *Scandinavians' Star* (*Scandinaviens Stjerne*)¹⁰.

Just before Mormonism arrived, Europe had boiled with social, economic, and political change. While many recognize the impact of the 1848 revolutions on the histories of Germany, France, and Russia, the changes wrought on Scandinavia—and particularly on Denmark—are less appreciated. The fortuitous 1848 death of Danish King Christian VIII (1839-1848), leaving no direct heir, allowed Danish liberals to force a constitutional monarchy on the new king, Frederick VII (1848-1863). The resulting Danish Constitution of June 1849 granted Danish citizens important new religious freedoms found nowhere else in Europe, except perhaps Great Britain. While not effectively enforced, the constitution permitted the 1850 introduction of Mormonism into Denmark, and ultimately to the rest of Scandinavia.¹¹

Mormon history in Scandinavia began with the arrival of four missionaries in Denmark. The first was Peter Olsen Hansen,¹² a Copenhagen native, who arrived in Copenhagen on May 11, 1850. On June 14, Hansen went to a Copenhagen wharf to greet Elder Erastus Snow, John Erik Forsgren¹³ (a native of Sweden), and George Parker Dykes.¹⁴ Hansen's

8. Erastus Snow, *Mormons Bog. Oversat paa Engelsk fra Grundterten af Joseph Smith den Yngre. Udgivet og forlagt af Erastus Snow* (Kjøbenhavn: Trykt i F.C. Bordings Bogtrykkeri, 1851).

9. *Lærdommens og Pagtens Bog for Jesu Christi Kirke af Sidste Dages Hellige: Samlet udaf Guds Aabenbaringer af Joseph Smith, President. Oversat fra anden engelske Udgave. Udgivet og forlagt af Erastus Snow* (Kjøbenhavn: G. Trier, 1852).

10. Erastus Snow, *Skandinaviens Stjerne: Organ for de Sidste Dages Hellige* (Kjøbenhavn: trykt hos F. E. Bording, October 1851). The *Stjerne*, first published October 1, 1851, served as the church's journal for Scandinavian Mormons well into the twentieth century.

11. Scandinavia is defined here as Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, and the portion of Finland colonized or occupied by Swedes.

12. Andrew Jenson, "Peter Olsen Hansen (1818-1895)" in *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company, 1914), 766-67. See also *An Autobiography of Peter Olsen Hansen* (privately published by Leland Hansen Ashby, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1988), copy in the BYU Library.

13. Andrew Jenson, "John Erik Forsgren (1816-1890)" in *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company, 1920), 370-71. See also Oluff Petersen, "Historical Sketch of J. E. Forsgren," *Box Elder News*, 1 August 1916. Forsgren was a member of the Mormon Battalion, as was his missionary colleague, G. P. Dykes.

14. Andrew Jenson, "George Parker Dykes (1814-1888)" in *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company, 1914), 762. See also Frank

arrival a month earlier than the others was not in compliance with Elder Snow's instructions. He had been requested by Snow to meet at Hull, England, for travel to Denmark. Hansen's sense of history was a great temptation, and he chose to disobey. He later wrote:

Now, as far as I know, I might have complied with his wish as well as not, but there laid a fine packet, offering me a fair opportunity for me to get over before anybody else, when I would have the pleasing satisfaction to know that I, indeed, was the first Mormon missionary to tread that soil and I gave way to the temptation. . . . Now this was not forgetting that Bro. Snow was my Pres. for I obeyed Presidency, but I done what I did understanding and simply for to gain the privilege already mentioned. I had weighed the matter and evaluated the cost.¹⁵

Hansen's insubordination proved nevertheless important to the early success of the missionaries. The day after his arrival in Copenhagen in May 1850, he attended Baptist worship services and quickly made several new friends. He later wrote: "[T]wo [of these] families were afterwards among the first baptized into the new and true church."¹⁶

In June, Hansen took his newly arrived missionary companions to the Baptist services where they met with Peter C. Mönster, a well known Danish religious reformer and leader of the Baptist congregation. Shortly thereafter meetings began with several families from Mönster's congregation, and to Mönster's consternation, fifteen of his flock were baptized by Snow on August 12, 1850.

These were not, however, the first convert baptisms in Scandinavia. Elder Forsgren, called by Brigham Young to preach in Sweden, had already left Copenhagen in June 1850 for his birth home at Gävle (*Gefle*), Sweden. On July 26 he baptized his brother Peter Adolph, and on August 9, his sister Christina Erika. Soon afterward, Forsgren was arrested for preaching, transported to Stockholm, and deported from Sweden aboard a ship bound for the United States. He eluded the Swedish authorities by jumping ship at Elsinore, Denmark, and rejoined his colleagues in Copenhagen on September 18. Forsgren's leadership was important to the missionaries' success. He energetically disseminated Snow's printed materials and served briefly as Scandinavian Mission President after

Essholm, *Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah* (Salt Lake City: Utah Pioneers Book Publishing Company, 1913), 852. In the early 1840s Dykes visited the Fox River settlement in Illinois and baptized a number of prominent Norwegian immigrants. See William Mulder, *Homeward to Zion: The Mormon Migration from Scandinavia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957), 7-17.

15. Ashby, 74.

16. *Ibid.*, 75.

Snow's departure. When Forsgren later returned to Utah, he led a large company of Scandinavian and English emigrants.

Snow neither spoke nor wrote Danish when he arrived in Denmark. He believed deeply in the power of the printed word, and by necessity employed the language skills of Hansen as well as the talents of several new converts to prepare and publish gospel teaching materials for use in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. By September 1850 he succeeded in publishing "A Voice of Truth for the Honest in Heart," which, he said, outlined "the gospel's first principles, or the Lord's means to save mankind."¹⁷

Peter O. Hansen had been laboring over a translation of the Book of Mormon into Danish since his days in Nauvoo, and Snow assigned him to continue that work. In a February 24, 1851 letter to his brother Zerubbabel, Snow wrote of the urgency of completing the translation.¹⁸ Only five months later, Snow reported to Brigham Young that the Book of Mormon had been printed.¹⁹

Other publications followed in rapid succession. By October 1851, the first issue of the *Scandinavians' Star*, "a journal for the Latter-day Saints," had been printed, as had a translation of Orson Pratt's *Remarkable Visions*.²⁰ Elder Dykes had also published his *Chronologic Table* which summarized 6000 years of human history. This chronology, Dykes wrote, "showed the coming of our Savior is near."²¹

In March 1852, before his departure for England and then home, Snow also published a pamphlet in Swedish titled, "A Voice from the

17. See n. 6.

18. Erastus Snow, *One Year in Scandinavia* (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1851), 12: "I am now very busily engaged with Brother Hanson (sic) in translating the Book of Mormon; it is a very laborious and tedious task to get it issued clean and pure, according the simplicity of the original; and requires closest attention. I am publishing three thousand copies—have only one hundred and sixty-eight pages finished, it will take me until May or June."

19. *Ibid.* (Letter to Brigham Young, dated July 10, 1851).

20. Orson Pratt, *Mærkværdige Syner* (Kjøbenhavn: F. E. Bording, 1851): "Visions of Joseph Smith—discovery of gold plates filled with Egyptian characters and hieroglyphics—their translation into the English language by the aid of the Urim and Thummim—the sacred history of ancient America, now clearly revealed from the earliest ages after the flood, to the beginning of the fifth century of the Christian era,—a sketch of the rise, faith, and doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." This was translated from the 1848 English version, *An Interesting Account...* (Liverpool: R. James), a sixteen-page pamphlet with four pages of added notes (*Tillæg*) by Erastus Snow. Snow begins by stating that it is his intention to finish this *skrift* with excerpts from famous writers who, though unacquainted with the Book of Mormon, Indians' stories (*sagn*), or the antiquities of the Americas, provide evidence that in earlier times America was peopled by two different races and that the Indians' forefathers were Israelites who had prophets and holy scriptures and used both the Hebrew and Egyptian languages.

21. G. Parker Dykes, *Chronologisk Tabel* (in Andrew Jenson, *Andet Uplug* [Aalborg: Bechske Bogtrykkeri, 1874]).

Land of Zion: A Testimony of the Living and the Dead."²² The publication of this historical and doctrinal survey of Mormonism ensured that Scandinavian missionaries could provide their contacts with the story of Joseph Smith, the history of the church, and an outline of Mormon doctrine. The church in Scandinavia was poised for vigorous proselyting efforts by its new members.

In a pattern set by Joseph Smith and consistent with the church's practice in the United States and in Great Britain, Snow called many of the new Scandinavian members to missionary service.²³ Their newly acquired faith, zeal, and enthusiasm, coupled with their knowledge of the languages, peoples, and cultures, undoubtedly contributed to their impressive success.

One such example of missionary service by a new member is important to this discussion. In September 1851, a recently baptized Dane, Hans Frederik Petersen, was called to preach in Østerrisør, Norway. Upon arrival in Norway he promptly, though unsuccessfully, requested permission from the parish priest to conduct meetings in the local school. The priest apparently knew about the Mormons and asked with considerable emotion, "Have the Mormons now really come to Norway?" Despite several setbacks, Petersen found a few homes where he could teach, and within a month he had baptized several Norwegians. However, vigorous persecution led by clerics and the police forced him and his companions to leave Østerrisør and teach in other towns along the coast of Norway.

Early in 1852 several Norwegian Saints applied to have their names removed from the state Lutheran Church. They also requested permission to organize a Christian dissenter society. Existing law would not permit the establishment of a new church denomination, and their request was denied.²⁴ The State Lutheran Church, concerned by the Mormon presence, sought to warn its members of the Mormon heresy. Similar warnings had already appeared in religious and secular publications in Denmark and Sweden prior to the publication of Walnum's tract.²⁵

22. See n. 6.

23. Christian John Larsen, *Autobiography of Christian John Larsen*, from a holograph document in possession of Camma Zollinger, edited, extracted, and organized into chapters by Camma Zollinger. Typed copy in the possession of the author with kind thanks to Camma Zollinger. Larsen was born March 21, 1831 in Greis, Jutland, Denmark, and was baptized by G. P. Dykes on August 19, 1850: "On March 11th, 1851, I was ordained a Priest by Apostle Erastus Snow and appointed to go as a missionary in company with Elder Christen Christiansen to the city of Aalborg, to assist Elder George P. Dykes, who had established a branch of the church there."

24. Andrew Jenson, *History of the Scandinavian Mission* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1927), 56.

25. Schmidt, *Oh, Du Zion i Vest*.

Pastor Walnum's warning to the faithful in Norway began:

One of the present time's greatest marvels is Mormonism, or as its adherents call it, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. . . . In England there may be 30,000 Mormons. They have apostles, disciples and teachers whom they send to the ends of the earth to win converts. They have also come to our distant fatherland to seduce valuable souls with their lies.²⁶

Walnum's exposé of Mormonism continued with a recitation of many of the historical or religious claims made by Mormon writers and preachers, as well as some by their detractors to explain or expose Mormonism. Several of the issues discussed in Walnum's pamphlet are cited here:

- He charged that Solomon Spaulding and Joseph Smith were the authors of the Book of Mormon.²⁷
- He related a claim that Professor Anthon had denied the hieroglyphics brought to him by Martin Harris were Egyptian.²⁸
- He reported that many of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon later denied their testimonies and left the church.²⁹
- He correctly noted that some revelations published in the *Book of Commandments* were changed in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. This proved, he said, "the God from whom the Mormons receive revelation is not a God of truth, but is a God of lies."³⁰

26. Walnum, "Om Mormonerne," 2.

27. Walnum, "Om Mormonerne," 3-4: "A man, who hardly appreciated it was responsible for the beginnings of Mormonism. The man was Solomon Spaulding, who was born in the village of Ashford, was first a priest, a real estate man and finally was inclined to become a writer. . . . Once finished with his book, he sought to have it printed in Pittsburgh, and he left his handwritten manuscript with a printer but there was someone who hindered publication. In the meantime the manuscript remained on a shelf in the print shop, and anyone who wished could take it down and read it. And by this means many knew it, until it disappeared and thereafter no one knew what had become of it. But 16 years later a book was published in Palmyra in the western part of the state of New York which was called The Book of Mormon." See E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville: Printed and published by the author, 1834) 278-90. See also Lester E. Bush, Jr., "The Spaulding Theory, Then and Now," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 10, no. 3 (Autumn 1977): 40-69.

28. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 270-72.

29. Walnum, "Om Mormonerne," 7: "[L]ater the 8 witnesses were similarly worthy of belief for one of them was Joseph Smith's ungodly father and 2 of them were his unworthy brothers; yes! Of all the 11 witnesses 5 were unable to hold firm in their testimonies. Three are dead as adherents of Mormonism, and Joseph Smith's brothers still claim the truth; but the other 6 witnesses are later fallen away and have become foes of Mormonism."

30. *Ibid.*, 8-9: "A book called Doctrine and Covenants was issued in 1833. But their dreadful and impudent deception is evident, for in 1835 they reissued the just named book with several inconsistencies with the earlier edition. For example there is a revelation from

- He surveyed Mormon history, including Kirtland, Ohio, the Missouri experience and Nauvoo, Illinois, and described how the aggrieved citizens of Nauvoo turned on Joseph Smith and killed him. Smith's replacement by Brigham Young and the settlement of the Saints in the "Colony of Deseret" was also reported.
- He passionately rejected the Mormons' claim to be the only true church and objected to what he said was a Mormon view that the great religious reformers like Luther and the churches they founded were all heathen.³¹ It was grievous to him that the Mormon church had apostles and prophets ordained by the laying on of hands, and these were not, he charged, chosen by Christ or his successors, but instead by Joseph Smith.³²
- He declared Joseph Smith's claim that the Bible was incomplete, thus requiring other scriptures to be provided by revelation, to be heretical. He also lamented that Mormon leaders' interpretations of the Holy Scriptures were far too literal.³³ Walnum correctly identified an inconsistency between Joseph Smith's and Erastus Snow's teachings about the nature of God.³⁴ Smith had spoken of

1833 which directs that Smith shall not receive another gift other than the gift of translation. But after the 1835 edition he was given power to carry out any task. We see therefore, that the God from whom the Mormons receive their revelation is not a God of truth, but a God of lies."

31. *Ibid.*, 14: "The Mormon Church is the only true church that can bring salvation. All other expressions of faith are heathen."

32. *Ibid.*: "The leaders of the Mormon church have the gift and authority of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. Apostles and Prophets are necessary for the existence of the church. But the first Apostles named no successors. The successors were chosen by God's Prophet, Joseph Smith. Until he was taken from the earth he received God's revelations, and so the church must accept his commandments as though they came from the mouth of God. . . . He described being ordained to Aaron's Priesthood by John the Baptist, and to the Melchizedek Priesthood by Peter James and John, and he was named their successor."

33. *Ibid.*, 15, "The scriptures are presented as proof and a literal interpretation is taught. But our holy scriptures are not the final guide for God gave Smith the Book of Mormon as the complete gospel where are found numerous teachings which reverse our holy scriptures. This belief is proper so long as it is properly translated and interpreted as Smith taught them. They are called the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, a revelation to Smith: 'For I bless you that you may study in your own mind, then you should ask me if it is correct, and if it is so your heart shall burn within thee, thereby shall ye know that it is correct. But if it is wrong so shall you not have the feeling, then shall your thoughts leave you and you will forget that which is incorrect. Therefore you cannot write holy words unless they are given of me.' By this means the holy scriptures are thereby subject to Smith's interpretation."

34. *Ibid.*, 16, "The Mormons recognize the tripartite God; but after what Joseph Smith wrote in the *Millennial Star* they denied that God is a spirit without body parts, for in the just named magazine Smith wrote: 'What is God? He is a material intelligence who has a body of parts! He is in the shape of a human.'"

three separate Gods—the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost—who were one only in unity and purpose. Smith's concept contradicted the classic Christian view that God is a spirit without body parts and is one with Christ and the Holy Ghost. Furthermore, Smith had stated that God is of the same species as man and that God-like perfection may be achieved by man. However, Walnum recorded that Snow had written, "[T]he person of the Father is spirit, glory and power, but the son has a body similar to man and the Holy Ghost is in the image of the Father and the Son."³⁵ In retrospect, Snow's doctrinal view closely resembled the teaching found in the *Lectures on Faith*,³⁶ rather than Joseph Smith's later views as expressed in his King Follett funeral sermon.³⁷ This apparent contradiction suggests that the assimilation of some of Joseph Smith's teachings into church doctrine was slower than is generally appreciated.

- Another point of contention was Snow's teaching that individual faith was necessary for participation in Christ's atonement. Faith came from learning and obeying the teachings of God's prophets and apostles rather than, as Walnum asserted, being a direct gift of God. Thus, in the Mormon view, faith in God and knowledge of His character comes from the testimony of witnesses whom God raises up and sends out to spread his word.
- Walnum was offended by the claim that baptism by immersion is required at the age of accountability and that infant baptism is not efficacious.³⁸

35. See n. 6.

36. See *The Book of Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints; The Revelations of God*. By Joseph Smith, President, 4th European ed. (Liverpool; published for Orson Pratt by S. W. Richards, 1854) 5:45- 46: "They are the Father and the Son—the Father being a personage of spirit, glory and power, possessing all perfection and fullness—the Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, a personage of tabernacle. . . ; he is in the express image and likeness of the personage of the Father; or the same fullness with the Father; . . . possessing the same mind with the Father, which mind is the Holy Spirit, that bears record of the Father and the Son; and these three are one; . . . and these three constitute the Godhead, and are one."

37. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo, Brigham Young University, 1980), 344: "God who sits in yonder heavens is a man like yourselves. That God if you were to see him today that holds the worlds you would see him like a man in form, like yourselves" (quoted from the diary of Wilford Woodruff).

38. Walnum, "Om Mormonerne," 24: "As a consequence of Christ's instruction the Mormons have rejected infant baptism, and describe it as a fraud. They reject every baptism, which is not conducted by immersion, and conducted by one with authority from God (one of the servants of the Mormons). Baptism is declared to be necessary for salvation; the justification is the forgiveness of sins; and after baptism is the Holy Ghost given by the laying on of hands. . . . But, were this the truth, so follows therefrom, that according to the teachings of the scriptures none can be a true Christian and be saved unless he is

- He quoted at length from Judge Brochus' report on Brigham Young's malfeasance and on the Mormon practice of polygamy.³⁹

Pastor Walnum then concluded with the entreaty: "Dear souls, have you never felt the blessings you received when you were baptized as an infant?" He added that Mormons even baptized living people to save the dead, and that one could be baptized again and again for the forgiveness of his own sins.

Walnum's recitation of Mormon historical claims was faulty but consistent with much that was being published by Mormon detractors at this time.⁴⁰ His review of Mormon doctrine, though written in a derogatory tone, reasonably represented Snow's teachings contained in his "Voice of Truth"⁴¹ and "Voice from the Land of Zion."⁴² As Walnum considered the Mormon presence in Norway, he was seriously concerned with many doctrinal threats by Mormonism to the faith of susceptible members of the Norwegian Church. Mormonism's overestimated but apparent huge successes in the United States and Great Britain, must have seemed a possible threat to repeat itself in Norway and the rest of Scandinavia.⁴³ As noted earlier, Walnum was exercised over Mormonism's very literal interpretation of the Bible, views which sharply denigrated the teachings of the strongly Calvinist Scandinavian Lutheran churches. Probably most troubling to him were Joseph Smith's claims to priesthood authority that permitted ongoing revelation from the Heavens and allowed changes in the gospel which Walnum thought directly contradicted teachings of the Bible and the Church Fathers.

Other doctrines provoking Walnum's exposé included Snow's view that man could earn salvation by repentance and obedience. Walnum vigorously disagreed. For him, grace could not be earned, but was a gift from God. Neither Snow nor Walnum wrote about Joseph Smith's First

baptized. So infant baptism was necessary. Still in all these years, none have been baptized by a Mormon priest, so there has not, in all this time, been one true Christian. Hence, Luther, Franke and all the heroes of the faith who lived in the past hundreds of years were nothing more than heathens. Dear Soul! Can you believe this?"

39. B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Latter-day Saints: Century 1* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), 3:520-44, and Benjamin G. Ferris, *Utah and the Mormons* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1856), 342-46.

40. Charles MacKay, *The Mormons: or Latter-Day Saints with Memoirs of the Life and Death of Joseph Smith, the American Mahomet* (London: Office of the National Illustrated Library, 1851).

41. See n. 5.

42. See n. 6.

43. In his introduction, Walnum ("Om Mormonerne," 1) states: "About 20 years ago there were no Mormons, and now they approach 180,000 souls in the United North American States. . . . In England there may now be 30,000 Mormons."

Vision. The vision probably played little role in Mormon proselyting between 1850 and 1852.⁴⁴

Snow emphasized the apostasy of the ancient church which necessitated a restoration of divine authority in order to restore the fullness of the gospel. Walnum was confident that the gospel, as taught by his church, enlivened by God's spirit, was sufficient.

Walnum did not discuss the Mormon doctrine of gathering. It is likely that the implications of this doctrine on the Scandinavians were not apparent in 1852, since only one small group had emigrated by the time of Snow's departure. Later, Nordic critics of Mormonism would warn against emigration and describe the oppression of immigrants by Brigham Young's distant mountain Zion.

Snow, in fact, waxed eloquent when it came to the gathering. He preached that believers would be gathered to Zion's mountain and there be preserved from the great plagues that were to come over the earth in the last days. The ten tribes would be gathered, and the Jews would return to Jerusalem. Christ's Second Coming "is not far off. . . . We believe that this generation which presently lives on the earth shall not all perish before the Savior comes." He painted a strikingly idyllic picture: "All is peace and quiet. . . . no war in our little world; how peaceful and quiet, how still, how happy, how lonely. . . . [I]t is the poet's dream realized in this life. . . . Here we are all equally rich. There are none who are truly poor as each has free access to land. . . . for the good of all without money or price" He suggested that the trip to Zion could be made at minimal expense, either by traveling to New Orleans and then overland or to California and then overland, euphemistically saying it was only a hundred or so miles from the coast of California to Salt Lake City.

By the winter of 1851-1852, Elder Snow had set the course for what followed in the Scandinavian Mission. As he prepared the Saints for his coming departure, a second "General Conference" of the church in Scandinavia was held in Copenhagen on February 20-22, 1852. Snow reorganized the mission, ordained new priesthood officers, and made assignments to ensure continuity of his programs. He lamented the severe persecution of the Saints throughout Denmark, Norway, and southern Sweden. During the conference, he asked church leaders to prepare a petition to the parliament and the king requesting them "to give us recognition for our worship of God and secure for us the rights and freedoms which the constitution provides. Write it in powerful language, but in humility and submissiveness of heart."

44. *Skandinaviens Stjerne* (August 1852, 161-64) began a serial of Joseph Smith's life called "Joseph Smiths Levnetsløb: skrevet af ham selv." This included a translation of the 1838 version of the First Vision.

At the conclusion of the conference, more than 300 people gathered at the Hotel du Nord for a “festive dinner” to honor Brother Snow before his departure to Zion. The description of this event in the *Star* shows the great affection held by the Scandinavian converts for Snow.⁴⁵ To them, he became known as the “Apostle of the North.”

Snow’s farewell letter to the Saints published in the March 1852 edition of the *Star* is apologetic, prayerful, and tender:

Dear Brothers and Friends:

With this number my duties as editor and my work in this land come to an end. But, my concerns for you will not end here. I pray my Heavenly Father and my brethren for forgiveness for whatever mistakes I have made in the conduct of my duties. My sole purpose has been to honor God and bless my fellow men. . . . My beloved ones, indulge not in prayers for this God’s servant, but that wisdom and revelation will flood over them [his successors] in His name. Take pleasure and give respect to their counsel, guidance and instructions which will be provided for you by the Lord. Double your diligence in spreading the *Star* and the other materials that I have printed for you, so will God let His light shine in the darkness and give you much fruit from your work. Always be glad. Pray unceasingly and give thanks for everything the almighty God blesses you [with] through the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.—E. Snow⁴⁶

Shortly after Snow’s departure for Liverpool, the requested petition was completed, signed by 850 persons and submitted to the king and parliament on March 15, 1852.⁴⁷ There is no evidence that the petition received serious consideration, and persecution continued throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century although it manifestly failed to deter church growth.

Thousands of Danes, Norwegians, and Swedes ignored the pleas and warnings of Pastor Walnum and his contemporaries. Elder Snow, his companions, and their converts found many deeply religious, Bible-reading Scandinavians with concerns about salvation, who accepted the Mormon claims of the need for a restoration of Christ’s church and his gospel. They also accepted the doctrine of God-given priesthood authority and the need for proper execution of the saving ordinances as restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. The immanence of Christ’s Second Coming seemed confirmed by “the signs of the times.” Many of the newly converted brethren were called to missionary service. Their

45. *Skandinaviens Stjerne*, 15 March 1852, 96.

46. *Ibid.*

47. “Til vore hoistærede danske Rigsdagsmænd” (To our most honored members of the Danish Parliament), *Skandinaviens Stjerne*, April 1852, 102-103. The two-page petition ends: “Copenhagen, the 15th of March, 1852 with 850 signatures.”

successful preaching and the use of Elder Snow's books, pamphlets, and *Scandinavien's Star* caused the church to grow rapidly.

Many Scandinavians had little prospect of overcoming their poverty and the barriers to ownership of their own homes and farms. The principle of "gathering" to Zion, as well as the prospect of abundant free agricultural land, must have been exciting to many poor but enterprising "hearers of the word." Enveloped in their new faith, many of these Saints survived bitter persecution and later took substantial personal risks to travel to Zion to establish new homes and lives among their kindred believers. Their faith and hopes were well stated in the first stanza of a hymn written in 1854 in Christiana, Norway,⁴⁸ by a young Danish missionary named Charles Christian Anton Christensen (the famous Danish-Mormon artist C. C. A. Christensen) and published in the *Star*.⁴⁹

The message of peace sounds from Zion;
Light from the morning star shines forth;
Many have joy from heavens light
And obediently covenant with God
As heirs to freedom's home.

The Mormon missionaries' success undoubtedly provoked the stewards of the Scandinavian churches, such as Pastor Hersleb Walnum, to respond from the pulpit, in written word and deed, and even sometimes to self-righteously lead anti-Mormon mobs. At a time of enormous social, political, and economic change, the Lutheran clerics probably deterred many from listening to the Mormon missionaries. However, Erastus Snow would have warned them, as he did during an 1859 speech in the *Salt Lake Tabernacle*, that to resist was in vain: "Do any of you ask how this came to pass that so many thousands have gathered from that land. . .rejoicing in the testimony of the Gospel in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, etc.? It was not done by the wisdom and learning of man, or by any influence that man himself could exert over that distant people. . . .[I]t was not of man, but of God."⁵⁰

48. Christiana was renamed Oslo after Norway won independence from Sweden.

49. C. C. A. Christensen, "Christi Kirke og den faldne Christenhed" (Christ's church and fallen Christianity), *Skandinaviens Stjerne*, 1 February 1854, 143-44:

*Fredens Budskab nu fra Zion lyder;
Morgenstjernen herligt straal'er frem;
Mange nu ved himelens Lys sig fryder
Og gjør Pagt med Gud som Order byder.
Haabende en Arv i Fredens Hjem.*

50. *Journal of Discourses* (1860, Liverpool: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1966 lithographed copy) 7:129.