JESUS WAS IN BERLIN
AUGUST 1, 1914

A SERMON
PREACHED IN
PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
LAWRENCE, KANSAS
SEPTEMBER 26, 1915
BY
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JUNE 1916

"I came not to send peace but a sword."
Matthew 10: 34.

JESUS WAS IN BERLIN AUGUST 1, 1914

Berlin.

The first of day of August nineteen fourteen.

Jesus of Nazareth a citizen of the Fatherland.

The past few years a humble carpenter in the city of Berlin.

For weeks rumors of war have filled the air.

Then August first nineteen fourteen.

Suddenly—as from a clear sky, "The enemies of the Fatherland are at the gate!"

At the gate—hideously armed!

Ready to despoil and murder!

Ready to murder and destroy!

There is only one thing to do. There are not two things to do. There is only one thing to do.

Jesus does that one thing.

He flings aside his hammer and his saw.

Rushes for his uniform. His soldier's uniform.

Rushes for his sword. And his gun. And his bayonet. And his pistol.

The next moment he is on his way to the colors.

Then another moment and he is on his way to the front.

What for?

Why—to repel the attacks of the enemy. The enemy are at the gates of the Fatherland. Bent upon despoiling the Fatherland. They will kill. They will murder.

And before they kill and murder, THEY must be killed and murdered.

But they are brother men.

Bosh!

Who said Bosh?

Why—Jesus.

Such monstrous stupidity! Brother men!

The Fatherland is in danger. Its very life is threatened. Those that hate it are at the gate. Those that would cast it down headlong into a bottomless pit are at the gate.

And to talk brotherhood at such a time!

Talk brotherhood when the enemies of the Fatherland are not at the gate.

He's off.

On the way to the front.

That's Jesus there in the second row.

I like that swing of his. I like the set of his jaw. See that fist tightened at his side. I pity the man that faces his gun.

Through Belgium.

Into France.

Then the mighty shout. "On to Paris!"

What's in Paris?

Why, the enemy. The enemy that must be humbled.

What have they done?

Done? Why, nothing. But they're the enemy.

Who said so?

The Kaiser.

Does he know?

Of course he knows.

Then it's on to Paris.

He sweeps along with the conquering host.

Gayly.

Resolutely.

Back of them—moans and groans.

Back of them—the rattle of death.

Back of them—lakes of blood.

Fields stripped of their crops.

Villages that beamed and smiled but yesterday in ruins. In smouldering ruins.

Everywhere men dead and dying. Everywhere swords, guns, helmets, cloaks, battered cannon, writhing horses.

The mire choked with men. With dead men.

A hollow where they had taken refuge—piled with them.

Cowards! to have sought refuge.

Why not stand up like men and take their medicine.

The way he did.

Some of them—still alive.

Wriggling.

Let them wriggle.

On to Paris!

He's in the first row now.

Those that were in the first row are lying back there among the piles of dead.

Brave Jesus.

An iron cross upon his breast.

None braver than he.

Then the Marne.

He had been such a pitiless fighter that they placed him in charge of a machine gun. It takes a fiendish fighter to man a machine gun. The thing is so inhuman. So cruelly inhuman.

So they gave him a machine gun.

Then the enemy came.

Young men like himself. Strong. Stalwart. Shoulder to shoulder. A solid phalanx.

Singing.

"It's a long, long way to Tipperary"?

No.

A hymn.

The second stanza of "Who is on the Lord's Side?"

You could hear every word.

"Fierce may be the conflict,
Strong may be the foe,
But the King's own army
None can overthrow;
Round his standard ranging,
Victory is secure;
For his truth unchanging
Makes the triumph sure.
Joyfully enlisting
By thy grace divine,
WE are on the Lord's side,
Savior WE are thine."

I guess he didn't hear them.

Savior!

Then the pitiless machine gun.

And the singing ceased.

The steady aim of the Nazarene.

Not one of them should ever sing again.

Then another line.

And another.

Singing.

Until his gun belched death upon them.

Then the singing ceased.

He had stilled their song.

He told me afterward in Berlin that it was all he could do to turn that machine gun on those fine young

fellows as they came singing up the hill.

I wish now he had not told me this. I did not like his squeamishness. These men were of the enemy. They got what they deserved. The enemies of the Fatherland deserve what these men got.

It is just as well that he say nothing about this to anyone else.

They'd take his iron cross away from him.

They don't want the sniffling kind around.

It was all he could do to turn the murderous instruments upon those young men—singing as they came!

But he did.

He did his duty.

Like a man.

Jesus the patriot.

The gallant patriot.

The darling of the empire.

The pitiless fighter.

Bravest of the brave.

They will build him a monument in the park. They will carve his name upon it.

JESUS
AFORETIME OF NAZARETH
PERFECT MASTER OF THE SWORD
HE CAME NOT TO BRING PEACE BUT A SWORD
AND GOD ALMIGHTY HATH BLESSED
THE SWORD HE BROUGHT

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London.

The fourth day of August nineteen fourteen.

Jesus of Nazareth a British subject.

These past few years a humble carpenter in the city of London.

For weeks rumors of war had filled the air.

Then August fourth nineteen fourteen.

Suddenly as from a clear sky, "Belgium is being despoiled. The German army is on Belgian soil."

Hideously armed.

Ready to murder and destroy.

There is only one thing to do. There are not two things to do. There is only one thing to do.

Jesus does that one thing.

He flings aside his hammer and his saw.

Rushes for his uniform. His soldier's uniform.

Rushes for his sword. And his gun. And his bayonet. And his pistol.

The next moment he is on his way to the colors.

Then in another moment he is on his way to the front.

What for?

Why, to repel the attacks of the enemy. The enemy are despoiling poor helpless Belgium.

But what's the use of getting excited over such a matter?

Only yesterday you British were despoiling poor helpless diamond-blessed South Africa.

The Germans are merely doing what you are given to doing.

But he brushes me aside.

He has no time to quibble about the past.

The past is past.

But these Germans are brother men.

Jesus, they are brother men.

Bosh!

This is no time to smirk about brother men.

Belgium is being despoiled.

But why didn't you think about brother men when

you were despoiling poor helpless diamond-blessed South Africa?

He is all of a rage now.

So he's off.

He is on his way to the front.

That's Jesus there in the second row.

I like that stride of his. That shows he means business. That set jaw. Those clenched teeth. The fist tightened at his side.

Across the channel.

Into France.

Northward.

Northward?

What for?

Why, to repel the enemy.

What have they done?

Why, they are the enemy.

Who said so?

King George.

Does he know?

Of course he knows.

Northward.

Then the desperate retreat toward Paris.

In the midst of the desolation he stood. Head erect. Still proud. Proud in defeat. Proud in flight.

The glorious field back yonder. That's the way the papers spoke of it. The glorious field. Eight days have passed since the battle and there are 700 wounded still on the field. Still shrieking. Still moaning. No one to help them. Sixty of them huddled in one tumble-down shack. Eight days have passed. Wounds that were severe have now become hopeless. Everywhere filth. Filth and blood.

He saw it all as his regiment swept over the field toward Paris.

It was some of his work. Some of his own work.
Do you wonder that he exulted?
These were Germans.
The enemy.
The hated enemy.
Back toward Paris!
One night I saw him steal out to a point that overlooked the enemy's camp. Devout man that he was, he had gone out to pray. I heard him. Heard every word. He prayed for victory. With all his soul he prayed for victory.
"Oh God, help us to tear the soldiers of the foe to bloody shreds with our shells. Help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead. Help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire. Help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief. Blast their homes. Blight their lives. Water their way with their tears. Drench them with blood."
I liked his way of putting it. That wasn't the way the priests prayed. They had a soft and mushy way of praying for these very things. They too prayed for victory. They wanted these same things done. They wanted God to do them. But they didn't like to say it out loud. Their prayers sounded better. That was all. They meant the same thing. They prayed for victory upon their arms.
That's what victory means to the side that loses.
Then the Marne.
Those terrible days at the Marne.
He had earned the right to a machine gun.
So they gave him one.
Then the enemy came.
Young men like himself. In the full pride of their

wholesome German youth. Strong. Stalwart. Shoulder to shoulder. A solid phalanx.
Singing.
"Deutschland uber alles"?
No. A hymn.
The second stanza of Ein' Feste Burg:

"Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right man on our side,
The man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus it is he;
Lord Sabaoth is his name,
From age to age the same,
And he must win the battle."

They were singing about him.
As if he were on their side.
He was no German.
What had their priests been telling them?
He was not on their side. Fighting for them.
He was on the other side. He was against them.
He was a Britisher.
Then the pitiless machine gun.
And their singing ceased.
The perfect aim of the Nazarene.
Not one of them should ever sing again.
Then another line.
And another.
Singing.
Until his gun belched death upon them.
Then their singing ceased.
HE had stilled their song.
But he told me afterward in London that it was all he could do to turn that death-flinging gun upon those

fine young fellows as they came singing up the hill.

But in that moment he remembered. These men were enemies. He had been ordered to kill them. The king had ordered him to kill them. His king.

God?

No, no. George. George the fifth. By the grace of God. His noble and gracious king.

This was no place for thought of the other man. Let him drop in his tracks and rot. What right had he to be an enemy of the great and good King George?

It was all he could do!

Think of such piffle. And from a warrior like Jesus. A trained and trusted warrior.

What if they should all talk that way?

But he caught himself before it was too late.

He turned the beastly gun upon them.

He did his duty.

Like a man.

Jesus the patriot.

Jesus the gallant patriot.

The Queen's own.

The King's well beloved.

The pitiless.

There will be a tablet to him in Westminster. His name will be carved upon it.

JESUS
AFORETIME OF NAZARETH
PERFECT MASTER OF THE SWORD
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Well, what's the matter?

It isn't true.

What isn't true?

The picture.

You haven't played fair with Jesus.

You have misrepresented him.

Jesus wouldn't do these things.

First of all he wouldn't go to war.

He wouldn't kill his brother men. No matter who ordered him to kill them.

He wouldn't glory in the moans and groans of brother men. In the rattle of death. In far stretching lakes of blood. In ruined villages. In huge piles of dead.

He wouldn't turn a fiendish machine gun upon his brother men. His singing brother men. No matter who ordered him to.

He wouldn't pray that God would tear the enemy to bloody shreds with his shrapnel. That God would lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire. That God would wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with grief that availed nothing at all.

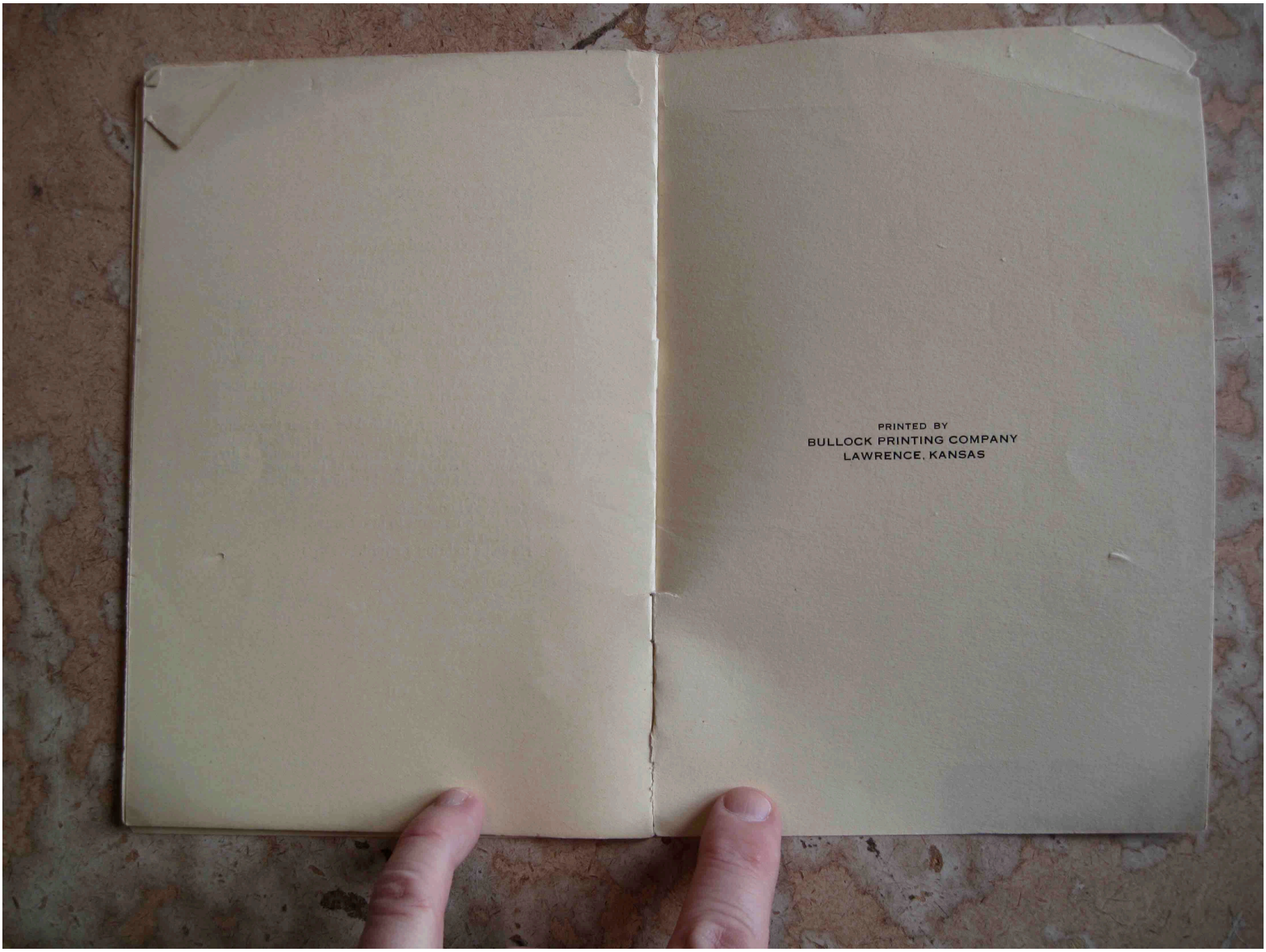
Nonsense.

You don't know him.

You think he came to bring peace.

He didn't.

He came to bring a sword.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