

# Brothers across Enemy Lines

## A Mission President and a German Soldier Correspond during World War I

*Jeffery L. Anderson*

The First World War destroyed millions of lives and billions of dollars' worth of property. In peacetime, each death is a tragedy, while in war the deaths of millions become a statistic.<sup>1</sup> One of the lives lost among the statistics is that of Wilhelm Kessler (fig. 1), a German citizen and Latter-day Saint who cut short his mission to enlist in the German army. His correspondence with his mission president, Hyrum W. Valentine, reflects both his patriotism and his love for the gospel and the Saints. Valentine's letters in return express his love for this young man, a love that transcended political differences and earthly conflicts.

At first glance, Kessler seems relatively ordinary by Latter-day Saint standards. Born July 23, 1887, in Neunkirchen, Germany, he was raised as a Catholic. He joined the Church in Karlsruhe, Germany, on June 29, 1907, the same year his older sister, Barbara, immigrated to Utah with her husband.<sup>2</sup> When Kessler arrived in Utah in 1910, he settled in Salt Lake City's Fourth Ward and became part of a large community of German-speaking people living in the Valley. Though the predominant population of his ward was English-speaking, there were also many German-speaking Latter-day Saints who attended, and the Valley featured German social organizations and a German-language newspaper, the *Salt Lake City Beobachter*. Trained in Germany in business, Kessler worked during

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1. Alan Levy, *The Wiesenthal File* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1993), 441.

2. Obituary of Barbara K. Kuhn, *Deseret News-Salt Lake Telegraph*, January 22, 1953, B7.

his brief time in Salt Lake City as a bookkeeper, possibly for the Sweet Candy Company.<sup>3</sup>

In October 1912, Kessler was called to the Swiss-German Mission, where he served briefly as a proselyting missionary in Berlin. In March 1913, he was transferred to mission headquarters and became associate editor of the German-language Church periodical, *Der Stern*. While serving at mission headquarters, Kessler developed a close association with his mission president, Hyrum W. Valentine, and with Valentine's wife, Rose (fig. 2).

Hyrum Washington Valentine was born March 4, 1873, in Brigham City, Utah. From 1900 to 1903, he served as a missionary in the Swiss Mission. He married Rose Ellen Bywater, a local dentist, on August 17, 1905.<sup>4</sup> In January 1909, he was appointed Box Elder School District clerk and four months later became the district's first superintendent. Valentine was employed in the fruit-growing business in Brigham City until 1911. He began his service as Swiss-German Mission president in December 1911.<sup>5</sup> Valentine and his wife had no children at that time. Valentine's papers, however, reflect that he viewed his missionaries, particularly Wilhelm Kessler, as his own sons and appreciated the opportunity to have stewardship over them. While in Switzerland, the Valentines adopted a daughter, Basel, and after their return to the United States adopted a son, Dee.

The Swiss-German Mission headquarters was located in the city of Basel, which sits in Switzerland's northwestern corner, where the Swiss,



FIG. 1. Wilhelm Kessler, 1913. From *Der Stern* 45, no. 24 (1913): 382.

3. Little additional information is known of Kessler's business or Church activities. Ward records show him giving a prayer in priesthood meeting and speaking in the Sunday School prior to his November 1912 departure to serve his mission. Fourth Ward, Salt Lake City, General Minutes, September 18, 1911, and Sunday School Minutes, October 13, 1912, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

4. According to her autobiography, Rose Ellen Bywater was the only woman practicing dentistry in the state of Utah at that time. Rose Ellen Bywater Valentine, *Memoirs of Rose Ellen Bywater Valentine*, ed. Dale M. Valentine (n.p.: n.p., 1962), 19, 25.

5. Hyrum Washington Valentine, Biography 1947, Church Archives.

German, and French borders meet. During the war, trenches were located just a short distance from Valentine's home. Cannons could be heard regularly in Basel, and occasionally airplanes in battle could be seen in the distance. Moreover, the neutrality of Switzerland and its French- and German-speaking population and culture allowed Valentine a unique vantage point from which to observe events and read reports on the war. Valentine's personal opinions favoring American neutrality in the war closely reflected those of his own countrymen, and his letters to friends and family manifest those feelings.<sup>6</sup>

At the war's outbreak, Kessler deemed it his duty to support his native country and quickly left the mission for service in the German army. President Valentine and Hyrum Mack Smith, the European Mission president, were in Germany touring the mission. Kessler sent Valentine a telegram seeking counsel regarding the matter, but conditions were such that Valentine thought it best not to respond.<sup>7</sup> Sister Valentine spoke with the departing missionary. "There are rumors of war in Germany," she wrote. "Bro. Kessler (a Zion Elder born in Germany) [is] worried."<sup>8</sup>



FIG. 2. Hyrum W. Valentine and Rose Ellen Bywater Valentine, 1913. From *Der Stern* 45, no. 24 (1913): 382.

6. Family members who knew Valentine in later years were surprised to learn his early letters reflected neutral opinions. Apparently, the two great wars of the twentieth century changed his attitude about American neutrality.

7. Swiss and German Mission Journal 1898–1920, August 2, 1914, Church Archives. Because of the mobilization and general confusion, sending a telegram from Germany to neutral Switzerland could have exposed Valentine to scrutiny by German officials. Valentine at the time was strongly isolationist. A missive from Valentine urging Kessler to stay out of the war could have been used by German authorities as evidence that Valentine and Smith were, if not spies, at least opposed to the German government. It is also possible that the telegraph system was so tied up by the military that it would have been difficult for Valentine to have sent a message.

8. Switzerland Zurich Mission Manuscript History and Historical Report, July 25, 1914, Church Archives, cited in Rose Valentine, *Memoirs*. The location of the original journal is unknown.

Kessler hastily typed two letters to Valentine dated July 31, 1914. On August 3, 1914, Kessler reported for duty in the German Army in Lörrach, Germany. That day he penned a letter in German to Valentine.

Because of wartime confusion, troop movements, and even a brief arrest after being accused of spying for the British,<sup>9</sup> Presidents Valentine and Smith did not return to Basel until August 12; Valentine could not have read Kessler's letters before that date. Given Valentine's sentiments regarding the war, he might have attempted to dissuade Kessler from joining the military had he received the news before Kessler left.

Valentine and Kessler corresponded regularly through April 1916. Wounded twice in battle, Kessler was awarded the Iron Cross second class. He continued his correspondence with Valentine from the hospital where he was recovering from wounds received in September 1914. In his letters, Kessler described some of his experiences in the war and expressed his longing to be reunited with the Latter-day Saints, especially his beloved mission president.

But the longed-for reunion would never take place. In July 1916, Valentine received news he had hoped he would never have to read. After serving for nearly two years in the German army, Kessler had fallen on July 1, the first day of the first battle of the Somme—one of the most devastating battles of the war—near the city of Mametz, France.<sup>10</sup>

Valentine was released as mission president on December 1, 1916. He reported his experiences in general conference on April 8, 1917,<sup>11</sup> two days after the United States declared war on Germany in response to Germany's commencement of unrestricted submarine warfare:

I want to say a word about Brother Kessler, one of your citizens of this city. He was sent over there to edit the mission paper. A more faithful man was never sent to us to perform missionary work, and he found himself in a most difficult position. On August 1, 1914, President Hyrum M. Smith and I were out in the mission traveling through Germany. The war came like a thunderbolt. We never had a word of warning of it at all.

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9. Jeffery L. Anderson, "Mormons and Germany, 1914–1933: A History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Germany and Its Relationship with the German Governments from World War I to the Rise of Hitler" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1991), 42–43.

10. By the mid-November 1916 end of the battle, both sides together had suffered about a million casualties. The Germans lost 500,000 men; the British, 400,000; the French, 200,000.

11. Hyrum W. Valentine, in *Eighty-Seventh Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1917), 145–51.

Brother Kessler said: “I carry in my pocket a sworn statement, an oath that I will be ready at the moment they call for my help.” He said: “I could not look my countrymen in the face and stand here when they call for me to render assistance.” He said, “It is true I have been sent here to do missionary work, and I have enjoyed my work most exceedingly, but I can’t edit the paper any longer, there is nothing here but turmoil. We will not be able to cross the boundary; I can’t cross the boundary; if I do, I will be taken as a deserter and cast into prison and possibly shot. I don’t know but that tomorrow the French will rush over the boundary here into Basel; they will discover that I am a German citizen, and I will be taken a prisoner of war and interned. I don’t know but tomorrow the Germans themselves will cross over the boundary here and come riding in a street car. They could come in a street car and ride into the city of Basel, and they could come here and take me as a traitor to my country. I may be cast into prison, I may be executed. It matters not,” he said, “but I feel I must go!” In the anguish of his soul, he went to serve his country, and there is no criticism.<sup>12</sup> Oh, I know the anguish of his soul, many days after he had gone into the war, how he felt what a burden he had taken upon himself. He might have waited. I have often said he might have waited eight days and President Smith would have been there and he might have counseled with him. I don’t think the result would have been any different, but he would not have had the burden resting on his shoulders. I want to say to you, he was just as true a servant and a soldier in his country’s army as he was a servant of God in our midst. We know of his example from the letters we received from the officers in the army, in the regiment, in the division where he served, and he is a credit to our people. My brethren and sisters, he died as he lived,—a faithful Latter-day Saint, a soldier of the Cross though enlisted for the time being with his country’s army.

The fact that Valentine made statements in support of this young man who had given his life fighting for the enemy of the nation to which Valentine and most of his listeners held citizenship is significant. It reminds

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12. Valentine here gives the impression that Kessler departed the mission field under some duress, feeling that he would not be physically safe if he were to remain on his mission. This does not reflect the patriotic sentiment contained in Kessler’s extant letters, but it may reflect other correspondence that has not survived or conversations between Kessler and Valentine’s wife, Rose, before Kessler’s departure. Rose Valentine kept a diary in which she possibly recorded these matters, but that document has been lost or destroyed. The surviving documents provide strong evidence that Kessler did not like the notion of killing anyone. Kessler’s patriotism seems to have been overshadowed by his Latter-day Saint faith and personal moral convictions that led him to espouse peace and love for all. While Valentine might have accurately represented Kessler’s views, it is also possible that he emphasized some of Kessler’s feelings and de-emphasized others because of the United States’ declaration of war on Germany.

Latter-day Saints that, first and foremost, we are all brothers and sisters, regardless of nationality. It is also a manifestation of Valentine's love for the German people, especially Kessler, in spite of the international political situation that made their nations enemies. It stands as a witness to the belief that Latter-day Saints, even in times of war, are "subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law" (A of F 12). Valentine and Kessler gave allegiance to the same faith but owed allegiance to a different earthly master. It is to Valentine's credit that he withheld criticism of the German Saints who fought for their fatherland.<sup>13</sup>

The following letters are the correspondence between Wilhelm Kessler and Hyrum W. Valentine in July and August 1914. Also included is a letter from President Valentine notifying Kessler's home-ward bishop, Charles H. Worthen, of Kessler's death.<sup>14</sup> Overstrikes and typos have been omitted for the sake of clarity, though misspellings are retained.

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13. Seventy-five young men from the nearly seven thousand Latter-day Saints living in the German-speaking missions are listed in mission histories as being killed in battle during World War I. Anderson, "Mormons and Germany," 212.

14. All letters are found in Hyrum Washington Valentine, Papers, 1911–1940, Church Archives.

## The Kessler-Valentine Correspondence

Basel, Den 31. Juli 1914.<sup>15</sup>

Dear President/Valentine,  
my dear father:—

Before I leave to give satisfaction to my final and only destination as a German man and soldier, I want to say Good bye! to you. I rather would have shaken your dear hands once more, but nevertheless do I feel your sympathy.

From the bottom of my heart do I thank you for your love and fatherly guidance. May the Lord repay you and bless you for all your direct and indirect good counsels and your correct conduct unto me.

I will think of you and mother [Rose] before I fall asleep; my heart will be tender when I feel your prayer, for which I will long as a child longs for food.

I won't be of any service to the church under the circumstances existing at the present time, but yet of a little to my beloved country. I can truly say that/in my soul I [feel] a firm conviction that this step that I am making is not a wrong one.

God be with us till we meet again!—

Good bye!

Your loving and devoted son

W<sup>m</sup> Kessler

[Continuation of letter:]

Dear President:—

If you would like to do me a favor then I might ask you the following:

If I should not return then please notify the Authorities of the church in my name, to pay to Elder Geo. Kuhn, my brother in law, 408 Post Street, Salt Lake City, the sum of 200 Dollars, money I ow[e] him.<sup>16</sup> He has a son on a mission at the present time, is a very good Latter-day Saint and not a

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15. The original letter, measuring 29.2 x 22.4 cm and typewritten in English, appears on Kessler's personal letterhead. In this letter, the date, all slashes (/), and Kessler's signatures were written in longhand with black ink. It looks like two letters, the second part undated, but obviously written on or near the same day.

16. This refers to Johan (John) George Kuhn (1865–1915). Kuhn and his wife, Barbara, who both immigrated to Utah in 1907, lived in the Twenty-Fifth Ward in Salt Lake City. Obituary of John George Kuhn, *Deseret Evening News*, April 26, 1915, 14. Valentine subsequently wrote to President Joseph F. Smith and the Presiding Bishopric, asking that the Church take care of the matter. Hyrum Valentine to Presiding Bishop's Office, July 22, 1916; Valentine to Joseph F. Smith, July [August] 1, 1916, Valentine Papers.

wealthy man at all.<sup>17</sup> He was perfectly willing to postpone due repayment till my mission was over and would not accept any interest on the money, although he could need it.

Please, write to Bishop [Charles Herbert] Worthen of the fourth Ward in Salt Lake City and tell him that I tried to represent his Ward well; tell him also the reason, why I did not write as frequently as I should have done.

Please, visit my Sister and my Brother in Law in Salt Lake City, when you come there and give them my love.

Have a kind word for me when you write to the Presidency of the Church. Assure them of my respect and love and adoration. In all my troubles [I] will not forget to pray for these/noble men.

Please, Forgive me, if my behavior has not always been as it ought to have been—I regret every thing that might have hurt your feelings in any way.

And, please, don't argue with yourself that I did wrong; consider my patriotisme, my rights I am fighting for, my religious view on the subject, my believe in heavenly protection and the oath that I have spoken with a conscious German heart when called to the army.

I thank you, dear President Valentine, for these favors you will do for me, in advance. I am only sorry that I haven't met you before I went.

Love to you and Sister Valentine for all what you have done for me. The Lord bless you.

I remain as one of your many boys and your Brother in the glorious cause  
W<sup>m</sup> Kessler



Lörrach, the 3. Aug. 1914.<sup>18</sup>

My Dear Ones:

The deep impressions of my difficult departure from Basel reside with powerful resonance in my soul. The tears of the Church members in behalf of the departing brethren were for my tender heart as an edifying rain of love, which gently cooled the burning glow of excitement for my fatherland

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17. Rudolph Philip Kuhn (1891–1944) served in the Northern States Mission, 1913–14.

18. This is a translation from the original German text. This, as well as all other translations, were done by the author with significant help from Matthew K. Heiss and Ingrid K. Hersman. It should be noted that the German version manifests Kessler's fine command of the German language. The original is written in longhand with black ink, except for two postscripts written in pencil upside down at the top of page one and at the bottom of page three. The letter is folded to make four pages and, when folded, measures 11.9 x 17.9 cm.

without diminishing the warmth. Again, many thanks to all for their manifestation of heartfelt, sympathetic feelings; my soul is filled with emotion.

At one o'clock we arrived in Lörrach; we thought it wise first to have a good lunch because we were unsure if, after registering, we would or would not be swiftly moved elsewhere. After we made ourselves known to the authorities we were given leave till five o'clock. Brother Zimmer and I made good use of the time.<sup>19</sup> Being outside of the city, and indeed on the edge of a stream near a meadow, in the shadow of a magnificent apple tree we took an idyllic siesta and dreamt that we were again at fast meeting. Deepest rest and most splendid peace prevailed. Indeed, upon our entry into the city, we felt the surprisingly peaceful and measured mood of its joyous residents. No agitation was evident. The silence of the meadow was only interrupted occasionally by marching troops chanting a spirited war song. Flawless order overall! Later we were quartered here during the night. My hosts were two wonderful older folks. At midday we also found Brother Ed. Rudolf in the registration office.<sup>20</sup> That was on Sunday. Yesterday noon Bro. Z., Br. R., and I and one other comrade took a refreshing bath in [the stream near] the great meadow and then one hour of refreshing sunbathing.<sup>21</sup> Who said war? [In English.] I cannot yet give you an address because I do not yet know which infantry battalion I will be assigned to.

4 Aug. 1914. Evening. Still here.

Brother Zimmer left, probably to Freiberg. The infantry must still wait. We are becoming impatient. However, early in the morning we expect to receive our orders. I also met Brother Färber and we were glad to see one another.<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, we were soon separated. I spent last night with 14 men quartered under cannon fire! [We were] in our clothes on the bare floor, no blankets, just tablecloths. But that creates courage! Brother Rud was also there.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, we were in the best of spirits. I also met the

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19. Several individuals could be the "Brother Zimmer" mentioned here. It is not, however, Max Zimmer (1889–1957). At this time, Max Zimmer, who was also serving in the mission in Tilsit, Germany, near the Russian border, had been, or soon would be, taken captive by the Russians. He was not released until several weeks later. See Anderson, "Mormons and Germany," 42–43. Eventually, this Max Zimmer replaced Kessler as associate editor of *Der Stern*.

20. I have not been able to identify this Ed. Rudolph.

21. Kessler is likely referring to the aforementioned Ed. Rudolph and Brother Zimmer.

22. This is probably Alfred T. Färber (1882–1966), who was born in Berlin, Prussia, but apparently immigrated to Utah before returning to Germany, where he died.

23. It is not known who Brother Rud is, unless this is a reference to the Rudolph mentioned above.

young blond student from Basel and had a deep and serious discussion with him; we parted promising after our return to meet again. During formation on the first evening, there stood on my left side a Salvation Army officer, and the second man to my right was a teacher from the Kreschona. At noon today in great haste I had three teeth temporarily filled. This evening we were quartered at a miller's. All others drank the beer provided by our host, but I did not touch it. I am in excellent spirits and wish the same for you.

Greetings to all. Give special greetings to Papa Fink<sup>24</sup>

Sincerely yours,

Corporal Wilhelm Kessler

[Written upside down at top of page 1]

On the bookshelf in the office is a letter rack labeled "private letters" that should also be sent to me. Many thanks for sending it in advance.

[Written at bottom of page 3]

I wish with all my heart that you are in good spirits. Write me as soon as I send you my address. I think often about all of you!!



Basel, Aug. 20, '14<sup>25</sup>

To Mr. Wm. Kessler,

Sargent, 3, Comp. E, Reserve Battalion

Dear Brother:

You should not have the impression that I am unhappy with your actions, or that I am indifferent to your fate<sup>26</sup> because you had to leave us. I have, however, felt that whatever I write or what I may say, would not leave much of an impression on you, while everything associated with you seems so strange to me and especially in this regard I have nothing that I wish to say.

I thought that you might go, as soon as I learned that there may be war and had I received the dispatch in Dresden, only then would it have been

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24. This is probably Joseph Finck (1870–1955), who was born in Erstein, Alsace-Lorraine, but later immigrated to Salt Lake City, where he died a member of the Riverview Ward. Obituary of Joseph Finck, *Deseret News–Salt Lake Telegraph*, September 24, 1955, 4B.

25. The 27.9 x 21.4 cm letter is a carbon copy of the original and is on tissue paper.

26. The German here reads "Schicksal," which I have translated as "fate."

possible to give you an answer. But because the news came to me after the meeting on Sunday evening in Chemnitz, I realized that a response would be of no use.

Several of the German brethren are going to war to defend the Fatherland with a clear conscience and a prayer in their hearts[;] we pray continually that they may be returned to us unharmed and unwounded. We shed tears when we read your letter[;] our grief could not have been greater had you been our own beloved son. We are happy to be permitted to have such a realistic parental feeling toward a worthy son. All of your requests made in your letter will be gladly fulfilled should you fail to return to us. You only need to make it known to us should you have anything else in your heart that we could do for you, and it will be gladly done for you. Also, we want to ask that we may continue to be considered as your beloved parents and that you inform us of anything that might befall you.

The confusion and excitement has become very great, but until now, no one has suffered at all [in Basel], however from now on there will begin a struggle for bread among the poorer people but with the help of God and with the support of the branches and the help of the rich it will not be necessary for anyone to suffer from hunger. Many missionaries have been released and a few in their confusion traveled to Rotterdam and could not come back so they were therefore released from our mission. Still others will be released in the ensuing days. Now we hope that in all branches in these difficult times a few [missionaries] can be retained so that our members do not have to feel abandoned.

With *Der Stern* nothing has been done so far, but we have decided, as soon as possible, to bring that to order, and in the meantime, where possible, to publish *Der Stern* in Basel.<sup>27</sup> We will bring Brother Zimmer to Basel to take on this work. We had a very successful visit with Pres. Smith and he has already gone to Liverpool. Things go well in the branches and among all of the people is a visible disposition for the word of God, so in spite of how the conflict is resolved, between the various nations the truth will win.

May God protect you our son!

Brother and Sister [Valentine]




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27. With Kessler's departure and the confusion associated with the war, no issue of *Der Stern* was published until October 15, 1914.

Basel, July 22, 1916.<sup>28</sup>

Bishop Charles H. Worthen,  
256 West 7th, South St.,  
Salt Lake City, Utah.

Dear Brother Worthen:—

It is with a good deal of sadness that I convey to you the mournful news, that our beloved Brother, Elder William Kessler, was slain in the Battlefield July, 1, 1916. He performed a most excellent Mission in this land and we feel that our Grief and sorrow could scarcely be greater if we had been called upon to part with one of our own sons.

I am very pleased to quote the paragraph of his letter which has reference to his home ward as follows:

“Please write to Bishop Worthen, of the Fourth Ward in Salt Lake City and tell him that I tried to represent the ward well; tell him also the reason, why I did not write as often as I should have done.”

The call “To Arms!” came to us all very suddenly, and the soul of Elder Kessler was sorely tried, President Hyrum M. Smith and myself were away on a tour of the mission at the time and before we were able to return he was away. He has been very close to us all the time and we have been in constant communication with him until April 23, last since which time due no doubt to regulations we had heard nothing from him direct. On June the 23 I felt uneasy about him and wrote his sister who promptly responded that all was well with him, this was under date of June 28, and under date of July 10, which we however did not receive until the 20th, she conveyed to us the sad tidings that he had sacrificed his young life in the battle-field, in obedience to the call of his country.<sup>29</sup>

28. This letter is a two-page, typed carbon copy on 27.3 x 21.3 cm tissue paper.

29. Kessler’s regimental commander, Colonel von Bammbach, notified a German cousin of Kessler, a Mrs. Schott, of Kessler’s death, charging her with informing the rest of the family. The letter from Kessler’s commanding officer is a typewritten copy of the original. Obviously copied by Valentine or his staff, it is on mission letterhead and measures 22.2 x 28.7 cm. The original text is in German. In English translation, the body of Von Bammbach’s letter reads as follows:

I assume the painful responsibility of informing you of the death of your cousin Lieutenant Kessler. With many of his brave comrades, he died a hero’s death on July 1, 1916, defending an onslaught by the English. On June 26th he received a commission as an officer. Unfortunately, this happy news came after his regiment’s battle and could not be awarded to him prior to his death.

Please notify the relatives of Lieutenant Kessler concerning his death. The entire corps of officers regrets the loss of a gallant and dashing comrade

Got<sup>30</sup> bless his memory, and his many friends and Brethern in his home Ward and in the city generally, he was a noble son and an energetic defender of the faith and the Right. We are indeed sad to contemplate the possibilities of this young life blasted in the very bloom, and for naught, one is wont to say. But God doeth all things well, and even though Death and Hell array themselves against him yet shall they not prevail. I believe firmly the end of this terrible struggle will be in accordance with the Will of the Almighty God, and that even gloomy as this struggle [is] it will not and must not be in vain.

Freedom and Truth must rise from the ashes of the Men and Millions who have been swept away through the carnage and cruelty of this most inhumane warfare.

With kind regards to you, dear Bishop, and the Saints in general of the Ward which was so dearly loved by our Noble Brother and Son, we remain your Brother and Sister in Christ,<sup>31</sup>

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and charming human being. I personally learned to appreciate him in the fall offensives of 1914, where he was, prior to his being wounded, assigned to my personal staff and lament the loss of a young officer whose special steadfast character personified the officer corps and was a credit to his unit.

30. The German word for “god” is “Gott.” Valentine’s use of the German word, though it is misspelled, indicates that he was having a hard time keeping the German influence out of the English letter he was typing. In German all nouns are capitalized, explaining the many capitalized common nouns in the letter.

31. There is no signature on this letter from Valentine to Worthen. It is a retained copy, and though Valentine often signed his retained copies, this one was not signed. I assume from the context that the statement “your Brother and Sister in Christ” was followed in the original by the signatures of both Hyrum and Rose Valentine.

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