

[The students sang "Onward Christian Soldiers"]

How terrible to sing about Christian soldiers! I don't know when I've heard that song (sung). It's been a long time. There is a general attitude being spread that war is a thing of the past, a thing we can well forget. It may seem surprising to someone that for my text this morning I am taking Judges 5:23, "Curse Meroz said the angel of the Lord. Curse its people bitterly, because they did not come to help the Lord, to help the Lord against the mighty."

I imagine most of you are familiar with the setting of that verse. Chapter 4 tells how the people of Israel had been held in subjection by Jabin king of Canaan and Sisera the leader of his army. And Deborah and Barak had led the Israelites out in order to win their freedom from these people. It tells in ch. 4 about their defeating them and then in ch. 5 tells about the song of Deborah. In v. 17 it says, "The people of Zebulun risked their very lives; so did Naphtali on the heights of the field." But then v. 23 says, "Curse Meroz, said the angel of the Lord. Curse its people bitterly, because they did not come to help the Lord, to help the Lord against the mighty."

Now of course that is OT^o teaching. The OT^o tells about these wars. It says the Israelites were ordered by the Lord to exterminate the Canaanites, to kill all the Canaanites. They were rebuked and punished by the Lord because they made a treaty with one group, the Gibeonites, instead of exterminating them. The OT^o glorifies the warlike deeds of David and others. Of course that is OT! We are in a different age! today! So we turn to the NT.

We turn to 2 Timothy and there we read in 3:16 that Paul says about Timothy (v. 15) and how from infancy you have learned the holy scriptures which are able to make you wise to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is God-breathed." What is Paul talking about? Is the scripture just something written? Is every writing God-breathed and useful for teaching and reading? Certainly not. What was he speaking of? He was speaking of the holy scriptures that Timothy had known from infancy. In Timothy's early youth no book of the NT had yet been written. This verse is talking about the OT. It says that the OT which Timothy had known from his infancy is God-breathed and is useful for teaching and correcting. Of course we use it of the whole Bible and we certainly are entitled to do so because we know that God added another testament, a testament that is equally true with the OT. But the verse as originally written is about the OT. It is God's Word, and it is God'-breathed. We must recognize that it like the NT is free from error and that we can trust whatever it teaches.

Well, we find not merely accounts of fighting in the OT, but of accounts of God's ordering that certain wars be carried out and that certain people be exterminated. But we find this verse: "Curse Meroz said the Angel of the Lord. Curse its people bitterly because it did not come to help the Lord, to help the Lord against the mighty." Can that particular verse have any particular relevance to us? Yes it can if we are in a situation that is similar to that of the Israelites in that day. I must say that today America is in a situation of terrible danger. This danger is due to two causes. There are other causes that enter in but there are two that are the most conspicuous.

The first of these is the rise, the increase of not only tyranny and of brutality ~~and of the~~ and of the attempt to exterminate Christianity in the world but the fact that those who do such things have determined and declared their intention of bringing the whole world under their control and completely exterminating Christianity.