

## THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS

War is one of those ugly blemishes of human history. There is not a nation that has not at some point of time engaged in national warfare. The greatest brutalities and inhumanities have been committed in the midst of war.

In 1929, following the horrors of World War I, the great nations of the world met and drafted and committed themselves to observe certain standards of civility toward combatants when forced to go to war.

Recently, some American soldiers were accused of violating those conventions in their handling of and interrogating of Iraqi prisoners. It is true that Iraqis have a notorious record of cruelty and barbarism towards prisoners, yet our government rightly insists that our troops must operate by a higher, more civilized and humane standard.

All of the above reminds us of our obligation as we fight this battle to protect and preserve the church from those who are set on corrupting her faith and capturing her citadels. We must conduct ourselves in a way that is appropriate for those who wear the name of Christ. Paul said, "Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27). Even in the most intense conflict we can not allow ourselves to behave in a unchristian manner; no matter what the opposition might do. It would help all of us who stand in defense of Zion to ponder the following words:

"We know how love acts! We know how hate behaves. Love is kind. Hate lifts its ugly head through unkindness. Love is courteous. Hate is rude. If we do not communicate the love of Christ toward one another, even toward the one with whom we disagree the most, we have violated the fundamental doctrine of Christ" (Larry West).

Soldiers we are called to be (II Tim. 2:3-4). To fight the good fight of the faith is our responsibility (I Tim. 6:12). But we are also to love our enemies and pray for them (Matt. 5:44). Our speech must always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that we may know how we ought to answer each one (Col. 4:6). By "speaking truth in love" (Eph. 4:15), we can not only overthrow the erroneous teaching of our adversaries, we can maintain good standing with the captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10). JHW