

THE BULWARK

“A CLOUD OF WITNESSES...”

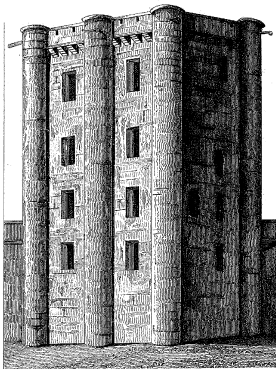
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*“Mark well her bulwarks,
consider her palaces, that
you may tell it to the
generation following”
Psalms 48:13*

Some years back, I was asked by a friend (who later became a brother in Christ) to attend a football bowl game with him. He didn’t have to ask me twice as I wanted to share with him the drama that would be played out on the field. As we drove to San Diego where the game would be played, he shared with me some of his exploits when he played for Texas A&M. He also told me of the “12th Man” and since we would be sitting in the alumni section it was imperative to follow step by step the choreographed cheers. Follow the leader.

In reading over an article recently, that trip to see Texas A&M play football, triggered something inside of me. First off the whole concept of the “12th man”. It goes back to a tradition when in the 1920’s when the coach yelled up into the stands and called on a student to “suit up” and be ready to replace an injured player, if need be. Though the “12th man” never entered the game, yet the willingness to do so encouraged the team.

Interesting story, but one may well ask, “what does this have to do with prices of bananas in Turkey?” The answer is we as children of God have a rich history of those who faced tremendous obstacles and trials, yet remained faithful to God. Look at the first verse of Hebrews 12. *“There, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses sur-*

rounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”



We sometimes forget that we are not alone in our journey of faith. With our eyes, *“on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith...”* (Hebrews 12:2) We must awaken to the “heroes of faith” that are brought forth in chapter eleven of Hebrews

and their stellar example. But also realize we have been blessed by the lives of so many who lived life in accord with the Scriptures. Ultimately we seek to, *“be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, and offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”* (Ephesians 5:1-2) Paul simply said, *“Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.”* (1Corinthians 11:1)

In a manner of speaking, we stand encouraged by those who went before us. But even more so, with our focus locked on Christ, we know He endured and was victorious, as can we (see Romans 8:26ff) also enjoy the blessedness of sweet victory. *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also all who have loved His appearing.”* (2Timothy 4:7-8) (wbc)