

◆ I THESSALONIANS ◆

Volume 1 Issue 1

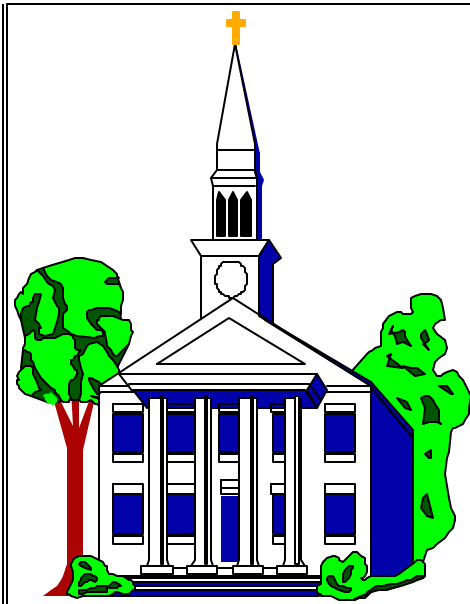
cMinistry of the Saviour

November 1997

PAUL SENDS TIMOTHY TO INSTRUCT AND ENCOURAGE

Paul having left the church at Thessalonica and traveled to Corinth, about the year 50 A.D. sent Timothy back to instruct and encourage the church. Timothy's report back to Paul seems to have inspired the following letter. The first three chapters describe how the church received the Gospel. The last two discuss moral, doctrinal and practical matters. For those concerned for their dead, Paul comforts them with the hope of the return of Christ and the resurrection.

Paul started this, his first letter to a local church by saying what would be repeated many times, We give thanks to God always for you and we pray for you when we speak to God. We remember and recall unceasingly before God your work energized by faith and service motivated by love and unwavering hope in the return of our Lord Jesus Christ the Messiah. We know that



This is the first of the letters to the churches from Paul.

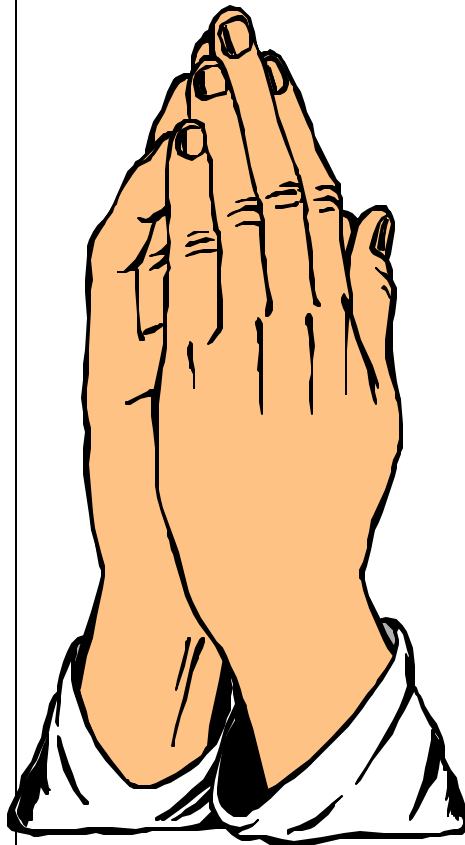
God loves you, dear brothers and sisters because when we brought you the Good News, it was not only with words but also with power for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance that what we said was true. You know that the way that we lived among you was proof of the truth.

YOU RECEIVED THE MESSAGE WITH JOY FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SPITE OF THE SEVERE SUFFERING IT BROUGHT YOU.

Without regard for the suffering that it would bring you, you received the Good News. In this way you imitated both us and the Lord. Now people everywhere are talking about your faith and the good example you are to all Christians. It is wonderful how you welcomed us and how you turned away from idols to serve the true and living God. Others speak of how you are looking forward to the coming of God's Son from heaven, Jesus whom God raised from the dead. The same Jesus who personally rescued us and delivered us from the terrors of the coming judgment and invested with us the privileges of the new life.

Paul Remembers His Visit to Thessalonica

You know that our visit was not a failure and that our coming to you was not fruitless and useless. We had already suffered and been outrageously treated at Philippi yet in the strength of our God, we summoned courage to proclaim to you unfalteringly the good news. We are not preaching with any impure purposes. We have been approved by God to be entrusted with the Gospel, so we speak not to please men but to please God who tests our hearts. We never resorted either to words of flattery or to pretexts for gain. We have not asked for praise from you or anyone else. We could have asserted our authority as apostles of Christ. But we behaved as gentle as a mother with her child when we were among you. We loved you so much that we gave you not only God's good news but our very lives also. We worked night and day in our trade while we were with you so that we might not be a burden on you while we proclaimed the good news to you. Remember how we used to exhort each of you personally, stimu-



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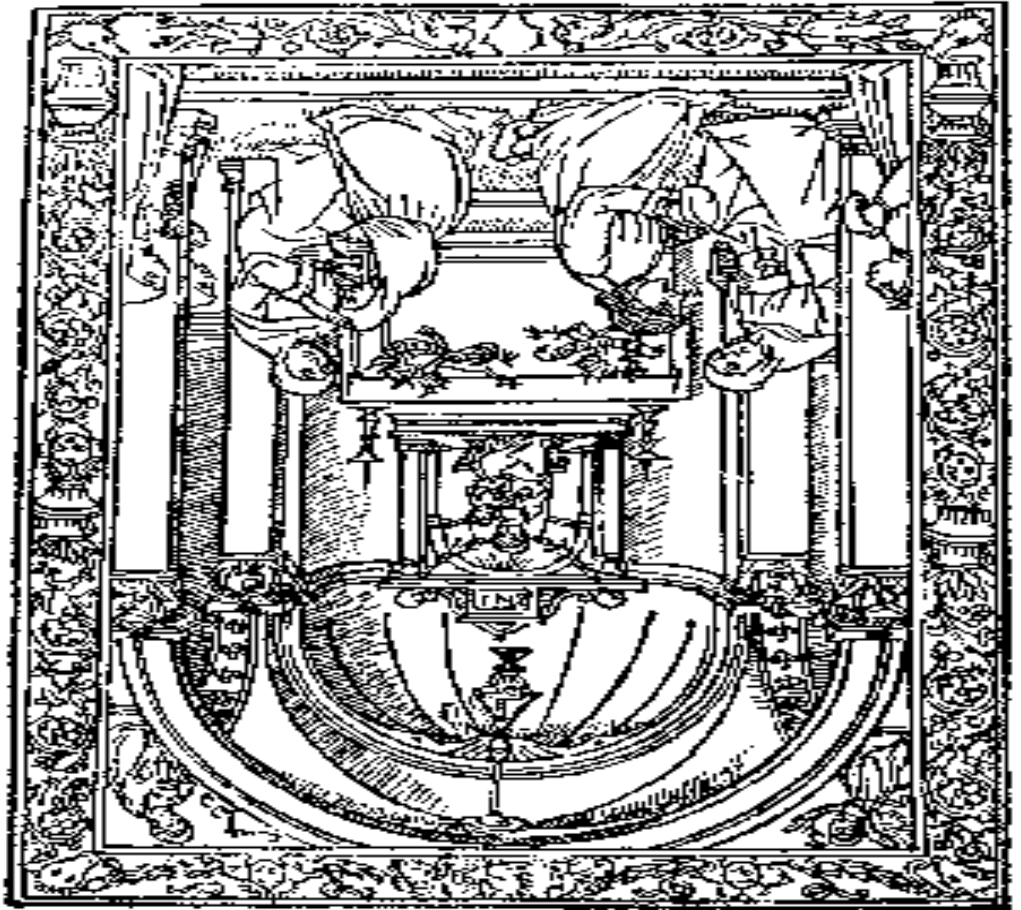
lating and encouraging and charging you as a father would his children. We pleaded with you and urged you to live your lives in a way that God will consider pleasing and worthy, because He called you into His kingdom to share His glory. We never stop thanking God that when we preached, you accepted the words that we

spoke as being the very word of God which it was. And His word continues to work in you who believe.

You have suffered persecution from your countrymen. In this way you have imitated the believers in Judea who because of their belief, suffered from the Jews. The Jews had killed the prophets and the Lord Jesus persecuted us and drove us out. They forbid us and hindered us from speaking to the Gentiles that they may be saved. But, God's wrath has come upon them at last. I wanted to come to you again, but Satan hindered us. I pray that God Himself may make it possible for me to come to you very soon. You will give us joy when we stand together before our Lord Jesus when He comes back again. For you are our pride, glory and joy. What is it that gives us hope and joy and our hope of a crown? It is you. By your true belief, you have become a harvest that shows the fruit of our labor.

We Could Stand It No Longer -- We Decided--

Finally when we could stand it no longer, we decided that I should stay in Athens and we sent Timothy to visit you. He is our brother and co-worker in the Lord as we proclaim the good news. We sent him to strengthen and establish and exhort and comfort and encourage you in the faith so that no one of you should be disturbed and beguiled and led astray by these afflictions and difficulties to which I have referred. You know that this is unavoidable in our position and situation, and must be recognized as our appointed lot. You know that as Christians, such troubles are going to happen to us. Even while we were with you, we warned you that troubles would soon come and they did. That is the reason that I could bear the suspense no longer, I sent that I might learn how you were standing the strain and the endurance of your faith. I did not want the tempter to get the best of you and all our work be in vain for nothing. But Timothy has come back and brought the good news of your steadfastness of faith and the warmth



of your love.

It was for this reason that in spite of all our stress and crushing difficulties we have been filled with comfort and cheer about you. We are given new life knowing that you are strong in the Lord. How we thank God for you and what can be adequate thanks to God that we can render for you for all the gladness and delight which we enjoy for your sakes before God? We continue to pray

both day and night that we may be able to see you face to face.

May the Lord make you to increase and excel and overflow in love for one another and for all people just as we also do for you. May He strengthen and confirm and establish your hearts faultlessly pure and unblamable in holiness.

Live to Please God -- Church

Dear brothers and sisters, we urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus to live in a way that pleases God as we have taught you. You are doing this already and we encourage you to do so more and more. Follow the instructions which you learned from us about how you ought to walk so as to please and gratify God even more abundantly attaining even greater perfection in living this life. You remember what we taught you in the Lord, God wants you to be holy so you should stay free of sexual sin. Each one of you should know how to possess or control and manage his own body in purity separated from things profane and consecrate yourself to honor Him. Do not live in lustful passion as the pagans do in their ignorance of God and His ways. Never cheat another Christian by defrauding him in business nor to take his wife. For God has not called us to impurity but to consecration and dedication of ourselves to the most thorough purity. Who ever disregards this, disregards God whose Spirit gives you life. I need not write of Chris-



We loved you so much that we gave you not only God's good news but our very lives also.

tian love to you, because God Himself has taught you to love one another. In fact you are already known for your love toward others. This should be the ambition of every believer, to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands, just as we commanded you be-

fore. As a result, people who are not Christians will see the way you live and you will not need to depend on others to meet your financial needs. Bear yourselves becomingly, be correct and honorable and command the respect of the outside world depending on nobody and having need of nothing. Praise God that I can live without tending to your business and God will help me tend to mine! What better deal can I get?

We Would Not Have You Ignorant Brethren

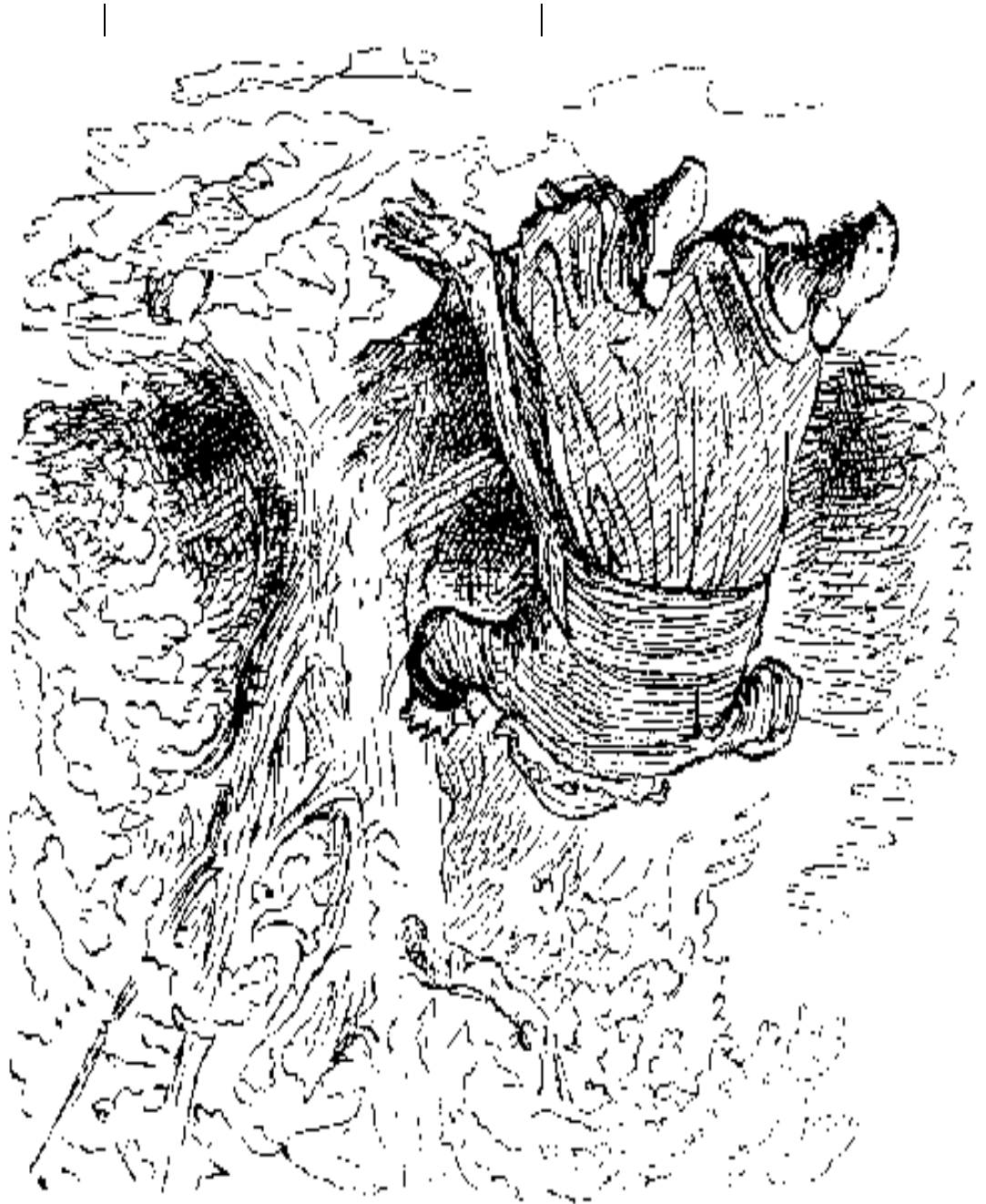
Brothers and sisters, I want you to know what will happen to the Christians who have died so you will not be full of sorrow like people who have no hope. Since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will also bring with Him through Jesus those believers who have fallen asleep in death. I tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not rise to meet him ahead of those who are in their graves. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout with the call of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God. First, all the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. Then together with them that are still alive on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and remain with him forever. So comfort and encourage and comfort each other with these words.



The Day of the Lord ... Like a Thief In the Night

I do not need to write you about how and when or the dates or seasons because you know quiet well that the day of the Lord will come unexpectedly like a thief in the night. When people are saying all is well, everything is peaceful and secure, then disaster will fall upon them as suddenly as a woman's birth pains begin when her child is about to be born. Then there will be no escape. But you are not given up to the power of darkness brethren for that day to overtake you by surprise like a thief. We are all children of the light and of day. Let us not sleep like others but be sober and watch for that day. Let us who live in the light think clearly protected

by the body armor of faith and love and wearing our helmet the confidence of our salvation. For God has decided to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ. For God has not



appointed us to incur His wrath, He did not select us to condemn us but that we might obtain His salvation through our lord Jesus Christ who died for us so that whether we are

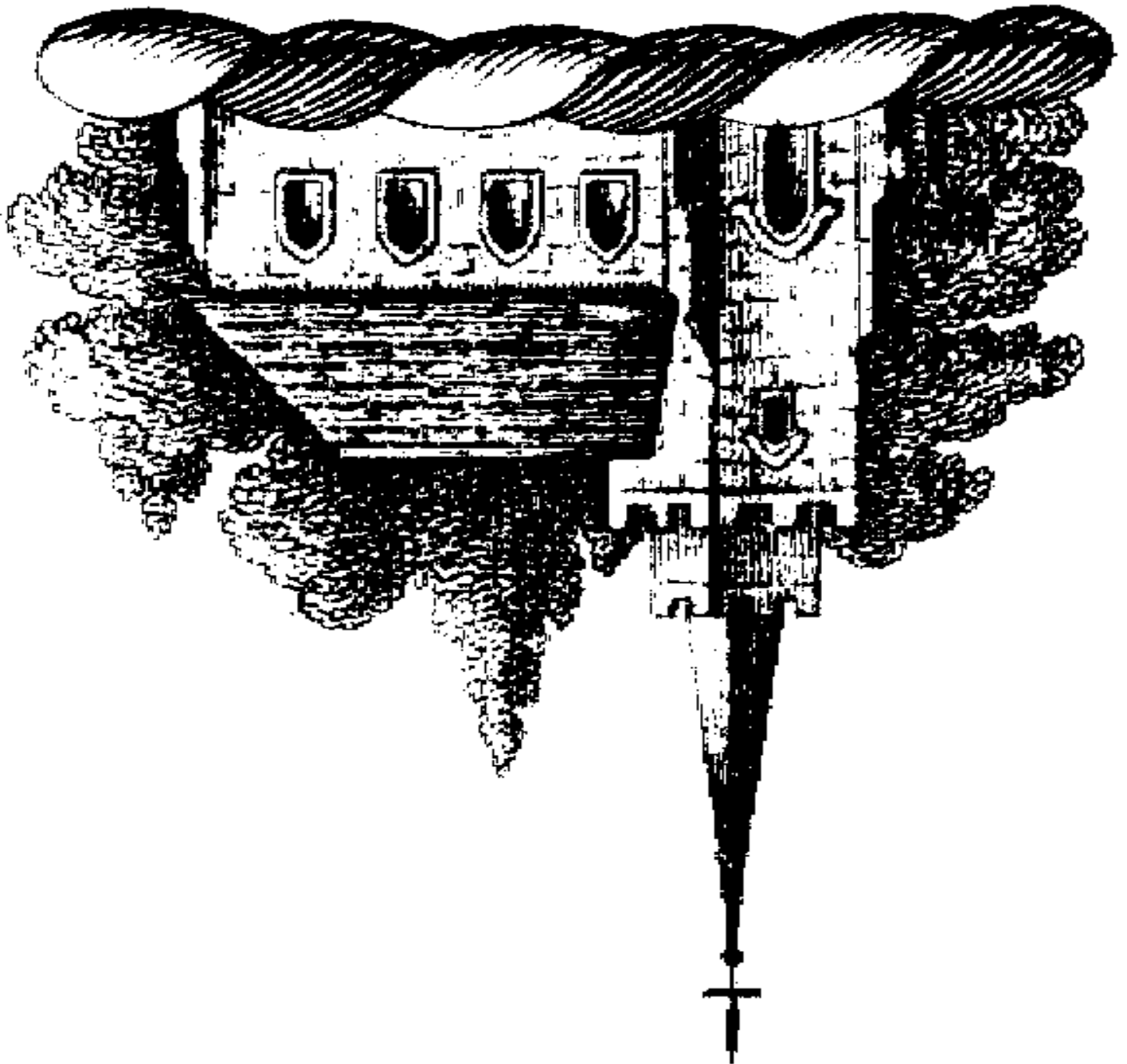
still alive or are dead at Christ's appearing we might live together with Him and share His life.

BUILD UP EACH OTHER IN THE LORD

Encourage, admonish, exhort, edify, strengthen and build up one another just as you are doing. Get to know those who labor among you

and appreciate and acknowledge and respect them all, your leaders who are over you in the Lord and those who warn and kindly reprove and exhort you. Hold them in very

high and most affectionate esteem and appreciation of their work. Be at peace among yourselves and live peaceably with each other.

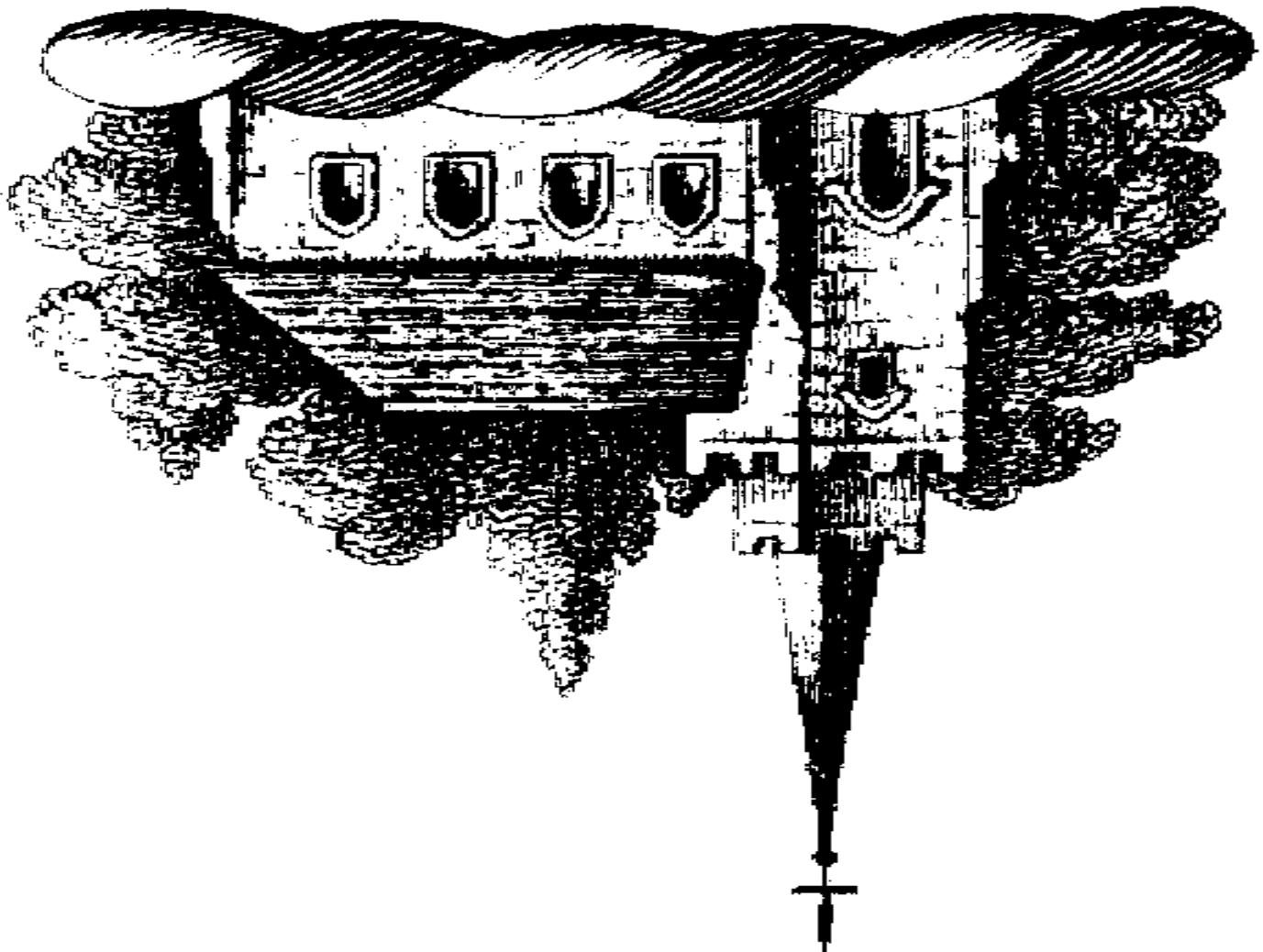


BE UNCEASING IN PERSEVERING PRAYER

Do not repay evil for evil. Show kindness. Warn those who are lazy. Encourage those who are timid. Take tender care of the weak. Be patient with everyone. Do good to

Jesus. Do not stifle, quench, suppress or subdue the Holy Spirit. Do not spurn gifts and utterances of the prophets. Do not depreciate prophetic revelations nor despise in-

may be. May God make you holy in every way and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless until the day that the Lord comes again. Pray for us. Greet each



everyone. Always be joyful. Keep on praying no matter what happens. Always be thankful for this God's will for you who belong to Christ

spired instruction or exhortation or warning. Test and prove all things and hold to what is good. Abstain from evil of all kinds whatever it

other in love. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you.
