

WILLIAMSTON, N. C.,
December, 1869. }

DEAR BROTHER BODENHAMER:—A merry Christmas to you! I hope your soul is feasting and your friends are merry around you. How like you the manna which came down from heaven and the good old wine of Gospel grace? Are you not greatly rejoiced, and does not your heart leap for joy and feel merry before the Lord?

I understand you dwell in that mountain where the Lord of hosts hath made a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees, well refined. Isaiah 25:6. And that he has commanded you and your companions, saying, Eat, O friends; drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved. Songs 5:1.

I suppose you do not fail to obey this injunction, but being hungry and thirsty, (Matthew 5:6) fall to, with a free good will and partake of the dainties spread before you.

I understand you have some dishes on your table of the richest repast. One is said to be called "Eternal Love," another "God's Grace," another "Holy Calling," another "Salvation is of the Lord," another "Imputed Righteousness," another "The Apostle's Doctrine," another "Fellowship," three others, called "Faith, Hope and Charity," together with a vast number of others, too tedious to mention now.

With the fatness of these dishes, I think your soul must be made fat; for it seemeth to me impossible for a sinner to eat one of them without growing in grace and in the saving knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 2d Peter 3:18.

What will you do with all of them, my brother, when one of them seems sufficient for a day, a week, a month and a year? For instance, the one called "Eternal Love," cannot I think, be exhausted soon. It is said "God is love." 1st John 4:8. God existed eternally. God then loved eternally. He could not love, without an object to love. That object was Christ and all those who were in him. So he loved his people in Christ before the world began—that is, eternally. Therefore it is declared, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." Jer. 31:3.

"His love, from eternity fixed upon you,
Broke forth and discovered its flame,
When each with the cords of his kindness he drew,

And brought you to love his great name.
What was there in you that could merit esteem,
Or give the Creator delight,
'Twas "even so Father"! you ever must sing,
"Because it seemed good in thy sight."

"God so 'loved' the world; that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. "Herein is 'love,' not that 'we loved' God, but that 'he loved us' and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1st John 4:10. "Behold what manner of 'love' the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" 1st John 3:1. "Every one that loveth is born of God." 1st John 4:7. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." 1st John 3:9.

Nothing can separate such an one "from the 'love' of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38, 39. Angels, principalities and powers must all fail in their attempts to break this bond of heavenly union. Thus, as to ONE of the dishes.

But what are in those vessels of gold there? 1st Kings 10:21. You have surely noticed those and their contents. I am informed they are filled with wine. "Wines on the lees," I think it is called. I suppose it has been standing on the "lees" from eternity, and is now mellow and precious, sparkling and rich—always old—always new—and should be called the "GOOD OLD WINE OF GOD'S GRACE."

One vessel of this wine, it is said, is called "Quickened into life."—Another is called, "By grace are ye saved," another "Kept by the power of God," another "Sealed by the Spirit," another "Fear not little flock," another "Old things are passed away," another "All things are become new," another "Atoning Sacrifice," another "Bleeding Lamb," another "Washed us in his blood," another "Kings and priests to God"! and many others unnecessary to mention now.

Now, brother B., try either one of these vessels. Do not fear to drink, or to drink deeply. This wine doth not intoxicate—it doth not poison—it doth not derange—it hath no dregs. Just taste and see that the Lord is good. Psalms 34:8. Unto such I think he is

gracious. 1st Peter 2:3. Try another draught, and another, it will do you no harm. It is the feast of the Passover Lamb, which is sacrificed for us. Therefore said one, "Let us keep the feast, not with old leaven; neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." 1st Cor. 5:7, 8. "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life and I will raise him up, at the last day," saith our Lord. John 6:54.

Let me encourage you then, my brother, to signalize this merry Christmas, by "keeping the Feast"—by eating and drinking, "Christ and him crucified"—by swallowing down the solemn truths and rich promises of the gospel. You may sing and welcome. Sing Psalms and make melody in your heart to the Lord. Ephesians 5:19. God hath said, "Let the inhabitants of the rock sing!" Isaiah 42:11. And saith the Psalmist, "Sing unto him, sing Psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous work." Psalms 105:7. "Sing unto the Lord a new song." Psalms 33:3.

I also understand that in this mountain, spoken of before, God destroys "the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations." Isaiah 25:7. And this is something more to be merry about. A merry Christmas to you indeed! For you are in the place, in my opinion, where the covering of false teaching and the veil of ignorance is destroyed. Where nature's night is dispelled and where the moon and stars of the legal dispensation disappear. Where the sun of righteousness ariseth with healing in his wings—where the light of divine truth shines, and where many of those who have long sat in darkness see great light, and to those who were in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. Matthew 4:16.

And if the veil of the temple is rent in twain from the top to the bottom, as we are informed it is, what hinders you now from peeping over into the Holy of Holies and seeing plainly our great High Priest and his oblation, the Lamb of God—the bloody sweat—the offering and the Priest, and the holy incense arising to God as a sweet-smelling savour? If the veil of ignorance is taken away and the eyes of your understanding are enlightened,

(Ephesians 1:18,) do you not praise God that you can "see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man?" Heb. 2:9. Do you not see the "fat things" to which this "every man" in Christ is entitled, of whom he says he is not ashamed to call brethren?" Hebrews 2:11.

I further learn that in this mountain spoken of, God "will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth." Isaiah 25:8.

I really desire to rejoice with you, and reader thanks to our heavenly Father for such rich displays of divine favor. May I seek a place at your side, and praise God, "who hath saved us and called us, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." 2 Timothy 1:9, 10.

I would like to be seated with you in the banquetting house of our Redeemer and behold the banner of love unfurled above our heads. Songs 2:4. Can it be that any such poor, sinful mortal as I am can have such hope in Christ—can be thus washed, cleansed, pardoned, sealed and made like Jacob "to ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; to suck honey out of the rock and oil out of the flinty rock?" Deut. 32:13. Then

"O for such love, let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break,
And all harmonious human tongues
The Saviour's praises speak."

Allow me to rejoice with you, brother Bodenhamer, that the Lord hath made bare his arm and made his power known to many poor souls during the year about to close. The year 1869 hath witnessed the going forth of God's ministers, typified by an angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people. Revelations 14:6.

Perhaps never before since my acquaintance with God's heritage,