The Pilgrim's Quest

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and ***confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims*** *on the earth. For they that say such things* ***declare plainly that they seek a country.***" (Heb. 11:13,14)

Pilgrim's Quest Bible Church
Pastor Garry E. Huff

"Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

Psalm 23
vs. 5b

The Lord, the Shepherd, sets before His sheep a most wonderful feasting banquet in the presence of the most cunning, devious, and tempting enemies imaginable. There is never a moment or time that these enemies are not stealthily lurking ***among*** the sheep ready to devour its prey. But what great peace of heart and mind that can come to the sheep who are feeding hungrily during the worst of the worst days. Fierce days will come. The apostasy will abound. The love of many will wax cold. But a lavish banquet is provided in the midst of it all. With deceptive, lying enemies all around a wonderful feeding place is provided for the sheep by the guarding, protecting, caring Shepherd. And, yes, the Shepherd has something more to give. He anoints the head of the sheep with oil.

What wonders the sheep have been seeing, hearing, tasting, and yes, even smelling! They have seen the Shepherd's comforting rod and staff. They have heard the Shepherd's kind and calm voice. They have tasted of the fruits of a higher tableland that was set before them. All along the journey the sheep have been walking in the wonderful fragrance of their Shepherd. And now the sheep are anointed with the same fragrant perfume which emanated from their Shepherd!

The "anointing oil" is a wonderful study and found as part of the pattern of the Tabernacle God gave to Moses. The Tabernacle was a type of Christ given in detail some 32 items that were assembled to-

gether to form a moveable sanctuary for God's people on their pilgrim journey to Canaan. Among these items were two sets of spices consisting of "principle" spices and "other" spices. The "principle" spices when properly prepared after the "art of the apothecary" were dissolved in olive oil, and it became the "holy anointing oil" for Kings, Priests, and Prophets. The "other" spices were also compounded into a powder and was burnt on the golden altar before the veil. It became a smoking perfume that filled this Holy Sanctuary. It, too, could be dissolved with olive oil and became a "perfumed ointment." Both the "principle" and the "other" spices were compounded in definite proportions according to the heavenly pattern namely Christ. They were never to be copied or manufactured for common use apart from the Tabernacle. We can see that the "holy anointing oil" would be for those who were set apart for special leadership services representing the Lord in the office of King, Priest, or Prophet. The "other" anointing oil would be for the Christian who represented Christ in fruit, witness, and daily service to the Lord. Thus, all Christians were to have this "anointed heavenly perfume" upon their lives!

It would be difficult to envision the Shepherd pouring out this "anointing perfume" upon sheep who were still living on the mountains of sin, starving with malnutrition, and perishing with thirst. It would be difficult to imagine the good Shepherd pouring out this heavenly scented fragrance upon a stinking, smelly, unwashed sheep. The process of formulating the perfumed oil with its beating, bruising, crushing, and dissolving all suggests the humbling, cleansing, set apart life of the sheep void of pride and self indulgence. Since the Shepherd would never pour out this precious oil to anoint a sheep still entangled in the thorns of sin, He would, likewise, never squander this ointment on a polluted smelly sheep permeated with the sweat of sin's curse. And why would He anoint a pompous egotistical self exalting sheep? The Shepherd has separated the sheep from the bleak mountains of sin. He has thoroughly fed, watered, and washed the sheep. He has taken them through the humbling valley of death's shadow. He has provided victory over the worst of the enemies. Now, as the journey draws closer to the final destination of the Shepherd's home, the Shepherd anoints the sheep with the same fragrance that is verily like the Shepherd!

This "heavenly scent" is ***unseen*** but nevertheless ***real*** and ***present***. It is neither flamboyantly nor ostentatiously rendered. But as

God's voice is often an unpretentious "still small voice" so is this fragrance of heaven's scented perfume. It is detected when a preacher ministers the Word of God and it is accompanied by the fragrant presence of Christ. It is noticed when prayer is offered and lifts the soul up into the very throne room and presence of God. It is found when a hymn is sung and the understanding of the words is accompanied by God's Spirit. It is known when a Christian is walking in communion with God, pleasing Him, and loving Him with all their heart. No matter what the conversation may be, there is an "under tow" of the precious anointing oil from the Shepherd. In the end, every part of the life and every word that is uttered honors the Lord Jesus Christ! It is this kind of Christian life that draws others not to the sheep but to the Shepherd!

It would be impossible to think that such a life which would not also include the spilling over of the cup of the heart! It is this "running over" of the anointing that affects others. The three main ingredients *(and no doubt others)* that overflows this cup are faith, hope, and charity. Faith is the believer's enablement to appropriate the wonderful promises of God. Hope accompanies faith with the certain and sure anticipation of those promises. Love supercedes faith and hope for it loves the Shepherd, His sheep, other folds, even those who are not part of the Shepherd's flock. It is that love that inundates the life in love for God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength as well as to love the neighbor as ourselves. Love is able to take what may seem the harsh reality of "raw" truth and say it in such a loving way that it speaks with the heavenly scent of Christ's loving presence! Love adorns the Christian life with the anointing and fragrance of Christ!

Think of the Shepherd's flock in which all the sheep have had their heads anointed with oil! Think of what faith, hope and love would be if actively working among the sheep! Think of the unity that would persist among such a flock! Think of what the preaching, praying, singing, and living would be among this flock! What encouragement! What spiritual strength would be found! What readiness to enter victoriously the Shepherd's own home! The Church of Christ would truly be triumphant indeed! ***May God grant such a life among God's own people! May our heads truly be anointed and our cups running over!***

Let Us Love

Let us love, and sing, and wonder,
Let us praise the Savior's name!
He has hushed the Law's loud thunder,
He has quenched Mount Sinai's flame;
He has washed us in His blood,
He has brought us nigh to God.

Let us love the Lord who bought us,
Pitied us when enemies,
Called us by His grace, and taught us,
Gave us ears, and gave us eyes:
He has washed us in His blood,
He presents our souls to God.

Let us sing, though fierce temptations
Threaten hard to bear us down!
For the Lord our strong salvation,
Holds in view the conqueror's crown,
He who washed us in His blood,
Soon will bring us home to God.

Let us wonder; grace and justice
Join, and point to mercy's store;
When through grace in Christ our trust is,
Justice smiles, and asks no more:
He who washed us in His blood,
Has secured our way to God.

Let us praise, and join the chorus
Of the saints enthroned on high;
Here they trusted Him before us,
Now their praises fill the sky:
"Thou hast washed us with thy blood;
Thou art worthy, Lamb of God."

John Newton

Verses for Thought of Heart:

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity." (1Co 13:13)

"Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity! *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments" (Ps. 133:1, 2)

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God…" (I Jn. 4:7)