

FACT QUESTIONS 4:16b—5:1

170. In one gesture the maiden accomplishes two things. What are they?
171. What does the verb tense have to do with our understanding of the thought of 5:1?
172. Does this text suggest that someone should get drunk? Discuss.
173. These verses can or should refer to our marriage—but conditions must be met—what are they?
174. Discuss the meaning of these verses to our fellowship with our heavenly groom.

TEXT 5:2—8:4

FOURTH SCENE—The King's Palace 5:2—8:4

Retrospect

Shulammitte: Narration to Court Ladies of another dream,
5:2-7

TEXT 5:2-7

2. I was asleep, but my heart waked:
It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh,
saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my un-
defiled;
For my head is filled with dew, my locks with the drops
of the night.
3. I have put off my garment; how shall I put it on?
I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?
4. My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door,
And my heart was moved for him.
5. I rose up to open to my beloved;
And my hands dropped with myrrh,
And my fingers with liquid myrrh,

Upon the handles of the bolt.

6. I opened to my beloved;
But my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone.
My soul had failed me when he spake:
I sought him, but I could not find him;
I called him, but he gave me no answer.
7. The watchmen that go about the city found me,
They smote me, they wounded me;
The keepers of the walls took away my mantle from me.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 5:2-7

125. What is meant by saying that she was asleep but her heart was awake?
126. How could his voice knock? ("it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh")
127. Define each of the four names given in verse two?
128. What is suggested by his reference to the excessive dew?
129. The maid seems more interested in her feet than she is her beloved. How shall we understand this expression in verse three?
130. If he unlocked the door why didn't he come in? Cf. verse four.
131. As she arose did she use perfume? Or what is meant by the reference to myrrh in verse five?
132. Why do you think her beloved left?
133. Where did she look as she searched for him? Cf. verse six.
134. She evidently ran out of the house. Why did the watchman hit her?
135. Are the keepers of the walls the same persons as the watchmen? Why take her mantle or veil?

PARAPHRASE 5:2-7

Shulammite to Court Ladies:

2. I was sleeping, and in dreaming (heard)

The sound of my beloved knocking (and saying),
 "Open to me, my sister, my companion, my dove, my undefiled!

For my head is drenched with dew,
 And my locks with moisture of the night."

3. (I thought) I have already taken off my gown,
 How can I put it on again?
 I have already bathed my feet,
 How can I soil them?
4. My beloved put his hand through the grille,
 And my heart yearned for him.
5. I rose up to open to my beloved,
 My hands dripped with myrrh,
 And my fingers with choice myrrh
 Upon the handles of the lock.
6. I opened to my beloved,
 But my beloved had withdrawn himself and passed on.
 When he had spoken my wits seemed to leave me.
 I sought him but I found him not;
 I called after him but there was no answer.
7. The city watchmen found me;
 They struck me; they wounded me.
 Sentinels of the walls snatched away my veil.

COMMENT 5:2-7

Exegesis 5:2-7

We are back in the palace of the king—either at Jerusalem or his residence in the north nearer to Shunem.

It is morning in the chambers of Solomon—the maid from Shunem is recounting to the ladies of the court a vivid dream of the night. It is all so real she almost becomes again a participator as she tells it. "I was asleep but I was constantly aware of my beloved from whom I am separated. All at once he was at the gate! I heard his voice—he knocked—He called to me:

“Open blood of my blood, love of my heart, my alert soft one, my purest one. I have been long in coming to you over many mountains. I have come—all through the night I have hastened to your side—my head is wet with dew. Let me in.” I turned on my bed—I hardly knew what was happening. So very foolishly I thought only of myself—“I cannot go to him—I have undressed and bathed for bed—I cannot go out in the courtyard to the gate I will soil my feet.” I looked toward the door—he had already entered the courtyard and was even now at the door of our house. His hand appeared through the hole near the door and attempted to unlock the door. When I saw his dear hand my heart almost stopped. I hardly knew what I was doing—I jumped out of bed and threw a mantle over myself—I thought “I must meet him with perfume”—I dipped my hands in myrrh—I hurried to the door, I could not move the lock or hold the handles of the door so full were my fingers with myrrh. When I did at least get the doors open, my beloved was gone! I was beside myself—Perhaps he came in another way—I looked in every room of these courts—he was nowhere to be found. I could yet hear his voice and his dear words of love—I called him, I called him again—there was no answer. I *must* find him. I *will* find him. I ran out the open door—across the courtyard and out into the streets of the city. I had no sooner entered the streets than the watchmen were all around me. One of them struck me. It was a heavy blow—I can yet feel the pain. One of the sentinels jerked my veil from me. I do not blame them, I must have appeared as a wanton woman wandering the streets at that hour. Was it only a dream—it was so real—was he really here?”

We have chosen this form of narrative to give a degree of the reality that must have been present when it was first told. In our narrative we have tried to include the meaning of the text.

Marriage 5:2-7

These verses would make a fine section for an evaluation of the actions of the bride and groom—how did they respond

to this circumstance? What does it reveal of their character? In this evaluation we can see ourselves. First we shall consider *the groom*:

He has come a long way at great danger—He openly gives expression of his heart. He is willing to consider the maid as his sister—i.e., he will treat her in the responsible manner of a brother. At the same time the term “sister” suggests the strongest blood relationships. He believes the very best of his bride—she is dove-like and pure.—A virgin. Even when she does not answer his call or knock, he will yet try to enter. When he is unsuccessful he leaves. We do not know why he left. We could conjecture but it would be futile.

the bride:

Her consciousness and subconsciousness was always upon her love. Even when asleep she was yet with him. This being true, she yet responds subconsciously in a selfish manner. Perhaps we could excuse her on grounds of confusion or frustration. One often acts irrationally upon being suddenly awakened. But why should she care about her appearance?—or her feet?—isn't his presence more important than her comfort? Why the excessive myrrh? We do appreciate her concern—but why so concerned? for her lover or for herself? Perhaps we are too critical of the bride. If we are, please correct our evaluation in a discussion on this subject.

Communion 5:2-7

We now take the maiden's place as we attempt to relate these verses to our Lord and His bride. Oh, that we were as constantly concerned about the presence of our Lord as was the maid in the text. Even when we sleep He is not out of our subconsciousness. How often do we dream of our Lord? We have heard so often Revelation 3:20 misapplied. *In the context this verse relates to lukewarm Christians*, it reads: “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: . . . Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. *Here I am!*”

I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will go in and eat with him, and he with me" (verses 14, 19, 20). He loves us and believes in us—we are His blood-relative. We are His brother, His sister—we *do* have the Holy Dove—by His blood and grace we *are* virgins—He has, at great danger and from a great distance, come to us. How do we react to His knock?—to His voice? We are about as mixed up as the maid. His call is never convenient—we are forever half asleep or busy with something or someone else. If He had just timed His coming on another day—or night or when I was better prepared—on and on we go—"I would get my feet dirty if I answered His knock"—we are sure you would! He got His feet dirty coming to call on you and me. But He is insistent—if we will not answer He will attempt to unlock the door—see His nail-pierced hand near the latch of your heart? We will get hurt looking for Him—the watchmen of the world will misunderstand our intentions and will tear aside all attempts of concealment—we will become totally vulnerable! They will wound us deeply! But unlike the dream of the maid—we *will* find Him—in the dark streets or deep needs of our world we shall find Him.

FACT QUESTIONS 5:2-7

175. What are the circumstances of these verses:
176. We have used synonomous expressions in describing the maid. Reword them again.
177. She made a foolish mistake. Why?
178. There was a time when she was especially moved. When was it?
179. Why couldn't she get the door open?
180. Where did she make her search?
181. Why rush out into the streets? Why was she wounded?
182. Discuss our evaluation of the groom. Have we left something out?
183. Do we represent the bride accurately? Discuss.

184. Do you believe there is any practical value in our comments on communion? If so, discuss its meaning in our present day life.

TEXT 5:8-16

Adjuration to Court Ladies, 5:8 (third)

Court Ladies, Challenge, 5:9 (ironical)

Shulammitte, Description of her beloved, 5:10-16

8. I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
If ye find my beloved,
That ye tell him, that I am sick from love.
9. What is thy beloved more than another beloved,
O thou fairest among women?
What is thy beloved more than another beloved,
That thou dost so adjure us?
10. My beloved is white and ruddy,
The chiefest among ten thousand.
11. His head is as the most fine gold; His locks are bushy,
and black as a raven.
12. His eyes are like doves beside the waterbrooks,
Washed with milk, and fitly set.
13. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as banks of sweet herbs;
His lips are as lilies, dropping liquid myrrh.
14. His hands are as rings of gold set with beryl:
His body is an ivory work overlaid with sapphires.
15. His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of
fine gold:
His aspect is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.
16. His mouth is most sweet; yea, he is altogether lovely.
This is my beloved, and this is my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 5:8-16

135. The maiden seems to confuse her dream with reality. Has the shepherd ever truly been lost?
136. She was lovesick from two causes—read 2:5 and compare with 5:8—what were these causes?
137. The court ladies have not changed their attitude since 1:8. What was it?
138. What is meant by the expression “white and ruddy”?
139. The chief among ten thousand would stand out in some conspicuous manner. What was it with the shepherd?
140. What quality is suggested in describing his head as “most fine gold”?
141. What is the meaning of the compliment as related to having “bushy” hair?
142. His hair was black as compared to what other color?
143. There is a beautiful figure of speech in verse twelve. Read it carefully and express it in your own words.
144. Her beloved must have had a beard—read verse thirteen—his lips were red anemones—what is represented by the myrrh?
145. She describes his hands. What is the figure?
146. His body is as a work in ivory—but more—what is added?
147. What is suggested by saying his legs are as pillars?
148. His bearing is described in 15b. What was it?
149. Is the sweetness of his mouth a reference to his kisses—his voice or his speech?
150. She concludes by calling him more than her beloved—he is also “my friend.” What does this suggest?

PARAPHRASE 5:8-16

8. I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem!
That if ye should find my beloved . . .
What shall ye tell him?
(Tell him) that I am lovesick.

Court Ladies:

9. What is thy beloved more than another beloved,
 O thou fairest among women?
 What is thy beloved more than another beloved,
 That thou dost so adjure us?

Shulammitte:

10. My beloved is clear-skinned and ruddy,
 Outstanding as a standard-bearer in an army of ten
 thousand.
11. His head is as the purest gold;
 His locks are wavy and raven-black;
12. His eyes are like doves by the water brooks,
 Bathed in milk and fitly set like gems;
13. His (bearded) cheeks are like a raised bed of balsams,
 As clustered aromatic plants;
 His lips are red as anemones,
 And his words like flowing myrrh;
14. His fingers are cylinders of gold set with topaz;
 His body like polished marble veined with lapis lazuli;
15. His legs are like alabaster pillars
 Set upon bases of refined gold;
 His bearing is as Lebanon, majestic as its cedars,
16. His voice is melodious;
 Indeed, all of him is surpassingly lovely,
 This is my beloved, yes, this is my companion,
 O daughters of Jerusalem!

COMMENT 5:8-16

Verse 8. "All this (5:1-7) Shulamith dreamed; but the painful feeling of repentance, of separation and misapprehension which the dream left behind, entered as deeply into her soul as if it had been an actual external experience. Therefore her words to the daughters of Jerusalem are not out of place." (Delitzsch)

In contrast with the watchmen—at least the daughters of Jerusalem will understand her need. They have had similar experiences. She carries a deep love-sorrow without him all of life is out of focus. I am love-sick.

Verse 9. Do these women ask because they want to know or only because they wish to needle their rival? We believe it is the latter reason.

Verse 10. If Solomon is the author of this song (and we believe he is) the words that follow would be the most exaggerated of self-praise if they referred to himself—however, put in the mouth of the Shulammitte concerning her shepherd lover, they become far more believable. She calls into use the kingdom of nature and art in her praise of this one who is altogether lovely. “Whatever is precious, lovely, and grand, is all combined in the living beauty of his person.” (Ibid) The rosy whiteness of his skin suggests perfect health. The term “chiefest among ten thousand” refers to the one who carries the banner in war. She is saying to the ladies of the court or harem “you could easily pick him out . . . It would be as easy as seeing the banner-bearer among ten thousand.”

Verse 11. To say that his head is “precious fine gold” is to immediately associate it with beauty-value and honor—perhaps the imposing nobility of bearing is the point in comparison. The locks of his hair appear as a terraced hillside—or a series of hills seen at a distance, hill upon hill. “Seen from his neck upwards, his hair forms in undulating lines, hill upon hill. In color, these locks of hair are black as a raven . . . the raven-blackness of the hair contrasts with the whiteness and redness of the countenance, which shines forth as from a black ground, from a black border.” (Delitzsch)

Verse 12. The eyes in their glancing moistness, and in the movement of their pupils, are like doves which sip at the water-brooks, and move to and fro beside them . . . That the eyes are like a precious stone in its casket, does not merely signify that they fill the sockets . . . but that they are not sunk like the eyes of one who is sick . . . they appear full and large as they pass forward from wide and open eyelids.” (ibid)

Verse 13. His cheeks are like a soft, raised flower bed, the impression received upon seeing them is like the fragrance which flows from such a flower bed, planted as it is with sweet-scented flowers. This latter allusion is probably to the practice of perfuming the beard. (Cf. Ps. 133:2) His lips are as blood-red as the scarlet anemone. His speech is as fragrant and sweet as the smell of myrrh.

Verse 14. "His hands—golden cylinders, filled with stones of Tarshish. The fingers, full, round, fleshy in mould are compared to rods or bars of gold formed like rollers garnished with stones from Tarshish, to which the nails are likened. The transparent horn-plates of the nails, with the white segment of a circle at their roots, are certainly, when they are beautiful, an ornament to the hand, and without any need of being stained are worthy to be compared to the gold-yellow of topaz. His body is an ivory work of art, covered with sapphires. The term "covered over" perhaps should be "with sapphires." The well formed body over which are the branching blue veins under the white skin.

Verse 15. His legs are white marble columns, set on bases of fine gold. Strength and stability as well as beauty are here symbolized. His whole bearing is noble, the impression one gets upon looking at him is the same as when we stand at the base of a giant cedar tree and looks up.

Verse 16. His mouth (or speech) is most sweet, this is a reference to the manner by which he addresses others—with true sweetness. (Cf. Prov. 16:21)

To sum up her evaluation she can say "he is altogether lovely." The women of the court wanted to know—(or did they?) As she stands back before this full length portrait she can tell them—"This (emphatically) is my beloved, and this is my friend."! She evidently had spent enough time with him in various circumstances so she could say she was describing not only his physical appearance, but his personality and character.

Marriage 5:8-16

What a paragon of manhood! What hope is there for us poor, ordinary mortal husbands? Before we turn the page and look for more practical material—pause! Look again. The various parts of the body of the husband *all* relate to a quality of character we each can find in our lives as they relate to our wives—Consider: (1) *A pure mind*—(refined gold)—What a valuable, honorable, beautiful quality this is. A slavery to King Jesus by which He brings every thought into captivity is the answer here. Surely there is no greater gift we could offer our wives. (2) *A single eye*—i.e., a healthy eye—The eye is the window of the soul. A single resolute purpose in life is so important to marriage. If our Lord cannot supply such a purpose we shall never have it. (3) *A pleasant face*—it is possible to cultivate a happy cheerful expression on our face. An optimistic attitude in our general demeanor which is reflected on the face will be a very large help. Who can offer reason for such an expression? The fruit of His presence is joy. (4) *Words of fragrant sweetness can be said*. Many a bride wishes she were married to Barnabus—i.e., “the son of encouragement.” One of the gifts of His presence is encouragement or exhortation. (5) *Beautiful hands*—strong and helpful. There are so many little areas of need where we can help. Show me your love apart from your works and I by my works will show thee my love. (6) *A body like a work of art*—A work of art is only produced by the most careful cooperation and practice of the skills of an artist. Our whole person should be fashioned by the Master artist until we become like Him. Until we become in truth His own body, indwelt by His Spirit. (7) *Strong legs by which and on which we stand*.—Our foundation is solid gold. “Having done all to stand”—to do that requires strong legs. He who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation can cause us to stand today. We stand in a beautiful, valuable place every time we let Him direct our posture.

So we can see with Him and through Him and because of Him we are altogether lovely. What wife wouldn't be delighted to share life with such a man?

Communion 5:8-16

It is not at all difficult to see the application of this text to our heavenly husband—indeed, and in truth He is “altogether lovely”! We should like to attempt a paraphrase of the text as we relate it to our Lord: “My beloved is pure and strong. The leader among all men. He carries the banner of His own conquest. He is the head of His body, the church—such a head is of value beyond estimate. He is eternally youthful and strong. His beauty is such a contrast to the environment in which He lives. What a refreshment it is to look into His eyes! His eyes are full of love and alive with interest in my life in all of it, all the time. He looks at me tenderly—softly, ‘like doves beside the water brooks’—peaceful, restful, yet full of life. He always is able to see what no one else could. Everything moves into its proper place when I look long enough into His eyes. All the love and care of my Father is seen in the face of my Lord. To know that even now I have the fragrant words that came from His lips is startling! What beautiful strong hands does my Lord have. Today His hands are my hands. His help is my help in our world. The body of my Lord is indeed a work of art—not of men but of God. I stand in the strength of His might. His total bearing is one of the King of all Kings and the Lord of all Lords. This is my beloved and my nearest, dearest Friend.” How inadequately we have represented Him—He is more—much more than we were able to say.

FACT QUESTIONS 5:8-16

185. There is a carryover of the dream of 5:1-7 into verse eight. What is it?
186. The daughters of Jerusalem are contrasted to the watchmen. How?
187. Why do the women of Solomon’s harem ask about the shepherd?

188. It really does not seem sensible to think of these verses applying to Solomon as the groom. Why?
189. What is meant by saying "my beloved is white and ruddy"?
190. Explain the phrase "the chiefest among ten thousand"?
191. Why say of his head: "his head is as the most fine gold"?
192. Describe the hair of her beloved.
193. His eyes are surely one of his most attractive features. Explain.
194. Show how his cheeks were like a flower bed.
195. What symbolism is used to describe his hands?
196. What is taught by saying "His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of gold"?
197. What does the bride say as she stands back to view the full length portrait she has just painted?
198. Group the seven qualities of the husband here described and discuss three in one session and four in another as they relate to your husband-wife relationship.
199. Please read over again our paraphrase in the description of our Lord—now make your own paraphrase by following the text and your own heart.

TEXT 6:1—7:10

Court Ladies: Inquiry, 6:1

Shulammitte: Answer, 6:2—Avowal, 6:3

Solomon: Interview with the Shulammitte, 6:4—7:10

Dialogue: Solomon, 6:6-10

TEXT 6:1-10

1. Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women?
Whither hath thy beloved turned,
that we may seek him with thee?

2. My beloved is gone down to his garden,
To the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens,
And to gather lilies.
3. I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine;
He feedeth his flock among the lilies.
4. Thou art fair, O my love, as Tinzah,
Comely as Jerusalem,
Terrible as an army with banners.
5. Turn away thine eyes from me,
For they have overcome me.
Thy hair is as a flock of goats,
That lie along the side of Gilead.
6. Thy teeth are like a flock of ewes, which are come up
from the washing;
Where every one hath twins,
And none is bereaved among them.
7. Thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate behind
thy veil.
8. There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines,
and virgins without number.
9. My dove, my undefiled, is but one;
She is the only one of her mother.
She is the choice one of her that bear her.
The daughters saw her, and called her blessed;
Yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.
10. Who is she that looketh forth as the morning,
Fair as the moon,
Clear as the sun,
Terrible as an army with banners?

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 6:1-10

151. Why did the women ask the questions of the whereabouts of the beloved? Did they really want to seek him?
152. The maid knows immediately where he was. How was it she was so well informed?

153. As a shepherd wasn't gathering lilies a rather superficial job? Explain.
154. What is the strong avowal in verse three?
155. Solomon is again attempting to win the heart of the maid. Why bother if he has a harem full?
156. How does the maid compare with two cities? i.e., with Tirzah and Jerusalem?
157. The maiden had qualities other than physical beauty—she was as “terrible as an army with banners.” Explain.
158. The king was overcome with a look. What did he see in her eyes that so moved him?
159. The shepherd had used the same figure of speech in his description of the maid (cf. 4:1ff). Is there any difference between 4:1, 2 and 6:6?
160. The description in 6:7 is repeated in 4:3b. Why? Discuss.
161. Why mention the 60 queens and the 80 concubines?
162. What was the purpose in having “virgins” or “maidens” in such large numbers?
163. There are four descriptions of the Shulammitte in verse nine. Discuss their meaning.
164. The maiden must have made quite an impression upon everyone—or perhaps Solomon is only full of flattery. Discuss.
165. There is a beautiful expression in verse ten. Discuss the qualities here suggested.

PARAPHRASE 6:1-10

Court Ladies:

- 6:1. Whither is thy beloved gone,
 O thou fairest among women?
 Whither is thy beloved turned aside?
 And we will seek him with thee.

Shulammitte:

2. My beloved is gone down to his garden,

To the beds of balsam,
 *To delight himself in the gardens, (Dr. R. Young)
 And to gather anemones.

3. (But) I am my beloved's and my beloved his mine!
 He (who) pastures his flock where anemones grow.

Solomon:

4. Thou art fair as Tirzah, O my companion,
 Comely as Jerusalem,
 Imposing as troops marching with their banners!
5. Turn away thine eyes from me,
 For they are taking me by storm.
 Thy hair resembles a flock of goats
 That browse along the slopes of Gilead.
6. Thy teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep
 Just come up from the dipping pool.
 Each has its twin,
 And none among them is bereaved.
7. Thy cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate
 Behind thy tresses.
8. There are sixty queens and eighty concubines,
 Also virgin damsels without number.
9. My dove among all the rest is alone perfect;
 She is her mother's only daughter,
 The darling of her that bore her.
 The damsels saw her and pronounced her happy,
 Queens and concubines, too, praised her, saying,
10. "Who is this that appears like the early dawn,
 Fair as the moon, clear as the sun,
 Imposing as troops marching with their banners?"

COMMENT 6:1-10

Exegesis 6:1-10

We have been impressed and greatly helped by the comments of Walter F. Adeney in *An Exposition of the Bible* (p. 533, 34):

“The mocking ladies ask their victim where then has this paragon gone? She would have them understand that he has not been so cruel as really to desert her. It was only in her dream that he treated her with such unaccountable fickleness. The plain fact is that he is away at his work on his far-off farm, feeding his flock, and perhaps gathering a posy of flowers for his bride. He is far away—that sad truth cannot be denied; and yet he is not really lost, for love laughs at time and distance; the poor lonely girl can say still that she is her beloved’s and that he is hers. The reappearance of this phrase suggests that it is intended to serve as a sort of refrain.

In the first refrain the daughters of Jerusalem are besought not to attempt to awaken the Shulammité’s love for Solomon; this is well balanced by the refrain in which she declares the constancy of the mutual love that exists between herself and the shepherd.

Now Solomon reappears on the scene, and resumes his laudation of the Shulammité’s beauty. But there is a marked change in his manner. This most recent capture is quite unlike the sort of girls with whom his harem was stocked from time to time. He had no reverence for any of them; they all considered themselves to be highly honoured by his favour, all adored him with slavish admiration, like, that expressed by one of them in the first line of the poem. But he is positively afraid of the Shulammité. She is “terrible as an army with banners.” He cannot bear to look at her eyes; he begs her to turn them away from him, for they have overcome him. What is the meaning of this new attitude on the part of the mighty monarch? There is something awful in the simple peasant girl. The purity, the constancy, the cold scorn with which she regards the king, are as humiliating as they are novel in his experience. Yet it is well for him that he is susceptible to their influence. He is greatly injured and corrupted by the manners of a luxurious Oriental court. But he is not a seared profligate. The vision of goodness startles him; but there is a better nature in him, and its slumbering powers are partly roused by this unexpected apparition.

We have now reached a very important point in the poem. It is almost impossible to reconcile this with the theory that Solomon is the one and only lover referred to throughout. But on the "shepherd hypothesis" the position is most significant. The value of constancy in love is not only seen in the steadfast character of one who is sorely tempted to yield to other influences; it is also apparent in the effects on a spectator of so uncongenial a nature as King Solomon. Thus the poet brings out the great idea of his work most vividly. He could not have done so more forcibly than by choosing the court of Solomon for the scene of the trial, and showing the startling effect of the noble virtue of constancy on the king himself.

Here we are face to face with one of the rescuing influences of life, which may be met in various forms. A true woman, an innocent child, a pure man, coming across the path of one who has permitted himself to slide down towards murky depths, arrests his attention with a painful shock of surprise. The result is a revelation to him, in the light of which he discovers, to his horror, how far he has fallen. It is a sort of incarnate conscience, warning him of the still lower degradation towards which he is sinking. Perhaps it strikes him as a beacon light, showing the path up to purity and peace; an angel from heaven sent to help him retrace his steps and return to his better self. Few men are so abandoned as never to be visited by some such gleam from higher regions. To many, alas, it comes but as the temporary rift in the clouds through which for one brief moment the blue sky becomes visible even on a wild and stormy day, soon to be lost in deeper darkness. Happy are they who obey its unexpected message.

The concluding words of the passage which opens with Solomon's praises of the Shulammite present another of the many difficulties with which the poem abounds. Mention is made of Solomon's sixty queens, his eighty concubines, his maidens without number; and then the Shulammite is contrasted with this vast seraglio as "My dove, my undefiled," who is "but one"—"the only one of her mother." Who is speaking here? If this is a continuation of Solomon's speech,

as the flow of the verses would suggest, it must mean that the king would set his newest acquisition quite apart from all the ladies of the harem, as his choices and treasured bride. Those who regard Solomon as the lover, think they see here what they call his conversion, that is to say his turning away from polygamy to monogamy. History knows of no such conversion; and it is hardly likely that a poet of the northern kingdom would go out of his way to whitewash the matrimonial reputation of a sovereign from whom the house of Judah was descended. Besides, the occurrence here represented bears a very dubious character when we consider that all the existing denizens of the harem were to be put aside in favour of a new beauty. It would have been more like a genuine conversion if Solomon had gone back to the love of his youth, and confined his affections to his neglected first wife." (*ibid.* pp. 533-34)

From a reading of several commentaries we are well aware that the above quotation will not be met with unanimous approval. We only offer what seems to us a consistent position. We believe the interpretation we have suggested compliments the teachings of the rest of the scriptures. We are asking this inspired poem which has in itself no certain interpretation to agree with the plain teaching of the rest of the word and not *visa versa*.

Marriage 6:1-10

Dear God, I want to be that pure man! I trust your heart has responded to the concept presented here as has mine. There is a beauty, a wonder, something awesome, and genuine in holiness. There is a motivation for living, suffering, working, yea, and dying in keeping myself for one woman.

There is nothing weak or unworthy about this look at marriage. It will not do to apply this to our wife and ask her if she is like the Shulammite—of course, we hope she is. But she will respond far more readily to our example of purity. If we are so in love with her that the offers of Satan do not

tempt us then, purity and oneness becomes a possibility. Let's look very closely at Solomon's description—it will help us much. (1) He does not mention the lips or speech of the maiden. She had said nothing that pleased him, indeed, she could have spoken against him. It is more important that the conversation of our wife please us than her physical person. (2) Her penetrating gaze profoundly disturbed him—it was because her gaze was pure or unadulterated. Contrast the response of the shepherd to her look—it repulsed Solomon and encouraged the shepherd. (4:9) (3) Even Solomon hesitated in pressing his attention on one whose virtuous behavior gave him no encouragement. The demeanor of our wives speaks far more eloquently than their lips. We need to separate selfishness from virtue. There is nothing virtuous about refusing the attentions of our wife or husband because such attention (particularly in the sexual realm) is not convenient. (Cf. I Corinthians 7:1ff)

Communion 6:1-10

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and *to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other such blemish, but holy and blameless*” Ephesians 6:25-27. We are so very delighted and humbled to consider the fact that this is how our bridegroom looks at us, His Bride. But in the text before us we want to know how the world—or Solomon looks at us. Is the world non-plused by our transparent sincerity? A genuine consistent life is as “imposing as troops marching with their banners.” When Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for lying the result was as follows: “And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things . . . But of the rest durst no man join himself to them: howbeit the people magnified them; and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of

men and women; (Acts 5:11, 13, 14).” It was the consistent lives of the Apostles and other Christians that led in this conquest. Have you ever been avoided because you were a Christian? Has someone refused to look you in the eye? We shouldn’t be surprised. If such persons could voice their reaction it could be in the words of our text—“Turn away thine eyes from me, for they are taking me by storm.” Paul obtained this response from the governor Felix and his female companion, Drusilla. “And as he reasoned of righteousness, and self-control, and judgment to come, Felix was terrified, and answered, Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me” (Acts 24:25). The Christian should indeed be attractive as a person—but pure and undefiled in character and this is a shock to many people.

FACT QUESTIONS 6:1-10

200. The shepherd really never left the maid—how account for his apparent leaving?
201. The shepherd was not only feeding the flocks but also thinking of his beloved. How did he express his thoughts?
202. There are two refrains running through the Song. What are they?
203. There is a marked change in the manner of Solomon. What is it?
204. There is something awful in the simple peasant girl. What is it?
205. Solomon has not become a “seared profligate.” How do we know? Discuss.
206. This text seems to support the “shepherd hypothesis.” Explain.
207. Do you think Solomon underwent a conversion at this point and left all his other wives and became loyal to only the Shulammitte? Discuss.
208. Discuss the three points of comparison under the section of *Marriage* as they relate to marriage today.

209. Discuss the possible influence a pure consistent life can have on our world.

TEXT 6:11-13

Shulammite, 6:11-13

- “11. I went down into the garden of nuts,
To see the green plants of the valley.
To see whether the vine budded, and the pomegranates
were in flower.
12. Before I was aware, my soul (desire) set me (made me)
Among the chariots of my princely people.
13. Return, return, O Shulammite;
Return, return, that we may look upon thee.
Why will ye look upon the Shulammite,
As upon the dance of Mahanaim?

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 6:11-13

166. These three verses are very important to the understanding of the story of this Song. Explain why this is true.
167. I thought this maiden was employed in the work of the vineyard. What is she doing in the garden of nuts?
168. Her purpose seems pensive. Was she angry with her lover?
169. This is a very difficult verse for interpretation. Paraphrase its meaning in your own words.
170. If this is a description of her abduction by Solomon, she is surely playing down what happened. Why?
171. Are we to understand the words of verse 13 are from the Shulammite? Perhaps only half of the verse are her words. Which half? Explain.

PARAPHRASE 6:11-13

Shulammitte:

11. I had gone down to the walnut garden
To see the fresh verdure of the valley,
To see if the grapevines were in bud
And the pomegranate trees were in bloom,
12. When quite unexpectedly this desire of mine led me
Into the midst of the chariots of my noble people.
13. (They cried) "Return, return, O Shulammitte;
Return, return, that we may look at thee!
Why would we look upon the Shulammitte (said I)
As if ye were watching the Mahanaim dance?"

COMMENT 6:11-13

Exegesis 6:11-13

In the most charming manner possible, the maiden recounts the circumstances of her being kidnapped; "It was in the early spring of the year, I had gone to the garden where the walnut and pomegranate trees grow, it was also in the valley where the vineyard is planted. I had come for two reasons—I did want to check on the budding of the grapevines and to stand beneath the flaming bloom of the pomegranate trees. But I had also come out here in the beauty of the valley because I had quarreled with my beloved and I needed to think and pray. (We assume this latter purpose.) "When quite unexpectedly this quest of mine led me into the midst of the chariots of my noble people." (Clarke) "Or perhaps it was my confused state of mind, before I hardly knew what I was doing, my desire to visit the garden resulted in a place in one of the chariots of my Lord the king."

The thirteenth verse poses real problems for interpreters. Her identity as a maid of Shunem or Shulem is established—

this is the only place in the story where such designation is given. Cf. I Samuel 28:4; I Kings 1:3; II Kings 4:8. As to who is speaking in the first half and last half of the verses, we offer what appears to us as a reasonable explanation: "*They cried*" i.e., Solomon's body guard who were running after the maiden, cried, "Return, return, O Shulammite, return, return, that we may look at thee." She had been startled by the sudden appearance of this calvacade of chariots—she left the scene as rapidly as possible. Solomon, attracted by her beauty, commanded that she be brought to him. She remonstrates with her would-be captors. "Why would 'we' look upon the Shulammite, as if you were watching the Mahanaim dance?" Such a dance must have been well-known as a source of public amusement for Solomon. She is saying she does not want to become a play-thing for the King.

Marriage 6:11-13

We have nothing but admiration for such a woman. She is willing to admit her own limitations. She placed herself in a dangerous position—perhaps it was her own petulance that led her there, or perhaps it wasn't, for whatever cause she freely admits she was responsible for being there. She does not say a word against the King—was it because of her position in the court of Solomon? She tried to remove herself from the presence of all that was a threat to her and her love. She was an unwilling captive of the king. She refused to be a mere trinket for the amusement of the monarch. She was captive to her beloved—he had won her devotion. Her convictions were stronger than the environment. We are reminded of such a woman described in I Peter 3:1-16.

Communion 6:11-13

What an example of the kind of commitment we can make

to our Lord! We have indeed been taken captive while on our way to the garden of nuts! Before we hardly knew it our desire led us to a place in the chariot of Satan and we were whisked off to a place in his harem. We can be sure Satan has no personal interest beyond how he can use us. Are we ready to admit our need as the Shulammite? Flattery is a dangerous tool in the hand of Satan. It is possible that flattery was part of the reason the maiden was a captive. We, like the maiden, can recoup our losses—we can remain steadfast in our first love. We can return again to the One altogether lovely.

FACT QUESTIONS 6:11-13

210. Why recount her capture with no blame for her captors?
211. How do you interpret the thirteenth verse?
212. Discuss the possible lessons for present day marriages in these verses.
213. Discuss the kind of commitment necessary to overcome captivity by Satan.

TEXT 7:1-10

Solomon; 7:1-9 (verses 1-5 may be remarks of women attendants)

Shulammite (interrupting the King); 7:9b-10 (Her final avowal of fidelity to her beloved.)

1. How beautiful are thy feet in sandals,
O prince's daughter!
Thy rounded thighs are like jewels,
The work of the hands of a skillful workman.
2. Thy body is like a round goblet
Wherein no mingled wine is wanting.
Thy waist is like a heap of wheat set about with lilies.
3. Thy two breasts are like two fawns that are twins of a roe.

4. Thy neck is like the tower of ivory;
Thine eyes are the pools in Heshbon,
By the gates of Bathrabbim;
Thy nose is like the tower of Labanon which looketh
toward Damascus.
5. Thy head upon thee is like carmel, and the hair of thy
head like purple;
The King is held captive in the tresses thereof.
6. How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!
7. This thy stature is like to a palm tree,
And thy breasts to its clusters.
8. I said, I will climb up into the palm tree,
I will take hold of the branches thereof;
Let thy breasts be as clusters of the vine,
And the smell of thy breath like apples,
9. And thy mouth like the best wine,
That goeth down smoothly for my beloved,
Gliding through the lips of those that are asleep.
10. I am my beloved's; and his desire is toward me.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 7:1-10

172. If verses one through five are the words of women attendants to the maiden what could be their purpose?
173. Why use the term "prince's daughter"?
174. In what way can rounded thighs be compared to jewels and the work of skillful artists?
175. Her body is like a goblet full of unmixed wine. Is this the meaning of verse 2a?
176. It seems strange to compare her waist to a heap of wheat—set about with lilies—what can this mean?
177. Breasts are compared to fawns before (Cf. 4:5). This seems to be a favorite comparison. What is involved?
178. The neck like an ivory tower was also used in 4:4—or was it? Discuss.
179. Her head compared to Carmel—the city? the mountain?

or what? How?

180. Purple hair?? Explain.
181. What is meant by saying her eyes were like pools in Heshbon?
182. It would hardly be a compliment today to point out a very prominent nose. What is meant by 4b?
183. The king is held captive. How? for what?
184. This maid was fair and pleasant—but for what purpose? (Cf. verse six)
185. The king is surely getting bold in verse seven. It would seem that his figure of speech breaks down in 8a. Explain.
186. If her breasts were "fruit of the vine," what would be their purpose?
187. Solomon is about to act upon his words—then there seems to be a break in verse 9b. Explain.
188. The Shulammite surely endangers herself in putting off the passionate advances of the king. What prompted her remark of verse ten?

PARAPHRASE 7:1-10

Solomon or Women Attendants:

1. How stately is thy walk in sandals, O noble lady!
Thy rounded hips are like ornaments
Fashioned by a skillful craftsman.
2. Thy bosom is as a well-shaped goblet
That lacks not blended wine.
Thy body is like a heap of wheat
Set about with anemones.
3. Thy two breasts are like two fawns,
Twins of a gazelle.
4. Thy neck is like an ivory tower.
Thine eyes as the clear pools at Heshbon.
By the Bath-rabbin gate.
Thy nose (face?) is like the tower of Lebanon.

- Which looks towards Damascus.
5. Thy head is set upon thee like Carmel,
And thy tresses have a purple sheen.
A king is enmeshed in their ringlets.
 6. How fair and how pleasing art thou, O Love,
Among delightful things!

Solomon:

7. This form of thine is like a palm tree,
And thy breasts like date clusters,
8. I said (to myself), I will climb the palm tree
By taking hold of the frond stumps.
Let thy breasts be like clusters of grapes,
The fragrance of thy breath like citrons,
9. And thy palate (mouth?) like the best wine . . .

Shulammitte (interrupting):

That rightly goes down only for my beloved.

Solomon (concluding):

- Causing slumbering lips to speak.
10. I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me myself.

COMMENT 7:1-10

Exegesis 7:1-10

There is an interesting explanation of these verses in *An Exposition of the Bible* by Walter F. Adeney—He does not attribute these verses to Solomon but to the women of the court, he says:

"The Shulammitte now seems to be attempting a retreat, and the ladies of the court bid her return; they would see the performance of a favourite dance, known as 'The Dance of Mahanaim.' Thereupon we have a description of the performer, as she was seen during the convolutions of the dance,

dressed in a transparent garment of red gauze—perhaps such as is represented in Pompeian frescoes,—so that her person could be compared to pale wheat surrounded by crimson anemones. It is quite against the tenor of her conduct to suppose that the modest country girl would degrade herself by ministering to the amusement of a corrupt court in this shameless manner. It is more reasonable to conclude that the entertainment was given by a professional dancer from among the women of the harem. We have a hint that this is the case in the title applied to the performer, in addressing whom Solomon exclaims, "O prince's daughter," an expression never used for the poor Shulammitite, and one from which we should gather that she was a captive princess who had been trained as a court dancer. The glimpse of the manners of the palace helps to strengthen the contrast of the innocent, simple country life in which the Shulammitite delights.

It has been suggested, with some degree of probability, that the Shulammitite is supposed to make her escape while the attention of the king and his court is diverted by this entrancing spectacle. It is to be observed, at all events, that from this point onwards to the end of the poem, neither Solomon nor the daughters of Jerusalem take any part in the dialogue, while the scene appears to be shifted to the Shulammitite's home in the country, where she and the shepherd are now seen together in happy companionship." (p. 534, 535.)

We much prefer this explanation to the labored efforts of the commentators to apply this to the Shulammitite. No doubt the women of the harem could imagine (with Solomon) that if this maid were to dance she would meet the description here given.

There are ten features of the female form:

- (1) How beautiful are your feet—as you walk in your sandals, you have the grace of a princess.
- (2) Your thighs are a work of art—like the carved jewels of a master artist.
- (3) Your navel is like a lovely goblet in which the best of

wine can always be found.

- (4) Your waist is like a heap of wheat encircled with anemones.
- (5) Your two breasts are as soft as two fawns—perfect twins of a roe.
- (6) Your neck is like an ivory tower.
- (7) Your eyes have the depth of the pools of Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbin.
- (8) Your face (or nose) has the grandeur and serenity of the tower of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damascus.
- (9) Your head is like the beautiful Mount Carmel.
- (10) Your hair, as it shines in the sunlight, is the royal color of purple—a king would be held captive in its ringlets.

Marriage 7:1-10

One's wife should be physically attractive to her husband. She should know it. It would not be at all offensive if you were to make your own personal paraphrase of these verses and give them to your wife as a love letter from her husband. Better yet, you could read them to her. Perhaps the metaphors and similes you use could have a more contemporary motif. Your wife would not be at all flattered if you told her that her nose was like the tower of Lebanon. If you do not tell your wife of her physical attraction to you she could be willing to listen to someone else who is ready to describe her charms.

Communion 7:1-10

We believe most of this section is a flattering attempt on the part of Solomon or the women of his court to seduce the Shulammitte. No doubt the description fits the maiden—but the purpose behind telling it is surely open to censure. Flattery is such a subtle tool of Satan. So many Christians are very susceptible to flattery. Why? Because no one has convinced them of their true worth. We are almost ready to believe anyone

who can see a value in us, even if it is only for their own advantage. We need to read again and again the love letters of our Father and His Son who tell us over and over again how valuable we are to them and the world in which we live.

FACT QUESTIONS 7:1-10

214. When we attribute these verses to the women of the court of Solomon we are introduced to a dance routine. Explain and discuss.
215. What did the Shulammitte do while the dance was in progress?
216. How does the description given here relate to the maiden?
217. Do the ten features of the female form describe the Shulammitte or the dancer or both? Discuss.
218. Read verses six through ten and explain them in your own words.
219. Discuss the application of these verses to marriage.
220. What is the antidote for flattery? Discuss.

TEXT 7:11—8:4

Shulammitte: Invitation to the Shepherd, 7:11—8:2
 Aside to Court Ladies, 8:3
 Adjuration to Court Ladies, 8:4 (final)

- “11. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field;
 Let us lodge in the villages.
12. Let us get up early to the vineyards;
 Let us see whether the vine hath budded,
 And its blossom is open,
 And the pomegranates are in flower;
 There will I give thee my love.
13. The mandrakes give forth fragrance;
 And at our doors are all manner of precious fruits,

- new and old,
 Which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.”
- “8:1 O that thou wert as my brother,
 That sucked the breasts of my mother!
 When I should find thee without,
 I would kiss thee;
 Yea, and none would despise me.
2. I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother’s
 house,
 Who would instruct me;
 I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine,
 Of the juice of my pomegranate.
3. His left hand should be under my head,
 And his right hand should embrace me.
4. I adjure you O daughters of Jerusalem,
 That ye stir up, nor awake my love,
 Until he please.”

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 7:11—8:4

189. How is it now possible for the maiden to give such an invitation since she is confined to the palace of Solomon?
190. What time of the year is suggested by the reference to the vines and the pomegranate tree?
191. Why offer her love in the vineyard?
192. Mandrakes are a particular type of fruit—Cf. Gen. 30:14-18—what is intended by her reference to them here?
193. The last half of verse 13 is a poetic way of promising something. What was it?
194. Does the maid want her lover to become or pretend he is her brother? What is meant?
195. It would seem from 8:1b that no physical expression of love had passed between the maid and the shepherd. If this is true, how shall we understand some of the earlier expressions? Discuss.
196. Why take her beloved into her mother’s house? What

type of instruction would be given?

197. Was she promising a real drink of wine or was this a poetic expression?
198. Verse three was repeated earlier. What is meant?
199. Verse four is an oft-repeated refrain—it is given at very appropriate times. Show how this is true here.

PARAPHRASE 7:11—8:4

Shulammitte's Soliloquy

11. Come, my beloved, let us go into the open country;
Let us lodge in the villages.
12. We will rise early and go into the vineyards.
We will see if the vines have budded;
Whether the blossom is opening,
And the pomegranates are in flower . . .
There will I give thee my caresses.
13. The mandrakes are giving forth their fragrance,
At our doors are all kinds of luscious fruits,
New and old, all reserved for thee, my beloved.
- 8:1 Oh, that thou hadst been as my brother,
One nursed in the bosom of my own mother!
Then had I met thee in the open, I would have kissed
thee,
And no one would have despised me.
2. I would have led thee to my mother's house;
Where she would have instructed me.
I would have made thee drink spiced wine
Made from the juice of my own pomegranates.

Aside to Court Ladies

3. His left hand would have been under my head,
And his right hand supporting me.
4. I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
Why should ye arouse or stir up love
Until itself is pleased to awaken?

COMMENT 7:11—8:4

Exegesis 7:11—8:4

The bridegroom has come for his bride. Whether this is literal or figurative, we could not say. Does this only happen in the dreams of the maiden or has Solomon capitulated? If Solomon has given her leave to go back to her home in Shunem, then perhaps a message has been sent to her shepherd and he actually is present to respond to the words of his beloved. We shall comment separately upon each of these six verses.

Verse 11. It must have been with a good deal of poignancy that the maiden thought of the open fields of Galilee. She no doubt thought of friends or relatives in some of the villages who would welcome she and her new husband as overnight visitors. All the associations of many years back rushed in upon her and her heart is full of yearnings to be back again amid familiar faces and places. She is tired of the oppressive atmosphere of the king's harem.

Verse 12. It is still the spring of the year. It was spring when she was snatched away from her garden. Unless we conclude an entire year has gone by, her sojourn at court was only a few weeks. After a pleasant conversation with friends at the house in the village they would retire for the night. She is already anticipating their marriage and what is here proposed amounts in our terms to a honeymoon. How fresh and new is the atmosphere in the early morning! A stroll through the vineyard could be so beautiful! Holding hands, we could stoop down and check together the development of the blossoms. We could pause to drink deeply of the fragrance from the flowers of the pomegranate trees. "There in the seclusion and privacy of His handiwork I will give you my love." Away from the eyes of anyone but her beloved she would express her deep feelings for him.

Verse 13. We are back in the village of Shunem. In the garden near the house the fragrance of the mandrakes is filling the air. At the doors of our house we have kept from past

seasons dired fruit—we will also have fresh produce from our garden. Ever since I met you I have planned and laid up these gifts for the day when we could share them together. Besides the literal meaning we have given to her words, we seem to catch another meaning! Mandrakes had long been associated with love (Cf. Genesis 30:14-18). Perhaps these words are but a veiled promise of her expressions of love to be given to him in their house.

Verse one of the eighth chapter. The shepherd had addressed her as his sister, she now reciprocates with the thought that if he were her brother she would rush into his arms and kiss him at any time and any place. We like the words of Adeney here: "This singular mode of courtship between two lovers who are so passionately devoted to one another that we might call them the Hebrew Romeo and Juliet, is not without significance. Its recurrence, now on the lips of the bride, helps to sharpen still more the contrast between what passes for love in the royal harem, and the true emotion experienced by a pair of innocent young people, unsullied by the corruptions of the court—illustrating, as it does at once, its sweet intimacy and its perfect purity." (*ibid.*, p. 535.)

Verse two. Why go to her mother's house? This would be after their marriage for instruction from the mother in the art of lovemaking. No mention is made of her father—perhaps her mother is a widow. Such a simple home-like atmosphere is in strong contrast to the oppressive magnificence of Solomon's palace. She has some wonderful home-made country beverages for him—spiced wine and pomegranate juice. "Perhaps what is here called 'spiced wine' is especially prepared juice from the pomegranate."

Verses three and four. We have treated these verses earlier in our comments on 2:6, 7. The fourth verse is repeated twice: in 2:7 and 3:5. Please see our comments upon these verses. This would seem to be the final word to Solomon and the women of the court. She is saying in essence: "I am committed to the shepherd as my husband—I can already feel his strong arms around me. Do not, as I have said twice before, attempt

to arouse any love on my part for Solomon—love will take its spontaneous course—and in my case it is for my shepherd.”!

Marriage 7:11—8:4

If the Shulammitte represents the bride of Christ, then these words can become a pattern for the love the church should have for her Lord. This has always been a parallel for the love the husband should have for his wife and the wife for her husband. Where is the bride who will express her love with the same intensity and fidelity as the Shulammitte? We believe there are many who would if they were married to a man like the shepherd. But is this the criteria for such a response? Many a husband knows he is far from the ideal here described but his wife loves him none-the-less. This is surely the fulfillment (in reverse order) of how Christ loved the church. Even when this is true can we not read into these words the longing of the dear girl we married? She *does* want to find anew the fresh fields and the secluded spot—she still wants your exclusive interest in her—to share with her the little things—the beautiful things of very ordinary life. Just a cup of tea—a simple flower—even an orange eaten with love is worth more than the many expensive “things” for which we spend so much time away from her. If somehow her husband could be her brother she could then get on the inside of his thoughts and could establish a rapport shared in a happy family. Anything to be one with the one she loves more than life.

Communion 7:11—8:4

What a tremendous example this passage is of the kind of love we, as the bride, should give to our living Lord. “Christ is a living Person. He loves you with a personal love, and He looks everyday for your personal response to His love. Look into His face with trust till His love really shines into your

heart (Romans 5:5). Make his heart glad by telling Him you love Him." (*author unknown*) Converse with your heavenly Husband—say to Him, "Come, my beloved, let's go to work—" or "let's wash the dishes." He *is* alive—He *does* want to participate in all you are and do. He also sleeps with you at night. How delightful to begin the day with Him. We have found so much good in the little booklet *Manna In The Morning* published by Moody Press. We wish to say a word of recommendation here—if you are not meeting Him in the morning—or even if you are—get it and read it. Oh, how we need to plan ahead for a continual love affair with our Lord. There is all manner of precious fruit from our experiences and from His word—both new and old which we can share with Him. This will never happen if we do not plan it. Communion with our Lord through the Holy Spirit (II Corinthians 13:14; Colossians 2:1ff) is a joint participation—a partnership that includes all of life. Do we take Him into "our mother's house"? i.e., into the relationship and fellowship of the family conversation? or of the TV programs and the exchange of the usual subjects? If we did, perhaps our family would be so impressed with His presence that instruction would have an entirely different meaning.

FACT QUESTIONS 7:11—8:4

221. The bridegroom has come for the bride—is this to be understood as an actual visit from the shepherd? Discuss.
222. With whom would the newly-weds stay in the villages?
223. The maiden is homesick—she feels oppressed. Why?
224. We conclude the whole Song discusses a time of only a few weeks in May or late April. How is this conclusion reached?
225. It would seem the young couple are on their honeymoon. What gives us this thought?
226. Do you agree that there is a possible double-meaning in verse 13? Discuss.

227. How can we compare this couple to Romeo and Juliet?
228. Is there anyone anywhere in the United States like the two persons described here? Discuss.
229. Why go to her mother's house? Where is her father?
230. What were her final words for the women of the harem and Solomon?
231. Where is the wife like the Shulammitte? Discuss.
232. Are there men like the shepherd? (What about the rest of us?)
233. What is really important with our wife?
234. Why would any wife want a brother-sister relationship with her husband? or is this what is meant? Discuss.
235. What a tremendous example this passage is of the kind of love we as the bride should give to our living Lord. Please discuss the very practical application of this text to your own personal relationship to your Lord.

TEXT 8:5-14

FIFTH SCENE — The Homeward Journey, 8:5-14

Villagers (or the Shepherd's Companions): Inquiry, 8:5a

The Lovers: Dialogue, 8:5b-14

Shepherd, 8:5b

Shulammitte, 8:6-12

Aspiration; 6, 7

Recollection; 8, 9

Declaration, 10

Information, 11

Repudiation, 12

Shepherd, 8:13

Shulammitte, 8:14

5. Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness,
Leaning upon her beloved?
Under the apple-tree I awakened thee: