

threefold profession of love for Jesus” in this passage is “intended to balance his threefold denial.”<sup>1849</sup>

**E-122** “The words... ‘more than these’ might refer to the way in which Peter has until now taken the lead in comparison to the other disciples, to Peter’s earlier statement that he was willing to give Jesus his all,<sup>1850</sup> and to what Peter will experience in the future.<sup>1851</sup> In any case, thus formulated, this question is designed to let Peter know that loving and following Jesus can have more implications for him than he perhaps has thought and practiced in the past.”<sup>1852</sup>

**E-123** “Peter’s affirmative answer is without hesitation, and appeals to Jesus’ knowledge of him. The appeal does not have the sense of ‘Why ask me? You know me, don’t you?’ Jesus’ knowledge is, rather, the last thing on which Peter can base an appeal before Jesus. His own actions have witnessed against him, and ‘more than these’ seems to mock him more than justify him. All that is left to Peter is, ‘You know that I love you,’ an appeal to Jesus’ knowledge of him as one of his own.”<sup>1853</sup>

**E-124** Commenting to the sisters of the Nauvoo Relief Society, Joseph Smith said:

How mild the Savior dealt with Peter, saying, “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”<sup>1854</sup> At another time, He said to him, “Lovest thou me?” and having received Peter’s reply, He said, “Feed my sheep.”<sup>1855</sup> If the sisters loved the Lord, let them feed the sheep, and not destroy them. How oft have wise men and women sought to dictate Brother Joseph by saying, “O, if I were brother Joseph I would do this and that”; but if they were in Brother Joseph’s shoes they would find that men or women could not be compelled into the kingdom of God, but must be dealt with in long-suffering, and at last we shall save them. The way to keep all the Saints together, and keep the work rolling, is to wait with all long-suffering, till God shall bring such characters to justice. There should be no license for sin, but mercy should go hand in hand with reproof.<sup>1856</sup>

**E-125** Madsen observes:

It is interesting that the earlier revelations called Joseph [Smith] “my servant, Joseph.” Later—presumably as he grew spiritually and became more worthy—we find the Lord speaking of him as “Joseph, my son.” Finally, he spoke of the Prophet and others with him as “my friends.” Servant, son, friend: three beautiful relationships. Not, I take it, stages in spiritual progress so much as levels of it; for in the end, those of us who are thoroughly committed to Christ remain servants, sons or daughters, and friends.<sup>1857</sup>

**E-126** Riddle’s image recalls the Mandaean poem that imagines souls being “‘entwined’ by the vine on their journey upwards.”<sup>1858</sup>

Millet also comments on the effects of the gradual refining process of sanctification on our personal judgments:<sup>1859</sup>

Perhaps it is the case that over the years the Spirit of the Lord works in a quiet, consistent manner to educate our consciences, enhance our perspective, and polish our wisdom and judgment. After all, the Prophet Joseph explained that an important assignment of the Holy Ghost is to convey pure intelligence through “expanding the mind, enlightening the understanding, and storing the intellect with... knowledge.”<sup>1860</sup> It may be that one day we will look back on what we perceived at the time to be seasons wherein we believed we were required to make decisions on our own, only to discover that the Lord had been, through the honing and refining processes in our souls, leading us along paths of his choosing. That is, maybe we will learn that our own wisdom and judgment were not really our own.<sup>1861</sup>

1849 A. E. Harvey, *Companion 1970*, p. 393.

1850 John 13:37; Mark 14:29.

1851 John 21:18, 19.

1852 H. N. Ridderbos, *John*, p. 665; cf. John 21:18a.

1853 H. N. Ridderbos, *John*, p. 665; cf. John 10:14; Luke 22:32.

1854 Luke 22:32.

1855 John 21:15-16.

1856 J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 9 June 1842, p. 241.

1857 T. G. Madsen, *Joseph Smith*, pp. 84-85. Compare Elder Hafen’s suggestion of the slightly different sequence of servant, friend, son (B. C. Hafen, *Disciple’s Journey*, pp. 299-301). A similar literary device involving an ascending set of titles applied to Jesus by the Samaritan woman in John 4 has been noted and discussed since early times (see e.g., Ephrem the Syrian, *Diatessaron* 12:16, 18, pp. 198-199).

1858 J. O. Ryen, *Mandaean Vine*, p. 108; cf. M. Lidzbarski, *Ginza*, GL 3:26, p. 551:16-19. See *Endnote 4-66*, p. 316.

1859 R. L. Millet, *Alive*, p. 108.

1860 J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 27 June 1839, p. 149.

1861 D&C 61:22, 62:8.