

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

On Saturday, April 20, 1974, at the Mormon History Association Annual Meeting held at Nauvoo, Illinois, I delivered the Presidential Address entitled, "Is There No Help for the Widow's Son?" At that time I was gravely concerned that the presentation of my findings and conclusions, as a result of long months of research, would not be properly interpreted; and that regardless of what I attempted to say, misunderstandings would occur. My concerns were justified. I have been informed of instances where even my own colleagues, in the Mormon History Association, and also some close friends within the Church misinterpreted what I said, and more important to me, in some cases even questioned my faith in Joseph Smith and the Church.

Of course, I assume the full responsibility for creating those questions, concerns, and misunderstandings. It was because I was not skillful enough, erudite enough, nor perhaps prayerful enough to make my personal position and feelings clearly known.

Therefore, regardless of what I said, or what interpretations were placed upon what I said, let it be known at this time, that:

- 1) I know that Joseph Smith was/is indeed a true prophet of God--the one called under direction of Jesus Christ to usher in this dispensation of the fullness of time.
- 2) I know further that Temple Work, with all its ramifications, including Eternal Marriage and the Endowment ceremony is divinely inspired.
- 3) Because of the personal witness I have received by the Spirit (which has been complemented and supported by continual study and experience); the prime criterion or standard of judgement I am committed to employ as an explanation of any aspect of the Church--either of Joseph Smith and/or the Temple ceremonies--is that of divine revelation.

Had I delivered my address in Nauvoo, making sure that my knowledge and conviction of the above three statements was clearly reflected in the subject matter of my address, I am confident that fewer misunderstandings would have been occasioned; and my address would have more clearly approximated my honest feelings. I am deeply sorry that such was not the case.

Sincerely,

*Reed C. Durham, Jr.*

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