

## **Review on the book by Ernest Skinner "Joseph Smith Sr., First Patriarch to the LDS Church**

**By Gracia Jones**

The book was written in 1958, for his own family. Recently the author died, and his family have reprinted the book and made it available for sale. You can visit the sight of the publisher at [palmyrapublishing.com](http://palmyrapublishing.com) according to the address inside the flyleaf of the book.

Including the index the book has 263 pages. It is nicely printed in paperback form, with art work from the LDS archives and museum.

The book is easy to read, very enjoyable. It has ten chapters. Below I give a short description of these chapters:

- I. Blessed and Holy is He, for He is Mine -- an evaluation of the character of Joseph Smith, Sr.
- II. His House as built upon a Rock--covers the ancestral influences that shaped Father Smith's character—New Englanders, patriotic Americans, etc. While it does not go into historical or personal depth, it explains the setting of early America, and touches on the role of Joseph Smith Sr.'s, ancestors in it.
- III. God Moves in A Mysterious Way--touches on the marriage of Father and Mother Smith, and their moves around Vermont, New Hampshire, etc., to Palmyra, N.Y.
- IV. Oh Ye That Embark--synopsis of the restoration of the gospel, i.e., the Book of Mormon, Witnesses, etc.
- V. He Shall Sit in the general Assembly of the Patriarchs—discusses the "Law and Order of Patriarchal Lineage" Using Doctrine and covenants, and Joseph Fielding Smith Doctrine of Salvation, it outlines the office, calling, duties, of patriarchs. It sticks to Church History, D&C, Lucy Mack Smith, very closely. There are some Biblical passages cited. It defines what it means to be a patriarch to the church (presiding patriarch) or a patriarch of the church. Father Smith was the oldest desc. of Ephriam in the church, therefore he had the right by lineage...etc.
- VI. If You Will Be Faithful—Blessings and Their Fulfillment. this chapter deals with blessings given not only to his family, by Father Smith, but also quotes from blessings he gave to others. It is a very interesting chapter. The author is showing the depth of spiritual and scriptural knowledge shown in the blessings. He is also showing in several cases how inspired the blessings were and that they were fulfilled (a matter of record).
- VII. With An Eye Single to My Glory—subtitles are Service it, the church, missionary work, Kirtland Temple Service, Other Activities (such as the conference held in June, 1830, many interesting insights drawn from Church History, etc. It isn't anything NEW, but it puts it in simple perspective.
- VIII. He Shall See The Afflictions of His Children--this chapter touches on the many trials endured by Father Smith. It covers from the death of Alvin on through to the expulsion from Missouri The stories are familiar but very well presented through quotes from those who left records of events

- IX. A Prince and a Great Man Has Fallen In Israel--sub headings: Final Benediction, includes excerpts from his final blessings to his children, Interesting quotes from Church History and the Journal of John Smith. (brother of Joseph Smith Sr.)
- X. Let His Name Praise Him--subtitles: Contributions; I quote one paragraph that sums up this chapter: "From the information gathered in this work one learns that Father Smith made many great contributions to his family, his Church, and his fellow men, both spiritually and temporally."

The book successfully does what it claims.

Appendix I contains "Highlights in the life of Joseph Smith, Sr. and gives a year by year synopsis of his life, moves, callings etc., from 1771 to 1840.

Appendix II. Visions of Joseph Smith Sr.gives the seven visions of Father Smith as told by Lucy Mack Smith.

Appendix III. Gives the Discourse of Elder Robert B. Thompson at the Funeral of Joseph Smith Sr. taken from the History of the Church.

Appendix IV. Elegy

The full text of the poem by Eliza R. Snow

There is an extensive bibliography and a respectable index.

This book contains an amazing amount of faith promoting information which has been compiled in such a way as to allow any reader no matter how previously uninformed, to understand the sequence of events in the establishment and calling of patriarchs and the specific contributions made by Father Smith. It is not a comprehensive history and does not claim to be.

I believe this book would be a very good book for families to read to their children. I liked it very much.

Gracia Jones