

Brief Notices

View of the Hebrews, edited by Charles D. Tate Jr. (BYU Religious Studies Center, 1996)

For almost a century, critics of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon have claimed that *View of the Hebrews*, first published by Ethan Smith in 1823 (2d. ed, 1825), served as inspiration for scripture. Ethan Smith, pastor of the Congregational Church in Poultney, Vermont, argued that the Native Americans were scattered Israelites who would soon be restored into the gospel fold. Charles Tate has introduced and edited the entire text of the 1825 edition in an effort to “invite our readers to decide for themselves” (xix) concerning the alleged connection between Smith’s treatise and the Book of Mormon.

View of the Hebrews reads very much like a gospel tract. Smith quotes dozens of scriptures in an attempt to show that in the latter days Israel would be restored in fulfillment of God’s covenant promises and sets out to prove that Native Americans are these covenant people. “I shall attempt to embody the evidence obtained,” says Smith, “to show that the natives of America are the descendants of the ten tribes of Israel” (58). Smith quotes liberally from authors who had drawn this con-

clusion before him and makes no claim to be writing scripture.

Lay readers who wish to investigate repeated claims that the Book of Mormon borrows from *View of the Hebrews* will find this volume valuable. For those unfamiliar with the ongoing dialogue, a cursory introduction reviews literature that compares *View of the Hebrews* to or distinguishes it from the Book of Mormon. Other readers will want an analysis of the text itself, which is not offered here. Serious scholars will probably continue to refer to Smith’s original editions, since the 1996 volume does not include original pagination and does not provide discussion of the differences between the 1823 and 1825 editions.

—Jed L. Woodworth

The Ten Commandments for Today, edited by John G. Scott (Bookcraft, 1997)

Seeing the Ten Commandments as eternal principles that have never been annulled, this collection focuses primarily on recent statements by Church leaders relevant or adaptable to these ten topics. Of course, these Judeo-Christian fundamentals, about which thousands of books have