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Book of Mormon Gems of Truth: Lesson 40

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Abstract: Monthly Book of Mormon lessons for adult women (Relief Society). Each month a verse of Book of Mormon scripture is presented with accompanying quotes from General Authorities and writers of the Church.

Visiting Teacher Messages

Book of Mormon Gems of Truth

Lesson 40—" . . . For Behold, Ye Are Free; Ye Are Permitted to Act For Yourselves; For Behold, God Hath Given Unto You a Knowledge and He Hath Made You Free" (Helaman 14:30).

Edith S. Elliott

For Tuesday, May 1, 1956

Objective: To show that free agency is an eternal gift.

THERE was never any other intent by our Heavenly Father than that man should be free to act for himself. The whole plan of salvation encompasses this premise. Throughout scriptural history we read about the fruits of freedom and the curse of bondage.

In the Book of Helaman, we read how Nephi exhorted the people to turn from their selfish ways and live the gospel of Jesus Christ and be ready for his coming. He also reminded them that they each had their free agency. In all of our relations with our Father in heaven, he has made it clear that we are at liberty to choose our mode of behavior.

In our everyday lives it is the divine gift of freedom that we must cherish. Unless we guard this precious gift we will be subjects for enslavement by the power of darkness in both our spiritual and temporal conduct.

We have all seen the dwarfing effects of apathy and indifference to a worthy project. These factors court decay of the will to do, to act, to think, to initiate, to be free. They are indeed a form of enslavement.

Let us be aware of entangling influences and cast them aside; rather let us choose our Heavenly Father's plan. He has given us a knowledge that under any circumstance our will to do is free. Matthew Arnold's explanation is:

Yet the will is free; strong is the soul and wise, and beautiful; The seeds of God-like power are in us still. Gods are we, bards, saints, heroes, if we will (*Courage*, page 12).

To enjoy the liberties with which we are so blessed, we must respect the rights of others. We do not need to indulge our fellow man to the point of losing our own freedom and self-respect, nor should we be selfish to the point of forcing our will upon another. Understanding, compassion, and truth are foundations for peaceful relations one with another.

It is only through freedom and liberty that we can develop our God-given talents and enjoy the opportunity to choose our way of life, and we should do so, with judgment, intelligence, and honor, for our Heavenly Father has given us the knowledge.