

A Tribute to Sister Marie

*Remarks prepared and delivered by Kenneth Glyn Hales
at the funeral services for:*

M A R I E B A L L A R D

Every thoughtful person has asked him or herself that question best phrased by Job of old: "If a man die, shall he live again?"¹

Sister Marie believed, as I do, that the answer to that question is yes.

Death comes to us all, it is inevitable, but it can best be understood when we learn of life, even eternal life.

Life on earth does not mark the beginning of our existance. The poet, William Wordsworth, wrote:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The soul that rises with us, our life's star, Hath
had elsewhere its setting And cometh from
afar: Not in entire forgetfulness, And not in
utter nakedness, But trailing clouds of glory do
we come From God, who is our home: Heaven
lies about us in our infancy.²

Some years ago one of the choice spirit children of our Father in Heaven, Sister Marie, was born and came to live and begin her mortal life. It was not a creation of something out of nothing because she lived before this life as a spirit child – but now it was time for that new

experience, mortality. Which is one step of the way in our Father's plan.

Sister Marie has now completed that step.

What then? What happens at death?

The Prophet Alma said:

"Behold, it has been made known unto me by an angel, that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, yea, the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life.

"And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called Paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow.³

Sister Marie is now enjoying her peace.

"We laugh, we cry, we work, we play, we love, we live. And then we die. And dead we would remain but for one man and his mission, even Jesus of Nazareth. Born in a stable, cradled in a manger, his birth fulfilled the inspired pronouncements of many prophets. He was taught from on high. He provided the life, the light, and the way.

Multitudes followed him. Children adored him. The Haughty rejected him. He spoke in parables. He taught by example. He lived a perfect life. Through his ministry, blind men saw, deaf men heard, and lame men walked. Even the dead returned to life.⁴

Sister Marie believed, as I do, in the mission of our savior, Jesus Christ.

"The story continues, they crucified our Lord. Death came. His body was placed by loving hands in a sepulcher.⁵

"On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came unto the sepulcher. To their astonishment, the body of their Lord was gone. Luke records that two men in shining garments stood by them and said: 'Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen. . . .'⁶

"Job's question, 'If a man die, shall he live again?' had just been answered."⁷

And so, as loving hands place Sister Marie in her grave, may they remember that in the resurrection she shall live again. And there will be a happy reunion.

There is a happy reunion now as friends and relatives who have gone on before are happy once again to enjoy the companionship of Sister Marie who is now back with them, her mortal experience completed.

And she now knows the answers to these questions expressed by Eliza R. Snow:

"O my Father, thou that dwellest
In the high and glorious place,
When shall I regain thy presence,
And again behold thy face?
In thy holy habitation,
Did my spirit once reside?
In my first primeval childhood,
Was I nurtured near thy side?

"For a wise and glorious purpose
Thou hast placed me here on earth,
And withheld the recollection
Of my former friends and birth.
Yet oftentimes a secret something
Whispered, 'You're a stranger here;'
And I felt that I had wandered
From a more exalted sphere.

"I had learned to call thee Father,
Through thy Spirit from on high,
But until the key of knowledge
Was restored, I knew not why.
In the heavens are parents single?
No; the thought makes reason stare!
Truth is reason, truth eternal
Tells me I've a mother there.

"When I leave this frail existence,
When I lay this mortal by,
Father, Mother, may I meet you
In your royal courts on high?
Then, at length, when I've completed
All you sent me forth to do,
With your mutual approbation
Let me come and dwell with you."

And the words of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, may come to you as though spoken by Sister Marie:

"Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me;
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea.
Twilight and evening bell,

And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark;
For tho' from out our bourne of time and place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar."

Sister Marie has now put out to sea. She has crossed the bar and is now with friends and relatives in that place called Paradise.

Sister Marie believed, as I do, that it is a happy reunion to enter Paradise.

And we shall see her again. The promise of the Savior tells us that. He showed us that the spirit once again reunites with the body, and the body is raised without any infirmity in its perfect form.

I testify to you that this is the case.

1. Thomas S. Monson. *Pathways to Perfection*. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book. 1976] .p. 3. See also Job 14:14.
2. Ibid.. p. 3.
3. Alma 40:11,12
4. Monson, op. cit., p. 4.
5. Ibid., 5.
6. Ibid., 5. See also Luke 24:1,5-6.

7. Ibid., 5.

8. Ibid., p. 288.