

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

ADDRESS BY SIR PHILIP SHERLOCK

ON THE OCCASION OF THE MEMORIAL SERVICE

FOR SIR FRANK WORRELL 19/3/67

The Gospel according to St. John, Chapter VII, and verses 37 and 38.

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water, out of him shall flow rivers of living water.

Cross over the Jordan from Palestine, leave behind you the Sea of Galilee, and soon you pass into dry sandy country -- the outer limits of the great Syrian desert, El Hamid. Hundreds of miles of burning sands separate you from the green valley of the Euphrates further east, a waterless land, a dead land. Set out from Palestine from the region round about Jerusalem, and travel east, and again you come to thirsty land and desert. For a thousand miles and more the great Arabian desert and the desert of red sandstone stretch before you, a land of emptiness, a land of thirst, a parched land. Or, set out from the south, from the Ashiba in the green country of Palestine, and once again you come to desert, to sand, to burning thirst, a land of death.

It was in this desert, you remember, that the Jews wandered for forty years, there in the desert of Sin, they endured thirst and they endured hunger, and there in the desert they cried out:

Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt.

Bitter the sight of men, women and children, hungry and thirsty, threatened with death from famine. They cried out against Moses and Aaron saying, "Ye have brought us into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly of people." And then they pitched their tents in the parched land of Rephedim where they camped. And there was no water. And yet again their voices rose against Moses, their voices rose against Aaron:

Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst.

And it was there, it was there that God said to Moses:

Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it so that the people may drink.

The memory of the desert, the waterless land, was burned deep into the consciousness of every Jew. They knew in their bones what water meant, that water was life. They knew that the

desert was death, that water was literally life. Every year they celebrated three great festivals. They celebrated the festival of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread, which we often call the Passover. They celebrated the festival of the Harvest of the In-gathering, and then at the close of the year they celebrated the festival of the Feast of Tabernacles, the time when all the crops were gathered in, the last produce of the year, the corn, the wine, the oil. They called it the Feast of Tabernacles because of the memory of those forty years of wandering in the wilderness, when their fathers lived without home, without fields, without settled habitation, in huts. The festival lasted for seven days. On each day of the seven men fetched water -- water from Siloah -- poured it out before the Altar, and the priest who poured, and the people who watched, while young, had learned by heart the history of their forefathers. They knew by heart how Moses smote the rock and water flowed out. They knew the story of David, how when in exile he cried out that someone might give him to drink of the water from the fields where he had lived and grown up as a boy. They knew how at night one of his men left him, went to the well, fetched the water. They knew by heart the story of how David refused to drink it because a man had risked his life for it, and how he poured it out before God. They knew by heart the song that he had sung, the song of the Shepherd who led his people through green pastures and beside still waters. And now the last day of the feast had come, the great day of the feast. On the preceding day the priest had poured out the water before the altar and had recited the promise of Isaiah:

Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

On this last day Jesus was present in the temple. In his mind and in the mind of every Jew present there was the memory of the desert, the memory of forty years of wandering and thirst and hunger. In his mind also was the memory of forty days when He spent in loneliness in the desert hungering so much that the smooth round stones before Him looked like loaves of bread. And as always He looked out and he saw not simply the physical and the material, but the spiritual. Just as once He had seen men fishing from a boat on a lake, and He had cried out to them that He would make them fishers of men, just as once He had passed through fields ripe for the harvest and had said that the harvest truly was plenteous, but the reapers were few, so now He saw the needs of the spirit. He looked round about Him upon the crowded streets of Jerusalem, upon the precincts of the temple crowded with people, the temple itself. Every morning, every night in His ears rang the sounds of the Roman trumpets, but he saw more. He heard the priest who cried:

With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation,

and now He cried to them transforming this physical thing into something spiritual, this water into a symbol of life, and saying to them if anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me. Whoever believes in Me let him drink. As Scripture says, "Streams of living water shall flow out from within Him." How could anyone who heard Him fail to understand what He meant, fail to understand that the wells of salvation were within them.

There is a tremendous picture of the prodigality of goodness, the active out-pouring of creative power, the transforming

power of inexhaustible inner strength, streams of living water shall flow out from within him.

Turn your minds now to our friend Frank Worrell. Think of him as you knew him. Think of the words that he said, the things that he did. I have tried to do this. One thing shines out as you think of him. There is never a mean word, never a petty action, never a diminishing of another man or woman. Of how many of us could this be said. There was in our friend a natural easy generosity of spirit that came only from goodness. The streams of living water flowed out from him. Nor was there any pomp, any fuss, any self-importance. Think of that great tour in England when he led the West Indies to victory. The world was at his feet. The Press showered praise upon him. Her Majesty the Queen honoured him. He was for the West Indian the embodiment of achievement, of excellence measured by world standards, excellence, quality. This is what Sir Frank helped to build into this society of ours, this society in which for so long a part of our history there was no great tradition, this society in which for so long a part of our history the dominant motive was the exploitation of the human being, the commercial, the material. In which for so long there was no respect for men and women. He helped to build into this society of ours a sense of greatness, of respect for men and women, whether poor or rich, of fellowship where once there was hatred, of brotherhood where once there was bitter division. What a debt we owe to Frank Worrell -- not simply for his cricket, but because of this quality of excellence which he built into our way of life. Cricket was his medium, but excellence, excellence was the man's purpose, excellence was the man's achievement. Every club in the West Indies would have been honoured and happy to have him as captain at the end of that tour, but what did he do? My brother told me how when he returned he rang up and said that he wished to play for Boy's Town, and, said he, "I will play under the captaincy --" "I think it was young Richards. My brother, Hugh, said "No, you come and play with us. We want you to come. But let young Richards play under your captaincy, Train him, teach him how to lead men." And so the man who won the highest honours at Lords played for one of the poorest clubs in Kingston, leading a team of youngsters who had known the desert of neglect and poverty and insecurity and disregard. Out of this believing man there flowed streams of living water, changing and transforming the lives of those round about him.

This goodness was natural and easy and unassumed. It was so easy that one came to take it for granted, not recognizing how valuable it was. I think because he sought nothing for himself, the more honoured he was, the more modest he was. Can you remember him claiming anything for himself? Can you remember any occasion on which he exploited his fame in order to win something for himself? What he found was a way of giving quickly. When there was a hold-up here and it was difficult to get clay for the cricket pitch, he quietly went off in his car to Yallahs, a number of times, and brought back clay in his own car. Soon after he left us for St. Augustine to help with the development of the games and student activities there. He spotted in one of the clubs a young teenager who seemed to him a promising spinner. He became a father to the lad. He bought him his cricket gear. He set his feet on the path of manhood. This was the pattern of Frank Worrell's life. This was the way in which he lived. Streams of water of life-giving goodness flowed out of him to change the lives

of others. And this was a great comfort to Velda Worrell. We pray for her and for their daughter. It was a comfort to her to know these things. I travelled with her last Wednesday as far as Antigua. She told me about a little boy's club in Trinidad, how the boys had saved up at Christmas time and bought a small gift for her husband. And they hadn't given it to her, they told her about it, but they kept it because they wanted to give it to him themselves.

Go where you will, through every land that plays cricket, and you will find this love for our friend, love for this man out of whose inmost being there flowed in quiet abundance the healing refreshing power of goodness. You who worked with him, you who played with him will remember also in him a tranquility not often found in a man so young. His boyhood friends told me that there was something of this quality in him even while he was a boy growing up in Barbados. But tranquility of spirit cannot exist where feeling is absent. Tranquility exists only in those who have gained an inner strength, those who have felt the wind and storm, those who have endured testing, those who have been through conflict, those who have found assurance in the end. I think it was of this that Wordsworth wrote when he said that he

"learned to look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth, but hearing often times
The still sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air
And the blue sky and in the mind of man."

And it is this capacity for feeling and for gaining tranquility, this capacity for insight that led William Faulkner in one of the most notable and solemn utterances of our time to challenge the artists of his generation to "leave no room in his workshop for anything but the old verities and truths of the heart, the old universal truths, lacking which, any story is ephemeral and doomed. Love and honour and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice.... Which led him to declare that Man will not merely endure, but will prevail because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance."

Frank died at the early age of 42. He must have known as a man moments of great doubt and conflict, for already while still young, you knew that there was within him an inner strength, hard as steel, gentle as love, trusting as a child's smile. It was a comfort to his widow to speak of his love for this University, and above all, for its students. He had offers of other jobs more highly paid. She told me how on one occasion when a generous offer had been made to him he discussed it with her. And then he said, "Velda I can't take it. This is our University. We must work for it. We must be proud of it. We must give it everything we have." This was the spirit that moved him to cable to my friend, Dudley Huggins, when the Frank Worrell Cricket Fields were being opened at St. Augustine a week or so before his death. With the help of friends and benefactors he

had converted 17½ acres of rough land into an excellent game ground for games and athletics, and he cabled best wishes, best wishes to all, and then he went on to say, I wish I were with you. Thanks to Gary and to the team. Special thanks to all. Thanks to my many contributors, contributors of labour, capital, machinery, material, advice. Good luck to all." A few days later he died.

I saw him on the Saturday morning briefly. None of us there thought that the end was so near. I think for the first time in his illness he was in pain. It is always hard to watch illness. It is hard even when there is good hope of recovery. It is heart-breaking when there is no hope within earthly reach, so hard to watch enfeebled that body that moved with such elegant strength, with such gracious ease. He died next morning. He suddenly sat up in bed and then fell back. "And there was," said his widow, "a smile on his face." She was telling me this in the aeroplane, and as she spoke to me there came into my mind the memory of Mr. Valiant for Truth, of how he was taken with a summons, of how he went down to the riverside, and as he went down deeper he said: "Grave, where is thy victory?" So he passed over, and the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

At this time while we meet here the body of Sir Frank Worrell is being laid to rest in a corner of our University campus at Cave Hill in Barbados near the playing fields, in a place of great beauty almost within sound of the sea, looking across to Bridgetown and to the fields where Frank Worrell first won recognition as a cricketer.

Brave spirit, what would you have us, your friends who mourn for you, what would you have us remember? What words of comfort would you have us carry in our hearts from this place, the doctors and nurses who wept when you died, those who played and worked with you, those in many lands who admired and loved you? Would you not bid us to find courage and comfort and perhaps even happiness in Him Whom you trusted, in Him Whom you believed? Would you not have us turn to Him, also a Man with his youth upon Him, a Man who promised life though He was about to die, a Man who faced hostility and death, and with assurance cried: "If any one is thirsty, let him come unto Me. Whosoever believeth in Me, let him drink. As Scripture says, streams of living water shall flow out from within him.

University Chapel,
Mona, U.W.I.,
Sunday 19th March, 1967