

The Remembrance

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SIR DONALD BURNS SANGSTER—
Eulogy by Rev. Cannon R. O. C. King
yesterday at the Kingston Parish Church

"We are gathered here to pay tribute to one who was greatly loved. We are here to do honour to a distinguished son of Jamaica. Sir Donald Sangster was highly respected. He gave his life in the service of his country.

"His life was gentle, and the elements so mixed in him that Nature might stand up and say to all the world, 'This was a man!'"

"Sir Donald was baptized in St. George's Church, Kingston. His uncle, Peter Watt Sangster, a famous politician, was one of his god-parents. Sir Donald was an old boy of Munro College. After leaving College he became a solicitor.

"His political career began at the early age of 21. It reached its climax when he became Prime Minister of Jamaica last February. While working on the details of the Budget he fell seriously ill on Saturday, the 18th of March:

"On Monday, the 20th of March he was taken to the Montreal Neurological Institute for treatment.

Rich contribution

"Soon he lost consciousness, which he never regained. Sir Donald passed away on Tuesday, the 11th of April — four days after he had received a knighthood from Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second.

"He made a rich contribution to this nation. His life was one of dedication, devotion and sacrifice. He served Jamaica. He served the Commonwealth. He served the world.

"Sir Donald's fatal illness was caused by the burdens he bore for our nation. He is not the only statesman who has suffered death from strain. In the year 1945 while Mr. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, President of the United States of America, was being sketched by an artist, he was heard to say, 'I have a terrific headache.' Two and a half hours later, the voice of that great statesman was forever silent. Cerebral haemorrhage had taken its toll.

"The burden of Jamaica was too heavy for Donald Sangster. Although a man of strong character, he broke under its weight. Today, our nation mourns his loss. The people of Jamaica are deeply moved by the many tributes paid to Sir Donald.

"A few years ago, Sir Donald was present at the annual Christmas treat for the poor given by St. George's Church. After addressing the poor, he placed his arms around many of them, expressing his love.

"He was a man full of love. He was a man full of humility. He was a man full of friendliness. He rose to great heights but never lost touch with those of low estate.

Sir Donald believed in prayer. I vividly recall a certain night when he asked me to come to see him. I went to Vale

Royal. He told me that he was confronted with many problems. He asked me to pray with him.

"We knelt down and prayed for God's guidance. He knew he needed help from God. He was reaching after God. I left him alone — alone with God.

"Many of us are ignorant of the tremendous burdens of our leaders. We see their spectacular performances, but we do not realize their utter loneliness.

"Let us continually pray for our leaders. Let us ask God to raise up more leaders of the stature of Donald Burns Sangster. His death is a challenge to all Jamaicans, especially to the youth of our fair land.

"Last year, I was in London during the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. I telephoned Sir Donald. I gave him the assurance of my prayers for the Conference.

"I need your prayers now," he said.

Across the mighty city of London I prayed with him for God's guidance on the Conference and for wisdom for himself.

"This ended, he used these words, 'Thank you, R. O. C. This is the best thing that has happened to me since my arrival in London.'

"In many of his public utterances Sir Donald emphasized the value of being a Christian. He also spoke of the help received from attendance at public worship. He worshipped at St. Michael's Church, Kingston.

Dedicated service

"Today, we thank God for the dedicated service rendered to Jamaica by Donald Burns Sangster.

"We thank God for Sir Alexander Bustamante, who led Sir Donald to political maturity.

"We pray for God's guidance upon the Honourable Hugh Lawson Shearer, on whom Sir Donald's mantle has fallen.

"We pray for Mr. Norman Washington Manley, Leader of the Opposition. We pray for all who shoulder the responsibility of Government.

"We pray for her Majesty the Queen. We pray for her representative, Our Governor-General. We pray for our leaders in every walk of life.

"We pray for love, for peace, and for harmony in our nation. We pray for equality, liberty and the rule of law, all on which true democracy rests.

A reminder

"We are here to pay honour to an illustrious son of Jamaica. But we are also here to be reminded of the certainty of death.

Three weeks ago we celebrated Easter. The message of Easter is the Resurrection. In the 15th Chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul uses these words: 'Christ is risen from the dead: and became the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death: by man came also the resurrection of the dead.'

"Because Christ rose from the dead, we too shall rise from the dead. Death is not the end. Death is the beginning of a new life with God.

"While we mourn the loss of Donald Burns Sangster, let us remind ourselves that death is no respecter of persons.

The glories of our blood and state

Are shadows, not substantial things;

There is no armour against fate;

Death lays his icy hand on kings:

Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down,

And in the dust be equal made

With the poor, crooked scythe and spade.

"Death is an episode for which we should all prepare. The Christian believes that the best preparation for death is to receive Christ as Saviour, and to follow Christ as Lord.

Many of us are satisfied with life. We have prepared our wills. We have assigned our earthly possessions. Have we asked ourselves if we are ready to face God?

"We, too, may be stricken suddenly as was Donald Burns Sangster. I humbly say to everyone who hears me: This very night thy soul may be required of thee. Seek forgiveness. A loving God awaits thee.

"This is the faith of the Christian. This was the faith of Sir Donald Sangster. Without Christian standards, Jamaica will be doomed. Without Christian standards, Jamaica will lose her soul.

"While our thoughts are centred upon the noble life of a great Jamaican, let us remember that our nation will be exalted by the genuine quality of the life of each citizen.

"Indeed, our earthly citizenship is temporal. Our true citizenship is in heaven. Earthly

kingdoms have waxed and waned. Earthly kingdoms have crumbled. Earthly kingdoms will continue to crumble. The spiritual kingdom has no end.

Crisis hour

"Good education, sound economy and excellent communication are necessary. But these alone cannot make good people. Man's heart is desperately wicked. Man needs a change of heart. This change can only be brought about by utter surrender to our Lord Jesus Christ.

"In this crisis hour, let us place ourselves and our nation in the hands of God. Jamaica, under God, will be a praise upon the earth. Jamaica, under God, will be a gem in the Commonwealth. Jamaica, under God, will be a glory to every Jamaican.

"Unto God we commit his servant Donald Burns Sangster, Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, Prime Minister of Jamaica, statesman, humanitarian, friend, Christian.

"May the memory of Sir Donald inspire us, in unity, in peace and in love, to serve Jamaica."

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