

MEMORIAL SERVICE
At the
Methodist Chapel, High Street, Reigate.
On 17th November, 1943.

Organ Recital: "Wait Patiently for Him.

Hymn No. 1: "Oh for a Thousand Tongues to Sing"

Prayer

Hymn No. 108: "Jesu the very Thought of Thee"

Bible Readings: 23rd Psalm, St. John and Revelations.

Hymn No. 831: "Give me the Wings of Faith to Rise."

Address: by the Rev. J. P. Veall.

This Memorial Service at Reigate is part of a larger company gathered at Wesley's Chapel; Tooting; in Hull, and other parts of the country where Mr. Rank had either worked in his association with the Methodist Church or had established one of his business centres.

We are part, as I say, of this larger company, all spread out over various parts of the country to—day, singing the same hymns to the same tunes, as chosen by Mr. Rank himself, and joining in the same prayers. We are a part, therefore, of the larger fellowship gathered together in these Memorial Services at the same hour, this afternoon, and I suppose it is expected that I should try to say I something by way of tribute to this remarkable man and his unique career.

Born in the middle of the Crimean War, he has come to the end of his long journey in this Fifth year of World War No. 2. It is, therefore, of some significance if you split his life into two halves, the first half belongs to the 19th Century, and the second part belongs to the 20th Century. I think that gives you a clue to many characteristics in his career.

If you think of Mr. Rank to begin with as a rugged individual you will see that the *laissez faire* period of the last Century gave considerable scope for a man of his qualities, and by his industry and force of character this sturdy and far—sighted Yorkshireman made use of his opportunities to the full. By the time he became a citizen of the 20th Century he had reached a position of influence and power in the industrial life of his time, and if sometimes the 19th Century projected itself into the 20th Century that was a perfectly natural process for a man of strong and independent judgment.

It is, however, Mr. Rank's connection with Methodism that I want specially to say just a word or two about this afternoon. Mr. Rank was from the day of his conversion a man of strong religious convictions and utterly devoted to the welfare of his Church. He served in most of the lay offices of the Church, i.e. Circuit Steward; Class Leader; and Sunday School Superintendent. Mr. Rank was also for many years a representative on the Conference and served on the Connexional Committees for Home Mission Meetings; Temperance and Social Welfare; and, of course, for the London Mission. In his middle life considerable pressure was brought to bear by some people that he should become a Local Preacher, but he declined the invitation because as he often told his friends he felt he could do his best work in the Sunday School. Probably he was right in that. In my days at Wimbledon I have seen him in charge of his Sunday School in Tooting, and I thought he never looked happier than when he was at work there among the boys and girls of this Church. I think of one of them now - one whom I knew intimately — who has achieved great distinction in this War as an Air Force Chaplain. I think of that man as one of Mr. Rank's Sunday School Scholars at Tooting, one of the boys he shepherded, and there are other men in the Ministry who would say the same.

Mr. Rank was a very successful business man, who gave large sums of money to his Church and other good causes. Many people did not realise that in the days of his full vigour he was just as ungrudging in the time and service he gave to his various offices in the day to day life of his Church, and in regard to the motives which promoted these princely gifts I am sure that two things can be said about him without any hesitation, and the first is that he applied his money with a sense of stewardship for the causes that he believed were best worth supporting, and in the second place he saw clearly that money used with a sense of direction and stewardship could become an extension of personality.

Mr. Rank knew at first hand what John and Charles Wesley spoke of as the experience of a warm heart, and longed that other people should share it too. I believe that line of Charles Wesley: "Oh let me commend my Saviour to you" was the secret of most of Mr. Rank's giving. In his own way he did it first of all in his own native City of Hull, and he did it later in Tooting, but it was not enough to do it in Hull and Tooting, he wanted to do it in all sorts of places at the same time. He wanted the same message proclaimed in the vernaculars of the Counties, in Manchester, Liverpool, Bristol and Sheffield, and so he poured out lavish sums to encourage the building of Central Missions in big Centres.

Mr. Rank believed he was carrying out the great motto of Wesley that was expressed in the line: "Oh let me commend n Saviour to you." The same motive was behind his support of Missions Overseas, where modern up—to-date well equipped buildings with schools and hospitals in great Countries like India and China are an abiding Memorial to his gifts and to the motive of Evangelism which lay behind.

What I have always liked about Mr. Rank has been the fact that in every one of the Halls his money has helped to build there was always full provision for a modern fully equipped school, in which he believed with all his heart and soul, and there was also provision for Social Work in the Mission Halls.

Incidentally, apart from Social work, among other things in his younger days he was a keen cricketer. You may have seen him play. He played regularly right up into middle life, as you would expect a keen Yorkshireman to do.

We in the South can think with gratitude of the princely gift some 10 years ago to his native City of £300,000, out of which provision is permanently made for easing the old age of numbers of citizens in his native City.

There was always a touch of Yorkshire warmth and kindness in Mr. Rank's friendship to all of us. He was a man who was most simple and unostentatious in his style of living, and his own personal habits. A lover of home—life of the finest type. These 19th Century roots, of which I spoke at the beginning, we shall not see the like again.

Mr. Rank has left an abiding memory of a high character. God grant that we may make the best use of the plant that has been established, and as we do it I am sure we shall be helping to fulfil the Master's motive of this man's life and work.

Prayer.