

**MEMORIAL SERVICE to the late MR. JOSEPH RANK, held at the  
CENTRAL HALL, RENSHAW STREET, LIVERPOOL.**

**on Wednesday, 17th November 1943 at 2.30 p.m.**

**Conducted by the Rev. G. H. Taylor, Minister of Central Hall. Assisted by  
the Rev. Charles H. Hulbert of High Barnet.**

The Rev. C. H. Taylor opened the Service with the following words:- 'We have met at this hour to call to mind Joseph Rank, our Brother, and fellow worker, whom God has called home to himself, and to give thanks to God for him, and for his life, and for his service. Let us worship God.'

The Congregation then sang the Hymn:

'O for a thousand tongues to sing,  
My great Redeemer's praise,  
The glories of my God and King,  
The triumphs of his grace.'

Prayers were then offered up as follows:-

'I am the Resurrection and the life, saith the lord. He that believeth in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.'

'O God, giver of Life, the Conqueror of Death, our help in every time of trouble, comfort us, give us grace in the presence of death to worship Thee, so that we may have sure hope of eternal life and be enabled to put our whole trust in Thy goodness and mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

'Almighty God, Father of all mercies, and Giver of all comfort, deal graciously, we pray Thee, in this hour, with those who mourn the loss of him whom they loved and cherished. Let them cast every care on Thee, so that they may know the consolation of Thy love, through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

Then followed one or two brief passages from the Scriptures:-

The Twenty-third Psalm - 'The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want...'

St. John. 14. 'Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and will receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also. Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.'

Romans 8. 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword?... Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

Revelations. 7. - The Words of the Seer of Patmos. 'These are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the Throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and He that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat, For the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes.'

The second hymn 'Give me the wings of faith to rise' was then sung.

**The Rev. Charles H. Hulbert of High Barnet, then gave the following Address:-**

'We know why we are here this afternoon, I have been asked by the family of Mr. Joseph Rank to come from London to speak to you for a few minutes. As I say, we all know why we are here: we are here to pay our last tribute to Joseph Rank, and I suppose there will be three things that will be in our memories after to-day for many a day.

The first will be his achievement. Mr. Rank was the Head of Joseph Rank, Limited, and it will be interesting to you to know that at this time there are similar services to this being held in Cardiff, Hull, here in Liverpool, in Glasgow, and two services in London, and then, of course, the service which is being held in Reigate at this very moment. Representatives of Joseph Rank, Ltd. are at each of these services, and I very much doubt there is any other man in the world to whom such a thing could happen.

Most of us know, of course, that from humble origins and small beginnings, Mr. Rank built up that great business — one of the most wonderful businesses in the world.

I have, of course, some knowledge. My father and my family have been in the Corn and Milling business for 90 years, and 50 years ago I was selling Joseph Rank's flour. You may be rather surprised at that, but I was a traveller before I was a minister, and I learned more on the road than I learned at College, and so, of course, I have some understanding, at any rate, of Mr. Rank's career because of my associations.

I think it would be a good thing if you would remember this, that is, if you are going to understand Joseph Rank's career, he lived more than half his life in the reign of 'Queen Victoria, and was brought up in a school where they learned poetry, when lines of Shakespeare were believed:-

'There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which taken at the flood,  
Leads on to Fortune.'

It is quite true that Mr. Rank took the tide, but there was no chance or accident about it. I am quite sure about that. He did not achieve because of chance, it was because of sheer downright ability and because of utter devotion that he built up that great business. He could say: 'This one thing I do,' and he did one thing.

Those who knew him intimately, of course, will agree with me when I say there was something uncanny about his judgment of things. I mean to say he had real vision, a gift of vision; he was a prophet. He could see beforehand, and he not only knew markets but he knew men. The secret of his success of this great business was his judgment of men as well as of markets. During the last 35 years I have been very intimate with Mr. Rank. For twelve months I was his minister. The first year of the War I was at Redhill and saw him constantly and had many talks with him.

One day as I sat in his room I asked him what were the marks he looked for in the minds of the men he was engaging for jobs in his firm. I said: 'Suppose I came as a candidate for a job as a commercial traveller, what would you look for in me?' and he said this interesting thing. He said: 'First of all, I should look for integrity and character; that is the first thing I want in anybody I employ; I want perfect honesty. The second thing I want is temperance. I look for temperance because a man that drinks will some day or other give way to dishonesty, and the third thing I look for is Religion. You see, I believe this, that a man cannot keep the last six Commandments if he does not keep the first four. The fourth thing I look for is Push and Initiative, and if a man has the whole four, he is my man.' I was very interested to hear him say that.

His achievement was not Chance, but sheer ability, deep thought and wide observation, and it was by constant toil he built up his great business, and to him you can apply the following proverb:-

'Seest thou a man diligent in business,  
He shall stand before Kings.'

I think the second thought that will be in our memory from to-day is his amazing generosity. He has impressed the world with his gifts. There has never been anything quite like it. I suppose it will be true to say that he has given more money to Christianity than any other man since the days of Jesus. He simply gave millions away, and because of his generosity he had many critics. Well, you can remember this, there are other men who have built up great fortunes in this City of Liverpool, but they have not given them away. They have spent it on themselves, but Mr. Rank did not spend it on himself. Many men spend it on yachts, parties, take big holidays, have shooting estates, and pleasures, but Mr. Rank, he was like John Bunyan — There was a man — ‘The more he gave away, the more he had,’ and he believed in John Wesley’s rule, ‘Get all you can, save all you can, give all you can,’ and he gave almost always for a Religious interest. He was very particular about that. It is quite true to say that he gave to all Charities. I know he did. For instance, I have often appealed to him on behalf of people who were in need and who were distressed and I have never once asked him for help for a genuine case, in vain. Even in Hull I never once brought him a case of a man in need without getting some very good help. That ought to be said, but, of course, his great interest was giving to Religion. He did it, well, because of Religious propaganda purposes. He also gave vast sums to Overseas Missions. For many years he maintained six Missionaries, in India, Africa and China, and paid all their expenses, but his concern in this country was for the wage — earning multitudes, and he had to do with the building of great Central Halls like this. We have just about 100 in this country, and he had a hand in building most of them, and gave very liberally towards them. He started the work that was carried on in them, but it was with set purpose; he believed that Jesus Christ was the Saviour of the World, and the only Saviour of the World, and the way to save the World is to make known Jesus, and so he gave his money to these Religious Centres, so that through them men might hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Saviour of men. This one thing he knew very well, that people are only saved by Jesus according to their Faith, and Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, and it is by the preaching of God’s Word that man is saved. In Glasgow they have a motto that ‘Prosperity is by the preaching of the Word’ and so he believed the best thing he could do for the working classes in this country was to provide a working class kind of Church, so he not only gave money for the Halls, but gave of his services too, as a Sunday School worker for 60 years. For instance, I can tell you that in the last 20 years, for the building of Halls to carry on our Missions, Mr. Rank has given something like £450,000. He not only gave in a princely fashion, but he also did something else that some men do not do. He was a great Church Worker, and for 60 years he was a Sunday School Worker, and he never missed Sunday School on a Sunday.

He came to London many years ago; I remember him coming some time before 1910, and the first thing he did on Sunday was to go to Tooting Methodist Church and offer to teach in the Sunday School. They said they had no Sunday School classes vacant, and Mr. Rank then said: “Well, have you no naughty boys? I will take a class of the naughtiest boys in the school,” and he took these boys and became their teacher.

He then had to do with the building of the great Central Hall at Tooting and when that Hall was opened he became the Sunday School Superintendent, and he was always there, mornings and afternoons.

He organised that great Sunday School with over 1,200 scholars, with the same care and precision that he organised his business. It was one of the most wonderful Sunday Schools we have in London.

When Mr. Rank was about 60 years of age, his health was not quite so good and it called for rest. His Doctor advised him to rest on Sunday, but he would not rest on Sunday. When told he ought to give up his Sunday School he replied: “Not if I know it. I will give up business on Saturday and I will rest on Saturday, but I am not giving up my Sunday School.”

He later went to live at Reigate, and even then he came every Sunday morning and afternoon to Tooting, and brought his lunch in his pocket, and had his lunch in the Vestry. He then took his afternoon class, and then went home. That was Joseph Rank during the years.

Right up to the very end of his life he maintained his position at that Sunday School, and was going every Sunday until a few weeks ago.

Now, I suppose I am the person who saw him last. I think possibly I saw him last of anybody here. I saw him a fortnight ago yesterday at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and I think that would be the last time anyone here saw him. We were talking together, and he said: "Nothing gives me more consolation to day than the work I have done in the Sunday School."

There is one other thought that will remain in our memory from to-day and, that is, his Personal Religion behind it all. I would like to ask you: "How do you explain the life of Joseph Rank?" You ought to be able to explain it, because it is this; he was different from other men — there was something different about him. He had all the temptations of a wealthy man, and wealthy men have more temptations than poor men. When Jesus said: "It is harder for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle," he said something true. It is not only hard for a rich man, it is ten thousand times harder for a rich man's son, and Joseph Rank had all the temptations of wealth; The World, the Flesh and the evil flung open their doors to him as to others. He had all these temptations, yet he never yielded to them. He lived simply and carefully and beautifully. How do you explain it? You cannot explain it apart from what he called his "Christian Conversion," There it is, right at the beginning of everything. There was a day in his life when he discovered, as he said, Jesus Christ as his Saviour, and his never failing Friend. When I talked to him he often used to say: "My Never Failing Friend."

I was his Minister for a year and one day, I had with me a young Minister named Joe Brice. I took him with me to see Joseph Rank, and when we sat down in Mr. Rank's house at Reigate he turned to this young man and said: "Now, Mr. Brice, you are converted, are you not? Tell us how you were converted," and so this boy Joe Brice told his wonderful story of how up to the age of 16 he had never had sufficient food, and then things changed for him, and he came under the influence of Methodists, and became what we call "Converted," and he became a Methodist Minister. Then when Joe Brice finished his story, he turned to Mr. Rank and said: "Now, Mr. Rank, you are converted are you not? Tell us your story," and so the old man of 87 told his story, how that he went to the Church of England, but did not agree with the doctrine of the Vicar, so he left and joined the Methodists and became the friend of T. R. Ferens, who became Managing Director of Reckitts, and of Alfred Gelder, the great Architect of Hull. They went to Kingston Methodist Church; then one Sunday morning H.P. Hughes came to conduct a Mission. He said: "I went with my two friends to hear this great Preacher from London, and I did not care for his Sermon, but at the end of it he gave out a Hymn, with a Chorus, the Hymn was: "'Tis the promise of God, for salvation to give, and there was a Chorus at the end:-

"Hallelujah, 'tis done,  
I believe on the Son,  
I am saved by the blood  
of the crucified One."

I said: 'That is what I have been wanting.'" Mr. Hughes said: "Sing that chorus a second time," and they sang it a second time. Now, Mr. Brice, all that I am, and all I have done, dates back to that moment when I sang:- "Hallelujah, 'tis done, I believe on the Son, I am saved by the blood, of the crucified One." That was the beginning of it, and that is the explanation of his life. Something came to him of God and Jesus Christ that gave him something, and so he became a deeply religious man.

One day when we were walking round his garden at Reigate he stopped and said: "The best man I have ever known was a Methodist Worker named Thomas Champness. One day when I lived in Hull I was talking to him and he said:

'Mr. Rank, I am in a race.' I said: "Race", what race are you in? How old are you? '69,' he said, 'and getting nearer to Heaven every minute.' I said: 'You can't run at 69, your heart's bad.' 'Yes, my heart's bad, but I can run.' I asked him what sort of race he was in, and he said: 'I am in a race to be the best man God made this side of Heaven' and, he went on, 'Mr.

Rank, I want you to be in that race,' I said, 'I am in it, I lose my temper a bit, but I am in it,'" and that was typical of him.

His favourite hymn was:-

"O, Happy day,  
High heaven that heard the solemn vow,  
That vow renewed shall daily hear,  
Till in Life's latest hour I bow,  
And bless in death a bond so dear."

and with this I finish my few words this afternoon, as we say our last tribute to his great name.'

The Rev. G. H. Taylor then gave the Blessing, and the

Organist, Mr. Obiah Jones, gave a very beautiful and impressive rendering of Chopin's Funeral March.