

**MEMORIAL SERVICE for the late MR. JOSEPH RANK, held at St. John's
Methodist Church, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow,
at
2.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 17th November, 1943.**

The officiating Ministers Were:-

The Rev. E. H. Hines, Methodist Chairman for Scotland.

The Rev. R. H. Wills, Methodist Mission, Greenhead Halls, Bridgeton.

The Rev. B. E. Woods, Maryhill Methodist Mission, Glasgow.

Organist — Mr. J. Caley.

A very representative gathering was present in the Church.

Hymn No. 1.

Prayer by The Rev, B. E. Woods.

Hymn No. 108.

Lesson read by The Rev. R. H. Wills — 14th Chapter of St. John's Gospel.

Hymn No. 831.

Address: by The Rev. E. H. Hines:-.

Some men are called to play a part in life in very humble circumstances, while others are charged with great responsibilities, and have in their hands powers that are, at times, so great a burden to be almost overwhelming. I think Joseph Rank was among the latter class.

When he brought his life to an end on Saturday evening last, there was brought to a close a remarkable career that must have had few parallels in many respects.

From his early beginnings that were very humble he came to be a man of immense wealth and business power, far surpassing anything, I imagine, he pictured in his earlier days.

When I lived in Hull, an old man told me that he could remember Joseph Rank coming to his shop for orders for flour. I do not know whether that is true or whether it is the imaginings of an old man, but he thought it was true, at any rate. He was never ashamed of those days.

A few years ago he said to a certain Baronet staying at the same hotel in hull: "Sir William, I want you to come with me on a little trip tomorrow," and on the morrow these two men went not to that fine mill that Mr. Rank owned in Hull, but to the little mill where he started his career: it seemed to hold for him a great affection.

I suppose he was a man who had a genius for big business. There are stories told of his foresight, his uncanny sensing of the markets and the prices, that is quite beyond my understanding, and many other people's, too.

I have been much in contact with people who worked for him. They used say that he gave what he thought was a just wage, and again and again they went on and said: "He is very good to us all," and I know of at least one young man studying for our Ministry, who was in his employ, to whom he went out of his way to be exceptionally kind in his gift of books to him. Others I have met who have been the recipients of his private personal generosity, but he was never a man who regarded lightly the wealth that came to him. He was a deeply religious man and he regarded 'what he did with his money as a trust from God, and he was not just a philanthropist, he was far, far more than that.

When he was younger, for many years in London he attended morning worship at Tooting, and then I am told he had a frugal meal in one of the vestries in order that he might remain for the afternoon Sunday School over which he presided.

I know that up to the end he attended his morning worship in Redhill, and the minister who is minister recently there, told me that he was one of his kindest and most sympathetic listeners, - a sincere worshipper in that service.

As most of the newspapers have reported, he was a generous supporter of our Methodist Church, that support has been on a munificent scale. Most of them speak in the figure of a million — I do not know and I should not like to say. I certainly should not put it less, but I do not think anyone quite knows how much it has been. For a number of years already, it is said that his income has been devoted to a Benevolent Trust, which is for the purposes of our Church work. Those of you here (though not all of you) know that he was known in our Methodist Church as the “anonymous donor,” We all knew who it was, but we spoke of him as the anonymous donor.” He never gave rashly, although liberally: he always wanted to help people who would help themselves.

I remember as a young minister writing to him for some scheme, and I had a personal letter in reply saying: “You want to raise so much, I will give you the last £100.” The members of the Church had to raise the other. His views were very decided, very decided indeed and yet he was very careful in the causes that he helped. They had to pass his critical examination. I could tell you stories of that, not very many years ago now, a certain scheme that had asked for his generosity. He examined all the plans himself, he made suggestions for alterations and improvements to those plans, and many of those schemes must have been coming to him, but he never thrust them on one side and said either yes or no without giving them careful examination.

His help in erecting large Mission Halls up and down Britain (which some of you Methodists attend) to reach the people outside the Church was very near to his heart, and vast sums of money has he given in order to further such projects, and Glasgow has been the recipient in that respect, at least, of his generosity.

In the Councils of the Church, in the life of the Church, he has given his guidance that was always very valuable and appreciated, but apart from that, some of you may have read that he inaugurated a fund in Hull - a Benevolent Fund - for the poor of the city. I happened to be in Hull at that time and the ministers of the city had to vouch for the cases that were to receive of his goodness, and I can assert that very many poor and needy people in that depressed time were greatly blessed by his goodness, but I think it is true to say that his wealth never hardened him and his giving never became automatic.

One day a deputation sailed upon him, as many deputations did, in order to get some help for a large scheme that they had in hand. They put before him their scheme with its difficulties, all the arguments that they could, that might impress him and bring forth his help. He did not seem to be impressed, and then the minister told of a little newspaper lad who was selling his newspapers and out of each dozen that he sold he was contributing to this scheme of the Church, and without a moment's hesitation Mr. Rank took his cheque book and contributed the sum that the officials had asked from him. It is really true that his heart was easily touched by the generosity of the poor people. It is such glimpses as these, I think, that one gets an impression of the real man.

Nothing that I may say will, in any way, estimate his power - his power in the business world you know better than I do — what power he exercised, and I suppose it is almost impossible to sum up the value of his service to the community in many, many ways, but we come here today, do we not? in order to pay our respects and thanks and thank God for the man who used his talents and his wealth, not for himself but in high and holy purposes and to Christ-like things, who was not spoiled by power and money, but who made his wealth one of the expressions of his devotion to his Lord and to his God.

A man who was able to build a vast business, and yet while he was doing it, could spend his Sundays in talking and teaching boys and girls the way of life as he understood and knew it in Christ Jesus. To a man like that we come to pay our tribute. There is quality there, you know. It is the quality of the man, not simply as a business man but as a man of character, a man of deep and religious faith, and further, no one can estimate, as I say, the value of his work to hospitals, Churches and poor people, and I should never like to attempt it, but this I know that he was indeed a worthy steward of all that was entrusted to him by God and he strove to qualify the name of God in the ways for which he was best fitted. He loved his Church, he loved his Lord and he has striven through nearly ninety years to show himself approved.

We honour him, we thank God for him, and with those he loves we mourn today and pray that the comfort and the blessing of God may rest upon them as they think of him and cherish loving memories of him.

Prayer and Benediction by the Rev. E. H. Hines.

Voluntary, Hymn No. 744.