

ADDRESS by the Rev. Ernest D. Green, M.A.
(Chairman of the Cardiff & Swansea District)
at
Roath Park Methodist Church, Cardiff, on Wednesday,
17th November, 1943.

We come into this world with nothing, and we go out with nothing. We are here today to remember Joseph Rank who was a wonderful man during his great length of days, and was called to success and prosperity, and we honour his memory.

Joseph Rank was born into a very different world in the middle of the last century to the world in which we are living today, and during the first 50 years or so of his life he was one of a great many Englishmen who, making good use of the opportunities which God had granted to him, achieved great success and learning. He began in a very simple way and when one thinks of Joseph Rank as we saw him from day to day moving about, carrying the burden of his years so well it seems almost impossible to believe that in those early days he was employed as a boy in a little mill, sweeping up the mill and mending the bags. He used the opportunities God gave him for great work. He was a man who was diligent in business; when he was engaged in business it was with all his might and all his strength that he gave himself to that great task. He must have been a man with very distinguished abilities in order that he might make the use he did of the opportunities which came his way, and when he had acquired his wealth he used it as a very helpful steward of God, believing that the way in which he was using it was helping to further the interests of the Kingdom of God and the Methodist Church into which he had been born, and in which he was born again, and to which he was greatly attached. How great his liberality was no-one can know. I do not know how often I have heard people say that this gift is from a well known donor who is anonymous, but whom we all know, but Joseph Rank himself never advertised his gifts; he gave them anonymously, but in his case what was done in secret has indeed been blazoned from the housetops, and every-one of us knows how great his liberality was.

Amongst the list of those who have benefited by his liberality are the Methodists of South Wales. When I came into this district 10 years ago I found it almost submerged by debts and it was he who has made it possible for us to reduce those debts by £50,000 and more than half that amount has come as gifts from himself, and, therefore, I should be very ungracious indeed if as I remember him to-day I did not give thanks for the great generosity which he has shown and the great encouragement that he has given to me in the work the Church has entrusted to me.

Yes, I say that we are here to-day in order that we may remember Joseph Rank, but I am rather inclined to think that if we could hear the voice of Joseph Rank this afternoon he would say: "Never mind about remembering Joseph Rank, remember Jesus Christ," because Joseph Rank's faith in Jesus Christ was simple deep and profound; it gave to him a sense of assurance and he delighted to bear witness to what it had meant to him. When he came and took the chair at any of our public meetings, no-one ever expected Joseph Rank to make a long or eloquent speech, but at all those meetings over which he presided we should have been very surprised indeed if Joseph Rank had not borne witness to the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in his own individual life; he believed that it was a sure sign of a good Methodist and a good Christian man that he should be prepared anywhere and everywhere to testify as to the faith that was in him, and we remember Joseph Rank, but we remember Jesus Christ for in this building whenever we meet together we meet in the name of Jesus Christ and he is in our midst.

There was once an old man very nearly at the end of his life who wrote a letter to a young man, a young man who had to carry on the work that the old man had done, and the old man reading the letter could not help feeling a bit nervous about this young man whether he would

be capable of facing up to the difficult tasks before him, and that man St. Paul tells Timothy, to remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead, of the House of David.

I think Joseph Rank would say to us, all of us younger than he was, you have to carry on the work, you are passing through critical days, you are bound to be tested, tried and sometimes almost feel that the task is too great. "I have found the secret he would tell us: "Jesus Christ has never failed me, I put my trust in Him and He has never failed me," and I believe that his advice to everyone of us as we face life in these days would just be that:

Remember Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the World, our Saviour, our Redeemer, our Brother who died upon the cross for our salvation to conquer death and bring life and immortality to all. He does not fail a man who puts his trust in Him. Remember Him, He will not fail us whatever the future has in store for us as individual men or as a nation, and because we can put our trust in Christ Jesus we come to a service of this kind, and we know perfectly well that service would be incomplete without a song of praise, 'Jesus, who by His death conquered death' offers life to each and every one of us. Let us therefore, thank God that Jesus Christ remains the same yesterday, today, and for ever.

Amen.