

Dr. Allan A. MacRae

I have been asked to give a charge to the graduates. Why do they need a charge? Once I left the light on in my car all night long. In the morning I had to give it a charge or it would not go. Well, I think these fellows will go whether I give them a charge or not! But they have been burning the midnight oil. Many of them have for several years been studying hard, working hard to get through. I don't think they need something to start them now. I think they need a rest now. I think perhaps that should be the first element of a charge. A Christian should take care of himself.

I used to find that there were two types of ministers. There were those who had an endowed church somewhere where they could preach once a week and spend the rest of their time doing what they felt like. There were others who saw the needs and the opportunities and worked so hard that they drove themselves into an early grave. I would like to charge you to take a position somewhere in between these two. To work and to work hard, but to keep yourself in shape. I don't think you need to be started now. I think after all you've done, all the midnight oil you've consumed, I think you need a vacation now. You need a rest.

I heard the other day about a minister who for his last three years in a certain charge never took his vacation at all. Then demanded extra money for the time that he had not taken for vacation! I said that man ought to pay something to the church instead of asking them for extra money! They gave the vacation to keep him in condition, to give him a chance for a rest which he needs and which you need if you are going to do the kind of work that you should do. So I say it is our duty to keep ourselves in condition so that we will last. I've lasted quite a while. (Laughter). I think part of the reason is that the Lord has enabled me to learn how to keep myself in condition.

But then, what is next? What should I charge you? Paul said, I give you this charge, he said to Timothy. Preach the Word. I know of nothing that is more important than that the Word of God be at the very center of your ministry and of your life. We can learn many things by observation. Human study, human activity can learn many things. But of the things of God there is only one source and that is God's Word.

We cannot learn by our imagination to know God. We must learn through His Word. God speaks in the Word. You have spent much time in these three years learning to interpret that Word, to study it carefully, to read it in the original. Some verses are still obscure.

I was looking at a verse in Galatians the other day and I found that a great scholar had said there are 240 different interpretations of this verse! Now I'm going to give you the right one! There is much that is obscure, in the Word. There are too many people that are ready to interpret the clear by the obscure. Get the clear and God's Word has much that is clear and as you study it and work into it more and more will open before you. God wants you not to put your ideas, your fantasies, your imaginations--He wants you to preach the Word of God.

Shortly after I graduated from college I was visiting in a city I had not been in before and I dropped into a church that I was unfamiliar with, and I found that the minister was preaching on Ireland During the Last Fifty Years. He gave