

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT W. ANDERSON

Howard Carlson

God's standards for a faithful pastor – Ezekiel 13:4-16

America's pulpits are suffering a great crisis of identity over what constitutes biblical preaching. This was also true among God's people 2600 years ago. We must realize we are in a great spiritual war, and defensive as well as offensive steps must be taken.

In Ezek 13:4-5, 10, God tells what is required by Him of His spokesmen. We derive the positive precepts from negatives in the text.

- First, there must be involvement in the issues of the day and not a convenient sidestepping, like a fox in the wilderness which flees at every hint of danger (v. 4).
- Second, there are "gaps" in the defensive walls of God's people which must be plugged. Our children need the holes in their knowledge and emotional responses to be filled by the faithful preaching and teaching of the truth of God (v. 4).
- Third, a "hedge" or surrounding barrier must be built around God's people. Theology and sound biblical preaching should be designed to present a consistent, biblical world view. Thus a strong barrier against the world, the flesh and the devil (Ps 119:11), would prepare another generation to glorify and enjoy God (v. 4).
- Fourth, the truth must be preached and not popular fads, pop-psychology, or other fluff which seems to steam from our nation's pulpits. Calvin perhaps rightly said that in so doing, such preachers have "no zeal for God's glory." Even when the truth is not in fashion, it is the only sure way for God's faithful spokesman to please Him (vv. 6, 10-11).
- Fifth, the justice of God and the certainty of judgment for sin must not be minimized by unbiblical, false assurance (v. 10).

Here is the true interpretation of this passage. It refers to God's spokesmen and not to literal building of walls and gaps but: "To wit, the prophets of Israel which prophesy" (v. 16).

I have alluded to this passage because in my observation, it was to a very great extent fulfilled in the long and fruitful ministry of Dr. Robert Anderson. Early on I dubbed him "McInHodge." His preaching style was that of Carl McIntire and his content was that of Charles Hodge. His sermons did not daub "untempered mortar," but with the tempered cement of sound biblical exposition he fortified his people against society's current ills. While all about him pastors were building "hedges" with fluff and the "spectacular," Dr. Anderson continued faithful—week after week—with the deeper things, the theology of the Word. His ministry of discipleship has

stood the test. He has left a band of well-trained servants to carry on the work of Christ. For this we salute him who has been more faithful in this than we.