

their fathers had persecuted all the prophets, even killing the ones who had prophesied the coming of Jesus Christ, "The Just One." Then Stephen said, "Ye have been now the betrayers and the murderers" of this same Jesus.

It was because of Jesus that Stephen was stoned to death. He dared to hold Him up before their eyes for just whom Jesus Christ was, His person, His eternality, His being the fulfillment of all the Old Testament prophecies, and that He truly was the Son of God, the "Prince of Peace." This is why Stephen was stoned to death!

The Apostle Paul — we honor him because he was the greatest missionary the world has ever known. The record of his life and his achievements is a record of just how much God can bless the efforts of even one man who is determined to make Jesus Christ the Lord of his life.

It is appropriate at this point for me to refer to the writings of the founder and first president of the Independent Board, Dr. J. Gresham Machen. He wrote a book entitled, *The Origin of Paul's Religion*. In this book he goes to great lengths to describe Paul's wisdom and his missionary zeal in carrying out the Great Commission.

Dr. Machen writes: "His [Paul's] desire to plant the gospel in places where it had never been heard led him into an adventurous life which may well excite the astonishment of the modern man. The catalogue of hardships which Paul himself gives incidentally in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians shows that the Book of Acts has been very conservative in its account of the hardships and perils which the apostle endured; evidently the half has not been told! The results, moreover, were commensurate with the hardships that they cost. Despite the labors of others, it was

Paul who planted the gospel in a real chain of the great cities; it was he who conceived most clearly the thought of a mighty church universal which should embrace both Jew and Gentile, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free in a common faith and a common life. When he addressed himself to the Church at Rome, in a tone of authority, as the apostle to the Gentiles who was ready to preach the gospel to those who were at Rome also, his lofty claim was supported, despite the fact that the Church at Rome had itself been founded by others, by the mere extent of his labors.

"The really distinctive achievement of Paul, however, does not consist in the mere geographical extension of the frontiers of the Church, important as that work was; it lies in a totally different sphere — in the hidden realm of thought. What was really standing in the way of the Gentile mission was not the physical barriers presented by the sea and the mountain, it was rather the great barrier of religious principle."

Then Dr. Machen speaks of the Old Testament interpretation of laws and principles which had by now been twisted and misinterpreted by the Jews in such a way as would throw insurmountable barriers up to keep the great majority of Gentiles out of the Church universal. Dr. Machen pointed out that Paul could have urged upon both the Jews and the Gentiles the idea that the only way to carry on the broader work was quietly to keep the more burdensome requirements of the Law in abeyance. But in response to this idea, Dr. Machen said, "This method would have been the method of 'liberalism'! And it would have been utterly futile. It would have meant an irreparable injury to the religious conscience; it would have sacrificed the good conscience of the missionary and the authoritativeness of his