

Death of God

WHEREAS a movement sponsored by religious radicals which attacks the existence of God has recently been revived, aided, and abetted by unusually strong publicity in the press where it has been popularly termed the "God Is Dead" movement, fostered and defended on church-related campuses by faculty members whose salaries are paid through the free-will offerings of Christian people, with secular schools such as the University of British Columbia offering courses in what is openly and brazenly described as "Christian Atheism," with leading clerics now declaring our age to be a post-Christian era; and

WHEREAS the movement is actually as old as mankind, spurting to the fore at periodic intervals then dying out again, with the current phrase, "God is dead," being Nietzschean, based on a statement by the German philosopher, Friedrich W. Nietzsche, in the 19th century; and

WHEREAS the idea is not only atheistic but Communistic, a hand-in-glove fulfillment of the declaration by Karl Marx, "The idea of God is the keynote of perverted society. It must be destroyed. The true root of liberty, equality, and culture is atheism"; and

WHEREAS the principal tenets of this "Christian atheism" are being propagated by certain church-school theologians, such as Dr. Thomas J. J. Altizer (Episcopalian), associate professor of religion at Emory University (Methodist) in Atlanta; Dr. William Hamilton (Baptist), professor of theology at Colgate-Rochester Divinity School (American Baptist) in Rochester, New York; and Dr. Paul M. Van Buren (Episcopalian), associate professor of religion at Temple University in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS these theologians do not mean merely that people today are acting as if God were dead, nor that He never lived except in mythology but that the Creator has literally died and that now we should center our devotion on "the best man who ever lived," Jesus of Nazareth, who is not acknowledged by them to be Almighty God; and

WHEREAS as would be expected from a new theology which has abandoned historic Christian doctrine, the movement offers a "new morality," which abandons historic Christian holiness, maintaining that there are no absolute moral laws which are consistently binding and that an individual's only imperative is to be guided by "love" for others; and

WHEREAS the Word of God clearly states, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psa. 14:1; 53:1); and, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. 1:22); warning prophetically over 2,500 years ago, "Therefore, behold the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, "The Lord liveth" (Jer. 16:14);

BE IT RESOLVED that the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, meeting in Annual Conference at the Civic Auditorium in Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 20–24, 1966, go on record as reaffirming absolute faith in the God of the Bible as expressed in the Apostle Paul's triumphant declaration, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12), a fact summed up in Job's reply to Bildad, "For I know my redeemer liveth" (Job 19:25), truth explicitly believed and dogmatically proclaimed by the saints of God all down through the march of the centuries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we earnestly, fervently, and lovingly urge all religious schools desiring to maintain a label of "Christian" to immediately discharge all professors teaching the "God is dead" heresy; and that we further urge all Christians within denominations where "Christian atheism" theologians are being harbored to withhold all funds and support until firm disciplinary action is taken, and, failing in this, to obey the Biblical injunction, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached into heaven and God hath remembered her iniquities" (Rev. 18:4, 5).

*June 20–24, 1966
Grand Rapids, Michigan*