

A Clarion Call

The story of Daniel and his friends is a clarion call to our generation to be courageous; not to lose our nerve and allow the expression of our faith to be diluted and squeezed out of the public space and thus rendered spineless and ineffective. Their story will also tell us that this objective is not likely to be achieved without cost.

As political correctness stifles Christian witness, atheism seems to become more and more vocal in the public arena. Richard Dawkins in *The God Delusion*, Sam Harris in his *Letter to a Christian Nation*, Christopher Hitchens in *God is Not Great*, and Michel Onfray in *Atheist Manifesto* have been rallying the troops behind them by heralding the dangers of religion and the desirability of eliminating it. In order to do this, these so-called New Atheists harness the immense cultural power of science. At a conference at the Salk Institute of Biological Sciences in La Jolla, California, in November 1994, Nobel Laureate Steven Weinberg suggested ominously that the best contribution that scientists could make in this generation was the complete elimination of religion.

Weinberg and others portray atheism as the only intellectually respectable worldview. Intolerance of religion and growing disrespect of those with religious convictions are central features of their increasingly shrill onslaught. Indeed, their constant repetition of ragged and philosophically superficial arguments leads one to suspect that their great emperor of atheism is beginning to shiver through lack of clothes.

If Daniel and his three friends were with us today I have no doubt that they would be in the vanguard of the public debate, leading the counter-charge against the self-styled “four horsemen of the New Atheism”, as Dawkins and his allies Dennett, Harris, and Hitchens call themselves. In this book we shall try to learn something about what it was that gave that ancient foursome the strength and conviction to be prepared, often at great risk, to swim against the flow in their society and give unequivocal, courageous public expression to what they believed. This will surely strengthen our resolve, not only to put our heads above the parapet, but also to make sure in advance that our minds and hearts are prepared – that our helmets are securely on – so that we do not get blown away in the first salvo.

(Against the Flow: The Inspiration of Daniel in an Age of Relativism by John C. Lennox, Oxford U.K.: Monarch Books, Kindle, 2015, Page 14 & 15 of 513)