The Owl of Athena

CONTRATYRANNOS

The Isagorial Theory of Human Progress Website

EXCURSUS #8

One of a series of monographs that expands
the discussion of important topics examined in
The Natural State of Medical Practice.[1]

HUMAN LIBERTY AND THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN ETHOS

Summary: This excursus reviews human progress as a consequence of liberty of the unprivileged, or common citizenry, and integrates the ancient Hebraic ethos into that sequence. Most religions do not weigh liberty of the individual as a doctrinal element and have not been associated with secular progress. In contrast, the Judeo-Christian religion from the beginning has, in recognizing all people as descendants of God's original creation and therefore of equal importance to our Creator, retained an egalitarian sympathy for human liberty. There were several transient expressions of civil liberty resulting in medical progress in the ancient world. But it was only with the Reformation that there occurred a transposition of that Judaic egalitarian sympathy to governance in the West, the result being two-and-a-half centuries of human progress that have immeasurably improved the lives of billions around the world. This is the first time in human history that civil liberty, the offspring of the ancient Hebrew acknowledgement of the equal status of every individual before God, has been purposely sanctioned and ultimately codified within a civilization, and its astounding success argues it should become both permanent and global.

Introduction

In recounting the course of medical practice over the ages as presented in *The Natural State of Medical Practice*, historical aspects of the Judeo-Christian religion unexpectedly revealed themselves, sometimes profoundly.[2] Perhaps this was merely by chance, for the original purpose of examining human history for a natural state of medical practice was to seek pragmatic approaches to contemporary problems negatively affecting the profession of medicine. Still, one must wonder at the similarity in ethical basis of the Judeo-Christian religion and what enabled Western progress. Most religions do not weigh liberty of the individual as a foundational precept and central value. But it is concluded here that Judeo-Christian values are largely responsible for

[1] Volume, chapter and page number of otherwise unreferenced statements in this monograph refer to the version of the four volumes as published by Liberty Hill Press, 2019-2023:

Vol. 1 – *The Natural State of Medical Practice: An Isagorial Theory of Human Progress*
Vol. 2 – *The Natural State of Medical Practice: Hippocratic Evidence*
Vol. 3 - *The Natural State of Medical Practice: Escape from Egalitarianism*
Vol. 4 – *The Natural State of Medical Practice: Implications*

[2] I am aware of the scholarly and less than scholarly criticism of the term "Judeo-Christian religion" and prefer to ignore that unhelpful debate.

the freedoms which led to the rapid progress enjoyed by Western civilization over the past three centuries.

Using medical practice as a gauge of human progress, three historical periods were identified in which initiation of medical progress could be identified objectively or circumstantially: (1) third millennium early urbanization in Sumer, Egypt, India and China, (2) 5th C BC Greece, and (3) the modern West beginning in the 18th C. A degree of civil liberty is proposed to have existed in each period, with, taking them in order, the first appearing during the interlude in urbanization between leaving the kinship of the tribe and the beginning of authoritarian city-state rule, the second during the interlude between leaving the kinship of the Greek phratry and before the Athenian misdirection of political liberty, and the third following a revolt against a pan-European super-kinship and the codification of civil liberty triggered by the Reformation, a process still under way. The latter can be considered a social culmination of the ancient Hebrew ethos of the importance of the individual before God as expressed in the Pentateuch and its mature Judeo-Christian expression.

Free Will[3]

Any discussion of liberty must first ask if humans have free will. There has been divided opinion among the world's four great religions, to which over 80 percent of the global population is inclined:

1. Buddhism traditionally does not approach the subject of free will, and this seems consistent with the Buddhist concept of *anatman* in which there is the notion that belief in "self" causes suffering.[4] Recent interest in Buddhism and free will has brought forth controversial opinions on the matter, but, philosophical manipulation being inconsistent, the traditional (for 2500 years) Buddhist view of free will concludes Buddhist ethics and existence proceed apart from our definition of free will as a consequence of human reason.
2. Ancient Hinduism likewise was not receptive to the idea of cognitive free will, although in the 13th C the subject was broached by a "new" school of thought (*Dvaita*) that has been described as "more realistic." But the writings of a Hindu scholar provide an opinion from a century ago stating that Hinduism and free will are incompatible.[5] To avoid philosophical argument, the ancient and traditional view of a dissociation between the Hindu religion and free will is herein assumed.

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[3] The concept of free will can, in the complex realm of philosophy, be an insurmountable roadblock to understanding. Any preconditioned thinking can be interpreted as the absence of free will. Martin Luther did not consider mankind to have free will because Satan was able to affect one's choice. The use herein is that of Merriam-Webster's "voluntary choice or decision" (Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary).

[4] Repetti, Riccardo: What Do Buddhists Think about Free Will? in *A Mirror Is for Reflection: Understanding Buddhist Ethics*, J. H. Davis, ed., Oxford, 2017.

[5] The great scholar is Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), who wrote: "Therefore we see at once that there cannot be any such thing as free-will; the very words are a contradiction, because will is what we know, and everything that we know is within our universe, and everything within our universe is moulded by conditions of time, space and causality. Everything that we know, or can possibly know, must be subject to causation, and that which obeys the law of causation cannot be free." *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, vol. 1, Karma-Yoga, Calcutta, 1907, pp. 95-96.

3. In ancient Islam the concept of free will seems to be explicitly denied. The Quran (57:22) states, in the translation of Dr. Abdul Haleem, "No misfortune can happen, either in the earth or in yourselves, that was not set down in writing before We brought it into being – that is easy for God – so you need not grieve for what you miss or gloat over what you gain." And yet there are freedoms, for Quran states there is to be no compulsion in the practice of any religion. Also, (1) the stigma of not proceeding as ordained by the Quran implies that a person has a choice in the matter, and (2) the distinction between the absolute obedience of Angels and the ability of humans to choose is acknowledged (Quran 2:30). It is also claimed that, as man is God's deputy on earth, he has marginal autonomy. There is modern discourse on the subject.[6] For present purposes it is understood that, while man has freedom to act, the outcome is predetermined.
4. Judaism and Christianity for the most part acknowledge the existence of free will, with both free will and natural law in evidence in *Deuteronomy* 30 and championed by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), although uncontrollable extraneous factors may affect one's ability to choose wisely.

But, in acknowledging the existence of free will, why was the question asked in the first place? Free will is not synonymous with freedom. The latter is a product of the society in which an individual finds himself, whereas the former, free will, is the ability to consciously make choices. It follows that, for practical purposes, even though a society may restrict an individual's choices, to consciously make a choice is not restricted. It can be concluded that while free will as a philosophical issue may provide an estimate of the significance of the individual in a society, it is irrelevant to day-to-day functioning within that society. The issue instead is *civil liberty*, defined as "freedom from arbitrary governmental interference by denial of governmental power." [7] The status of civil liberty in selected societies/civilizations can now be briefly reviewed.

Civil liberty chronologically considered

1. Four ancient civilizations, 3000-2000 BC

Based on extant medical writings it was proposed that effective medical associations existed in the primary civilizations of Sumer, Egypt, India and China, the respective dates for collection of clinical material proposed as approximately 3000 BC, 3000 BC, 2000 BC and 2500 BC.[8] This was attributed to the spontaneous association of nascent practitioners as the enlarging urban population gradually realized pooled efforts could provide superior specialized services such as medical care, previously a tribal impossibility. Collegial networks in early cities of the four civilizations became possible because (1) there was no authoritarian mandate or social pressure from an egalitarian tribal kinship that might inhibit them, and (2) centralization of political power

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[6] See: M. S. Uddin, *Far Beyond My Comprehension*, revised edition, CreateSpace, Nov. 2015, original publication by Peace Publication, Sylhet, Bangladesh, and W. Zakaria, *Qadar in Classical and Modern Islamic Discourses: Commending a Futuristic Perspective*, in *International J. of Islamic Thought*, 7:39-48, 2015.

[7] Political liberty in members of society is defined as being "invested with the right to share effectually in framing and conducting the government under which they are politically organized." Definitions from *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*.

[8] The medical writings include: *Treatise of Medical Diagnosis and Prognosis* (Sumer), *Papyrus Ebers* and the Smith papyrus (Egypt), the *Charaka Samhita* (India), and *Huang Ti Nei Ching Su Wen* (China). *The Natural State of Medical Practice*, vol. 1, presents arguments in support of the dates.

in early urbanization had not yet developed capable of distorting them. Such a permissive interlude in the social milieu of early urbanization is consistent with an evolving "settlement hierarchy" phase of urbanization in primary cities.[9] The ability to freely associate to further self-interest by providing specialized services that must have accompanied those early medical observations had no doctrinal or communal support, for there had been no prior experience with medical professionals and the concept of progress had yet to be recognized.

The proposed dates for the primary urbanizations of the four civilizations far precede the onset of the Mosaic era (ca. 1350 BC), thus precluding any association with Hebraic religion. They also precede Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Zoroastrianism.[10]

2. Ancient Hebrews, 1300 BC

As portrayed in the frontispiece of volume 3 of *The Natural State of Medical Practice*, Adam and Eve and the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil can be metaphorically interpreted as an intrusion into the realm of the Divine in judging good and evil. It can be seen as an attempt by human agents to judge good and evil using their own (arbitrary, subjective) discernment. It has been pointed out that if effected, the strongest among us would hold that power. The problems associated with human judgment of right and wrong were thus identified in the Pentateuch of the Israelites. And, as that intrusion in Eden indicates, mankind had the freedom to choose (wrongly, in this case). Thus, an acknowledgement of free will can be considered to have been a component of the Hebrew religion by the time of its oral transmission through Moses *ca*. 1300 BC.[11] The escape of Hebrews from Egyptian slavery under Moses has also been used as proof of the importance of freedom to Hebrew society. But humans have been escaping from enslavement by other humans since the beginning of our species, and so it cannot be used as an argument implying that freedom has any particular ethnic affiliation. On the other hand, the Mosaic escape and the resulting Decalogue have been used as proofs of the universal importance of freedom of all individuals, specifically including the enslaved.

It is preferable to limit the discussion of freedom to historic times where there is objective documentation indicating the contemplation or implementation of the concept of freedom, particularly freedom of the individual. Rabbi Robert Gordis expressed a modest but constructive exception to this suggestion in his description of nomadic pre-exile Israelites. Noting that the tribal "*edah*" was a community-wide assembly of men who debated issues pertinent to their respective clans, he considered the democratic and egalitarian ethos of the nomadic tribe to be a restraint on authoritarian tendencies, an ethos carried forward by later Hebrew prophets and ever since a characteristic of Judaism in that there is no voice that must go unheard. One consequence, of course, is the rarity of unanimity on any issue, but, as Gordis puts it: [12]

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[9] *The Natural State of Medical Practice*, vol. 1, chapters 2-5, and vol. 3, chapters 3-6. The early cities of interest were Uruk (Sumer), Hierakonpolis (Egypt), Mohenjo-Daro (India), and Liangchengzhen (China). Each can be considered a city-state. The definition of settlement hierarchy is: "The mechanism proposed as the natural way intergroup adjustments take place as an enlarging population center that has had no prior experience with a leadership hierarchy becomes more complex and must deal with new goods and services needed by the evolving society."

[10] A possible exception is Ayurveda, which is proposed as originating from the earlier Vedic writings, primarily the Atharvaveda, which some suggest can be dated as early as 2500-2000 BC. The Vedas would subsequently become the basis of formal Hinduism *ca.* 6th C BC.

[11] The origin of the written Pentateuch is debated.

[12] Robert Gordis, *Judaism: Freedom of Expression and the Right to Knowledge in the Jewish Tradition*, in *Columbia Law Review*, 54:676-698, 1954; https://www.jstor.org/stable/1119712.

> Thus for thirty centuries Jewish tradition and experience has exhibited the basic democratic faith that freedom of the human spirit, in all its manifestations, justifies man's audacious faith that "he is little less than God." The oldest living tradition of the Western world would counsel modern democracy that this freedom is to be guarded jealously and to be limited at most temporarily, and then only under the gravest duress of a clear and present danger. It was as an authentic heir of the Hebraic spirit that John Milton spoke when he declared in his *Areopagitica*: "Let truth and falsehood grapple; who ever knew truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter."

It can be concluded that Israelites, as expressed through their true Prophets and Judges, were able to confront and manage disagreements on civil issues often of a religious or doctrinal nature.[13] That this appreciation of civil liberty was retained through many tribulations despite a tribal kinship environment can be attributed to codification during Mosaic times of a Divine covenant, the Decalogue, thereby avoiding the dampening effect of the social egalitarianism in kinships that typically inhibits expressions of individualism.

3. Ancient Greece, 500 BC

The changes in ancient Greek religious practices have been chronologically compared to the initiation of the natural state of medical practice by Hippocratic physicians.[14] Assuming that Hippocratic medicine was developing in the late 6th C BC, it was a time of diminishing authoritarianism, regression of tribalism, and expanding democracy (*e.g.*, Cleisthenes, 570-508 BC, the "father of Athenian democracy"). Zeus and the Olympian pantheon were becoming the focus of religious thought, and there is no regional evidence of Hebrew influence at this time. Sadly, by the advent of Christianity Hippocratic medicine had, except for the residue of its writings, disappeared. What prompted this brief flourish of scientific progress?

Ancient Greece is viewed by many as a template upon which our modern freedoms are erected. While the argument has been made that Hippocratic medicine and democracy were concurrent events and subject to the same initiating forces, the nature of Greek democracy may make that argument inapposite. It has been stated that while Sparta maintained its military prominence by *indoctrination*, Athens maintained its dominance by *motivation*. But its freedoms

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[13] Even in the opening of the *Song of Songs*, which some think was composed by King Solomon *ca.* 900 BC, where the personages are not clearly identified, it has been proposed that the young woman of the piece forgoes the attentions of the king, returning to her true love, a mere shepherd. This has been interpreted as an indication of freedom to act against even the wishes of a king without fear of retribution, and thus the society to which they belonged must have highly regarded the individual. If the *Song of Songs* was, according to tradition, transmitted orally from King Solomon, the dating would be 10th C BC, but the written version may be postexilic (*i.e.*, after 538 BC). Here is my personal interpretation of the first Song, based on a translation from the Greek of Alfred Rahlfs' *Septuaginta* (1935) by the classicist Dr. Jonah Rosenberg, with gender designations as noted at www.biblegateway.com:

> This is a mini-drama that begins with a young woman expressing her love for a young man. But it is clear that she has been brought to the King because of her beauty. The King says so in verse 1.4, using the "royal we," for this verse in Hebrew is singular masculine. The woman then describes herself as dark-skinned as the camel-hair tents of the Qedars, indicating "medium-skinned," although sunlight could have further darkened exposed skin. Then she reveals her love for a shepherd. This upsets the King, who tells her that she seems to be confused despite all his attentions and therefore she should leave and seek the person for whom she really cares, whom he suspects for some unknown reason to be a shepherd. And so, leaving the King behind sitting on his throne, she seeks her true love. With her attractiveness she finds him, upon which he praises her beauty. She abundantly returns the favor.

[14] *The Natural State of Medical Practice*, vol. 1, p. 458*ff*.

reflected the ability of each citizen to argue from a range of possible actions required for defense of the city-state, not for personal fulfillment.[15] This is one reason why it was considered so important for each and every citizen to be informed about the issues at hand, with penalties for not voting. It was recognized that for an "all hands on deck" approach to be successful in supporting and guiding the city-state it was critical that every citizen be enthusiastic in the process. What better way than to have him invest his personal well-being and fortune in an outcome in which he had a part in determining and purposely chose, freely instead of by dictate. Thus, Athenians had political liberty but not civil liberty. This is not a new interpretation of ancient Greek democracies. Two hundred years ago Benjamin Constant noted the consequences of the Greek experience with a democracy that included no individual rights, although Athens, because of its expansive commercial activity and interests, was a partial exception.[16]

While not to diminish the importance of those Greek freedoms that existed or Greek democracy, they both were directed at preservation of the city-state rather than personal fulfillment, and therefore they are not relevant to the evolution of medical progress through the efforts of Hippocratic physicians. What, then, allowed a few medical practitioners to see personal benefit accrue by forming a collegial network and sharing experiences from which each would benefit and would improve their services? I argue that Hippocratic medicine was a peripheral and parallel event to Greek democracy, an unintended consequence of the absence of interference with what seemed, to a few practitioners, an obviously desirable plan. There was no law or bill of rights to either prevent or to advance their purposes. But the great thing about Greek democracy was that, apart from social pressures, it *did not prevent* a citizen from advancing personal interests. This is in contrast to kinships, whereby all personal effort is, directly or indirectly, for the perceived greater good of the kinship. Peisistratus (ca. 600 – 527 BC) ended the dominance of kinship in the Attic population as he consolidated the Athenian city-state. In many city-states, including those of the Ionic coast and Dodecanese Islands, this element of civil liberty was permitted to *appear*, after which Greek democracies with their political liberties permitted it to *endure*.

It is therefore argued that there was no etiological association between the freedoms of Periclean Greece and the Hebrew recognition of the importance of the individual. Yet that Greek experience provided sufficient freedom for the initiation of progress, however transient. It is preferable to view the Greek medical innovation, as well as that of the previously mentioned four ancient primary civilizations, as evidence that human progress is an intrinsic, and perhaps inevitable, attribute of human liberty even when that liberty is incomplete and transient, and that even if uninvited it will spontaneously appear provided there are no restrictions.[17] But once success is realized, how can it be retained?

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[15] *The Natural State of Medical Practice*, vol. 3, p. 304.

[16] "As a [Greek] citizen decided peace and war, as a private individual, he was constrained, watched and repressed in all his movements; as a member of the collective body, he interrogated, dismissed, condemned, beggared, exiled, or sentenced to death his magistrates and superiors; as a subject of the collective body he could be deprived of his status, stripped of his privileges, banished, put to death, by the discretionary will of the whole to which he belonged." Benjamin Constant (1767-1830), *The Liberty of the Ancients Compared to That of the Moderns* [De la Liberte des Anciene Comparee a Celle des Modernes], a speech given in Paris, 1819. Constant was of Huguenot descent and received his education in part from the University of Edinburgh.

[17] Although, as noted in *The Natural State of Medical Practice*, vol. 3, p. 224, a sufficiently large and concentrated population, estimated at 10,000, and several other prerequisites are probably obligatory for producing a medical "profession."

4. The Modern West, 18th C

With the decline of Hippocratic medicine there was no medical progress throughout the Dark Ages and into the Renaissance.[18] But the Reformation released a flowering of independent religious thought that spread throughout much of Europe. Initially this restatement of religious freedom and the Hebrew covenant about equality of all people before God was triggered by Martin Luther's response to the hierarchy of the Catholic Church over purchase of indulgences.[19] But Luther also valued the individual conscience: "A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none… ," referring to authority within a Christian hierarchy. He considered all people to be "priests of equal standing." By reprimanding contemporary canon law, he was, in effect and whether or not he realized it," espousing equal justice before the law.[20] This is key.

There immediately followed reorganization of many churches that acted upon that concept of religious egalitarianism, with the result that some moved to become independent and self-governing. To prevent governmental infringement on religious freedom this same pattern was then posed as appropriate for secular government.

This interpretation led naturally to a shift toward representative government in many regions because the power of the Roman Church was diminished. The latter had functioned as a pan-European super-kinship or "chiefdom" comprising innumerable "tribes" throughout Europe for 1500 years, and, while its priests and monasteries attempted to provide medical care, spiritual comfort and other valued services to a vast and varied population, its own centralized political power increased to the point that the Church controlled the actions or affected the decisions of many monarchical governments.

With the Reformation this power of the Vatican was contained, especially in the north and west of Europe, because greater was the power of local political institutions. This in turn prompted power struggles between hereditary rulers and increasingly active civilian leaders who sometimes violently fought repressive regimes. The Church was no longer an ally on whom the ruling class could depend. Parliaments were enlisted to assist the ruling class. But with time those parliaments assumed more responsibilities previously held by rulers. Gradually individuals were no longer vassals of the crown, now being able to work motivated by a desire for self-betterment rather than the interests of a ruling hierarchy or the hierarchy of the Church. Thus, the 16th and 17th centuries saw a move toward civil liberties and then recognition of natural rights that released the ingenuity, entrepreneurship, and a desire for special services throughout the unprivileged general citizenry. The fruits of this monumental change began to emerge in medical practice in the latter half of the 18th C, not so long ago!

Usually the Renaissance is given credit for triggering the Enlightenment, in part because it was a time of intellectual rediscovery of the great works of ancient authors, the so-called "Renaissance humanism." But *The Natural State of Medical Practice* provides evidence that little of significance to medical progress resulted from the Renaissance. Instead, it proposes that the Reformation and subsequent political reforms saw the unprivileged, or "common," population bring about medical progress independent of both Hippocratic medicine and the Renaissance. If this an acceptable interpretation of history, the Enlightenment itself should also be considered a

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[18] *The Natural State of Medical Practice*, vol. 1, book 3, chapters 3-5.

[19] *Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences*, the Ninety-five Theses of Luther.

[20] For extensive documentation of this aspect of Luther's work see: Joseph Loconte, *God, Locke, and Liberty: The Struggle for Religous Freedom in the West*, Lexington, 2014.

child of the political reforms subsequent to the Reformation rather than an offspring of Renaissance humanism. [21]

The Mosaic Covenant

Of the several Divine covenants made with ancient Hebrews, the Mosaic covenant (*Exodus* 20:2-17) includes the Ten Commandments discussed in Excursus 6. These Commandments have been an important component of Jewish law up to the present day. The five Commandments that compose the ethical laws are relevant here in that they impose restrictions on our intrusion into the lives of others and vice versa. As interpreted herein and briefly put, they powerfully urge the inviolability of human liberty, and it is our uninvited transgressions into the lives of others, either personally or as a group or as a society, that have checked the variegated ingenuity of our species and prevented human progress for thousands of years.

And this is odd, for the essence of the Commandments is expressed in all societies, advanced or primitive, ancient or modern, where it can be considered a manifestation of natural law, *i.e*., our conscience.[22] It is almost as if humans were created with an endowed ability to rapidly reach a level of achievement in matters that would improve their status on earth (metaphorically, to achieve a secular Eden), although that ability, unable to be fully realized in the actions of a single individual, required that humans voluntarily work together. Furthermore, *The Natural State of Medical Practice* provides evidence in medical practice that only two or three centuries are needed to initiate rapid progress by this means, once certain demographic and economic circumstances prevail. The problem has been the intrusion by individuals or groups or societies that disrupt or forestall our ability to associate freely. The problem has been authoritarianism in both its political and egalitarian guises as it disregards natural law.

The ancient Hebrew tribes were the first to incorporate this Divine Covenant as a doctrinal force. It has been interpreted as an early form of federalism, for, in contrast to kinship, a covenant does not infringe on the intrinsic character of societies, instead providing a common path for their interactions.[23] Nevertheless, the nomadic ways, tribal rivalries, and captivities prevented basic demographic and economic requirements necessary for progress to be achieved. Thus, Hebrew medical practice, unlike pharaonic medicine, escaped being an authoritarian tool, but it was unable to support a professional association that might have led to scientific medicine.[24]

On the other hand, the Hebrew adoption of the Covenant would permit passage of the message of freedom through many generations of Jews and Christians down to the Reformation. At that point it led to a resurgent appreciation of the importance of the individual, first as a fuller

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[21] See: *The Natural State of Medical Practice*, vol. 1, book 3, chapter 6. Newton's *Principia* (1687) is sometimes credited with triggering the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries, but most often it is attributed to "Renaissance humanism," a rediscovery of the ancient writings of thinkers from the Greco-Roman world in philosophy, science, and history. The Enlightenment was understood to be Renaissance humanism's modernization that favored objectivity, sovereignty of reason, the concept of progress, and separation of church and state. It is sometimes credited with the political revolutions of the 18th C.

[22] It has even been proposed that the plan of God for His human creation was revealed to the ancient Hebrews because mankind was seemingly unable to obey natural law and thereby benefit from it; He therefore decided to tell it to the Hebrews directly.

[23] For a review of this concept, see: Fischer, K. J., *The Power of the Covenant Idea for Leadership, Reform, and Ethical Behavior*, in *The Journal of Values-Based Leadership*, 10: issue 2, article 13, 2017.

[24] *The Natural State of Medical Practice*, vol. 1, p. 149.

expression of that importance within the Judeo-Christian ethos and then increasing in scope to become a political force that would lead Western civilization to global predominance, doing so not by compulsion but by peaceful intellectual message. In that it explains the critical importance to progress of liberty of the unprivileged, the common man and woman, it has announced the good news of democratic reforms and civil liberties that, if uninterrupted, will continue to better the lives of all people.

If free people, however, through fear or personal pique, continue to voluntarily surrender their liberties to government in return for security, it is predicted that the proven authoritarian consequence, an overpowering political class, could lead to loss of all that has been gained. But, as demonstrated in *The Natural State of Medical Practice*, it will be even worse, for the consequences, being gradual, will by deceit proceed to the point of irreversibility and will then fall full force on our youngest generations and their progeny. This may cause some to reconsider *Exodus* 34:7 and view it as prescient, but by then there will be no escape.[25]

[25] The benign nature of the Western ethos that has come to predominate in the world is captured in a conversation by an unnamed member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 2002 with a group of American missionary tourists, as quoted by David Aikman in his 2008 book, *The Delusion of Disbelief.* I have been unable, however, to locate the original documentation of the quotation, although the statement's conclusion finds support in the article by Robert D. Woodberry, *The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy*, in *Amer. Polit. Sci. Rev*., 106:244-274, 2012. The Academy is a think tank associated with the State Council of China and located in Beijing and unlikely to have officially approved of it: "We were asked to look into what accounted for the … pre-eminence of the West all over the world … We studied everything we could from the historical, political, economic and cultural perspective. At first, we thought it was because you had more powerful guns than we had. Then we thought it was because you had the best political system. Next we focused on your economic system. But in the past twenty years, we have realized that the heart of your culture is your religion: Christianity. This is why the West has been so powerful. The Christian moral foundation of social and cultural life was what made possible the emergence of capitalism and then the successful transition to democratic politics. We don't have any doubt about this."