

Draft  
Commencement  
part

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Commencement part.

Harvard Div. Lib.

Sketch of Democracy.

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(Ezra L. Davis) Div. School.  
Announcement for.

## The Prophet of Democracy.

To have sown the seed and then to be forgotten at the time of harvest has been the fate of John Wise, pastor of a church in Ipswich. Unknown and untoured to day, yet the minister of a small country parish in New England was the prophet of American Democracy.

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## Democrat

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~~Democrat,~~  
~~Though his life was not adventurous, yet it was full of interest.~~  
~~His life was not dramatic, but not ad-~~  
~~venturous.~~ His father, Joseph Nise  
had come to this country as an  
indentured serving man to Dr.  
George Alcock of Roxbury, one of Gov.  
Mintnoff's Company. Upon the death  
of Dr. Alcock in 1640, Joseph Nise be-  
came a freeman. Twelve years later  
in 1652 John Nise was born and  
christened in Roxbury, Mass. His  
early education was obtained in the  
Roxbury Free School, of which his father  
was a father. In 1669 he appeared at  
Cambridge, and ~~is~~ <sup>was</sup> admitted to Har-  
vard College in the class of 1673. Born  
in the humblest circumstances the  
true American was purchasing the  
riches of freedom by paying the

price of education. Four years at Harvard  
 followed by five years of unsettled  
 work now as chaplain in the army  
 in King Phillip War, now as preacher  
 at Hatfield, ~~bring~~<sup>bring</sup> him to 1675 when  
 he was married in Roxbury. Two  
 years later in 1680 he ~~is~~<sup>was</sup> preaching  
 in the newly organized church at  
 Chebacco in the town of Ipswich. He  
~~is~~<sup>was</sup> ordained pastor of that church in  
 1683, and remained in the same  
 parish until his death in 1725. An ac-  
 tive vigorous life he lived. He distinguished  
 himself for bravery as chaplain of the  
 illfated expedition for the conquest of Canada  
 in 1690; at the risk of his own life he re-  
 scued his neighbor John Procter, from the  
 witchcraft persecutions. During ~~his~~<sup>his</sup> long  
 pastorate ~~his~~<sup>his</sup> fearless resolute way of

living  
life won for him a place of respect and affection among the people of his parish, and stamped John Wise as one of the choice spirits of New-England.

Two events of his life are of unusual significance. In one he is a man of fearless independent action; in the other he is a bold independent thinker.

Even as he was beginning his work in the pews, events of unusual importance in the political life of New-England were developing into a crisis. The dearly cherished liberties, which had been granted to the colonists by the Charter of 1629 had long been in danger, but in 1684, one year after John Wise's ordination the crisis came when Chas. II annulled the Charter, and by this one act swept

aside the freedom and rights of the Colonists.

By 1686 Sir Edmund Andros, invested with  
sovereign power from James II <sup>but</sup> ~~took~~ control  
of the Government in New England.

John Wise had been a keen observer.  
When the report reached Ipswich on Sun-  
day morning Aug. 31. 1687 that Gov.  
Andros had levied a tax on all property  
in the Colony, and had appointed <sup>the same officers</sup> collectors,  
the sturdy farmer ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~impressed~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~to act.~~ <sup>convinced that something must  
be done.</sup>

On Monday morning Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> 1687 the  
minister and two of his leading parish-  
oners called together the leading men of  
the town to see by what right an ap-  
pointed Governor could tax the colonists  
without consulting the General Court.  
A meeting of the citizens was called  
on the following day. John Wise was  
the leading spirit. In a bold

eloquent speech, he defended the rights  
 and liberties of the colonists, ~~probably~~  
~~uttering the watchword of the Revolu-~~  
~~tion, "No taxation without repre-~~  
~~sentation"~~ and lead the citizens of  
 Ipswich to take one of the earliest  
 steps in the long series of Revolutionary  
 measures ~~against taxation without representation.~~  
 They voted to a man to  
 resist all attempts at collecting the  
 taxes. Resist, they did, and the Rev.  
 John Wise and five others were ar-  
 rested, taken to Boston, and lodged in  
 jail to await trial. A fine of £50, sus-  
 pension from the ministry, and being  
 placed under bonds of £1000 ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> keep  
 the peace was the price paid by the  
 parish minister for making a firm  
 stand in defense of American Liberty.  
 The brave conduct of John Wise

and his followers in 1687 is the forshadowing of that spirit of independence that was the life of the Revolution—any way. Such resolute independent action by a man convinced of the truth of his position has been and always will be a distinguishing characteristic of the spirit of Democracy.

That the conduct of John Wise was not that of an enthusiastic upstart, or an impulsive unthinking agitator becomes apparent in his controversy in regard to church government. A keen insight into existing conditions, a wide and intelligent study of the past in the light of which to judge the present, mark him as a true prophet, the scholar and thinker as well as the man



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of action.

Seventy five years had brought many changes in New England Church life. The old ideal of a Puritan Commonwealth had to meet many problems that the great increase of population, the establishment of other churches, and the changed conditions in general forced upon it. In the gradual process of re-adjustment, the clergy of the Puritan Churches were being forced to understand that their autocratic power was fast slipping from their hands. The final convulsive effort to retain and strengthen their control was made in 1704 when the Pastors ministers Association formulated, and sent out for approval sixteen "proposals". The acceptance

of these proposals would have been a serious menace to the very existence of the congregational system of church government in New England.

Again John Wise is at the front. In 1710 he published the churches wrong enforced, a satirical rapier-like reply, which he thrust home to the very heart of the problem raised by these proposals, with a pungency that is refreshing, with a common-sense that is rare, with a penmanship that is seldom equalled he turned the full force of his power upon the proposals formulated by men of his own profession, and passed a criticism upon them that remains unassumed to this day.

The fundamental principles upon

which ~~these~~ criticisms rested were given a thorough and exhaustive treatment in a book which John Wise published in 1717, under the title, "A vindication of the Govern-  
ment of New England churches." ~~This~~

This is probably the first attempt on American soil to defend in literary form the <sup>theories</sup> ~~ideas~~ and practical workings of Democracy.

~~reality.~~

In his justification of the Demo-  
cratic form of Government from  
right reason, the fearless originality  
of his thought appears most clearly.  
His argument given almost entirely in  
his own words is as follows: - "It is agree-  
able that we attribute the system to God

whether we receive it from Reason or  
 from Revelation, for each is an emanation  
 of his wisdom. The interval native  
 liberty of man's nature in general im-  
 plies a faculty of doing or omitting  
 things according to the direction of his  
 judgement. Reason is congenerate  
 with his nature wherein by a law  
 immutable, inscribed upon his frame,  
 God has provided a rule for men  
 in all their actions, the which is  
 nothing else but the dictate of  
 right reason founded in the soul  
 of man. That which is drawn  
 from man's reason is a law of nature  
 The way to discover a law of nature  
 in our own state is by the narrow  
 watch, and accurate contemplation  
 of our natural conditions. Such

contemplation shows in man<sup>(1)</sup> a principle of self love, and self preservation that is very prominent in every man's being (2) A sociable disposition (3) an affection or love to mankind in general. But a Democracy is a form of Government which the light of nature does highly value and often directs to as most agreeable to the just and natural prerogatives of Human nature." A

A Such is his argument; With equal clearness and common sense he gives a thorough exposition of the practical workings of democracy, from which we have yet much to learn.

(With great justice, etc. (See under slip))  
 selves together for the defense of their rights, two editions of one thousand copies each were published and

contemplation shows in man (1) a principle of self love, and self preservation that is very prominent in every man's being (2) A sociable disposition (3) an affection or love to mankind in general. But a Democracy is a form of Government which the light of nature does highly value and often directs to as most agreeable to the just and natural prerogatives of Human nature." A

~~Such is his argument. Have we such reasons and common sense be giving a thorough treatise on the principles of democracy from which we may learn in their own right great justice has this book~~

been called the text book of the Revolution. In the year 1772, when the colonists were uniting themselves together for the defence of their rights, two editions of one thousand copies each were published and

sold in New-England. The subscription  
 list to one of these editions shows  
 that copies went to sixty seven New  
 England towns. Men at Concord  
 took 98 copies, at Lexington seven, and  
 scores of them were taken up in Boston  
 and Cambridge. Certainly the spirit and  
 probably some of the phrases of the  
 Declaration of Independence are  
 suggested in <sup>these</sup> these two sentences, —  
~~the end of all good government~~  
 "The end of all good government  
 is to cultivate harmony, and pro-  
 mote the happiness of all, and the  
 good of every man in all his  
 rights, his life, liberty, estate,  
 honor, without injury or abuse  
 to any." "All men are born free  
 and nature having set all men  
 upon a level and made them

equals, no servitude or subjection  
 can be conceived without inequal-  
 ity." He who had been one of the  
 through the influence of this book published  
 in 1777.

For the freedom of  
~~the mind of both~~  
 the known, and untoured to-day  
 yet a great force in American life  
 was Rev. John Wise, pastor of a <sup>country</sup> church  
 in Ipswich. In the hands of many  
 a prophet such as he, rests the  
 safety of our nation to-day as it  
 faces the problems which beset it.  
~~The rewards of their labor will~~  
~~be the glory of the nation in these~~  
 days of its terrible prosperity. The  
 rewards of their labor will be the  
 glory of the nation, as the living  
 principles of democracy to-day are  
 a monument to John Wise, pastor  
 and patriot.