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John Wise

Earl Clement Davis

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In ^{John. Maise} John Maise, we have a man entirely different from Cotton Mather, Not a great deal is known about him, and he never devoted himself to writing for publication. As a giant some over 325 volumes written by Cotton Mather, John Maise is remembered by fewer pages of printed ~~the~~ matter than Mather by volumes. Two short pamphlets, practically, of about 235 pages of ordinary printed matter cover all that we have of his writings.

In matter of birth he differed from Mather. His father, Joseph Maise, came to this country as an indentured sewing man to Dr. George Alcock of Roxbury, who was one of Governor Winthrop's company. In 1640 Dr. Alcock died and then Joseph Maise became a freeman.

2.
He soon married, and in 1652 the fifth
child was born, and ~~named~~ christened John Wise.
His early education was ministered unto
by in the Roxbury Free School, now Roxbury
Latin School. His father was one of
the patrons of the school. In 1669 he
appeared at Cambridge, and was ad-
mitted to Harvard College in the class
of 1673, about six years before Cotton
Mather graduated. Of his college course
we know but little except that he stood
well, and at one time came very near
losing his standing in college for being
detected in the act of wasting some
chickens which he had found some-
where about Cambridge. For five years
of graduation he was rather unsettled.
He was chaplain of the army in King
Phillip's war, He did some grad-:

mate work at Cambridge and got his 3^d
second degree, and was preacher at
Hotfield, Conn.,

In 1678 he was married in Roxbury.
Married a Miss Rogers.

Two years later in 1680, he was
preaching in a newly organized church
at Chebacco, ~~Mass~~ in the town of Ipswich. He
was ordained in 1683, and remained
with the same church until his death
in 1725.

He was indeed a great man, ~~strong~~, and
has been called "the first clear headed
American Democrat," One or two incidents
of his life indicate how entirely different
he was from men like Cotton Mather.
Story of Wrestling. Chaplain in the
Army. Strong, brave, courageous,
independent and a man of common

sense.

In his public life, we see him as a representative of a new type of New Englander. Cotton Mather and his father Increase Mather come in contact with the role of Sir Edward Andros, and they represented the conservative aristocratic elements of the colony. By 1686 Andros, invested with sovereign power from James II, had taken control of the Government. On Sunday morning Aug 31. 1687, the report reached Ipswich that Governor Andros had levied a tax on all property in the colony without consulting the general court. This roused John Wise to action. The next morning, John Wise and two of his parishioners went over to Ipswich and called together the leading men of the town to take council together.

5
upon this act of Gov. Aucher. As a result
of this conference, of Sept 1st 1687, a meeting
of the citizens was called for the next day
and through the influence of John Wise
the citizens voted to a war to resist
all attempts at collecting the tax. So for
for this resistance, the Rev. John Wise
and 5 others were arrested, taken to
Boston, and lodged in jail. A fine
of £50, suspension from the ministry,
and being placed under bonds of
~~£5000~~ £1000 to keep the peace was
the result of this resistance. It is
possible that this was the first clear
cut case of defiance to the principle
of taxation without representation.

At the expense of some slight repetition,
I quote the following of John Fiske.

The despot's Rule of Anchor was felt in more serious ways than in seizing upon meeting-house. . . . All the public records of the late New England governments were ordered to be brought to Boston, whither it then became a tedious journey in order to consult them. . . . The general court was abolished. The power of taxation was taken from the town meeting, and lodged with the Governor. Against this crowning iniquity the town of Ipswich, led by its sturdy pastor, John Wise, made protest. In response Mr. Wise was thrown into prison, fined \$50. and suspended from the ministry. A ~~to~~ notable and former free character was this John Wise. One of the broadest thinkers and most lucid writers of his time, he seems like a forerunner of the liberal Unitarian

divines of the nineteenth century." 7

The Beginning of N. E. Fisher 271.

In the years of the solemn Mithcraft, John Wise was about the only minister in New England who kept his head, and opposed the Mithcraft delusion from beginning to end.

But perhaps his most important work was in a literary way. The final attempt of the theocracy to regain its control was in the sixteen proposals which the Woburn sent out for consideration by the churches. This was in 1705. In 1705 John Wise published "The Churches Sworn Enforced" a careful and keen reply to these proposals, which as never been answered. It is one of the most pungent and icy criticisms I

system to God whether we receive it⁹
from Reason or from Revelation, for
each is an Emanation of his wisdom.
The intewol native liberty of man's
nature in general implies a faculty
of doing or omitting things, according
to the direction of his judgement.
Reason is congenate with his nature
wherein by a law immutable, instamf=
ed 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 condition." Such con-^o
templation stows in man, (1) a principle
of self love, and self preservation
that is very prominent in every wis
being, (2) a sociable disposition, (3) an
affection or love to man kind in
general. But a Democracy is a
form of Government, which the
light of nature does highly volve
and often directs to or wot agreeable
to the just and natural prerogatives
of Human Nature."

This by way of ~~an~~ suggestion as to
is line of thought.

This book has been called the
text book of the Revolution. In 1772
when the colonists were welding
themselves together for the defense

of their rights, two editions of one thousand
copies each were published and sold in
New England. A subscription list was
published in one edition, and many a
name prominent in the war is found
on this list. 38 copies in Concord,
7 at Lexington, and scores of them
in Cambridge and Boston.

Two sentences suggest the spirit and
force by the phraseology of the Declaration
of Independence.

The end of all good government
is to cultivate humanity, and
promote 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 ~~equal~~ nature

having set all men upon a level, and
made them equals, no servitude or
subjection can be conceived without
inequality." This was written
58 years before the Revolutionary
war.

John Wise

Earl Clement Davis

Harvard University or Pittsfield, MA¹

No Date

In John Wise we have a man entirely different from Cotton Mather. Not a great deal is known about him, and he never devoted himself to writing for publication. As against some over 325 volumes written by Cotton Mather, John Wise is remembered by fewer pages of printed matter than Mather by volumes. Two short pamphlets, practically of about 235 pages of ordinary printed matter cover all that we have of his writings.

In matter of birth he differed from Mather. His father, Joseph Wise, came to this country as an indentured serving man to Dr. George Alcock of Roxbury, who was one of Governor Winthrop's company. In 1640 Dr. Alcock died and thus Joseph Wise became a freeman. He soon married, and in 1652 the fifth child was born, and christened John Wise. His early education was ministered into the Roxbury Free School, now Roxbury Latin School. His father was one of the patrons of the school. In 1669 he appeared at Cambridge, and was admitted to Harvard College in the class of 1673, about six years before Cotton Mather graduated. Of his college course we know but little except that he stood well, and at one time came very near losing his standing in College for being detected in the act of wasting some chickens which he had found somewhere about Cambridge. For five years of [sic] graduation he was rather unsettled. He was chaplain of the Army in King Phillip's War. He did some graduate work at Cambridge and got his second degree, and was preacher at Hatfield, Conn.

In 1678 he was married in Roxbury. Married a Miss Rogers.

¹ The manuscripts in this series covering early New England Congregational preachers have no date. They are hand-written, dating them before Earl Davis started typing his manuscripts in 1907. So, they date either from his time at Harvard University, or the first year or two of his ministry in Pittsfield.

Two years later in 1680 he was preaching in a newly organized church at Chebacco in the town of Ipswich¹. He was ordained in 1683, and remained with the same church until his death in 1725.

He was indeed a great man, and has been called "the first clear-headed American Democrat." One or two incidents of his life indicate how entirely different he was from men like Cotton Mather. Story of wrestling. Chaplain in the Army. Strong, brave courageous, independent and a man of common sense.

In his public life we see him as a representative of a new type of New Englander. Cotton Mather, and his father Increase Mather, came in contact with the rule of Sir Edmund Andros², and they represented the conservative aristocratic elements of the colony. By 1686 Andros, invested with sovereign power from James II had taken control of the Government. On Sunday morning, Aug. 31, 1687, the report reached Ipswich that Governor Andros had levied a tax on all property in the colony without consulting the general court. This roused John Wise to action. The next morning, John Wise and two of his parishioners went over to Ipswich and called together the leading men of the town to take council together upon this act of Gov. Andros. As a result of this conference of Sept. 1st 1687, a meeting of the citizens was called for the next day and through the influence of John Wise the citizens voted to a man to resist all attempts at collecting the tax. To pay for this resistance, the Rev. John Wise and 5 others were arrested, taken to Boston, and lodged in jail. A fine of £50, suspension from the ministry and being placed under bonds of £1,000 to keep the peace was the

¹ Chebacco was the Native American term for the lake that was between the towns of Essex and Wenham.

² Sir Edmund Andros (1637-1714) was an English colonial administrator. In 1686 he was appointed Governor of the Dominion of New England, which included Massachusetts Bay Colony (including present-day Maine), Plymouth Colony, Rhode Island, Connecticut and New Hampshire. In 1689, after the overthrow of James II, the colonists of Boston rose against Andros' rule and deposed him.

result of this resistance. It is possible that this was the first clear cut case of defiance to the principle of taxation without representation. At the expense of some slight repetition I quote the following of John Fiske:

The despotic rule of Andros was felt in more serious ways than in seizing upon a meetinghouse. ... All the public records of the late New England governments were ordered to be brought to Boston, whether it thus became a tedious journey in order to consult them. ... The general court was abolished. The power of taxation was taken from the town meeting, and lodged with the Governor. Against this crowning iniquity the town of Ipswich, led by its sturdy pastor, John Wise, made protest. In response Mr. Wise was thrown into prison, fined £50 and suspended from the ministry. A notable and powerful character was this John Wise. One of the broadest thinkers and most lucid ministers of his time, he seems like a forerunner of the liberal Unitarian divines of the nineteenth century. (*The Beginning of N. E.*, Fiske, 271).

In the years of the Salem witchcraft, John Wise was about the only minister in New England who kept his head, and opposed the witchcraft delusion from the beginning to the end.

But perhaps his most important work was in a literary way. The final attempt of the Theocracy to regain its control was in the sixteen proposals which the Mathers sent out for consideration by the churches. This was in 1705. In 1705 John Wise published "The Churches Quarrel Espoused," a careful and keen reply to these proposals, which has never been answered. It is one of the most pungent racy criticisms I have ever read.

But in 1717 he published a book under the title, "A Vindication of the Government of New England Churches." This is a most thorough going defense of Democratic power of Government, and is to this day, I am told, used by judges at law as an authority in congregational polity.

In this justification of the democratic form of government from right reason and the clearness and the

originality of his thought appears to its best advantage. His argument given almost entirely in his own words is as follows:

It is agreeable 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 internal native liberty of man's nature in general implies a faculty of doing or omitting things, according to the direction of his judgement. Reason is {??} with his nature wherein by a law immutable, instantiated 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, (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.

This by way of suggestion as to his line of thought.

This book has been called the textbook of the Revolution. In 1772 when the colonists were welding themselves together for the defense of their rights, two editions of one-thousand copies each were published and sold in New England. A subscription list was published in one edition, and many a name prominent in the war is found on this list. 38 copies in Concord, 7 at Lexington, and scores of them in Cambridge and Boston.

Two sentences suggest the spirit and forcibly the phraseology of the Declaration of Independence:

The end of all good government is to cultivate humanity, and promote 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
inequality.

This was written 58 years before the Revolutionary war.