



## **The Works Of Alexander Pope Esq.**

In Nine Volumes Complete. With His Last Corrections, Additions, And Improvements; As they were delivered to the Editor a little before his Death

Containing His Miscellaneous Pieces In Verse and Prose

**Pope, Alexander**

**London, 1751**

Memoirs of P. P. clerk of this parish

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**Nutzungsbedingungen**

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# MEMOIRS of P. P. CLERK of this PARISH.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

The Original of the following extraordinary Treatise consisted of two large Volumes in Folio; which might justly be intitled, *The Importance of a Man to himself*: But, as it can be of very little to any body besides, I have contented myself to give only this short Abstract of it, as a Taste of the *true Spirit of Memoir-Writers*.

**I**N the name of the Lord. *Amen.* I, P. P. by the Grace of God, Clerk of this Parish, writeth this History.

Ever since I arrived at the age of discretion, I had a call to take upon me the function of a Parish-clerk; and to that end, it seemed unto me meet and profitable to associate myself with the parish-clerks of this Land; such I mean, as were right worthy in their calling, men of a clear and sweet voice, and of becoming gravity.

Now it came to pass, that I was born in the year of our Lord *Anno Domini* 1655, the year wherein our worthy benefactor, Esquire *Bret*, did add one Bell to the ring of this Parish. So that

it hath been wittily said, " That one and the same  
" day did give to this our Church two rare gifts,  
" its great Bell and its Clerk.

Even when I was at school, my mistress did ever extol me above the rest of the youth, in that I had a laudable voice. And it was further-more observed, that I took a kindly affection unto that Black letter in which our Bibles are printed. Yea, often did I exercise myself in singing godly ballads, such as *The Lady and Death*, *The Children in the Wood*, and *Chevy-Chace*; and not, like other children, in lewd and trivial ditties. Moreover, while I was a boy, I always adventured to lead the psalm next after Master William Harris, my predecessor, who (it must be confessed to the Glory of God) was a most excellent Parish-clerk in that his day.

Yet be it acknowledged, that at the age of sixteen I became a Company-keeper, being led into idle conversation by my extraordinary love to Ringing; infomuch, that in a short time I was acquainted with every sett of bells in the whole country: Neither could I be prevailed upon to absent myself from Wakes, being called thereunto by the harmony of the steeple. While I was in these societies, I gave myself up to unspiritual pastimes, such as wrestling, dancing, and cudgel-playing; so that I often returned to my father's house with a broken pate. I had my head broken at Milton by Thomas Wyat, as we played a bout

or two for an Hat that was edged with silver galloon. But in the year following I broke the head of Henry Stubbs, and obtained an hat not inferior to the former. At Yelverton I encountred George Cummins, Weaver, and behold my head was broken a second time! At the wake of Waybrook I engaged William Simkins, Tanner, when lo! thus was my head broken a third time, and much blood trickled therefrom. But I administred to my comfort, saying within myself, "What man is there, howsoever dextrous in any craft, who is for aye on his guard?" A week after I had a base-born child laid unto me; for in the days of my youth I was looked upon as a follower of venereal fantasies: Thus was I led into sin by the comeliness of Sufanna Smith, who first tempted me and then put me to shame; for indeed she was a maiden of a seducing eye, and pleasant feature. I humbled myself before the Justice, I acknowledged my crime to our Curate; and to do away mine offences and make her some attonement, was joined to her in holy wedlock on the sabbath day following.

How often do those things which seem unto us misfortunes, redound to our advantage! For the Minister (who had long look'd on Sufanna as the most lovely of his parishioners) liked so well of my demeanour, that he recommended me to the honour of being his Clerk, which was then

become vacant by the decease of good Master William Harris.

*Here ends the first chapter; after which follow fifty or sixty pages of his amours in general, and that particular one with Susanna his present Wife; but I proceed to chapter the ninth.*

No sooner was I elected into mine office, but I layed aside the powder'd gallantries of my youth, and became a new man. I considered myself as in some wise of ecclesiastical dignity, since by wearing a band, which is no small part of the ornament of our Clergy, I might not unworthily be deemed, as it were, a shred of the linen vestment of Aaron.

Thou may'st conceive, O reader, with what concern I perceived the eyes of the congregation fixed upon me, when I first took my place at the feet of the Priest. When I raised the psalm, how did my voice quaver for fear! And when I array'd the shoulders of the Minister with the surplice, how did my joints tremble under me! I said within myself, "Remember, Paul, thou standest  
" before men of high worship, the wise Mr. Jus-  
" tice Freeman, the grave Mr. Justice Tonson,  
" the good Lady Jones, and the two virtuous gen-  
" tlewomen her daughters, nay the great Sir Tho-  
" mas Truby, Knight and Baronet, and my young  
" master the Esquire, who shall one day be Lord  
" of this Manor:" Notwithstanding which, it was

my good hap to acquit myself to the good liking of the whole congregation ; but the Lord forbid I should glory therein.

*The next chapter contains an account how he discharged the several duties of his office ; in particular he insists on the following :*

I was determin'd to reform the manifold Corruptions and Abuses which had crept into the Church.

First, I was especially severe in whipping forth dogs from the Temple, all excepting the lap-dog of the good widow Howard, a sober dog which yelped not, nor was there offence in his mouth.

Secondly, I did even proceed to moroseness, tho' sore against my heart, unto poor babes, in tearing from them the half-eaten apples which they privily munch'd at Church. But verily it pity'd me, for I remember'd the days of my youth.

Thirdly, With the sweat of my own hands, I did make plain and smooth the dogs-ears throughout our great Bible.

Fourthly, The pews and benches which were formerly swept but once in three years, I caus'd every Saturday to be swept with a besom and trimmed.

Fifthly and lastly, I caus'd the surplice to be neatly darned, washed, and laid in fresh lavender, (yea, and sometimes to be sprinkled with rose-water) and I had great laud and praise from all

the neighbouring Clergy, forasmuch as no parish kept the Minister in cleaner linen.

*Notwithstanding these his publick cares, in the eleventh chapter he informs us he did not neglect his usual occupations as a handy-craftsman.*

Shoes, saith he, did I make, (and, if intreated, mend) with good approbation. Faces also did I shave, and I clipped the hair. Chirurgery also I practised in the worming of Dogs; but to bleed adventured I not, except the poor. Upon this my twofold profession, there passed among men a merry tale delectable enough to be rehearsed: How that being overtaken with liquor one Saturday evening, I shav'd the Priest with Spanish blacking for shoes instead of a washball, and with lamp-black powdered his perriwig. But these were sayings of men, delighting in their own conceits more than in the truth. For it is well known, that great was my care and skill in these my crafts; yea, I once had the honour of trimming Sir Thomas himself, without fetching blood. Furthermore, I was sought unto to geld the Lady Frances her spaniel, which was wont to go astray: He was called Toby, that is to say, Tobias. And 3dly, I was entrusted with a gorgeous pair of shoes of the said Lady, to set an heel-piece thereon; and I received such praise therefore, that it was said all over the parish, I should be recommended unto the King

to mend shoes for his Majesty: whom God preserve! Amen.

*The rest of this chapter I purposely omit, for it must be own'd that when he speaks as a Shoemaker he is very absurd. He talks of Moses's pulling off his shoes, of tanning the hides of the Bulls of Basan, of Simon the Tanner, etc. and takes up four or five pages to prove, that, when the Apostles were instructed to travel without shoes, the precept did not extend to their successors.*

*The next chapter relates how he discover'd a Thief with a bible and key, and experimented verses of the Psalms that had cured Agues.*

*I pass over many others which inform us of parish affairs only, such as of the Succession of Curates; a list of the weekly Texts; what Psalms he chose on proper occasions; and what Children were born and bury'd: The last of which articles he concludes thus:*

That the shame of women may not endure, I speak not of Bastards; neither will I name the Mothers, although thereby I might delight many grave women of the parish: Even her who hath done penance in the sheet will I not mention, forasmuch as the church hath been witness of her disgrace: Let the father, who hath made due composition with the Churchwardens to conceal



his infirmity, rest in peace; my pen shall not betray him, for I also have sinned.

*The next chapter contains what he calls a great Revolution in the Church, part of which I transcribe.*

Now was the long expected time arrived, when the psalms of King David should be hymn'd unto the same tunes to which he played them upon his harp; (so was I inform'd by my Singing-master, a man right cunning in Psalmody:) Now was our over-abundant quaver and trilling done away, and in lieu thereof was instituted the Sol-fa, in such guise as is sung in his Majesty's Chapel. We had London singing masters sent into every parish, like unto Excise-men; and I also was ordained to adjoin myself unto them, though an unworthy disciple, in order to instruct my fellow-parishioners in this new manner of Worship. What tho' they accused me of humming through the nostril, as a Sacbut? yet would I not forego that harmony, it having been agreed by the worthy parish-clerks of London still to preserve the same. I tutored the young men and maidens to tune their voices as it were a psaltery, and the Church on the Sunday was filled with these new Hallelujahs.

*Then follow full seventy chapters, containing an exact detail of the Law-suits of the Parson and his Parishioners concerning tythes, and near a hundred*

pages left blank, with an earnest desire that the history might be completed by any of his successors, in whose time these suits should be ended.

The next chapter contains an account of the Briefs read in the church, and the sums collected upon each. For the reparation of nine churches, collected at nine several times, 2s. and 7d.  $\frac{3}{4}$ . For fifty families ruined by fire, 1s.  $\frac{1}{4}$ . For an inundation, a King Charles's groat given by Lady Frances, etc.

In the next he laments the disuse of Wedding-sermons, and celebrates the benefits arising from those at Funerals, concluding with these Words: Ah! let not the relations of the deceased grudge the small expence of an hatband, a pair of gloves, and ten shillings, for the satisfaction they are sure to receive from a pious Divine, that their father, brother, or bosom wife, are certainly in heaven.

In another, he draws a panegyrick on one Mrs. Margaret Wilkins, but after great encomiums concludes, that, notwithstanding all, she was an unprofitable vessel, being a barren woman, and never once having furnished God's church with a christening.

We find in another chapter, how he was much stagger'd in his belief, and disturbed in his conscience, by an Oxford scholar, who had proved to him by logic, that Animals might have rational, nay, im-

mortal souls; but how he was again comforted with the reflection, that, if so, they might be allowed christian burial, and greatly augment the fees of the parish.

*In the two following chapters he is overpower'd with Vanity. We are told, how he was constantly admitted to all the feasts and banquets of the Church-officers, and the speeches he there made for the good of the parish. How he gave hints to young Clergymen to preach; but above all, how he gave a Text for the 30th of January, which occasioned a most excellent sermon, the merits of which he takes entirely to himself. He gives an account of a conference he had with the Vicar concerning the Use of Texts. Let a preacher (saith he) consider the assembly before whom he preacheth, and unto them adapt his text. Micah the iii<sup>d</sup> and 11th affordeth good matter for Courtiers and court-serving men. The heads of the land judge for reward; and the people thereof judge for hire; and the prophets thereof divine for money; yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? Were the first Minister to appoint a preacher before the House of Commons, would not he be wise to make choice of these words? Give, and it shall be give unto ye. Or before the Lords, Giving no offence, that the Ministry be not blamed, 2 Cor. vi. 3. Or praising the warm zeal of an Administration, Who maketh his Ministers a flaming fire, Psalm civ. 4.*

We omit many other of his texts, as too tedious.

*From this period, the style of the book rises extremely. Before the next chapter was pasted the Effgies of Dr. Sacheverel, and I found the opposite page all on a foam with Politicks.*

We are now (says he) arrived at that celebrated year, in which the Church of England was tried in the person of Dr. Sacheverel. I had ever the interest of our High-Church at heart, neither would I at any season mingle myself in the societies of Fanaticks, whom I from my infancy abhorred, more than the Heathen or Gentile. It was in these days I bethought myself, that much profit might accrue unto our Parish, and even unto the Nation, could there be assembled together a number of chosen men of the right spirit, who might argue, refine and define, upon high and great matters. Unto this purpose, I did institute a weekly Assembly of divers worthy men at the Rose and Crown Alehouse, over whom myself (tho' unworthy) did preside. Yea, I did read unto them the Post-Boy of Mr. Roper, and the written letter of Mr. Dyer, upon which we communed afterwards among ourselves. Our society was composed of the following persons: Robert Jenkins, Farrier; Amos Turner, Collar-maker; George Pilcocks, late Exciseman; Thomas White,

Wheel-wright; and myself. First, of the first, Robert Jenkins.

He was a man of bright parts and shrewd conceit, for he never shoed an horse of a Whig or a Fanatick, but he lamed him forely.

Amos Turner, a worthy person, rightly esteemed among us for his sufferings, in that he had been honoured in the stocks for wearing an Oaken bough.

George Pilcocks, a sufferer also; of zealous and laudable freedom of Speech, insomuch that his occupation had been taken from him.

Thomas White, of good repute likewise, for that his uncle, by the Mother's side, had, formerly, been servitor at Maudlin college, where the glorious Sacheverel was educated.

Now were the eyes of all the parish upon these our weekly councils. In a short space, the Minister came among us; he spake concerning us and our councils to a multitude of other Ministers at the Visitation, and they spake thereof unto the Ministers at London, so that even the Bishops heard and marveled thereat. Moreover Sir Thomas, member of Parliament, spake of the same to other members of Parliament; who spake thereof unto the Peers of the Realm. Lo! thus did our counsels enter into the hearts of our Generals and our Law-givers; and from henceforth, even as we devised, thus did they.

*After this, the whole book is turned on a sudden, from his own Life, to a History of all the publick Transactions of Europe, compiled from the Newspapers of those times. I could not comprehend the meaning of this, till I perceived at last (to my no small Astonishment) that all the Measures of the four last years of the Queen, together with the peace at Utrecht which have been usually attributed to the E--- of O---, D--- of O---, Lords H--- and B---, and other great men; do here most plainly appear, to have been wholly owing to Robert Jenkins, Amos Turner, George Pilcocks, Thomas White, but above all, P. P.*

*The reader may be sure I was very inquisitive after this extraordinary writer, whose work I have here abstracted. I took a journey into the Country on purpose; but could not find the least trace of him; till by accident I met an old Clergyman, who said he could not be positive, but thought it might be one Paul Philips, who had been dead about twelve years. And upon enquiry, all he could learn of that person from the neighbourhood, was, That he had been taken notice of for swallowing Loaches, and remembered by some people by a black and white Cur with one Ear, that constantly followed him.*

*In the Church-yard, I read his Epitaph, said to be written by himself.*

O Reader, if that thou canst read,  
 Look down upon this Stone ;  
 Do all we can, Death is a man,  
 That never spareth none.

POETRY

THE

As we now learn to read, that for the  
 encouragement of poetry, it not exceeds  
 that of this famous Pope, we cannot but with a  
 reflection to all we have to say, the subject  
 does there see in some parallel circumstances in  
 the person who was then honored with the laurel,  
 and in him who (in all probability) is now to  
 wear it.

I shall translate, and not explain, and in  
 the 8th chapter of his Flores de los Reyes. He be