



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 The First of his Letters

Pope, Alexander

London, 1751

IV. From Mr. Wycherley: Answer to the former.

Nutzungsbedingungen

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-56122](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-56122)

ing themselves, will suffer no young plants to flourish beneath them: but, as if it were not enough to have out-done all your coevals in wit, you will excel them in good-nature too. As for ^a my green essays, if you find any pleasure in them, it must be such as a man naturally takes in observing the first shoots and bud-dings of a tree which he has raised himself: and 'tis impossible they should be esteemed any otherwise, than as we value fruits for being early, which nevertheless are the most insipid, and the worst of the year. In a word, I must blame you for treating me with so much compliment, which is at best but the smoke of friendship. I neither write, nor converse with you, to gain your praise, but your Affection. Be so much my friend as to appear my enemy, and tell me my faults, if not as a young Man, at least as an unexperienced Writer.

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

From Mr. WYCHERLEY.

March 29, 1705.

YOUR letter of the twenty-fifth of March I have received, which was more wel-

^a His Pastorals, written at sixteen years of age. P.
come

come to me than any thing could be out of the country, tho' it were one's rent due that day; and I can find no fault with it, but that it charges me with want of sincerity, or justice, for giving you your due; who should not let your modesty be so unjust to your merit, as to reject what is due to it, and call that compliment, which is so short of your desert, that it is rather degrading than exalting you. But if compliment be the smoke only of friendship (as you say) however, you must allow there is no smoke but there is some fire; and as the sacrifice of incense offered to the Gods would not have been half so sweet to others, if it had not been for its smoke; so friendship, like love, cannot be without some incense, to perfume the name it would praise and immortalize. But since you say you do not write to me to gain my praise, but my affection, pray how is it possible to have the one without the other? we must admire before we love. You affirm, you would have me so much your friend as to appear your enemy, and find out your faults rather than your perfections; but (my friend) that would be so hard to do, that I, who love no difficulties, can't be persuaded to it. Besides, the vanity of a scribler is such, that he will never part with his own judgment to gratify another's; especially when he must take pains to do it: and tho' I

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FROM MR. WYCHERLEY. 11

am proud to be of your opinion, when you talk of any thing or man but yourself, I cannot suffer you to murder your fame with your own hand, without opposing you ; especially when you say your last letter is the worst (since the longest) you have favoured me with ; which I therefore think the best, as the longest life (if a good one) is the best ; as it yields the more variety, and is the more exemplary ; as a chearful summer's day, tho' longer than a dull one in the winter, is less tedious and more entertaining. Therefore let but your friendship be like your letter, as lasting as it is agreeable, and it can never be tedious, but more acceptable and obliging to

Your, &c.

LETTER V.

From Mr. WYCHERLEY.

April 7, 1705.

I Have received yours of the fifth, wherein your modesty refuses the just praises I give you, by which you lay claim to more, as a bishop gains his bishopric by saying he will not episcopate ; but I must confess, whilst I displease you by commending you, I please myself : just as incense is sweeter to the offerer than