

HERBERT, GEORGE (1593 - 1633), cleric and poet

Name: George Herbert
Date of birth: 1593
Date of death: 1633
Spouse: Jane Herbert (née Danvers)
Parent: Magdalen Herbert (née Newport)
Parent: Richard Herbert
Gender: Male
Occupation: cleric and poet
Area of activity: Poetry; Religion
Author: Herbert Gladstone Wright

Born in London 3 April 1593, the fifth son of [Richard](#) (died 1596) and Magdalen Herbert (see under [Herbert](#) of Montgomery). His father dying in 1596, he was left in the care of his mother; she lived for a time with her mother, lady Newport, at Eyton, then moved to Oxford, and from there to London. George was in the hands of a tutor until he entered Westminster School in 1605. From there he proceeded to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1609. On the following New Year's Day he sent two sonnets to his mother, in which he declared his intention to devote himself to sacred poetry. Already his health was poor, and for the rest of his life he had to battle against this weakness.

In 1612 he graduated, in 1614 he was elected a Fellow, and in 1616 obtained a master's degree. In 1618 he was made Praelector in Rhetoric and, in 1620, Public Orator. He delivered a number of orations, but resigned the post in 1626, as his interest had turned elsewhere. In January 1624, he was elected as member of Parliament for Montgomery borough, and in 1625 he sat in the first parliament of Charles I.

However, he decided to abandon a secular career. He already held a sinecure as comportioner of the rectory of Llandinam, a post which he retained until his death; and from 1626, when he was made a prebendary of Leighton Ecclesia by the bishop of Lincoln, his mind was bent on the priesthood.

He married Jane Danvers in 1629 and the year after became rector of Fuggleston-cum-Bemerton in Wiltshire. He died and was buried at Bemerton 3 March 1633.

His chief works are *A Priest to the Temple*, printed in *Herbert's Remains*, 1652, and *The Temple*, 1633. He was loved for his piety and devotion to his calling, and his poems rank high for the sincerity with which they reveal his spiritual struggles.

Author

Emeritus Professor Herbert Gladstone Wright, (1888 - 1962)

Sources

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

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G. H. Palmer, introduction to Herbert's *The English works of George Herbert* (Boston 1905), 1907

F. E. Hutchinson, introduction to Herbert's *The Works of George Herbert* (Oxford 1941)

R. I. Aaron, *Modern Language Review*, 1941

Further Reading

[George Herbert and Bemerton](#)

Wikipedia Article: [George Herbert](#)

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