

ERBERY, WILLIAM (1604 - 1654), Puritan and Independent

Name: William Erbery
Date of birth: 1604
Date of death: 1654
Child: Dorcas Erbery
Gender: Male
Occupation: Puritan and Independent
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Robert Tudur Jones

Born at Roath-Dogfield near Cardiff, the son of a merchant (*Brasenose Coll. Reg.*, i, 139). He graduated B.A. from Brasenose College, Oxford, 29 October 1623 (Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*); he was incorporated at Cambridge (Queens' College) in 1624; M.A. from Queens' in 1626. He subscribed for deacon's orders at Bristol, 23 December 1626 (Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*), and after being a curate at Newport, Monmouth, was preferred to the living of St. Mary and St. John, Cardiff. He remained there from 7 August 1633 until July 1638 (Foster's *Index*, N.L.W.).

Together with **Walter Cradoc** he came into conflict with the bishop of Llandaff in 1634 on account of his Puritan activities. On 20 October 1635 Erbery and **William Wroth** appeared before the Court of High Commission to answer for their Puritanism (T. Richards, *Cymru a'r Uchel Gomisiwn*, 39). **Wroth** submitted to the bishop but Erbery resigned.

During the Civil War he was chaplain to major Skippon's regiment (Chr. Love, *Vindication*, 36). After the surrender of Oxford, he was in that city opposing the Presbyterian visitors, and on 11 January 1646/7 he disputed in public with Francis Cheynell in the university church. He took part in the debates on the 'Agreement of the People' in January 1648 (*Clarke Papers*, ii, 171-5). He worked in Glamorgan under the terms of the Act for Propagation, and was paid £225 for his pains (Walker MS. c. 13, f. 17), but towards the end of 1651 his scruples about tithes led him to refuse further payment (*The Sword Doubled*, 3).

In doctrine he leaned towards mysticism, being a disciple of Jacob Boehme. As a result he was haled before the Committee for Plundered Ministers, 8 February 1652/3, to answer for his heresies (*Clarke Papers*, ii, 233).

He had close connections with the Welsh Puritans, and **Morgan Llwyd** thought of him as his teacher. He was a violent critic of his co-religionists, and in matters of education opposed the Puritan emphasis on what he called 'carnal knowledge.' On 12 October 1653 Erbery and John Webster opposed two others in public debate on this matter at Lombard Street, London (Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, iii, c. 361).

He died in London in April 1654, but his burial place is unknown. His daughter Dorcas became a Quaker and a follower of James Nayler (*Mercurius Politicus*, no. 350 (7624)).

The most important works of Erbery are included in the volume *The Testimony of William Erbery left upon Record for the Saints of Succeeding Ages* (London, 1658), but *Apocrypha* (London, 1652) is omitted from it.

Author

Reverend Principal Robert Tudur Jones, (1921 - 1998)

Sources

Erbery, *The testimony of William Erbery left upon record for the saints of succeeding ages* (1658)

Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses* (1813&€"20)

The Clarke Papers (1891&€"1901)

Christopher Love, *A Cleare and Necessary Vindication* (1651)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [William Erbery](#)

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