

## 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 comptoner 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

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

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### Further Reading

George Herbert and Bemerton

John Aubrey, Andrew Clark (ed.), *"Brief lives," chiefly of contemporaries* (Oxford 1898), Vol. I, Vol. II

Wikipedia Article: [George Herbert](#)

## Works

George Herbert, *The works of George Herbert in prose and verse* (London 1859), Vol. I, Vol. II

George Herbert, George Herbert, Ernest Rhys, *The poems of George Herbert to which are added selections from his prose, and Walton's "Life"*(London 1886)

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