

ALL HALLOWS

The Rev. William Lane

The Tower of the Church has some interesting features, one of which is the room above the porch which is unusual because it has a fire place. Curates when visiting might have sleep there. Meetings of Church officials might meet there and the bell ringers all passed through it. There was much coming and going up the steps by which it was entered.

William Lane had been instituted to Ringmore in 1637 and to Averton Gifford in 1638. He was an ardent Royalist and teamed up with the Champernowns of Modbury. Together they tried to block the crossing of the Avon at Averton Gifford. The parliamentary forces in Plymouth sent a sea-born expedition to land in Ayrmer cove to capture "Bishop Lane the traitor" and destroy the rectory. They plundered the valley of the "Awmarr". They carried off two of the Rector's sons as hostages but failed to find the rector. He had slipped away and climbed the church tower pulling up the ladder to the belfry behind him.

Normal business went on in the room below. His loyal parishioners looked after him and kept his secret hiding place safe for three months. Suspicions grew and he had to escape to France. On his return he went to London to claim back his parishes. Having no money he had to travel on foot. After a successful claim he was returning to Devon but caught a fever and died near Exeter. His friend the vicar of ALPHINGTON buried him in the church of that Parish.

Note. An account by one of the sons of Rev Lane is recorded in WALKER'S SUFFERINGS OF THE CLERGY Edited by F.C.Hingeston Randolph.

The following information on William Lane was gleaned from newspaper articles and, in the main, from the account of his misfortunes recorded in the Reverend John Walker's book 'Sufferings of the Clergy', published in 1714.

William Lane, who had obtained his Degree of Bachelor of Divinity at Oxford, was instituted as Rector of Ringmore by Bishop Hall on the 16th November 1637, following the death of the previous rector, Francis Torkington, who had held the living for fifty years. Sir William Kirkham had granted to Torkington the right of presentation for one term, and he had been permitted to assign it to one, William Griffiths, a Bachelor of Law, who presented William Lane. In the following year, on October 7th 1638, William Lane was also given the neighbouring parish of Aveton Gifford. The new living was larger as to population and value, but, before William Lane had time to remove his goods from Ringmore and settle in at Aveton Gifford, the Rebellion broke out and the town of Plymouth declared for Parliament.

The youngest son of William Lane furnished to The Rev John Walker the following account of his father's misfortunes from then on :-

" At which time the Garrison (Of Plymouth) came out with their boats and plundered these parts, and carried off most part of the valuable goods in the house; and took, says he, two of my brethren, Richard and John, not giving them time to put on their stockings, and forced them to carry what of the goods they could to Ammer (a creek where boats are kept, about a mile from the house, where they carried off stolen sheep and plundered goods, with my two eldest brothers - they imprisoned them in Plymouth some time, where they suffered for want of apparel and other necessaries for some time: all which time my father was active with Sir Champernon and other gentlemen in those parts, for raising succours for his Majesty, and was raising a Fort on a hill (part of the Glebe of Aveton) which commanded the bridge leading to Kingsbridge; but,

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My father had a Temporal Estate in Aveton which was also sequestered, only a set of mills excepted, where my Mother with five children took up their residence. The eldest son Richard, who was bred a divine, for his security went to New England; at which time, my Father to secure himself, went to France, where he remained till he could buy his peace.

Barnard, not content to enjoy the place and pay no fifths, most maliciously cut off the water course from the mills, the water passing through

the Glebe lands, which two of my sisters many times with much toil did stop, which continued for some time. My Father, returning from France, did constrain Barnard to pay the fifths and remained with the family at the mills. The income being but small for his family he removed with the second son John and daughter Elizabeth and third son William to a place in Torbay called Hopesnose, where he employed with some few servants in drawing lyme stones and sold them to the Topsham boats, where he continued with much satisfaction for some time. But it so happened that a small vessel of Brest passing by, which had King Charles II's commission, landed their men and carried off the working tools, bedding and household goods - to say, all that was in the small cottage; that work was ruined.

My Father, returning again to his mills, found that the water had for some time been cut off by Barnard, that the grass thus grown in the mill-leat, and the remains of his family there in a miserable condition. One day he walking up to view the ruins, met with one of Barnard's sons, who with base, reviling language abusing him without any provocation, he returned home to his wife, saying that Barnard could not content himself with enjoying his estate but maliciously hath destroyed his mills, it being the only maintenance remaining, which he could in part suffer, but to suffer abuse from his son he could not bear - was therefore resolved to make his condition known at Cromwell's Council Board. So, with that few pence he had, walked to London (I think) in his 63rd year, and put in his petition, was suffered to make proved his condition. It being discovered and known, he had orders to dispossess Barnard and name another person for Aveton Giffard, which accordingly he did, naming one John Martin.

Having thus settled his affairs, in hopes to enjoy some comfort in the new possession, coming home on foot from Honiton to Exon, being very dry and money scarce, finding water on the road drank thereof, which chilled his blood and threw him into an ague and after into a fever, which deprived him of his life, when lodging at the King's Head in High Street. (Exeter).

He lieth interred under the Chancel table at Alphington Church.

This is the exactest account I can give, I being the youngest of the family.'

William Lane was laid to rest in Alphington Church on August 31st 1654.
