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11 June [1535]
R. O.

856. FISHER AND MORE.

“Answers by confession of Richard Wilson, servant to Mr. John Fisher, doctor of divinity, late bishop of Rochester,” before Sir Edmund Walsingham, lieutenant of the Tower, and Thomas Legh, D.C.L., and in presence of Henry Polstede, John Whalley, and John ap Rice, to certain interrogatories ministered to them 7 June 27 Hen. VIII. in the Tower of London.

1.¹ To the first interrogatory, he says that about Midsummer come 12 months he heard his master say to Mr. Wilbere, Mr. Johnson, commissary [326] of Rochester, and Mr. Robert Fisser his brother, when they would have persuaded him to take the oath of succession, that he wished himself some great misfortune if he went to any place for that purpose.

2. To the second, touching the Act of Supreme Head, about Candlemas last Rob. Fisher came and told him of it in the Tower, when he “toke up his hands and blessed him, saying, Is it so?” Rob. Fisher also told him of an Act “by reason whereof men should come to the Tower thick and th For now. said he, speaking is made high treason, which was never heard of before, that words should be high treason. But there was never such a sticking at the passing of any Act in the Lower House as was at the passing of the same, said he; and that they stuck at the last to have one word in the same, and that was the [word] *maliciously*, which, when it was put, it was not worth for they would expound the same statute themselves at their pleasure.” Cannot remember if Dr. Fisher made any answer to this.

[3?] On Friday after Ascension Day last, Mr. Secretary, and others of the Council, came to examine Fisher on the Act of Supreme Head, and this respondent, standing in the Chamber without the partition, heard some part of the examination. Mr. Secretary said they were sent for two things, first touching the Act of Supremacy: the second point respondent did not hear. Mr. Secretary read the Act, and Fisher replied that he could not consent to take the King as Supreme Head. The Act was also read to him making it treason to deny the King to be Supreme Head. After supper respondent told his master that he thought Mr. Bedyll's reasons weak when he said the King was head of his people, and the people was the Church, with some further observations. The bishop asked if he thought he had been too quick with Mr. Bedyll, and respondent said no. Had no conversation with the bishop afterwards till he was examined again, but how they looked for the Council every day to come to them again. Cautioned the bishop to beware what answer he made as to the supremacy. During the interval Edw. White, the bishop's brother-in-law, was twice with him. Heard no words between them but salutations, and touching the Anabaptists, of whom the said Edward spoke to him.

To the third [and fourth] interrogatories, says he never had communication of those matters with his master other than is abovesaid, but had heard his master say since he was last examined that he had heard one of the statutes read but not the other.

4. To the fifth and every part of the same he says No, except as above rehearsed.

[5]. To the sixth, seventh, and eighth he also answers No.

[6]. Further examined whether he knew any letter, writing, or intelligence to be between Mr. More or any other man and his master since he came to the Tower; said that Dr. Adyson brought his master about Michaelmas last two letters which he found in his

1 The numbers in the margin of this paper do not refer to the interrogatories, but are continued consecutively through the examinations of several deponents, simply to mark paragraphs. It is by the evidence of these numbers, faint and illegible in many cases, that the order of the leaves of this document has now been ascertained; for each leaf was found separate and seemed to be a separate document when first examined. The Roman numbers are not in the MS.

master's books, and after he had showed them to him he took them with him again; but what their contents were he cannot tell. *Notarial signature of John ap Rice.*

ii. [The answers of John à Wood, servant to Sir Thomas Moore, the day and place aforesaid]. *This heading is crossed out.*

iii. "What communication has been between my lord and me since the first cu[m]ing of the Council.]

My answer:—

7. "I remembered unto him this word 'maliciously' to be put in that statute or some other like, for so heard I my lord's brother, Robert Fisher, tell my lord." Moved my lord (bishop Fisher) to send for the statute book, [327] and asked Edw. White to send it. Read the two statutes to my lord, and he read them himself, and on Friday or Saturday last the book was burned. Said that a man may answer a question without any malice; but my lord would not tell him what he would answer. After his last answer before the Council, my lord said he had stuck to the word "maliciously," and that the Council suspected he had counsel from Mr. Moore. But he said Nay, but his brother Robert had told him of the word and bade him so say.

"Whether I suspect any note between my lord and Mr. Moor."

8. Heard my lord tell George that there was no peril in the statutes except it were maliciously done and spoken, and suspects he bade George tell Moore so about seven or eight days before the last coming of the Council. Heard from George that Mr. Moore said Mr. Secretary gave him very good words, but he would say nothing about his answer but that my lord was certified. Told George he thought my lord would suffer death if he gave no other answer, and asked him to get the statute book, but he would not.

"What I have sent to Mr. Moor or his servant."

[9]. Never sent anything concerning the King's matter, either, in word or writing. Sent to Mr. Moor's servant half a custard on Sunday last, and long since greensauce. Moor or his servant sent him an image of St. John, and apples and oranges after the snow that fell in winter. On New Year's day Moor sent him a paper with writing, 2,000*l.* in gold, and an image of the Epiphany.

[10]. Has often suspected George of carrying letters between my lord and Mr. Moor.

[11]. Has seen my lord burn papers, and has burnt them at his bidding, but never was so bold as to look at them, "and for such causes I did suspect the matter the more." Has also burnt old papers that were written before he came to the Tower.

12. Gave George a letter to Moor from my lord since the first examination, but read it not.

13. "We" were agreed to deny any letters being sent between them. Thinks my lord gave many letters to George, and heard him tell George he might say he never carried any letters on the King's business, but he would not counsel him to be forsworn for other things.

iv. [Further examination of Richard Wilson, servant of bishop Fisher.]

*Heading mostly illegible * * * ** "the vijth day of June the person abovenamed, except" "

14. First: he says he has put in writing and sent by Mr..... certain things omitted in his first examination. When the books were here. Mr. More sent word to "the said" Mr. Fisser by Geo. G[olde], the Lieutenant's servant, that he heard that his own books should be condemned, but he does not remember Mr. Fisher's answer. After the said Mr. Fisher's first examination, said to him that he remembered that Mr. Robt. Fisher said to his brother that "maliciously" was in the statute, and therefore a man might answer to the questions not maliciously, and be in no danger; and the respondent asked George and Mr. White to get the book, which the latter at length did.

15. Read the book to his master, and said there was nothing to bind him to answer.

16. And afterwards heard him say to George that he saw no great peril in the statute, unless it were done or spoken maliciously. The next night Fisher wrote a letter to More, which was not sealed or closed, and told him, [328] if George was sober, to give it him to

be delivered; which he did. Knows nothing of the contents.

17. Thinks Fisher told George to show more about the statute.

18. Does not know whether George brought any answer, but heard him say that Mr. More was merry, and that my Lord was satisfied. Then within a few days came the Council again to the second examination.

19. At supper, Fisher, in answer to his questions, said he had not made answer, "but the [Co]uncil was gone even as they came. Then said my master to this respondent, [You] remember, Sir, that the last day before this that the Council was here, the Council should ask me two questions or two points. And this respondent said Yes, for he heard Mr. Secretary say then and purpose that he had come then principally for two things, [on] e was touching the Act of Supreme Head, and the other this deponent could [n]ot hear." Then said his master that the Council bore him in hand that they purposed to ask him two questions, of which one was whether he would accept the King as Supreme Head; "and I remember no such thing. Nor I nother, said this deponent then." But a while after he came to his master as he was saying evensong, and said Yes, that he had answered that he did not think the King might be supreme head, but his master denied having said so. The next day he remarked to his master that he had been a long time with the Council yesterday.

20. His master said the Council had blamed Mr. Lieutenant sore for keeping him and Mr. More so negligently, thinking that they had counsel of each other, and it was not so, but they supposed it, because both stuck much upon one point. Said that if it was upon the word "maliciously" the book was worth sending for; but he answered nothing.

21. On Saturday next "the said George" said to Fisher that he heard he was made a cardinal. "Then, said Mr. Fisher, A cardinal! Then I perceive it was not for nought that my Lord Chancellor did ask me when I heard from my master the Pope, and said that there was never man that had exalted the Pop[e a]s I had."

22. A further conversation between the respondent and Fisher, the former saying that if the [King] were Head of the Church, he would have power to [make] the body of Christ, and hear confessions.

23. Between the examinations George brought Fisher certain scrolls of paper, [written] with lead in some places, and in some other with an agg[let or] dry point, so that they could not be well read; which George said his master had bade him cut out of one of the monks' books. In one was written "Pasce oves meas," &c.; "and I am sure that these words Christ spake himself, and dare take that quarrel to my death." In another place he read, "My Lord, ye should not judge me to death this day, for, if ye should, ye should first condemn yourself and all your predecessors, which were no simple sheep in this flock, but great bellwethers. And, my lord, if ye would, in detestation of this opinion, dig up the bones of all our predecessors and burn them, yet should not that turn me from this Faith." Could not read any more. Showed them to his master, who said "T[h]ey be gone. God have mercy on their souls!" And when they were alive, Fisher said, referring to the said monks under examination, "I pray God that no vanity subvert them."

24. Thinks that letters have passed between Fisher and More since the last examination, for he saw George bring his Master a letter, and afterwards cast it in the fire, last Sunday. [329]

v. Depositions of Geo. Golde, [servant u]nto Mr. Lieutenant, 8 June, before Mr. Ch, in the presence of, John ap Rice, and

25. Says that on Sunday last "Mr. Fisher" wrote a letter to Mr. More, and sent it by him. The next day More sent back an answer, with Fisher's letter. Burned both at Fisher's order.

26. About 10 days ago, told Fisher he heard that he should be a cardinal; to which he answered that "he set as much by that as by a rush under his foot."

27. Heard this from John, some time fa[lconer] to the said Mr. Fisher, who heard it from one Noddy and one Andrew, servants of Ant. Bonevys[e].

28. No one else told him of this. About 10 days ago Fisher sent a letter to More by him, and More caused him to burn it. The next day More wrote an answer and sent it by

him. Fisher told him to burn it.

[29]. About six days after the monks of the Charterhouse were executed, Mr. Lieutenant caused him to carry to the Charterhouse six books which the monks had left in the prison, out of which books Mr. Lieutenant caused him to cut six leaves of parchment, “which leaves were as though it were with lead or like thing.” Laid them up in the Lieutenant’s parlour under a cupboard cloth. Two days after gave them to Ric. Wylson, Fisher’s servant, and, on their being returned, burned them.

30. Two days after the execution, Fisher said to him that he saw not so great peril in the statute, unless it were done or spoken maliciously, and he marvelled much that the monks were put to execution, [say]ing that they did nothing maliciously nor obstinately.

31. Delivered a letter from Wylson for the buying of the book of the statute to the Falconer, but does not know whether it was directed to the Falconer or to Edw. Whyte, Fisher’s brother. Received the book from the Falconer, and gave it to Wylson.

32. When the Lubecks were lately in London, More caused him to tell Fisher that he heard say thow ... works should be condemned, unto whom the said Mr. Fisher that so they would condemn his

33. Has conveyed about a dozen letters between More and Fisher, some being written with ink, and some with coal.

34. It was agreed between Mr. Fisher, his servant, and this deponent, both times the Council came to the Tower, to deny having carried any letters between them; but if he were sworn on a book, that he should speak the truth.

35. More also wrote four letters to his wife and Mrs. Roper [his dau]ghter.

36. Does not know of Fisher sending letters, except to More.

37. Further examined, 9 June.—About a week ago, went to Wm. Thorneton’s house in Themystrete for Mr. Fisher’s diet, as he was accustomed, and asked him if he had heard that Fisher should be made cardinal. Thorneton replied that he had heard it from a servant of lord Rochford.

38. About five days ago, took a pot of conserve from Fisher to Ant. Bonvise [but he would not have it, saying that Fisher had more need of it than he].² There were no letters in the pot.

39. Bonvise sent to More, two or three times every week, meat and a bottle of wine, till a quarter of a year ago, since when, he has sent none. Before the said time he sent Fisher a quart of French wine every day, and three or four dishes of jelly. [330]

40. Heard of Fisher being made cardinal, on Friday or Saturday last, from Mrs. Roper, and the same day told Fisher. Mentions Fawconer and Nody in connection with the report.

vi. Depositions of John à Wood, servant to Sir Thos. [More], Knt., taken by Mr. Thos. Lee, doctor of l[aw], Hen. Polstede, and John ap Rice, 10 [June] 1535.

41. Being examined as to the intercourse between his master and Fisher, said that about a fortnight after the first being of the Council in the Tower, George, the Lieutenant’s servant, came to More, and asked him, from Fisher. what answer he had made. More replied that he would not dispute of the King’s title, but give himself to his beads and think on his passage hence; and this he wrote in a letter to be given to Fisher. Soon after he sent another letter by George to the effect that he would not counsel Fisher to make the same answer, lest the Council might think they were agreed, and that he would meddle with no man’s conscience but his own. After the Coun[cil were at the] Tower, Fisher sent to tell More what answer he had made. Does not know if More sent an answer.

42. Wm. Thorneton, of London, says that he heard of Fisher’s being made cardinal from George, the Lieutenant’s servant, and the Falconer, who serves Fisher with his meat.

43. Andrewe, servant to [Anthony] Bonvies, about 12 days ago heard Florence Volusene say at his master’s house at dinner. that he heard at the French ambassador’s house that Fisher was made Cardinal. and since heard others speak of it.

44. Examined, 11 June.—Never carried any letters or other intell[igence], but bare stewed meat d[ivers times] passed for the which Mrs. Roper did give buying of

2 This passage is struck out.

the same, when she was Also that John the falconer came to his master.

45. vii. Examination of John Pewnoll, alias Fawconer, [somet]yme servant to Mr. Dr. Fisher, sometime bp. of Rochester. Last Lent carried a letter from Fisher, about his disease, to Mr. Bonvieste. who consulted Mr. Clement. and sent back word that Fisher's liver was wasted, and he should [ta]ke gote's my[lk] and other things. Carried another letter to Dr. Fre ... concerning physic, and others to Mr. Whyte, to desire him to seek relief for the said Mr. Fisher.

46. Fisher had money from his brother Robert, and, since he is dead, of Mr..... and Mr. Thorneton.

47. Twice or thrice Mr. Antony Bonvise sent him a dish of stewed meat, before six weeks passed, and a quart of French wine and when Fisher sent for it.

48. Heard that Fisher was made a cardinal first from George, the Lieutenant's servant, who heard it from Andrew

49. 11 June.—Geo. White deposes that last Saturday Wm. Thorneton told him Fisher was made a cardinal, and afterwards John the Fawconer. Asked about letters and communications between Fisher and others, "saith that he knowe[th] but that he hath received himself bills of [the said Mr. Fisher's] diet, which he hath got to show." Was also asked to send him a book of the statutes, which he did by Fawconer.

50. Examined who conv]eyed to him any books or letters; says he sent himself a book of divinity.

51. Illegible. [331]

viii. Further examination of John à Wood, 11 June.

52. Says that on the morning after the Council came to the Tower his master (More) told him that his daughter, Roper's wife, wished to know what had taken place, and he wrote her three letters. Gives the substance of them.

53. Ric. Wylson further examined on June 11.—Says that he does not know of any one encouraging Fisher. About two past he found the copy of a letter in Fisher's chamber to the effect that his opinion concerning the matrimony was true, and he should no[t] doubt therein, i[nsomu]ch as the Pope ha[d] astipulat Whether it was directed to [Fisher] or not he does not know.

54. ix. Further examination of Wm. Thorneton, 11 June.—Says he first heard that Fisher was made cardinal of Mr. Thornam, steward to my lord of Wiltshire, in Poules, eight or nine days ago, in presence of another priest. The same day, or the next, John Falconer and George both told him. Does not know whether any letter was sent to Fisher from beyond sea or on this side. Does not know or suspect any one of counselling or encouraging Fisher.

Mutilated, pp. 21. The leaf containing § iii. is in a different hand from the rest; apparently that of Wilson, the deponent, himself.