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14 June [1535]
R. O. St.
P. i. 431.

867. BISHOP FISHER AND SIR THOMAS MORE.

“Interrogatories ministered on the King’s behalf [unto] John Fisher, D.D., late bishop [of Rochester],” in the Tower of London, 14 June 27 Hen. VIII., by Mr. Thos. Bedyll, [Dr. Aldridge,] Ric. Layton, and Ric. [Curwen], of the King’s Council, **in presence of Harry [Polstede and John] Whalley, and of John Ap Rice, notary public;** with Fisher’s answers.

1. Whether he would obey the King as Supreme Head of the Church of England? — He stands by the answer he made at his last examination, but will write with his own hand more at length.

2. Whether he will acknowledge the King’s marriage with queen Anne to be lawful, and that with the lady Katharine to be invalid?—He would obey and swear to the Act of Succession; but desires to be pardoned answering this interrogatory absolutely. **[341]**

3. For what cause he would not answer resolutely to the said interrogatories?—He desires not to be driven to answer, lest he fall in danger of the statutes.

Signed by John ap Rice as notary: J. R.

Mutilated.

St. P. i. 432.

ii. Interrogatories ministered to Sir Thos. More.

1. Whether he had any communication with any person since he came to the Tower touching the Acts of Succession, of Supreme Head, or the Act wherein speaking certain words by (i.e. of) the King is made treason; and, if so, when, how often, with whom, and to what effect?

2. Whether he received letters of any man, or wrote to any, touching any of the said Acts; and, if so, how many, of whom, &c.

3. Whether these letters are forthcoming; and, if not, why they were done away, and by whose means?

4. Whether any man of this realm or without this realm sent him any letters or message exhorting him to persist in his opinion; and, if so, how many, of whom, when, and to what effect?

St. P. i. 433.

iii. The answers of Sir Thomas More to interrogatories ministered to him, 14 June 27 Hen. VIII., within the Tower of London, before Mr. Bedle, Dr. Aldridge, Dr. Layton, Dr. Curwen, in the presence of Polstede, Whalley and Rice aforesaid.

1. Never had any communication of such matters since he came to the Tower.

2. Had written divers scrolls or letters since then to Dr. Fisher, and received others from him, containing for the most part nothing but comforting words and thanks for meat and drink sent by one to the other. But about a quarter of a year after his coming to the Tower he wrote to Fisher, saying he had refused the oath of succession, and never intended to tell the Council why; and Fisher made him answer, showing how he had not refused to swear to the Succession. No other letters passed between them touching the King’s affairs till the Council came to examine this deponent upon the Act of Supreme Head; but after his examination he received a letter of Fisher, desiring to know his answer. Replied by another letter, stating that he meant not to meddle, but fix his mind upon the passion of Christ; or that his answer was to that effect. He afterwards received another letter from Fisher, stating that he was informed the word *maliciously* was used in the statute, and suggesting that, therefore, a man who spoke nothing of malice did not offend the statute. He replied that he agreed with Fisher, but feared it would not be so interpreted. Did not report to Fisher his answer to the Council with the advice to make his own answer different lest the Council

should suspect confederacy between them. After his last examination sent Fisher word by a letter, that Mr. Solicitor had informed him it was all one not to answer, and to say against the statute what a man would, as all the learned men of England would justify. He therefore said he could only reckon on the uttermost, and desired Fisher to pray for him as he would for Fisher.

Also considering that it would come to the ears of his daughter, Mr. Roper's wife, how the Council had been with him, and other things might be reported which would cause her to take sudden flight, and fearing that, being, as he thought, with child, she might take harm, he sent to her, both after his first examination and after his last, letters telling her the answers he had given, and that he could not tell what the end might be, but whatever it were he prayed her to take it patiently and pray for him. She had written him before divers letters advising him to accommodate himself to the King's [342] pleasure, especially urging this in her last. Other letters he neither sent nor received from any person. George, the lieutenant's servant, carried the letters to and fro.

3. There is none of these letters forthcoming, where he knoweth. He would have had George to keep them, and George always said there was no better keeper than the fire. When he saw this he desired George to let some trusty friend read them, and if he saw any matter of importance in them he might report it to the Council and get thanks before any man, otherwise that he should deliver them. But George said he feared his master, the lieutenant, who had ordered him not to meddle with such matters, and so burned them.

4. No.

Examined further, why he sent the said letters to Dr. Fisher? Replies that as they were both in one prison, and for one cause, he was glad to send to him, and hear from him again.

Signed as above: J. R.

S.P. i. 436.

iv. Interrogatories ministered to Sir Thos. More, the day, year, and place above recited, by the Council aforementioned, and in presence of the said witnesses; with his answers.

1. Whether he would obey the King as Supreme Head?—He can make no answer.

2. Whether he will acknowledge the King's marriage with queen Anne to be lawful, and that with lady Katharine invalid?—Never spoke against it, "nor thereunto [can] make no answer."

3. Where it was objected to him that by the said statute he, as one of the King's subjects, is bound to answer the said question, and re[cogni]se the King as Supreme Head, like all other subjects.—He can make no answer.

Notarial signature mutilated.

Mutilated.

All the above papers are in the same hand, and form one document.