

“earthen medallion is God, no more do we say that the statues of the saints are gods, nor do we adore them as such.’ With these reasonings the Shah and his courtiers remained content.

“The king said that Christians do not make the cross properly because there are only three nails, and we make the sign of it in four places: and, thus speaking, the Shah made the sign as a proof of what he said. The Fr. Visitor replied that it is not done on account of the nails of the Cross, but in order to signify the Trinity of Persons and unity of God and the incarnation of the Son of God: and so it is done at His name, signifying that there is one God alone, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, who are the three Persons; and the Father is signed on the head, to signify that He is the beginning of the other Persons, the Son on the body to signify that He became man in the virginal womb of S. Mary, and the Holy Ghost is signed on the two shoulders to signify that the Third Person proceeds from the Father and the Son. The king was pleased to have heard this explanation and said: ‘I believed that you made the cross in order to signify that Christ, the Lord, Son of God and man, died on the cross in order to save and redeem all men.’ The king then said: ‘We hold that the Lord Jesus is the Spirit of God and was not crucified by the Jews, but that God, seeing that the Jews wanted to crucify him, drew him up as the Spirit into heaven, putting the features of Jesus on Judas, who had sold him and whom, because he appeared to be so like Him, they took and crucified.’

“The Father said, ‘We hold in the Gospel that Jesus Christ is the Word of God, and that He himself as a man was crucified for the salvation of men and the third day rose from the dead and after 40 days ascended into heaven in the sight of all his disciples, who were afterwards witnesses of these truths for all the world.’

“The king asked whether the English believe this. The Fr. Visitor replied ‘yes’. The Shah put the question to the minister (clergyman) of the English who was present, and who confirmed that it was the case, because in this particular they believe the same as the Roman Catholics: and then, in order to show courtesy to the Fathers, with his hand the king poured out and gave them to drink, making a sign of the cross over the cup.

“The third point concerned free-will. The king turned to question the Fathers—who were the better, the English or the Roman Christian. The Fathers replied that by its fruit the goodness and quality of the tree are known: that the king should enquire about the things the English did and the examples they gave, and from those he would be able to judge. The Agent of the English rejoined that they were the better Christians, and that they had the right Faith. On this the Fathers observed: ‘Shah, we do not want to say more to your Highness than this, that the English are heretics and of a like sect as the Turks, who deny free-will and say that all the evil men do and the demons do is done of necessity, and they cannot do less, because God so wills: and so they (the English) say that God does everything, whether good or evil.’

“Here the grandees of the king looked at each other, and the Shah in particular jumped from his seat (as the saying goes) and began to make a sermon to all present, very earnestly as he detested that theory. He spoke with great gusto, so that the Tatar envoys from Caffa, who were there and who are of the same sect as the Turks, should hear him. After the king finished his arguments, the Fathers said: ‘This is the reason, your Majesty, why the English, who have no consciences nor fear of God, are pirates, rob, slay, destroy, and one cannot rely on their word, because they say that they cannot do anything else, seeing that they have no option.’

“The English did not know what reply to make during all this harangue of the Shah, which lasted for the space of more than three-quarters of an hour, during which his Highness brought forward many arguments and examples in opposition to the English who deny free-will, and in particular he said that it was most false. . . .

“Regarding the fourth and last point, the antiquity of the Roman Catholic religion and the primacy of the Sovereign Pontiff, the Shah enquired how long the English had been