

“Poland is making against the Turks, too, is that not by a Catholic king, obedient to the Pope, the vicar of Christ?” The Shah answered: “Tell me what the Pope is doing,¹ not what others are doing.” The Fathers rejoined: “What the Christian princes are doing may also be said to be what the Pope is doing, because, just as when the hand does any good action, it is the head which directs it and to it the praise is given, and, just as when Allah Virdi Khan, Amir Khan, etc., generals of your Highness, gain any victories or conquer any territory, the glory is attributed to your Highness, so also the victories won by the Christian princes are attributed to the Pope who is the head and father of all Christians.”

“His Highness observed that, if at the time when he had been waging war from this quarter, the Christians had done so over there, already the Turks would have been totally destroyed; and to this the Fathers answered that this was very true, and His Holiness was working hard and had laboured to unite all the Christian princes and persuade them to do so; but he was unable to compel them, and they were not doing so because they have other serious and important preoccupations.

“To that the Shah returned that, if the Pope were in person to go to fight against the Turks and to spend his treasure on it, all the rest of the Christian princes would go too and expend their money and resources. For, whoever does not obey the Pope, the vicar of Christ, is no good Christian.

“Thereupon the Fathers said: ‘Well! that is why we said, your Majesty, that the English are no good Christians, because they do not obey the Pope, and they are the cause of the Christian Catholic princes not making war on the Turks. For these heretics, disobedient to the Pope, rebel against their Catholic princes, who are obedient to him, and make war on them, as in these last years the Palatine, son-in-law of the king of England, did against the Emperor, although, thanks to God, the Emperor has gained the victory over him and despoiled him of his lands and punished him as he deserved.’

“At this audience there was present a Flemish painter, whom the king was keeping in order to make use of him: and on this occasion he caused another painter, one of the best in Persia (but much inferior to the Fleming), to come in and, in order to show off his painter and his art, he drew out from a portfolio various designs on paper, among which was one of the Descent of Christ from the Cross, and another of Shah Tahmasp, great-grandfather² of the king, which he kissed, making an inclination of his head.

“So the Fathers observed: ‘Just as your Highness and your people make gestures of respect, and venerate the portraits of your ancestors, so we Christians venerate the images of the Saints.’ With that the Shah expressed approval of the veneration which is paid to pictures of the Saints and, taking the painting of the Descent from the Cross, he kissed it and handed it to us to venerate: and he said: ‘I love the Lord Jesus and St. Mary so much that, were anyone in my kingdom to speak ill of or blaspheme against them, I would have him burnt alive’: and he turned to his chief justiciar, who was present, and bade him do so.

“It was already late, and the guests got up, and we too took our leave of the king, kissing his hand. As we went out, the English made apologies to the Fathers and begged their pardon for having exceeded the limits of politeness. The Fathers answered that in disputations on matters of religion neither politeness nor dissimulation nor compliments

¹ The Papal correspondence contains constant exhortations to the Christian princes, and instances of naval and military assistance provided by the Papal forces to operations against the Turks, e.g. in *Arm.* XLV, vol. 10, p. 13 (22) there is a letter to the king of Spain, of the 3rd Nones of July 1614. The king had ordered a fleet to be got ready to serve as an obstacle to the Turks' progress: “As you asked, We have ordered the commander of our ships to sail to Messina with that aim, and are praying God for success,” wrote the Pope. On 5th Ides of July the Pope wrote to the Viceroy of Naples that the Papal ships were already awaiting the arrival of Philibert of Savoy, commander of the royal fleet, to sail with him, when news came of 6 Turkish ships being off the coast of Sicily. Again on the Nones of February 1615; and again (vol. 11) on the eve of the Nones of January 1616, Briefs to the king of Spain about fleet movements. Again 9.5.1620 (vol. 14, p. 20) about sending ships for the Christian cause.

² ‘Grandfather’, more correctly.