

"now against the Turk, and inviting them to join their arms to Yours to the hurt of that common enemy. . . ."

To continue the narrative of Fr. Paul Simon, after Shah 'Abbas had told him to sign the 'Note Verbale' translated above:

“. . . He ('Abbas I) said that he would give a written answer and would affix to it the same 'secret' seal, which he had given to the Englishman, which would serve as a countersign of the letters he would write to Your Holiness and the Christian princes, who in future should give no credit to his letters, unless the countersign in question were on them: and he said that he would send me the reply with the letter for Your Holiness and those for the other Christian princes. He bade the Wazir have it written at once, as we desired, and send it after him, in order that he might affix his seal, because he had to leave the same day. When the Wazir read to him the sixth point, in which he recommended to him, in the name of Your Holiness, the Christians, especially the Armenians his subjects, he said to me: 'You are witness of the affection I bear for Christians', and that he had dispatched the cross, which we presented to him (as a gift), to the king of Georgia, and that there was for the patriarch a cross of wood which was then being made for him with his own hands." (This allusion is obscure, unless it refers to the patriarch of the Armenians, and 'Abbas I's intention to have him deposed for reasons already mentioned). "But he went on to say that the Captain of Hurmuz was robbing his (the Persian) merchants who went there, was carrying off Muhammadan boys and making them Christians by force, and doing them other injuries which he mentioned. He begged Your Holiness to give instructions that that should not be done. He then put me some questions, firstly, whether Your Holiness had ordered the Augustinian Fathers to change the faith of the Armenians, which for more than 1,000 years they had kept, and to make them into Portuguese. I made answer that Your Holiness had not given orders for it, because the ancient faith of the Armenians was the same as our own, neither did Your Holiness desire it to be changed: that Your Holiness would feel displeasure at the annoyance caused to his Majesty over that, even though it was not the fault of the Augustinian Fathers, who had never had any intention that the Armenians should change their faith, that the Armenians had not (rightly) understood them. He added 'I take it kindly that His Holiness has not given such instructions: tell him what the Fathers' (i.e. the Augustinians) "have done.' Secondly, he inquired of me: 'If the Portuguese Fathers' (so he calls the Augustinians) "tell me one thing, and your Fathers who are remaining here' (i.e. the Carmelites) "tell me another, which of them am I to believe?' I answered that I hoped to God the Augustinian Fathers and our own would never disagree; but, in case it should happen, his Majesty had perspicacity and would know from the letters which the one and the other group had brought him, and should act accordingly. He turned to his nobles, and said: 'I wish to show favour to the Fathers from the Pope'. Finally, he told me that Latin Christians committed insolences and injustices in his realm: who was to punish them? I think he enquired this because Pope Clement VIII, the Emperor and the king of Poland wrote to him to allow us to visit Christians who were in, and might go to Persia. I replied that Religious could not punish (wrongdoers), that Your Holiness would send a person to do so, as he had at the courts of the sovereigns of Christendom, because he desired that malefactors should be punished. He ('Abbas I) said that that would please him, and that I should ask Your Holiness in his name for this. "With regard to the two Fathers, my companions, he replied that they should remain in Isfahan, and continue to pray for him until he ordered otherwise. He directed that another, and a good house should be allotted them, because the first was inconvenient for (making) a church or chapel in it, and that I should leave to go to Your Holiness directly the dispatches¹ were handed me, and he told me to write to him at every oppor-

¹ *Despachi* is the Italian word used; this in 1608 for essentially diplomatic correspondence !!