

“God and Our Saviour, to Whom We pray that He may ever keep You under the shelter of His grace, and bring and order all Your plans and works to the furtherance of Your true salvation.

“Given at Rome at S. Peter’s, under the Fisherman’s Ring (fifth of the Ides of March), 11th March, 1608, in the third year of Our Pontificate.”

The other was worded:

“Some three years ago almost We wrote to Your Highness by Our beloved sons Paul Simon, John Thaddeus and Vincent, Religious of the Carmelite fraternity, who by Our command were accelerating the journey to Persia undertaken at the bidding of Clement VIII, Our predecessor of happy memory; and We by Our letter signified to You the immense joy which We derived from Your victories and triumphs, and how We heartily liked You and likewise desired to keep up the observances of mutual regard, which passed between Our predecessor and Your Highness.

“But because We have not yet learnt whether Our said sons have reached You, We are kindled by an ever greater desire to show You Our affection and have taken the timely opportunity offered by this beloved son (of Ours) John of Avila, the Spaniard, who has told Us he wishes now to return to You, by whom he was sent to Us with Your letter and commissions (but he explained to Us that it had been seized and taken away from him by brigands); to him We have willed to give Your Highness this letter, a witness to Our genuine attachment and goodwill. This man has told Us distinctly many things about Your uncommon kindness to Our sons the Christian faithful, who live in Your very extensive kingdom, and that all, who come to You from Our countries, are received there in a benign and friendly manner indiscriminately, a fact which certainly has bound to You so much the more closely Our liking and goodwill.

“May You therefore be rewarded by the Lord to Whom We always pray for Your true bliss, just as We also do for the happy outcome of the Wars, which You unremittingly wage against a common enemy and a perpetual foe of all called Christians, the Ottoman Tyrant, of Your triumphing over whom so many times and gaining such splendid and brilliant victories We have heard with supreme delight.

“For this reason also We exhort You never to slacken war until You crush the forces of this fierce beast in Asia, by which the more easily Our very dear sons the Christian kings may attack him in Europe. In sooth just as We passionately long for this, so when it shall please Divine providence—nor do We despair that it will happen before long—with the greatest eagerness of mind We shall take steps to get it done.

“Meanwhile to Your most potent arms there shall be joined Our most ardent prayers to God for Your victories. However, if We should be able to furnish anything else and You let Us know this in some way, We shall take pains that You comprehend how greatly at heart to Us are all Your affairs, and how desirous We are of Your success and satisfaction. On this matter the same beloved son John of Avila will bring You still more information; and though We think he is well enough known to You, having personally spoken much to Us about Your generosity to himself, yet We ask You to give him for Our sake a very kind reception. May Almighty God the Father of mercies grant You by the light of His holy grace brave and noble resolutions, and also order and dispose Your deeds to the praise of His most holy Name and to Your own true salvation.

“Given at S. Peter’s, Rome, under the Fisherman’s Ring, the fifth of the Ides of March (11th March, 1608) in the third year of Our Pontificate.”

Although Fr. Paul Simon moved out of Isfahan on 26.2.1608, the caravan did not actually quit the neighbourhood till 3.3.1608. In the meantime he had received from the Wazir a passport recommending him to all and sundry within the Shah’s realm and four ‘books’ in the Persian language as a present from the monarch for Cardinal Cinthius, who had asked for