

“Christians and granting them those privileges which will be mentioned under the other heading, ‘Religion’. The Shah, persuaded, then sent off as his ambassadors to make this request of the late Clement VIII the said Anthony Sherley, my brother, together with Husain ‘Ali Baig, a leading Persian, and later on he dispatched ‘Ali Quli Baig, Muhrdar, also a Persian (who left the other day to return to Persia) to Your Holiness, and afterwards me, Robert Sherley, also, each of us separately so that such disputes as to precedence as occurred between my said brother and Husain ‘Ali Baig should not of necessity arise. The king is now making a fresh appeal and praying Your Holiness in regard to the two headings mentioned, with respect to the first, that of the Confederation, his desire consisting of these three points:

“(1) That there should be friendship and correspondence between the Christian nations and the Persian, so that in all matters business may be transacted with greater intimacy than hitherto.

“(2) That Your Holiness and the other princes should have nuncios and ambassadors and agents at that capital” (i.e. Isfahan) “as also the king of Persia his at this Your capital and those of the other princes, who join the confederacy, in order that there may be greater trustfulness and reciprocal regard on one side and the other. The king of Persia is desirous also that the Christian princes should send him men, who are skilled in the management of artillery, as also persons expert in other necessary crafts, which would be specified by his ambassadors.

“(3) That this be a reciprocal confederacy between these princes and the Shah, both offensive in the matter of warfare against the Turks, and defensive when in making peace or a truce the Shah is to be included also, while he on the other part will do the same in like cases, and will observe it faithfully.

“And, in order that this confederacy may cause its effect to emerge to the hurt of the common enemy he (‘Abbas I) desires that all the pacts concluded up till now by any Christian prince whatsoever with the Turk be broken, because any plan is capable of being spoilt by such (pacts) for the reasons which will be explained to Your Holiness.

“As to warfare a defensive war solely does not please the Shah, but he would prefer that the Christian princes took the offensive for many reasons, and in particular because a war of defence is risky to the defenders apart from the waste of time, men, expenditure, and reputation, while the enemy’s discipline improves. On the contrary an offensive, besides avoiding these and many other inconveniences, just as it brings with it advantages and fame, so it also inspires fear and brings peril to the adversary, because it penetrates the more his defects and discovers his weak points, which were being kept masked by remaining on the defensive. It may be added that the weaknesses of the Turkish Empire are also disclosed to be considerably greater than what was thought: and now it is seen that, although there is no longer a war in Hungary, the Turk is posting there all the flower of his armies as a parade” (of force) “and out of fear of the rebels he has in Anatolia and elsewhere, while the troops are more showy than efficient for the most part. The interior of his realms is without soldiers, fortresses, munitions, or any other practical means of defence, as will be gathered, when particular places are discussed. Besides this the government is corrupt, disorganized and tyrannical: places as judges and governorships are sold, and to incapable and unmanageable men, so that the people, burdened and oppressed, everywhere are discontented. Very large numbers are daily fleeing to the king of Persia, and frequently news is heard of fresh rebellions, and very serious ones, as was that in Shirwan, which routed the Ottoman general with 60,000 men, that of the leader of the Arabs and of the Agha of Janissaries, and so many others known to Your Holiness, which for the sake of brevity I omit to specify, all of which have occurred since the king of Persia recommenced war against the Turk. By these revolts and other greater disturbances they become weakened further, and are the more certain to be beaten in battle.