

“will fill you with the abundance of His gifts and, taking You by the hand, will lead You by the paths of justice to solid and lasting happiness.

“For the remarkable properties of Your mind are perceived by Us and endorsed by the testimony of many persons, but especially that truly royal equitableness joined to the highest intelligence, by means of which You understand that it is expedient that the faithful Christians inhabiting, or coming to, Your country should enjoy the protection of Your authority, in order that no violence or molestation shall be visited on them openly or privily, and with emphasis We beg of You to watch over this carefully, and to achieve this with all Your might.

“These letters of Ours will be brought to Your Highness by the venerable brother Elias, Bishop of Isfahan, Our high priest, highly approved and commended by Us on account of the faith, erudition and piety with which he is endowed, such as few are; and, as he has so highly (as is right) spoken about You not once only, so We are confident that he will report to You, and bear witness to You, with what fervour of apostolic charity We unremittingly send Our prayers up to God for real blessings for You!

“We have, however, considered it opportune to send him back at present to his place of residence, so that just there he may be found and settled for everything which concerns the safety, immunity and profit of the Christians there, and that he may besides apply his exertions in promoting the accomplishment of acts of mutual goodwill between us, and in transacting such business for Us as may occur there.

“We desire therefore that confidence be placed in the said Bishop when engaged in such things, both by the Christians who are committed to his own spiritual guidance, that they may constantly enjoy Your royal protection, and accordingly We once more and earnestly commend them likewise to You; while, however, through the Bishop We wish to have them warned that, save for their faith in God, they should take care not to depart from the respect and obedience due to Your authority, even indeed in the least.

“We are giving instructions for there to be taken to You on this opportunity certain small gifts from foreign parts worth consideration rather as curiosities than for their value, which We hope You will willingly accept, considering only Our affectionate regard from which they proceed. With all Our heart also We wish Your Highness lasting safety and before all else moreover the light of Divine grace.

“Given at S. Peter’s, Rome, under the Fisherman’s ring, the 18th day of February 1705 and the fifth year of Our Pontificate.”

To Shah Sultan Husain the Pope had been lenient, to the point of silence, with regard to the schismatic Armenians: in the commendatory letters of the same date to the Emperor Leopold, the Doge of Venice and the Grand Duke of Tuscany he was more explicit, as for example in that to the Grand Duke Cosimo:

“Beloved son, greeting and the apostolic blessing. The things which Our venerable brother Elias, Bishop of Isfahan, recounted to Us some time ago regarding the truly deplorable state of the church of Isfahan and the nefarious attempt of the heretics, the Armenians in particular, to overthrow altogether the orthodox religion in Persia have, as was right proper, produced in Our mind really great anxiety. On this account, as far as the adversity of the present times permitted, We have benevolently granted him all the assistance and good offices which seemed fitting for repairing the harm done to the Faith and for the preservation and increase of Christian interests in those regions: and now that he is returning to his see We have very warmly recommended him to the king of the Persians whose letters he himself had formerly brought.

“But since this same venerable brother has placed, and to be sure with perfect justification, the greatest confidence in the piety of Your noble self, We pressingly beg of You to receive him, when he comes to You, with Your wonted kindness and freely to afford him everything which Your excellent judgment shall know to be to the advantage as well for the