

whilst, on the contrary, those that had not such a force to trust to, were defeated and destroyed [r]: for besides what has been already

[r] The original Italian runs thus, “ Di qui nacque che tutti li *Profeti* armati vinfero, e li disarmati rovinarono,” which the Editor of the old English translation in 1675 has rendered thus, “ For further evi^{ct}ion, the Scripture shews us, that those of the *Prophets* whose arms were in their hands, and had power to compel, succeeded better in the reformations which they designed: whereas those who came only with exhortation and good language, suffered martyrdom and banishment.” This is taking a great deal of liberty with the original: but that is not the point at present. Amelot de la Houffaye has translated the passage in this manner, “ De la vient que tous les Princes que j’ai nommez ont vaincu, aiant les armes a la main; & ont peri^{er} etant desarmez.”—Sylvester Telius’s Latin translation of it is as follows, “ Hinc factum est, quos *prædiximus* armis instructos, eos omnes victoriam reportasse; porro inermes domitos periisse.” Now though all the Italian Editions of Machiavel’s works that I have seen (which are not many indeed) say *Profeti*, and the old English version says *Prophets*; yet there is some room to suspect from the *que j’ai nommez* of the French, and the *quos prædiximus* of the Latin, that both the last translators followed some old copy of Machiavel’s Works, where the word was *prefati*, which some Printer, by mistake, might afterwards convert into *profeti*, and so mislead others. Every one knows such blunders have been committed more than once or twice. But if it was originally and intentionally written *Profeti*, the author is guilty of asserting a falsehood (as might be shewn at large, if it was necessary) except he meant the Founders of Sects, and Teachers of false Religion: and it would be no easy matter to reckon up many of those that have succeeded by dint of an armed force alone, if we leave out Mahomet and the Pope of Rome. Moses and his successors depended chiefly upon exhortation, and doctrine founded upon reason; as did Jesus Christ also, and his Apostles: which gave Tertullian occasion to say, “ non est Religionis cogere Religionem, quæ sponte suscipi debet, non vi.” And it is very remarkable, that the Civil Power did not favour Christianity for three whole centuries after Our Saviour’s birth: so that his Religion, though planted and propagated by peaceable, unarmed, and illiterate men, triumphed over all the rage and opposition of a perverse and obstinate world. Sanguis Martyrum est semen Ecclesiæ.—There is no doubt but Our Saviour, who had all the powers of nature at command, could have had *legions of Angels* to support his Mission, or to destroy his Persecutors, if he had thought fit: but he came to *seek and to save*; not to persecute and destroy; to court and convince by doctrine, by miracles and sufferings; by appeals to the reason and senses of mankind; not to use violence, or *compel them to come in*, as some others have done under the countenance of that text.—The genius of the Christian Religion, is *mild, gentle, long-suffering, peaceable, full of mercy and charity*, intended for the reformation and welfare, not for the scourge and destruction of men. Accordingly, when some of the Disciples would have had our great Prophet call down fire from Heaven to consume the Samaritans, he rebuked them, and told them, *they knew not what manner of Spirit they were of; for the Son of Man was not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.*—Some, indeed, of the old Prophets, were sent with an armed force to support their mission; which was not to make converts, or to establish any particular Doctrine, but to cut off, or exterminate sinful nations, when the measure of their iniquities was fulfilled. But it is as true, that Jonas was sent only to *preach* to the Ninevites; and that many others whom the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews enumerates, instead of cutting peoples throats, wrought righteousness, through Faith subdued Kingdoms, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens, &c. So that Machiavel’s assertion, that armed Prophets have always succeeded, and unarmed ones been defeated, does not hold either way in general: if yet he really designed to speak of *Prophets*, which is submitted to the Reader.

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