

under the sanction of your favourable opinion and great wisdom.<sup>9</sup> This circumstance of time lays open either a palpable falsehood, or at least an egregious blunder in Varillas. He says, in his Anecdotes of Florence, “ that Machiavel wrote the eight books which we have of the Florentine History, in so florid and elaborate a Style, that he is charged with an excess in that point: that it is chiefly upon this account that the ease and agreeable freedom of Boccace are preferred to his manner of writing: that his relation of facts is sometimes ill-natured and satirical: and that Marcus Musurus convicted him so evidently of these faults that he durst not attempt a reply.” Now Musurus died in the time of Leo X; so that he could not possibly animadvert upon Machiavel’s History, which did not appear till the days of Clement VII. Varillas has likewise strangely perverted the words of Jovius, which are as follow. “ *Pedestrem patrii sermonis facultatem a Boccacii conditoris vetustate diffluentem novis & plane Atticis vinculis astrinxerat, sic ut ille castigatior, sed non purior aut gravior existimetur.*”

It would be endless to relate the stories that are told of Machiavel’s irreligion. Let one suffice, and whether that is worthy of credit or not, is left to the judgment of the reader. “ When he lay at the point of death he was seized with the following phrenzy. He saw a small company of poor, half starved, ragged, ill favoured wretches who he was told were the inhabitants of Paradise, of whom it is written, *Beati pauperes Spiritu; quoniam ipsorum est regnum cælorum.* *Blessed are the poor in Spirit; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* After these had retired, an infinite number of grave Majestick personages appeared, who seemed as sitting in council and debating upon important affairs of State. There he saw Plato, Seneca, Plutarch, Tacitus, with many others of the like character: and when he asked who those venerable persons were, he was informed they were the damned, the Souls of the reprobated, *Sapientia hujus sæculi inimica est Dei; the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.* After this, being asked to which of those companies he would chuse to belong, he answered, he had much rather go to hell, where he might converse with those great Genius’s about State-affairs, than be condemned to the company of such lousy scoundrels as had been presented to him before. Soon after which he expired [m].” Spizelius gives us the substance of the same story [n]; but it is otherwise related by some. They pretend that Machiavel says in some part of his works, that he:

[m] Binet de Salut d’Origene.

[n] Scrutin. Atheismi historici ætiolog.