



## *Philosophy of Religion in Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, Marquise de Sévigné (1626-1696)*

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The religious philosophy of Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, Marquise de Sévigné is influenced by Jansenism, a then-contemporary theological movement that stressed divine volition and predestination. Sévigné argues that events in everyday life which might appear random actually are caused by God in a providential pattern. Virtuous actions that seem to originate from a human moral agent alone actually are the effects of divine causation operating through impulsions of grace. She laments the tendency of contemporary philosophers to focus on "poor secondary causes" and to ignore or minimize the role of divine causation in physical and moral activity. In this volitionist framework, the highest religious virtue is the abandonment of one's will to the (often inscrutable) will of God. In her defense of an omnipresent divine causation, Sévigné condemns Molinism, a Jesuit theory of salvation, as placing too much emphasis upon individual human responsibility and merit. She also condemns the Epicurean libertinism propagated by the salon of Ninon de Lenclos (1620-1705) because it ignores divine causation and promotes a hedonistic ethics contrary to the moral law authored by the divine will.

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