

anism, infinitely worse than that of the infatuated brethren of the Free Spirit, commend us, however, to the casuistry of the Jesuits so fully unmasked in Pascal's Provincial Letters. It is strange that different systems produce the same results, just as the same causes apparently produce results totally distinct.

Some of them also fell into Pantheism, and this was easy. They believed not only in the Free Spirit of God acting in conversion, but in a God absolutely free in all His operations. They rejected all natural limitations, all eternal and necessary natures of things, and kindred physical and metaphysical verbal absurdities, that would dethrone God. That piece of verbiage which asserts that a thing is not right because God wills it, but God wills it because it is right, they met somewhat in this way: who taught God right? To what being does God stand in such necessary relation as to make Him capable of moral distinctions? Where, behind the eternal throne, can you find room for a standard to which that throne shall conform? They were right. To place the possibility of sin in relation to the Divine Being, or to attempt to do away with such possibility by asserting that God is restricted in the performance of what is sin in us by any necessity, is to pander to the thoughtless fools who refuse to accept revelation because of the morality of the Old Testament, or to believe in God because of the existence of sin and suffering. Of His own will, for His good pleasure, in other words, freely, God does all things.

They held God to be absolutely free, without any so-called moral, physical or other condition, save in so far as He is pleased by the exercise of the highest freedom to limit Himself. For this power of limiting onesself is the highest freedom. And they held that God's freedom extends throughout the entire universe, so that God cannot be external to any person or thing therein. Even for the lost the consuming fire is God. It is strange that these Brethren should have come to a view so different from that Manichæism, which, as Paulicians, their teachers of Italy and Southern France had held. These, to solve the question of sin's existence, supposed a dualism of good and bad from eternity. But the Brethren, in their acceptance of the unlimited Divine freedom, find no need for this in their system. It does not surprise them that sin should arise out of limitations freely made within the Divine domain, for there is no *ab extra* importation into God's universe. They were Pantheists, therefore, in the sense in which Paul was a Pantheist on Mars Hill and in his epistles, but no Pantheist in the ordinary meaning of the word; for Pantheism is destroyed by freedom, the highest mark of personality. Touch the Freedom, impose any necessity upon the personality not self-imposed, and known historically so to be, and Pantheism becomes possible, man may sit in judgment upon God. He is the absolutely free, His only limitations being those free ones of His own