

truth of Xy by examining the evidence in its favor, and by comparing it with pagan religion, Judaism and Islam. The existence of God is argued on the basis of the rational necessity of a first cause and by the universal assent of the nations, whose traditions reveal a natural desire for immortality and a sense of impending judgment. The truth of Xy is also argued on the basis of certain matters of fact (Christ's existence, his death and resurrection) and the nature of Xn doctrine. Its doctrines, Grotius argues, are inherently superior to all others. It excels all other religions in the exceeding purity and holiness of its precepts. Xn worship is free from cruelty, human sacrifice, and lewdness. It teaches men to worship God with a pure mind and by performance of right acts. Xn service is joyful, not a servile obedience prompted by fear of punishment.

To fully understand the Xn religion, one must go to the books that contain it. These contain nothing impossible or disagreeable to reason. What they declare is confirmed by the books of the OT and the records of the Jewish religion. The Jews ought to accept the miracles of Christ as based on the same kind of evidence which persuades them of the miracles of Moses and Elisha. The miracles of Christ ought to be taken as signs of the truth of what He taught.

Xy is also superior to paganism. Pagan worship of departed men, stars, gross matter, brute creatures and things lacking real existence, is foolish and most disagreeable to right reason. Some of the wisest pagans, however, shared many beliefs with Xy. What is found as disorganized belief among the pagans is unified by the Xn religion; what is difficult to believe in Xy is matched in paganism by things far more incredible.

Xy and Islam are directly opposed. Islam is designed for bloodshed and spread by the sword; it delights much in ritual and ceremony; permits divorce; urges revenge; and encourages belief while refusing critical examination. Mohammed admits that Jesus, Moses, and the disciples were sent by God; yet many things in the Quran contradict their teachings.

#### 18. Penseés by Blaise Pascal (1669)

Blaise Pascal was a member of the Jansenists (Roman Catholics, followers of Cornelius Jansen [1585-1638], who opposed the semi-Pelagian views of the Jesuits), and a significant figure in the history of mathematics, physics, literature and apologetics. He assembled a collection of notes and aphorisms in preparation for writing a full-blown apology for Xy, but poor health and an untimely death at age 39 prevented its completion. His notes were compiled and edited eight years later as Penseés sur la Religion.

Pascal teaches that man's task is to understand himself. Careful thought on man's condition indicates a pervading ambiguity. Man stands at the crossroads between the finite and the infinite. His existence is characterized by both grandeur and