

misery. His finiteness places limits upon his reason. Uncertainty or existential doubt is a part of the human condition. Knowledge, moreover, involves more than just reason alone. In dealing with those truths which concern man most deeply, "the heart has reasons which reason does not know."

Thus the truth of God's existence cannot be determined through the use of pure reason. "The metaphysical proofs of God are so remote from the reasoning of men, and so complicated, that they make little impression; and if they should be of service to some, it would only be during the moment that they see such demonstration; but an hour afterwards they fear they have been mistaken."

The threat of emptiness and meaninglessness also characterizes the human condition. Man seeks to find satisfaction and meaning in his life by pursuing various finite and temporal things, but his labors fail to provide ultimate satisfaction or final meaning.

This description of the human condition drives Pascal to his wager for the existence of God. This bet is not a trick or intellectual exercise for Pascal. It is an existential choice involving one's ultimate concern. It is also a forced option. Either God exists or He does not. If God does not exist, the human condition is threatened with final despair. Man is thus confronted with an inescapable decision in the presence of an inescapable uncertainty. In the face of this risk, he wagers.

If he believes in God and God exists, he gains everything; if he believes in God and God does not exist, he suffers only a finite loss. If he disbelieves, and God exists, he loses everything; if he disbelieves and God does not exist, he reaps only a finite gain. The best strategy is to believe in God's existence. If one believes, there is an infinity to gain and only a finite possible loss. If one disbelieves, there is an infinity to loss and only a finite possible gain.

Does this wager drive a man to belief in God's existence? No, it cannot do that. But it can occasion sober, serious thought about the human condition apart from the Xn religion. Only the Xn religion provides man with an adequate picture of the distortions and corruptions present in man's nature, and with a teaching of deliverance from this condition through redemption by Jesus Christ.

NOTE: In the last half of the 17th cen and the first few decades of the 18th, the so-called philosophy of common sense made open war on Xy. Its advocates were variously known as Freethinkers, Deists, or Naturalists, and included Herbert of Cherbury, Thomas Hobbes, Charles Blount, John Toland, Anthony Collins, Anthony Ashley Cooper, Thomas Woolston, Jean Bodin, Michel de Montaigne, Pierre Charron, Pierre Bayle, and Matthias Knutsen.

Robert Boyle (1626-1691) endowed a series of lectures "to prove the truth of the Xn Religion against infidels," and numerous apologies were written. Among these, two deserve