THE PROBLEM OF EVIL, PASCAL'S WAGER, FAITH v. REASON & RELIGION AS A "FORM OF LIFE"

The Problem of Evil:
1. If G-d were to exist, G-d would be all-powerful, all-knowing and all-good.
2. A G-d who is all these things, would not allow (unnecessary) evil to exist.
3. There is (unnecessary) evil.
4. Therefore, G-d does not exist.

Two Kinds of Evil:
1. There is evil that exists that is brought about by natural events and are not within human control; and
2. There is human evil, i.e., evil brought about by human actions and for which human beings may be held responsible.

Possible Responses to the Argument:
1. Rejection of Premise # 1
   i. G-d is not really all-knowing; or
   ii. G-d is not really all-good.
2. Rejection of Premise # 2.
   i. construct a *theodicy* to show that G-d's being allPKG is not incompatible with there being evil in the world.

Some Defenses:
1. Evil is a necessary counterpart of good defense.
2. Evil is necessary as a means to the good defense
3. The greater good defense
4. The Soul-building, Soul-making defense.
5. The Free Will defense
6. The "G-d is a Great Mystery" or G-d Works in Mysterious Ways" defense

Prudential Reasons for Religious Belief
1. Pascal's Wager (Pascal 1623 - 1662)
   i. Belief is not an action.
   ii. The argument requires a specific conception of G-d.
   iii. The role of reason in the argument.
2. Pragmatism: William James (1842 - 19100
   i. The Need for Faith.
   ii. The Prudence of Belief without Evidence
3. The Superiority of Faith: Soren Kierkegaard (1813 - 1855)

Is the Existence of G-d Testable?
1. Proofs of existence
2. Falsification
3. Observation and evidence
4. Sense and Reference

Religion as an Activity rather than a Set of Propositions:
1. Beliefs are supposed to be true: ("You can't say I believe in fairies, but I don't think it is true that fairies exist.") But religion is not obviously a matter of truth.
2. Should religious states of mind be assessed in terms other than truth? What might those terms be?
3. Perhaps religion is not a matter of belief and religious states of mind are not beliefs.
4. Accepting a religion may be more like appreciating a work of art.