CONCLUSION

The present thesis is aptly entitled as "On Certainty: A Study on the Limits of Scepticism", because it has two goals to achieve, namely, (1) to prove that there is certainty in human knowledge and (2) to prove that scepticism itself has limits beyond which it becomes meaningless. In course of this essay I have tried to establish both the theses. It is the second thesis about the limits of scepticism which proves the first thesis about certainty. Thus in this work I have started with scepticism and ended with certainty.

My argument in this essay has been that only by refuting scepticism, in some sort of a negative dialectic, we can prove certainty. Refuting scepticism is itself a difficult task. Therefore, I have taken the help of the historically established formulations of scepticism for my argument. From the history of western philosophy I have derived the very notion of scepticism as one that refutes the possibility of knowledge. I have taken scepticism in its strongest form though its mild and harmless forms are also available. A deeper view of scepticism reveals that it is a serious philosophical standpoint which refuses to accept anything as a matter of faith, dogma and unexamined belief. It therefore subjects every belief to a logical scrutiny. But, unfortunately, the sceptic finds no resting-place in his philosophical quest for certainty, truth and necessity. Therefore, he ends up in despair and declares that nothing is knowable with certainty. It is the extreme form of scepticism that has disturbed the non-sceptical philosophers throughout the ages. In spite of Pyrrho's sincerity in his philosophical quest, he could not be the model of Greek philosophy which follows Plato rather than Pyrrho. Pyrrho ended up in despair while Plato opened up a way to hope. The philosopher of certainty and truth is thus the standard torchbearer of philosophy.
My effort in this essay is to bring out the philosophy of truth and certainty as against the philosophy of despair and ignorance in an effort to show that history of philosophy is full of examples which show the fruitlessness of the sceptical philosophy itself. The great philosophers of the West from Plato to Wittgenstein have demonstrated that scepticism is ultimately an impossible position. If scepticism is true, then philosophy itself as a rational activity will be impossible.

In my argument against the sceptic I have relied on the historical source because I find in it the genuine insights against the sceptical position. In the great works of Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant and Wittgenstein I have found the genuine concern against the sceptical challenge to human knowledge, science and philosophy as such. Out of this concern they have developed great systems of philosophy in which one comes face to face with truth which dazzles in the clear light of reason. Scepticism fades away in the face of the light of truth and reason.

As stated above, the aim of this thesis is to argue for truth and certainty. Truth is the very ground on which our knowledge stands. It is the foundation on which the edifice of knowledge is built. Certainty is the way we grasp this truth. The more we grasp the truth in its totality, the more certain we are. So certainty lies the way we approach truth. Hence, it is probable that there are degrees of certainty and it is also logically possible that some cannot attain a high degree of certainty in their quest for truth. However, it cannot be case that no certainty is possible in our quest for truth. If certainty is not possible, then science is not possible. Philosophy itself requires a measure of certainty in its quest for truth. Therefore, scepticism as a philosophical standpoint which denies certainty cannot be rationally possible.