

# BELIEVING AND KNOWING IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

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ONE CAN scarcely read the fourth Gospel without observing, at least in a general way, how frequent in it and how apparently germane to its message are references, variously expressed, to religious belief and religious knowledge. The aim of this inquiry will be to confirm and refine this general impression on the basis of internal evidence afforded by the Gospel's text.<sup>1</sup> This limited aim fairly dictates a procedure whose general character can be anticipated immediately.

## OUTLINE OF PROCEDURE

Given that our concern is with the frequency and relevance of ideas of religious believing and knowing found in the fourth Gospel, the obvious first requirement is to establish a criterion for identifying the literal expressions of these ideas—in other words, provisionally to define the set of texts from the Gospel that serve reliably as initial data.

In the second place, these literal references to religious belief and knowledge should provide a basis for differentiating other, less literal expressions, which seem to refer figuratively to the same ideas because they either occur in synonymous parallelism with the literal expressions or at least occupy corresponding positions in closely similar contexts.

Once these texts have been identified as respectively the literal and figurative references to religious belief and knowledge, the next requirement will be to determine the frequency and pattern of their incidence, that is, to find out how relatively numerous they are and whether their distribution shows some preferential pattern.

Once having tagged the pertinent texts, tallied their incidence, and charted their distribution, it will remain to give, on the basis of these data, some account of their meaning, and that under two principal aspects. The first aspect is simply verbal, concerned with setting down for the words that refer to religious belief and knowledge in the fourth

<sup>1</sup> The text used for all citations and supposed by all references is that of Eb. Nestle, *Novum Testamentum graece* (23rd ed., rev. Er. Nestle and K. Aland; Stuttgart, 1957). The only emendation is the punctuation of 7:37, discussed in the body of the article.

Gospel definitions acceptable to a Johannine lexicon. The second aspect is more properly literary, concerned with the organic or functional contribution of religious belief and knowledge to the theological argument and aesthetic design of the fourth Gospel.<sup>2</sup>

Certain peripheral questions will inevitably arise in the process of inquiry, but such byways will be better introduced where they more logically occur.

#### SELECTION AND COMPILATION

The first requirement, as has been said, for compiling the texts that constitute direct subject matter of this investigation, is for a working definition of literal expressions of religious belief and knowledge. Such a definition should comprise two conditions which are both necessary and sufficient. First, the texts in question must include terms that can be translated in context by forms of the English verbs "to believe" or "to know," by their synonyms or antonyms, or by other parts of speech cognate with any of these. And second, these expressions must at least imply that the object believed or known is in each instance religious, namely, God Himself or some divine manifestation or attribute. Thus, for example, in 2:24, *episteuen* would be excluded by the first criterion, since the context requires some such translation as "entrust" rather than "believe," while *ginōskein* would be excluded by the second criterion, since its object is not religious. Application of these criteria throughout the fourth Gospel results in a collection of those texts which include literal references to religious believing and knowing. The full list of these verses is given in Table 1. Inevitably, certain texts prove invincibly doubtful, and the verses where these problems occur are distinguished in the list by enclosure within parentheses.

The doubtful cases just mentioned, all of which are forms of the verb *eidenai*, are rendered both interesting and difficult by the poly-

<sup>2</sup> Without wishing to beg the question of the fourth Gospel's literary integrity and the authentic order of its parts, in view of the variety and uncertainty of current answers to that question it seems most judicious to adopt the common-sense hypothesis defended by C. H. Dodd: "I shall assume as a provisional working hypothesis that the present order is not fortuitous, but deliberately devised by somebody—even if he were only a scribe doing his best—and that the person in question (whether the author or another) had some design in mind, and was not necessarily irresponsible or unintelligent" (*The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* [Cambridge, 1953] p. 290).

valence and irony that characterize the language and symbolism of the fourth Gospel.<sup>3</sup> Thus, for instance, when in 4:32 Jesus says to the disciples that He has food to eat "which you do not know (*ouk oidate*)," the sensitive reader will probably infer in the verb an ironic reference to religious knowledge. But when the steward at Cana, on tasting the miraculous wine (2:9), "did not know where it was from (*pothen estin*)," one's initial impression of a quite plain statement that he was ignorant of the source of the wine may be made uneasy by suspicions of Eucharistic intimations, as well as by the recollection of how significantly ironic a formula this *pothen estin* ("where *He* is from") shows itself to be elsewhere in this Gospel, for example in 7:27 ff. Problems of this kind can sometimes be resolved by no more objective instrument than the literary discretion of the reader, admittedly, like taste, a rather imponderable faculty.

A glance at Table 1 should sufficiently confirm the reader's first impression that references to religious believing and knowing are both abundant and diffuse in the text of the fourth Gospel. Taken all together, there are about two hundred such literal references alone, or an average of nearly ten for each of the Gospel's brief chapters. Only one chapter is free of them. Not surprisingly it is chapter 18, the beginning of the Passion story, where the fourth Gospel shows least originality and most dependence on traditional material shared with the Synoptics. The same may be said of chapter 19, the conclusion of the Passion story, which accordingly has only one such reference (or possibly two) in 19:35.

Almost all these literal references are accounted for by one verb of believing, *pisteuein*, and two verbs of knowing, *eidenai* and *ginōskein*. As noted in the caption of Table 1, there are only seven exceptions: a single occurrence of the verb *apeithein*, one of *noein* (in a citation of Isaiah which differs from the Septuagint), three of *gnōrizein*, and one each of the adjectives *pistos* and *apistos*. A remarkable feature is the total absence of substantives, especially *pistis*, the word for faith

<sup>3</sup> The peculiar genius of Johannine ambiguity has been analyzed with very interesting and far-reaching results by O. Cullmann, "Der johanneische Gebrauch doppeldeutiger Ausdrücke als Schlüssel zum Verständnis des vierten Evangeliums," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 4 (1958) 360-72. For a general theory of the symbolic structure of the fourth Gospel, one which follows a strongly Neoplatonic line in interpretation, see Dodd, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-43.

TABLE 1

Believing <i>pisteusein</i>			Knowing			
			<i>eidenai</i>		<i>gignōskein</i>	
Chap.	Affirmative	Negative	Affirm.	Neg.	Affirm.	Neg.
1	7, 12, 50			26, 31, 33		11
2	11, 22, 23		(9)	(9)		
3	12, 15, 16, 18, 36	12, 18, 18, 36*	2, 11	(8)		10
4	21, 39, 41, 42, 50, 53	48	10, 22, 25, 42	22, 32		
5	24	38, 44, 46, 46, 47, 47	32	(13)		
6	29, 30, 35, 40, 47, 64, 64	36, 70	(42)		69	
7	31, 38, 39	5, 48	27, 28, 28, 29	28	17	26, 27, 49
8	30, 31	24, 45, 46	14, 55, 55, 55	14, 19, 19, 19	28, 32	27, 43, 55
9	35, 36, 38	18	24, (25), 28, 31	(12), (21), (21), (25), 29, 30		
10	38, 42	25, 26, 37, 38	(4)	(5)	14, 15, 38, 38	6
11	15, 25, 26, 26, 27, 40, 42, 45, 48		22, 24, 42			
12	11, 36, 42, 44, 44, 46	37, 38, 39	50	(35), 40*		16
13	19		3, 17, (18)	7	7, 12, 35	
14	1, 1, 10, 11, 12, 12, 29		4, 7	5, 5	7, 7, 17, 20, 31	9, 17
15			15*	(15), 21	18	
16	27, 30, 31	9	30	18		3
17	8, 20, 21				25	3, 7, 23, 25, 25, 26,* 26*
18						
19	35		(35)			
20	8, 27*, 27*, 29, 31, 31	25		9, (14)		
21			(12), 24	(4)		
Total	72	29	29 (36)	19 (31)	17	20
		101	48 (67)	85 (104)	37	

( ) Expressions doubtfully included.

\* Related words other than the verbs indicated: *apeithein* (3:36); *noein* (12:40); *gnōrissein* (15:15; 17:26); *apistos*, *pistos* (20:27).

which is otherwise so frequent throughout the New Testament, and *gnōsis*, which often denotes religious knowledge in the Pauline writings. Nor can this striking omission be subsumed under a general tendency of the fourth Gospel to eschew abstract nouns; for, to take as perhaps the best counterexample references to religious love and loving, occurrences of *agapē*, though outnumbered by *agapan*, are nonetheless un-

deniably frequent. It is true that the active connotation achieved by verbal expressions, suggesting that belief and knowledge are regarded as movements rather than as states, is one that is highly appropriate to the literary tenor of the fourth Gospel, but even this advantage seems insufficient to account for absolute exclusiveness. The absence of *gnōsis* might betoken some chariness of Gnostic overtones, but in the present state of knowledge of the Gospel's *Sitz im Leben* this can be only a guess, and one whose explanatory value is limited at that.

#### FIGURATIVE PARALLELS

A large number of figurative expressions can be shown in the fourth Gospel to correspond, at least partially, to its already numerous literal references to religious believing and knowing. A listing of the former is given in Table 2, where again the more problematic verses are set off by parentheses. Because of the elusiveness inherent in figurative diction, doubts arise oftener here and are harder to resolve. The following discussion of some sample texts will prove more or less applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to the rest of the verses cited. The greatest number of these figurative expressions are, naturally enough, verbs of cognition, and specifically of seeing, hearing, and, in a special sense, remembering.

First, some instances of the figurative use of seeing. In 3:11, "We speak of what we know (*ho oidamen*) and bear witness to what we have seen (*ho heōrakamen*)," suggests that *eidenai* and *horan*, knowing and seeing, are here alternative expressions for the receiving of revelation. In 14:7, "Henceforth you know (*ginōskete*) Him and have seen (*heōrakate*) Him" draws a similar parallel between *ginōskein* and *horan* as denoting knowledge of the Father. The Isaian passage in 12:40 links *noein* with *horan* in much the same way.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> G. L. Philipps, "Faith and Vision in the Fourth Gospel," in *Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (ed. F. L. Cross; London, 1957) pp. 83-96, suggests that in the fourth Gospel believing is the climax of a series of ascending grades of vision, each designated by a different verb of seeing whose psychological overtones the author describes. Too little evidence is offered to prove the theory, but enough to suggest that it may well have some basis.—For less specialized considerations of the relationship between vision and belief, see O. Cullmann, "*Eiden kai episteusen*: La vie de Jésus, objet de la vue et de la foi d'après le quatrième évangile," in *Aux sources de la tradition chrétienne (Mélanges offerts à M. Maurice Goguel)* (Neuchâtel, 1950) pp. 52-61. Cullmann sees a pronounced ecclesiastical symbolism in the fourth Gospel's presentation of the visible events of Jesus' life. Many of the

TABLE 2

## Figurative Parallels To (Not)Believing, (Not)Knowing

## Seeing (being blind), hearing, remembering

*horan* 1:34, (37, 39, 46, 50, 51); 3:11; 12:40; 14:7*theðrein* 4:19; 6:40; 12:45; 14:17, 19*theasthai* 1:14, (32)*blepein* 9:39*tuphlos ginesthai* 9:39*akouein* (3:8, 29; 4:42); 5:24, 25; 6:45; 8:43, 47; 10:3, 8, 16, 20, 27; 18:37*mimnēskesthai* 2:17, 22; 12:16

## Coming, entering, following

*erchesthai* (1:39, 46); 3:20, 21; 6:35, 37, 45; 6:65; 7:37; 14:6*hēkein* 6:37*eiserchesthai* 10:9*akolouthein* (1:37, 38, 40), 44; 8:12; 10:4, 5, 27; 12:26

## Receiving (rejecting)

*lambanein* 1:12, (16); 3:11, 32, 33; 5:43; 12:48; 13:20; 14:17; 17:8*para-lambanein* 1:11*kata-lambanein* (1:5)*athetein* 12:48

## Learning, being a disciple, working, serving

*mathētai einai, ginesthai* 8:31; 9:27; 13:35; 15:8*manthanein* 6:45*didaktos einai* 6:45*ergazein ta erga* 6:27, 28*diakonein* 12:26

## Loving (hating), honoring

*agapan* 3:19; 8:42; 14:15, 21, 23, 24, 28; 21:15, 16*philein* 16:27; 21:15, 16, 17*timan* 5:23*misein* 3:20; (15:18, 19, 23, 24, 25; 17:14)

## Drinking, eating

*pinein* 4:13, 14; 7:37*phagein* 4:32; 6:50, 51

## Keeping, remaining

*tērein* 8:51, 52, 55; (14:15, 21), 23, 24; (15:10), 20; 17:6*menein* 5:38; (6:27, 56); 8:31; 12:46; (15:4, 5, 6), 7, (9, 10)

## Confessing (denying)

*homologeîn* 9:22; 12:42*arneisthai* 13:38; 18:25, 26

## Being born

*gennasthai* 1:13; (3:3, 5, 6, 7, 8)

## Hating (loving) oneself

*misein tēn psuchēn* (12:25)*philein tēn psuchēn* (12:25)

As an example of the figurative use of hearing, 8:43 draws a parallel between "you do not know (*ginōskete*) my speech" and "you cannot hear (*akouein*) my word." As in this verse hearing stands for knowing, so it stands for believing in 8:46-47, where "why you do not believe (*pisteuete*) me" is matched by "why you do not hear (*akouete*)."<sup>5</sup>

Remembering, in the present context, refers to the disciples' enlightened recalling, after the Resurrection, of Jesus' fulfilment of prophecy in the deeds and sayings of His public life, an insight into unsuspected meanings that expresses the paschal gift of faith. Thus in 2:22, "After His resurrection His disciples remembered (*emnēsthēsan*) that He had said this, and they believed (*episteusan*) the Scripture and the word He spoke." As here their remembering is likened to their believing after the Resurrection, so in 12:16 their not knowing before the Resurrection is contrasted with their remembering after it: "At first the disciples did not know (or understand: *egnōsan*) these things, but when Jesus had been glorified they remembered (*emnēsthēsan*) that these things had been written about Him and done to Him."<sup>6</sup>

After verbs of cognition, the most frequent figures of believing and knowing are verbs of reception. *Lambanein*, which is the verb in nearly all such cases, is identified with *pisteuein* by apposition in 1:12: "As many as received (*elabon*) Him, He gave to them power to be sons of God, to those who believed in (*pisteuousin eis*) His name." Receiving,

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ideas developed in this study are taken up in the interests of biblical sacramental theology in the author's *Early Christian Worship* (*Studies in Biblical Theology*; London, 1953) pp. 38-59.—The frequency of connection between the ideas of testimony and of vision is considered by I. de la Potterie, "La notion de témoignage dans saint Jean," in *Sacra pagina* (*Miscellanea biblica congressus internationalis Catholici de re biblica*, edd. J. Coppens, A. Descamps, and E. Massaux; Paris, 1959) pp. 209-18.—The problem of the relationship between seeing and believing in the conversation with Thomas after the Resurrection is analyzed by H. Wenz, "Sehen und Glauben bei Johannes," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 17 (1961) 17-25.

<sup>5</sup> As the example indicates, contrary perhaps to antecedent probability, there seems to be no differential correlation of verbs of hearing with those of believing, on the one hand, and of verbs of knowing with those of seeing, on the other. The fact that all four notions are largely interchangeable should warn the reader against interpreting references to sight as references to some kind of mystical vision. Concerning this and related questions, see R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* 2 (London, 1955) 70-92.

<sup>6</sup> The idea of enlightened reminiscence on the part of the disciples after the Resurrection is intimately connected with the fourth Gospel's doctrine of the gift of the Spirit and its relationship to Jesus' own visible mission. For a discussion of the subject, see C. H. Dodd, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-27.

knowing, and believing are all three joined together in 17:8: "The words that you gave to me, I gave to them, and they received them (*elabon*), and they truly knew (*egnōsan*) that I came forth from you, and they believed (*episteusan*) that you sent me."<sup>7</sup>

Also recurrent is the use, as equivalent to religious believing and knowing, of verbs of approaching motion: of coming, entering, and following. In 6:35, "He who comes to (*erchomenos pros*) me shall not hunger, and he who believes in (*pisteuōn eis*) me shall not thirst" matches coming to Christ with believing in Him. The contrast of these expressions with hungering and thirsting reminds us that drinking and eating have also a figurative relationship to believing and knowing (see Table 2 for the texts). Furthermore, likelihood that the same parallelism is intended in 7:37 would favor altering the usual punctuation of that verse to make it read: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to (*erchesthō pros*) me, and let him drink, who believes in (*pisteuōn eis*) me."<sup>8</sup>

Illustrations of this sort could be multiplied many times over, but it should be sufficiently clear from these by what principles certain expressions have been designated as figures for religious believing and knowing. The equivalence indicated by such features as parallelism and apposition in texts like the ones just described justifies our supposing the same expressions to have the same force in other texts, where the context does not so obviously demand it, but where plausible interpretation clearly invites it. The full list of verses given in Table 2 supposes as legitimate this extension of the argument.

It is well at this point to take note of a danger of question-begging with regard to these figurative expressions which needs to be brought distinctly to view. It is the danger of supposing that in demonstrating a functional equivalence between the various figurative expressions and

<sup>7</sup> Although elsewhere in the New Testament "receiving" often stands for a response of faith, the preferred verb, especially in the Pauline writings, is commonly *paralambanein*, which is frequently combined with *paradidonai* in imitation of a rabbinic formula for transmitting and embracing the content of sacred tradition, *paradosis*. This does not appear to be the background of the fourth Gospel's usage, in which the primary force of "receiving" suggests rather the acceptance of a person than the endorsement of a creed, although the latter is an evident consequence of the former.

<sup>8</sup> For a summation of the general argument in favor of this punctuation, see R. Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (12th ed.; Göttingen, 1952) p. 228, n. 6. The punctuation here recommended has been adopted by the translators of *The New English Bible: New Testament* (Oxford & Cambridge, 1961).



religious believing and knowing, one has somehow shown the figurative and the literal expressions to be, within the context of the fourth Gospel, exact synonyms, precisely coextensive in meaning, and therefore interchangeable. Such usage is, of course, abstractly possible, but it is unlikely in the extreme. Rarely in any literature do figurative replacements coincide perfectly with the meaning of their literal counterparts. Were they to do so, their use would be quite otiose except on the superficial plane of verbal adornment, by introducing variety of sounds and letters. Normally, a simile or metaphor serves its purpose precisely because it does not mean exactly the same as the literal term, some aspect of which it can therefore highlight by concentrating the reader's attention upon it. If, therefore, such expressions as "coming to the light," "hearing the word," "seeing Jesus," "receiving Him," "remaining in Him," and the rest mean neither more nor less than is conveyed initially by "believing" and "knowing," and therefore neither more nor less than one another, then the multiplicity of these expressions would have to be described simply as bombast. But if, like well-chosen literary figures, they mean both something more and something less, then their multiplicity might contribute richly to the clarity and depth of the Gospel's message.<sup>9</sup>

#### THE SUBJECTS OF BELIEVING AND KNOWING

Having located the fourth Gospel's references, literal and figurative, to religious believing and knowing, and noted their number and distribution, we are led next to inquire how the author of this Gospel has worked these references into the scheme of his composition. Several questions are clearly relevant to such an inquiry. First of all, since the fourth Gospel evidently is, broadly speaking, a dramatic narrative, and since believing and knowing are personal activities, it should be to our purpose to examine how these activities are distributed among the dramatis personae. Who believe? Who know? Who do not believe? Who do not know? The diagrammatic listing

<sup>9</sup> The tendency here criticized, of setting up strict unexceptionable equations between believing and knowing and their figurative counterparts, is especially notable in Bultmann's work, where it fosters a minimal conception of the meaning of Johannine faith. See R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* 2, 70-74; also *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, *passim* under the texts where these expressions occur; and *Gnosis (Bible Key Words from Gerhard Kittel's Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament; London, 1952)* pp. 48-50.

given as Table 3 offers a compendious answer to these four questions. It remains only to supplement it by pointing out some of the more suggestive features that appear in the tabulation.

In the first place, the initial impression, already amply sustained, that references to religious believing and knowing are frequent throughout the fourth Gospel finds a new level of confirmation here. Of every one of the Gospel's major personages, and of most of its minor ones, it is once or oftener affirmed or denied that they believe or know.

Two facts are especially notable. The first concerns Jesus' own position in the scheme. He is represented by a large number of references. Every one of these references pertains to religious knowing, none to believing or to either of the negative notions. This circumstance alone would go far to suggest that religious knowing is conceived by the fourth Gospel as somehow the most perfect, perhaps as being the most stable and unqualified, of the notions we are considering.

The second fact inviting our notice concerns the disciples. In our list of believers, knowers, and their contraries, the disciples occur oftener than any other persons or classes of persons. Furthermore, they occupy every one of the realizable situations. They know, they believe, they fail to know, and, in one isolated instance, "certain" of them fail to believe. Here again one might reasonably infer a suggestion of the pre-eminence of knowing over believing, an intimation that, just as knowledge marks the best of conditions, so unbelief designates the worst. Thus Jesus, being what He is, must be kept on the highest level, that of knowing. The disciples, being what they are, can hardly be allowed to fall so low as the level of unbelief.

Still another suggestion might be drawn from the unique case of the disciples. Since they are referred to so frequently, and in all possible relationships to knowledge and belief, one might well presume, even without reading the Gospel as a continuous narrative, that it must be centrally concerned with the fluctuations, vicissitudes, and faltering advances traversed by the disciples in coming to believe and know Him whose disciples they are.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> An interpretation of the pattern of development of the disciples' belief as directly connected with their mission is suggested by F. Roustang, "Les moments de l'acte de foi et ses conditions de possibilité: Essai d'interprétation du dialogue avec la Samaritaine," *Recherches de science religieuse* 46 (1958) 344-78. The interpretation is based on a comparison of the conversation with the Samaritan woman and the conversation with the disciples in chapter 4.

TABLE 3

Believe	Not Believe	Know	Not Know
ruler 4:50, 53 Thomas 20:29 blind man 9:38  Martha 11:27 Nathaniel 1:50 other disciple 20:8	ruler 4:48 Thomas 20:25	Nicodemus 3:2  blind man 9:31 Peter 13:7 Samaritaness 4:25  Martha 11:22, 23 Evangelist 19:35; 21:24  Good Shepherd 10:14, 27 Jesus 3:11; 4:22; 7:29; 8:14, 55; 10:15; 11:42; 12:50; 13:3, 18; 17:25 Father 10:15	Nicodemus 3:10 Thomas 14:5  Peter 13:7 Samaritaness 4:10, 22  Baptist 1:31, 33 steward 2:9 paralytic 5:13 parents of blind man 9:21 Magdalen 20:14
disciples 2:11, 22; 6:69, 16:27, 30; 17:18	certain disciples 6:64	disciples 6:69; 14:4, 7, 17, 20; 15:15, 18; 16:30; 17:7, 8, 25, 26; 21:12	disciples 4:32; 10:6; 12:16; 16:17; 20:9; 21:4
Jews 8:31  leaders 12:42  Samaritans 4:39, 41, 42  many 2:23; 7:31; 8:30; 10:42; 11:45; 12:11 future hearers 17:20	Jews 5:38, 47; 8:45, 46; 9:18; 10:25, 26; 12:37 leaders 7:48  world 16:9  crowd 6:36 brethren 7:5	Samaritans 4:42  sheep 10:4, 14	Jews 8:55  Pharisees 1:26; 8:14, 19, 27; 9:29  world 1:10; 14:17; 15:21; 16:3; 17:25 Jerusalemmites 7:28

Finally, in this connection, the mere listing of the subjects of religious knowledge and belief exhibits something of the alignment of personal forces that implements the well-known moral dualism of the fourth Gospel. It appears especially in the case of "the Jews," who characteristically "do not believe," and of the "Pharisees" and the "world," who characteristically "do not know."

The only other subject recurring frequently enough to warrant special notice in a general viewing of the Gospel is the expression "many," invariably coupled with an expression of belief. The resulting formula *polloi episteusan* can safely be regarded as a literary cliché of the author.

#### THE OBJECTS OF KNOWING

To understand the nature of any human activity inevitably requires complementary considerations of the subjects and the objects of that activity, of who does it, and to whom or what, or for whom or what it is done. We have already given a general answer to the question of who believes and who knows. We must now do the same for the question of what they believe and what they know. To this purpose it has again seemed clearest and most objective simply to list, under fairly precise categorical headings, the texts in which these objects are named. These lists comprise Tables 4 and 5.

It will be observed that references to *idenai* have been separated from references to *ginōskein* in Table 4. This seems desirable in view of the fact that the respective objects of these two verbs of knowing, differently from their respective subjects, show a certain distinctiveness. Similarly in Table 5, among the objects of believing, differences—and in this case much sharper ones—call for division into three categories: first, dative objects after the simple verb *pisteuein*; second, accusative objects after *pisteuein* and the preposition *eis*; and third, explanatory clauses after *pisteuein*, usually introduced by *hoti*.

With regard to the objects of religious knowing, undoubtedly the most evident and most impressive fact is their overwhelmingly Christological bearing. All but a very few of them refer to Jesus, and specifically to the two interrelated questions of His origin and His mission. The expressed or implied answers to these questions are, in the broadest possible terms, that His origin is from God and His mission a reve-

TABLE 4

*Objects of Knowing and Not Knowing*

<i>eidenai</i>	<i>ginōskhein</i>
<p><i>Jesus:</i></p> <p><i>His origin and mission:</i></p> <p>as teacher from God 3:2</p> <p>as gift of God 4:10</p> <p>as world's saviour 4:42</p> <p>His father and mother (ironic) 6:42</p> <p>where He is from 7:27, 28; 8:14; 9:29, 30</p> <p>who sent Him 7:28, 29</p> <p>where He goes, His way 8:14; 14:4</p> <p>all given Him by His Father 13:3</p> <p><i>Significance of His signs and words:</i></p> <p>what He speaks 3:11</p> <p>meaning of "little while" 16:18</p> <p>His miraculous wine 2:9</p> <p>His mysterious bread 4:32</p> <p>His cure of the blind man 9:21, 25</p> <p>His shepherd parable 10:4, 5</p> <p>His washing of feet 13:7, 17</p> <p><i>His character and powers:</i></p> <p>sinner (ironic) 9:24, 25</p> <p>as knowing all things 16:30</p> <p><i>Truth of testimony about Him:</i></p> <p>5:32; 19:35; 21:24</p> <p><i>His sheer physical identity:</i></p> <p>1:26, 31; 5:13; 9:12; 20:14; 21:4, 12</p> <p><i>Without qualification:</i></p> <p>8:19</p> <p><i>God:</i></p> <p>as Father of Jesus 8:19, 55</p> <p>as sender of Jesus 15:21</p> <p>without qualification 4:22</p> <p><i>Religious premises:</i></p> <p>the Messiah to come 4:25</p> <p>God spoke to Moses 9:29</p> <p>God does not hear sinners 9:31</p> <p>resurrection on last day 11:24</p> <p>Christ to rise from dead 20:9</p> <p><i>Sapiential sayings:</i></p> <p>where the wind comes from 3:8</p> <p>where he goes who walks in darkness 12:35</p> <p>what a slave's master does 15:15</p>	<p><i>Jesus:</i></p> <p><i>His origin and mission:</i></p> <p>His doctrine from God 7:17; 8:28</p> <p>as sent by God 17:3, 23, 25</p> <p>as the Christ 7:26, 27</p> <p>as in the Father and having the Father in Him 10:38</p> <p>as speaking of the Father 8:27</p> <p>as hated by the world 15:18</p> <p>as receiving all from the Father 17:7</p> <p>as the true light 1:11</p> <p>as the holy one of God 6:69</p> <p><i>Significance of His signs and words:</i></p> <p>His doctrine of rebirth 3:10</p> <p>the truth that sets free 8:32</p> <p>His speech 8:43</p> <p>His shepherd parable 10:6</p> <p>His washing of feet 13:7, 12</p> <p><i>Without qualification:</i></p> <p>10:14; 14:7, 9</p> <p><i>The Paraclete:</i></p> <p>14:7</p> <p><i>God:</i></p> <p>as Father of Jesus 8:55; 10:16; 14:7; 16:3; 17:25</p> <p>as sender of Jesus 17:3, 26</p> <p><i>Religious premises:</i></p> <p>the unknown origin of Christ 7:27</p> <p>the law 7:49</p>

lation of God. Even in those few cases where the object of knowledge is not directly Jesus, but rather God, the same orientation is usually preserved by referring to God as the Father or sender of Jesus. The remaining objects of knowledge listed mostly concern the understanding of how or why Jesus does or says certain things, notably His miracles, symbolic actions, and ambiguous sayings.

*Eidenai*, as the list indicates, occurs more frequently and with a wider variety of objects than *ginōskein*. The most evident peculiarity of *eidenai* is its exclusive use to describe the mere physical recognition of Jesus or the failure so to recognize Him. There does not seem to be sufficient evidence in the text for maintaining, as some have done, that there is any important difference between the meanings of these two verbs as they are used in the fourth Gospel. The fact that both of them are used to describe Jesus' knowledge of the Father constitutes the strongest positive objection to the contrary opinion. Thus, in 8:55 Jesus says of the Father, "but I know (*oida*) Him," whereas in 17:25 He says to the Father, "but I know (*egnōn*) you." Since this is obviously the most constant and complete realization of religious knowledge envisioned by the fourth Gospel, the use of *eidenai* and *ginōskein* to describe it makes it highly probable that the two verbs are in general interchangeable within the limits of ordinary grammar. At least, whatever difference may exist between them would seem rather too subtle to have much effect on one's reading of the fourth Gospel.<sup>11</sup>

#### THE OBJECTS OF BELIEVING

Turning now to the objects of belief, which are listed in Table 5, we note first of all that those which are expressed in explanatory clauses closely resemble the objects of knowledge, which were surveyed in the preceding section. Here again, the controlling questions are about Jesus' origin and His mission, and in general they are accorded the same answers. However, whereas the verbs of knowing rarely had for their objects simple nouns or pronouns, such are commonest among

<sup>11</sup> The contrast we fail to discover between the two verbs of knowing is defended in considerable detail by I. de la Potterie, "*Oida* et *ginōskō*: Les deux modes de la connaissance dans le quatrième évangile," *Biblica* 40 (1959) 709-25. The author considers the former verb to express a more habitual awareness and the latter a more inchoative one; the former to pertain more properly to some kind of divine knowledge, the latter to knowledge naturally acquired.

TABLE 5

*Objects of Believing and Not Believing**Accusatives after pisteuein eis:*

As referring to God the Father:

Him who sent Jesus 12:44

God 14:1

As referring to Jesus:

the son 3:36

the son of man 9:35

the light 12:36

His name 1:12; 2:23; 3:18

whom the Father sent 6:29

"Jesus" 12:11

"Him" 2:11; 3:16; 4:39; 6:40; 7:5, 31, 39, 48; 8:30; 9:36; 10:42; 11:45, 48; 12:37, 42

"me" 6:35; 7:38; 11:25, 26; 12:44, 46; 14:1, 12; 16:9; 17:20

*Datives after pisteuein:*

As referring to the Old Testament:

Scriptures 2:22

Moses 5:46

writings of Moses 5:47

preaching of Isaiah (cited) 12:38

As referring to Jesus' ministry:

His word(s) 2:22; 4:50; 5:47

His works 10:38

As referring to Jesus:

"you" 6:30

"Him" 8:31

"me" 4:21; 5:46; 8:45, 46; 10:37, 38

*Clauses after pisteuein hoti:*

that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God 6:69; 11:27; 20:31

that "I am" 8:24; 13:19

that Jesus is resurrection and life 11:26

that the Father sent Jesus 11:42; 17:8, 21

that the Father is in Jesus and Jesus in the Father 10:38; 14:10, 11

that Jesus came forth from God 16:27, 30

that "you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem" 4:21

that the man had been blind and had acquired his sight 9:18

the objects of believing. These simple noun and pronoun objects fall into two classes.

The first class, governed by the phrase *pisteuein eis*, and therefore consisting of accusatives, contains only two instances in which God (the Father) is the object of belief. All the numerous remaining cases

in this class present Jesus as the object of belief, sometimes as designated by special titles, but most often as simply denoted by a personal pronoun. In all these instances the object is presented as a direct and, so to speak, terminal object of the action signified by the verb; that is, the action of believing is wholly taken up in its object, not diverted, referred, or transmitted to some other object expressed or implied. It is not, therefore, a question of believing someone's account of someone or something else; it is a question of believing someone *tout court*, and that someone, save for two instances, is Jesus. In this connection, the English expression "believe in" is preferable to "believe" as a rendering of *pisteuein eis*, although its adequacy in other respects might be questioned. At all events, it is better than such desperate neologisms as "believe into," resorted to by some writers, which must be rejected as English translations simply on the ground that they are not English at all.<sup>12</sup>

For the second class of objects, the situation is exactly the contrary of the one we have just described. The dative objects of *pisteuein* are, in more than a sheerly grammatical sense, indirect objects of belief. They precisely do divert, refer, or transmit the action of believing to someone or something beyond what they represent. They can fairly be categorized, in terms borrowed from the Gospel, as "testimonies" or as "signs"; that is, they are believed precisely as attesting or signifying. They are transitional objects, conducing to a belief that is ulterior and terminal.<sup>13</sup>

The character of these indirect objects of belief is obvious enough, for example, where they are references to Old Testament citations or

<sup>12</sup> Some writers consider that in the expression *pisteuein eis* the preposition retains its independent force, introducing a strong connotation of approach to and appropriation of its object. See, for example, G. F. Hawthorne, "The Concept of Faith in the Fourth Gospel," *Bibliotheca sacra* 116 (1959) 117-26. For further discussion of this construction and its background, see E. A. Abbott, *Johannine Vocabulary: A Comparison of the Words of the Fourth Gospel with Those of the Three* (London, 1905) pp. 19-80; also R. Bultmann and A. Weiser, *Faith (Bible Key Words from Gerhard Kittel's Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament)*; London, 1961) pp. 98-99.

<sup>13</sup> The notion of Johannine faith as proceeding in stages of development is supported by J. Huby, "De la connaissance de foi dans saint Jean," *Recherches de science religieuse* 21 (1931) 385-421; also D. Mollat, "La foi dans le quatrième évangile," *Lumière et vie* 22 (1955) 515-31; and A. Decourtray, "La conception johannique de la foi," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 81 (1959) 561-76.



to sayings and deeds of Jesus. The former are signs of a Messiah yet to come; the latter are testimonies to a Messiah who has already come. Both point, with greater or less clarity and precision, to the fact and meaning of Jesus' mission. Even where Jesus Himself is presented as such an indirect object of *pisteuein*, He is viewed under an aspect quite different from the one introduced by *pisteuein eis*. He is viewed, namely, as one who testifies to the character of His own mission by the works that He does and the words that He speaks. This point is demonstrated very clearly in 5:46-47, if we consider the correspondence among four dative objects of *pisteuein*. In that passage, the believing of Moses is first of all compared with the believing of Jesus, whereupon both these objects are set in parallel with, respectively, the writings of Moses and the words of Jesus. "If you believed Moses (*episteuete Mōusei*), you would believe me (*episteuete an emoi*), for it was of me that he wrote. But if you do not believe his writings (*grammasin ou pisteuete*), how will you believe my words (*rhēmasin pisteusete*)?" Contrast this passage, where Jesus, like Moses, is believed for His words of testimony, with 14:1, where Jesus, like God the Father, is believed in, simply and finally: "Believe in (*pisteuete eis*) God; also believe in me (*eis eme pisteuete*)." The former kind of belief exists for the sake of the latter kind; one who believes Jesus is on the way to believing *in* Jesus.

The last category of objects of belief comprises explanatory clauses given in indirect discourse. These are listed, and require little comment other than to remark that their content is largely the same as that of the objects, already discussed, of verbs of knowing; that is, they answer the twofold question of Jesus' origin and His mission. In some instances, indeed, these clauses describe numerically the same object of both a verb of believing and a verb of knowing. When we add a further observation, that in some of these cases the subjects also are numerically identical, and with nothing else in the context to suggest any difference in the force of the verbs, it follows that believing and knowing are, in some instances, simply synonymous. The fact can be illustrated by the parallelism apparent in 17:8, where "they truly knew (*egnōsan*) that I came forth from you" is indistinguishable in meaning from "they believed (*episteusan*) that you sent me." What this line

of argument does not prove, however, is that believing and knowing are in *all* instances simply synonymous.<sup>14</sup>

#### CAUSES AND CONDITIONS OF BELIEVING AND KNOWING

Something has already been said about the causes or conditions of believing, in describing the relationship conceived to exist between the indirect objects of *pisteuein* and the direct objects of *pisteuein eis*; that is, to believe the former is to experience an incentive for believing in the latter. This kind of incentive, the inducement of testimony and sign, would seem to be regarded as far more compelling than any mere suggestion, but at the same time as far less apodictic than strict objective evidence. It is, in fact, presented as a kind of motivation whose urgency is more moral than logical, and which therefore can be resisted with a certain display of objective reasonableness, but not without a certain intimation of subjective bad faith or bad will. Not reason alone, but *raisons du coeur* are at issue. Thus, for example, in the concluding portion of chapter 10, we find that although the Jews have been satisfied in their demand to hear Jesus distinctly claim His Messianic mission (10:25), and although they cannot gainsay the works He has done in support of that claim (10:33), yet neither the undeniable words nor the irrefutable works suffice to make believers of them. And indeed, on a plane of sheer rational inference the conclusion to be drawn from Jesus' words and works is not an inescapable one. But these words and works are, in fact, all that will be given, and when Jesus reproaches the Jews for rejecting them, He does not complain of their illogic but of their irreligion. The cogency of Jesus' doctrine evidently depends not on the quality of His hearers' reason, but on the quality of their will, as is stated in 7:17: "Anyone whose will it is to do the will of God will know about the teaching, whether it is from God or from myself that I speak."

This refusal to pass beyond acknowledged signs and admitted testi-

<sup>14</sup> In keeping with his tendency already noted, Bultmann seems to regard believing and knowing as everywhere simply synonymous; see his *Theology of the New Testament* 2, 73-74. Little distinction is made between the two by J. Alfaro, "Fides in terminologia biblica," *Gregorianum* 42 (1961) 463-505. A more nuanced account of the relationship between these two expressions is given by F. Nötscher, *Zur theologischen Terminologie der Qumran-Texte* (Bonn, 1956) pp. 29-31, and especially by Dodd, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-86.

monies to the divine prerogatives of Jesus which these signs and testimonies declare, is the pattern of worldly infidelity which the fourth Gospel chiefly envisions and assails. Sometimes, however, a kind of instinctive unbelief is seen to assert itself at a still lower level. Thus the reality of the signs themselves may be met with obstinate denial. Such is the case, for example, in chapter 9, where the Pharisees encounter the blind man whom Jesus cured. At first it is the fact itself, the miracle, which they resist, rather than its religious import (9:18). But ultimately the results of their inquisition force them to accept the bare fact (9:26)—again reminding us that they are not simply impervious to evidence, not naive sceptics—but they become all but frantic in refusing to extend belief from admitting what Jesus must have done to acknowledging what He must be. And yet, once again, this is precisely what Jesus demands of them. Thus, in 10:37: “If I do not do my Father’s deeds, do not believe me (*pisteute moi*); but if I do, even if you do not believe me (*emoi mē pisteuēte*), believe the deeds (*ergois pisteuete*), that you may acknowledge and know (*gnōte kai ginōskete*) that the Father is in me and I in the Father.”

The texts referring to causes and conditions of believing and knowing are listed and classified in Table 6. As indicated there, the fourth Gospel gives three general types of answers to the question of why men do or why they do not believe or know. One type of answer, which we have just considered, is expressed in terms of moral predispositions. Men fail to believe because they are, from a religious point of view, bad men. The opposite is no less true; religiously good men are conditioned to believe. Thus one aspect of the difference between believer and unbeliever has to be sought in the characters of the men themselves, as formed by their religious behavior, their previous lives in service or disservice of God. In 3:20–21 this antithesis is expressed in terms of a favorite Johannine metaphor: “Everyone who does evil things hates the light and does not come to the light, so that his deeds will not be exposed; but he who does what is right comes to the light, that his deeds may be revealed as having been done in union with God.” Especially noteworthy in this passage is the implied connection between the idea of moral predispositions for or against faith, and a correlative idea of judgment. Not only does good or bad behavior pre-

TABLE 6

*Causes or Conditions of (Not)Believing and (Not)Knowing**Of Believing and Knowing:*

## Testimonies:

the Father 1:33; 5:37; 8:18

## Jesus:

His words 3:11, 12, 32; 4:41, 42; 8:18, 30; 9:37; 10:4, 21, 27; 14:11; 16:30

His signs or works 1:50; 2:11, 23; 3:2; 4:19, 48, 53; 5:31, 36; 6:14, 26, 30; 7:31;

9:16, 33, 37; 10:21, 25, 37; 11:15, 42; 12:18, 37; 14:11; 15:24, 26; 20:31

His exaltation or resurrection 2:22; 8:28; 12:16, 32

His prediction 14:29; 16:4

the Scripture 5:39, 40, 46, 47; 13:19; 20:9

the Baptist 1:7; 5:33; 10:41

the Samaritaness 4:39

the Evangelist 19:35; 21:24

the disciples 17:20

## Divine influences:

the Father 6:44, 45, 65

the Spirit 14:26; 15:26; 16:13

## Moral predispositions:

good works 3:21

will to do God's will 7:17

belonging to the truth 18:37

Seeing the risen Lord: 20:25, 28

*Of Not Believing and Not Knowing:*

## Testimonies of Scripture:

as misinterpreted 7:42, 52

as prophecy to be fulfilled 12:38; 15:25

Divine influence (as prophesied): 12:40

## Moral predispositions:

evil works 3:19

seeking of honor from men 5:44; 12:43

fear of the Jews 7:13; 9:22; 12:42

Diabolic influence: 8:38-45

determine what men's reaction to the light will be, but by the same token its very goodness or badness will be shown for what it is by that reaction.<sup>15</sup>

Moral predisposition, however, is neither the fourth Gospel's only

<sup>15</sup> The necessity of moral rectitude as a condition for believing is emphasized, practically to the exclusion of other factors, by J. O. Buswell, "The Ethics of 'Believe' in the Fourth Gospel," *Bibliotheca sacra* 80 (1923) 27-37. The element of judgment involved in believing and disbelieving is related to the meaning of signs, and the latter, with emphasis on their eschatological character, are interpreted with reference to Exodus by D. Mollat,

nor its ultimate explanation of the opposition between believing and knowing and their contraries. The absolute necessity of some kind of divine influence to bring men to Christ is strongly and repeatedly affirmed, as, for instance, in 6:44: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. . . ." In a similar fashion, the didactic mission of the Spirit or Paraclete whom Jesus promises to send His disciples entails a divine illumination and confirmation of their belief and knowledge. The precise nature of these divine interpositions is, as one might expect, left undefined. Likewise, the compatibility of such divine pressure with freedom as the human ethical factor does not preoccupy the Evangelist, any more than do the seeming overtones of "positive antecedent reprobation" introduced by the Gospel's use of the Isaian hardening-of-hearts motif. The ingredients of such problems, so familiar to the modern theologian, are clearly present in the fourth Gospel, but they are not yet logically compounded into the issues of a later and more speculative theology.

The third, and by far the largest, class of causes and conditions of believing and knowing are those listed under the heading of testimonies. This category of our classification, like its equivalent term *martyria* in the Gospel itself, has to be given a very broad acceptance. In particular, it cannot be exclusively restricted to verbal evidence or to juridical depositions, although its subject matter oftentimes is verbal and its connotation oftentimes juridical.<sup>16</sup>

The juridical connotation of testimony comes especially to the fore in 8:17-18, Jesus' rhetorical appeal to the acknowledged norms of forensic procedure in support of the validity of His own testimony: "Even in your own law it is written that the testimony (*martyria*) of

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"Le sémeion johannique," in *Sacra pagina* (supra n. 4) pp. 209-18. For a more general discussion of the motivation of belief in the fourth Gospel, see F. M. Braun, "L'Accueil de la foi selon s. Jean," *Vie spirituelle* 92 (1955) 344-63; also W. Grundmann, "Verständnis und Bewegung des Glaubens im Johannes-Evangelium," *Kerygma und Dogma* 6 (1960) 131-54.

<sup>16</sup> A wide comprehension of the meaning of testimony, so as to include other than verbal material, is shown to be a general biblical usage, and one preceded in classical Greek, by B. Trépanier, "Contribution à une recherche de l'idée de témoin dans les écrits johanniques," *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa* 15 (1945) 54-63; also A. Vanhoye, "Témoignage et vie en Dieu selon le 4e évangile," *Christus* 6 (1955) 150-71. The presence and importance of juridical background in the Johannine idea of testimony is stressed by C. Masson, "Le témoignage de Jean," *Revue de théologie et de philosophie* 38 (1950) 120-27; also I. de la Potterie, "La notion de témoignage dans saint Jean" (supra n. 4).

two men is valid (*alēthēs*).” Still, we should not forget that the appeal is only rhetorical. That the testimony is of a kind that utterly transcends the juridical order is made perfectly clear by the statement that follows: “I am one who bear witness (*ho martyrōn*) in my own regard, and the Father who sent me also bears witness (*martyrei*) in my regard.” Moreover, that the testimonies need not be words but can also be actions is shown by 5:36: “The works that I do, the works my Father gave me to bring to completion, bear witness in my regard that the Father sent me.”

We may accordingly subdivide testimonies into two classes, respectively of words and of works. The words, statements in one way or another of the meaning of Jesus’ mission, come from numerous sources: from the prophetic Scriptures, from various of Jesus’ contemporaries, from the Father, and also, as we have seen, from Jesus Himself considered as witness in His own cause. The works, on the other hand, are all attributed to Jesus. These works, or miracles, are actually described by the fourth Gospel either as works (*erga*) or as signs (*sēmeia*), and the two expressions seem to refer to the same reality under somewhat different aspects. *Erga* is the expression normally used by Jesus, who performs the works; *sēmeia* is used by others, who behold them as signs. As *erga*, the works are seen as Jesus alone can see them, as the Father’s works, the acts of God, presented by the Father to the Son, to be performed in the sight of men. As *sēmeia*, on the other hand, the works are seen as other men can only see them, as signs of Jesus’ relationship to the Father whose emissary He is, and whose revelation He expresses and embodies. Jesus sees His works in the Father; it is for others to see the Father in His works. The Father’s work and Jesus’ work are set in parallel in 5:17: “My Father works (*ergazetai*) until now, and I also work (*ergazomai*).” And in 5:19 the divine perspective in which Jesus views His works is clearly set forth: “Truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but only what He sees the Father doing; for what He does, the Son does likewise.” On the other hand, the Messianic perspective of the people, who must see Jesus’ works as the credentials of His mission, is expressed in their question in 7:31: “When the Christ comes, is it likely He will do more signs (*sēmeia*) than this man does?”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> The special import of signs and works in the fourth Gospel, and their distinction from mere thaumaturgy, is developed by L. Cerfaux, “Les miracles, signes messianiques de

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF BELIEVING AND KNOWING

Having thus far catalogued and analyzed references to believing and knowing with regard to their vocabulary, their subjects, their objects, and their motives, the next and last distinct area of inquiry concerns their results. What is to happen, what does happen, if men believe and know? What happens, what is to happen, if they do not? An adequate answer to these questions would, of course, require a full study of Johannine eschatologism, an enterprise too far exceeding the limits we have set for this inquiry. On the other hand, the present subject cannot afford simply to transmit these questions. Accordingly, the list given as Table 7, and the brief discussion of it that follows here, are meant simply to indicate and roughly to organize the essential data that an adequate answer should have to take account of. It will be seen in this list that, although there are a great many different expressions which describe consequences of belief and knowledge, nearly half of these references contain the expression "eternal life" (*zōē aiōnion*). Nevertheless, the precise nature of the relationship between believing and knowing and eternal life is by no means obvious in the fourth Gospel. To put the problem in its most schematic terms, we may say that four different interpretations of the relationship of believing and knowing to eternal life can lay claim to some degree of support in the text of the fourth Gospel.<sup>18</sup>

In the first place, eternal life seems at times to be actually identified with belief or knowledge, to be simply another name, though doubtless one having its own proper connotations, for the same reality. Such is the impression given, for example, by 17:3: "This is eternal life, for them to know (*hina ginōskōsin*) you the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom you sent."

Secondly, it is also possible to understand eternal life as something distinct from, but coincidental with, believing or knowing, in such wise that to believe or know is simultaneously to enter upon eternal life. In 3:16 such a notion seems to be suggested: "God so loved the

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Jésus et oeuvres de Dieu, selon l'évangile de s. Jean," in *L'Attente du Messie* (Bruges, 1954) pp. 131-38; also J.-P. Charlier, "La notion du signe (*sēmeion*) dans le IV<sup>e</sup> évangile," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 43 (1959) 434-48.

<sup>18</sup> On the relationship of believing and knowing to eternal life, and the kind of eschatology supposed by the fourth Gospel, see Dodd, *op. cit.*, pp. 144-50; also R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 75-92; and W. Turner, "Believing and Everlasting Life: A Johannine Inquiry," *Expository Times* 64 (1952-53) 50-52.

TABLE 7  
*Consequences of (Not)Believing and (Not)Knowing*

Of Believing and Knowing	Of Not Believing and Not Knowing
<p>becoming children of God 1:12</p> <p>possessing eternal life 3:15, 16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 40; 6:33, 40, 48, 69; 8:12, 51, 52; 10:28; 11:26, 27; 12:25; 17:3; 20:31</p> <p>entering the kingdom (3:4, 5)</p> <p>rising on the last day 6:(39), 40, 44, (54)</p> <p>being honored, loved by the Father 12:26; 14:21</p> <p>being dwelt in by Jesus and the Father 14:23</p> <p>being loved by Jesus 14:21</p> <p>having Jesus reveal Himself 14:21</p> <p>sharing Jesus' prayer for unity 17:21</p> <p>receiving the Spirit 7:39; 14:16</p> <p>being saved 3:17; 10:9; (5:34); (12:47)</p> <p>being set free 8:32</p> <p>being exempt from judgment 3:18; 5:24</p> <p>being free from thirst 4:13</p> <p>being free from hunger 6:35</p> <p>being released from having to remain in darkness 12:47</p> <p>being able to do the things that Jesus does 14:12</p> <p>being able to bear fruit 15:5</p> <p>having petitions granted 15:7</p>	<p>losing one's life 3:36</p> <p>dying in one's sin 8:24</p> <p>incurring God's wrath 3:36</p> <p>being rejected, burnt 15:6</p> <p>being subject to judgment 3:18; 12:48</p> <p>thirsting (4:13)</p> <p>being able to do nothing 15:5</p>

world that He gave His only-begotten Son, in order that everyone believing in (*pas ho pisteuōn eis*) Him might not die (*mē apolētai*) but have (*echē*) eternal life."

A third interpretation would see eternal life as something not only distinct from believing and knowing, but temporally remote from them, occurring only long afterwards, in an eschatological future. Such an understanding might appeal, for instance, to 6:40: "This is my Father's will: for everyone who sees (*theōrōn*) the Son and believes in (*pisteuōn eis*) Him to have (*hina . . . echē*) eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

The fourth interpretation, which seems best able to accommodate all the facts of usage, effects a compromise between the third and the second, while rejecting the first in its unqualified form but admitting that it contains certain valid observations. In this view, eternal life is conceived as a single process, essentially uninterrupted, but traversing



two distinct phases. The first phase starts with a man's act of believing or knowing Jesus, whereas the second phase starts only with the eschatological resolution of cosmic history. Thus eternal life would be in one respect initiated and in another respect anticipated by believing in and knowing Jesus and, in Jesus, the Father.

This notion of an eternal life in two successive grades finds a certain confirmation in the fourth Gospel's presentation of the idea of judgment, which is also listed among the consequences of believing or knowing and their opposites. The judgment—usually conceived negatively, as condemnation of the unbelieving—sometimes seems to take place simultaneously with the success or failure of belief, but at other times to be a future eschatological event. Thus, 3:18 gives the former impression: "The unbelieving man (*mē pisteuōn*) has already been judged (*ēdē kekritai*), in that he has not believed in (*hoti mē pepisteuken eis*) the name of God's only-begotten Son." The latter idea, however, seems to be supposed in 12:48: "The word that I spoke, that is what will judge him on the last day."

The problem clearly enough raised by these and similar texts can only be solved, in terms of the fourth Gospel as we have it, by postulating, as suggested, a double eschatology, in part realized but with its climax yet to come. Otherwise, one would be forced to suppose the most flagrant inconsistency on one of the fourth Gospel's central concerns, perpetrated either by its original author or by subsequent editorial abuses. The former postulate seems far less gratuitous than the latter supposition.

#### THE MEANING AND FUNCTION OF BELIEVING AND KNOWING

I shall conclude this account of believing and knowing in the fourth Gospel by venturing a more compact statement of their religious meaning and literary function, which will be little more, really, than a résumé of what has already been said or implied.

First of all, I consider that believing and knowing are not used quite as synonyms in the fourth Gospel, and that they offer some basis, albeit a subtle one, for contrast. But secondly, I would emphasize that once these contrasting elements of their respective meanings have been abstracted, what remains as common to both is far more in evidence and far more important.

The distinctive meaning of believing, as I conceive it, is essentially the idea already described in connection with its dative indirect objects: the idea, namely, of accepting testimonies, of freely submitting to the moral force of a certain kind of religious evidence. The distinctive meaning I should associate with knowing is analogous to but distinguishable from this. It is a kind of discernment of signs, a quality of insight into the transcendental reference of various symbolisms, ambiguities, and veiled allusions. On this plane, I should further suggest that believing has a more volitional, and knowing a more intellectual, flavor. In knowing, one perceives that the signs, the works, and so forth are pointing to something beyond their superficial selves. In believing, one accepts the moral consequences, and orientates oneself in the direction to which they point. These are subtly different and closely correlative ideas, but it should be clear that they are not identical ones. Too exclusive an emphasis on the one idea makes the fourth Gospel look, as to some readers it has looked, like a kind of apologetics. Too exclusive an emphasis on the other makes it look, as again it has looked to some, like a kind of gnosticism. The more balanced view discovers and admires its uniqueness and its scope.

So much having been said for the limited proper domains of belief and knowledge, let us turn to what they have more extensively in common. This corresponds, as I understand it, to a specifically Christological transposition of the traditional biblical notions of belief in and knowledge of Yahweh: that is, to a loyal, trustful, and loving acknowledgement of God, as revealed in His dispensation of words and works, through Him whom He sent and with whom He remains united, Jesus the Christ. The substance of meaning common to belief and knowledge is, therefore, related to the shades of meaning proper to each, as the culmination of a process is related to its inception. And the facets and functions of this believing and knowing, their relation to will and intellect, their combination of progressiveness and stability, their personal qualities of affection and devotedness, the satisfactions they entail and the obligations they impose, are marvelously adumbrated by the extraordinary array of figurative expressions which we have had occasion to review, a profusion of metaphor fairly demanded by a reality so profound and so sensitive.

This understanding of believing and knowing is closely related to

the literary role of these notions in the fourth Gospel. The document is, after all, not a placid monograph, but a vigorous and even a violent narrative. Believing and knowing describe the central theme and identify the critical motivation of that narrative. The forces here set in conflict are precisely the opposite energies of those who do and those who do not believe and know. The crowning dramatic irony arises from the apparent triumph of the one coinciding with the real triumph of the other of these two forces. The protagonist is he who perfectly and unwaveringly knows, while all about him the inconstant currents of knowledge and belief have their ebb and flow, their clash and confluence. The narrative's episodes mark the tentative successes and partial defeats of belief and knowledge, each resulting in a sharper cleavage between the recruits under two standards, between the children of light and the children of darkness. And through it all runs the awful intimation of a twofold judgment, the human judgment which men are at first invited and at last compelled to pass upon Jesus, and the divine inexorable judgment which by that very fact is levied upon them.

In the plot, therefore, no less than in the diction of the fourth Gospel, we sense everywhere the dynamic tensions of belief and knowledge. They are reflected perhaps above all in that Gospel's distinctive quality of irony and ambivalence. That quality, manifested in both verbal and dramatic design, serves constantly to remind us that in the world portrayed by the author of this Gospel, many things will not be what at first they seem, because Jesus, the center of that world, is not what at first He seems. It serves to remind us, indeed, that we are reading the words of one of the privileged ones who "speak what they know, and bear witness to what they have seen."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Speculative and dogmatic developments concerned with the meaning of faith, especially in the Western Church under the influence of the Pelagian and Reformation controversies, have relied far more heavily on Pauline than on Johannine perspectives. Among the great and original theologians of modern times, however, one whose account of faith has much in common with the outlook of the fourth Gospel on believing and knowing is John Henry Newman, above all in his remarkable *Oxford University Sermons*. The current upsurge of interest in the Johannine writings among biblical theologians, and in Newman's work among speculative theologians, might find here a fruitful common ground.