

The Hidden Keys of Knowledge Found

Theodore Dana Hall

In the *Gospel of Thomas*, Jesus is recorded as having said, “The Pharisees and the scribes have taken the keys of knowledge and hidden them. They themselves have not entered [into the knowingness], nor have they allowed to enter those who wish to. You, however, be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves.”

The *Gospel of Thomas* may be found in the Nag Hammadi Library of scriptures that were found in 1945 near the Egyptian town of Naj Hammadi. These scriptures, as it was determined, are 1,500-year-old Coptic translations of texts even more ancient—texts of the early Christian Gnostics. Had these texts not been condemned by the makers of the orthodox Catholic church, they would be as familiar to us today as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

As its name suggests, Gnostic Christianity based itself on the conviction that people can enter the kingdom of Heaven through gnosis, which means knowingness. In contrast, orthodox Christianity claims that faith is the only important key to the gates of Heaven. Knowingness, faith ... what’s the difference?

The difference is quite extreme. Nothing can be really known unless it’s experienced. You can read dozens of books about driving a car, but you’ll never really know how to drive a car until you actually drive one. You’ve got to get behind the wheel, turn the key and take off. How does one know that the teachings of Christ as valid or not? One applies the teachings in his/her life and observes the results. The only way to gnosis is through experience.

This simple understanding is one of the “keys” that were hidden by the Pharisees and scribes of old—and by the church makers and priests of the Christian era. Why?

One who simply studies and applies the teachings of Christ doesn’t need a church, doesn’t need priests or ministers, doesn’t need to contribute a percentage of his/her income to the church. Self-study, as the priests have always understood, is bad for business. For a long time, the “masses” of the Catholic church were delivered in Latin, which the masses could not understand. Pretty neat way of hiding the keys to knowledge.

There are many nominally orthodox Christians who are actually Gnostics, who have experienced the truth of certain of the Christ teachings and made that truth their own. What I have to say in the following paragraph does not apply to them....

Orthodox Christianity is based on the doctrine of faith rather than on gnosis. For the orthodox, all that is required of “believers” is faith in the divinity of Christ. Never mind the message, all you have to do is believe in the divinity of the messenger. Faith is all you need. Faith, unlike gnosis, is very good for business, as the faithful require frequent

assurances that their faith is in fact sufficient, and, from time to time, guidance in restoring lost or waning faith. Lots of priests are needed to offer the necessary assurances and guidance.

At some point in his/her life, every Christian must ask the question, “Are my religious beliefs and practices really doing the job?—really getting me closer to Heaven?” If the answer to this question is “no,” or “I really don’t know,” it’s time to go Gnostic. All you really need are the teachings. Study them, apply them.

For further information on Gnostic Christianity, check out Elaine Pagels’ *The Gnostic Gospels*, a good introduction to the subject.

Copyright 2005 TD Hall