

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for the *Journal of Theological Studies* (old series) can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jts-os_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[1st page of article]

ON MATT. XI 27, LUKE X 22.

So much has been written about this famous passage, that I almost hesitate to add to the amount, were it not that I have for some time been haunted by a suspicion that the first clause πάντα μοι παρεδόθη has been seriously misunderstood, and thereby the sense of the whole passage has been obscured.

The main point is this: πάντα, 'all things', is generally taken in connexion with Matt. xxviii 18 (ἐδόθη μοι πάντα ἐξουσία), rather than with Matt. xi 25 and the preceding verses. That is to say, 'all things' has been understood to mean 'all authority', or 'all my doctrines', and not 'all my experiences', 'success and failure'.

When we are asked what a Saying of Jesus means, surely the first thing to ask is the context in which it has been transmitted. Now both in Matthew and in Luke 'I thank Thee, Father,' is given after 'Woe to thee, Chorazin!' In Matthew it follows with no break at all, in Luke it is only separated by Luke x 17-20 (which describes the return of the Seventy-two, the Woes on Chorazin and the other towns having been curiously given by the Third Evangelist as part of the valedictory address). It would seem therefore highly probable that the Woes on the Cities and the *Confiteor* followed one another in Q.² Is it not probable that they should be interpreted together? Both start from the rejection of the Message of Jesus, from the non-recognition of Jesus by the 'wise' and 'prudent'.

No one, neither Chorazin, nor Bethsaida, nor Capernaum, recognizes (ἐπιγινώσκει) the Son of Man when He came among them. Similarly they had failed to recognize Elijah (Matt. xvii 12 οὐκ ἐπέγνωσαν). They, like all Jews, in their prayers call God their Father, but they do not recognize His spirit (Matt. xii 28, also Luke x 9): no one recognizes the Father but the Son, and the Son's disciples.³ God and this generation will be strangers at the Day of Judgement, so soon to arrive.

I have tried to avoid discussing the text, whether we are to read ἐπιγινώσκει, or ἔγωγ τίς ἐστίν, or γινώσκει τίς ἐστίν. In any case the meaning is much the same: it is a question of *recognition*,—not of knowing a person's inner nature, but of recognizing him when he is in

¹ So both Harnack and Wellhausen: H. J. Holtzmann, however, interprets the first clause of Matt. xi 27 of 'success and failure'.

² *Confiteor* seems to me a better word for Matt. xi 25 ff than Harnack's *Lobpreis*.

³ Compare the double alternative, John viii 39, xiv 7.

sight. Our Lord had proclaimed that the Kingdom of God was at hand: the towns of Galilee had not recognized the signs of the crisis.

I add a paraphrase of Matt. xi 20-27, to bring out the meaning here suggested.

Sayings of Jesus, when the announcement that the Kingdom of God was at hand failed to stir the towns of Galilee to general repentance.

'Alas for Chorazin and Bethsaida! If Tyre and Sidon had had like opportunities, they would have recognized that the day of judgement was at hand. And as for Capharnaum, the judgement on it will be severer than that on Sodom! But I acknowledge that this, like everything else, is the Will of my Father in heaven: He has blinded the eyes of the Rabbis and the Pharisees, and on the other hand He has opened the understandings of some simple folk to receive the message. For both I bless His Name, because all things—success and failure—come to me from my heavenly Father. I can stand alone unrecognized, for He recognizes me; I stand alone, I and my disciples, but it is we who know God and recognize the signs of His visitation.'

F. C. BURKITT.