

WHO IS JUDGING THE CHURCH?

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: – A brother who gave a lesson here recently spoke on the judgment – and claimed that Christ had been judging the Church during this age. A number of the friends took exception to this. For my own part, I have studied all the texts on this subject, and I cannot find one text that favors the idea that Christ is the Judge of the church, unless it be Rom. 14:10; – but that is a wrong translation. Tischendorf, Rotherham, Revised Version and all the best authorities render it "the judgment seat of God."

In 2 Cor. 5:10, the Church is said to appear before the judgment seat of Christ – not to be judged, but to receive, etc.

All *krisis* (judgment) has been given into the hands of the Son, but the Church does not come into the *krisis*. – John 5:22,24.

The judgment seat of Christ does not come into existence until his thousand-year reign begins; and the *krisis* or the *krisis day* does not begin until the dead come out of their graves, and Christ sits on his *own* throne. – John 5:29; Rev. 14:7.

"God has appointed a day [the *krisis* day] in the which he will judge the *world* by that man," but where does it say that God has been judging the Church by Christ? – Acts 17:31.

Peter says, "If ye call on *the Father* [not on the Son] *who* without respect of persons judgeth," etc. – 1 Pet. 1:17.

Christ says, "*I* am the Vine, ye are the branches, and my *Father* the husbandman." "Whom the Lord [the Father] loveth *he* disciplines, and scourges *every son* whom he receiveth." – John 15:1; Heb. 12:6-10.

When the judgment of the world is spoken of the Greek word *krisis* is always used, but never *krima*. On the other hand, in speaking of the judgment of the [R2426 : page 30] Church the word *krima* is used, but never *krisis*. The Church does not come into the *krisis*, but it does come into the *krima*. – 1 Pet. 4:17. Compare with John 5:24.

It is this *krisis*, into which the Church does not come, that God has placed in the hands of Christ. – John 5:22.

I would like to hear from you on this matter. I hope this communication will find you well in every way, and that the Lord will continue to give you strength for every trial. You are surely having abundant practice in suffering, and ought to become quite a proficient sufferer. Paul says, "I glory in tribulation, for tribulation works out the capacity for enduring. And the capacity for enduring works out approval, and approval works out hope, and hope maketh not to be ashamed."

May our dear heavenly Father continue to be with you always – and that you may continually realize his approval and smile – is my prayer. Sister McPhail and I often talk to ourselves about your severe trials, and wonder how you have been able to bear them as you have. I often think of Paul's words, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed," etc. (2 Cor. 4:8-11.) God's grace was always sufficient for him, and will be for you.

Wishing you a happy and successful new year, with Christian love from Mrs. McPhail and myself to you and all with you,

Your brother in Christ,

M. L. McPHAIL.

IN REPLY: DEAR BROTHER: – I am glad to know that I have the Christian love and sympathy of yourself and family. One thing in connection with my troubles gives me great satisfaction, namely that, repeatedly and carefully searching my heart, I find in it no hatred toward those who have been maligning me – no desire to render evil for evil, but on the contrary a desire to do them all good, if possible. There is a great satisfaction in this, as it affords me one evidence that the spirit of love has possession of my heart. I trust that it may never be otherwise; but that more and more I may become a copy of God's dear Son, our Lord, – "who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered threatened not, but committed his cause to him who judgeth righteously." (1 Pet. 2:23; 1 Cor. 4:12.) You will be glad to know that I have on the girdle of love; that the peace of God rules in my heart; and that I have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men. – Col. 3:12-15; Acts 24:16; 1 Pet. 2:19; 3:16.

Respecting the proposition that Christ has been judging the Church during this Gospel age, would say: The Church is the Body of Christ, and as such is collectively at the judgment seat of the heavenly Father. Our Lord Jesus is not presented to us as our Judge, but rather as our Advocate before the Judge, our Bridegroom, our Friend, our Lover, our Redeemer, our Deliverer, our Head, our Governor, our Guide. As the Head he takes the supervision of the Body, he commands, instructs, guides, in the affairs of his Church, and takes it into fellowship with himself in the building up of the Body of Christ in the most holy faith. If we love him we will keep his commandments, and he that loveth him will be loved of the Father. Thus his commandments are to us a line of *judgment*, rules of life, daily; we are in him as members of his body, who professedly have given him our wills, – accepting his will or *judgment* instead of our own. Nevertheless he has given gifts unto men, unto the Church – a measure of his spirit, his will, to every man to profit withal; and for the use of these gifts received from our Lord Jesus we are accountable to him. And our use or misuse of these will constitute a judgment with which he will have to do, as represented in the parables of "The Pounds" and

"The Talents." I presume these were the thoughts which the Brother had in mind, when he spoke of our Lord Jesus as judging the Church during this Gospel age. As the head judges or criticises the body, succors it, shields it, supervises its affairs, so does Christ with the Church, which is his Body.

Seemingly you have overlooked the Greek word, *krino*, which is also rendered judgment, and which occurs more times than *krisis* and *krima* both together, in the New Testament.

Strong (in substance) defines these words thus: –
Krisis – Decision, for or against. Justice.
Krima – Decision, in respect to crime.
Krino – "To distinguish, decide, try," etc.

Krino is used in referring to the judgment (trial) of the Millennial age when the Church (head and body) will be the judges. – See Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30; John 12:48; Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 4:5; 6:2,3.

The same word, *krino* is used in attributing that coming judgment to God. – See Acts 7:7; Rom. 3:6; Heb. 3:10; 1 Pet. 1:17. [R2426 : page 31]

These seemingly contradictory statements are made harmonious by two other texts in which this same word *krino* is used – thus: "**God shall judge [krino] the secrets of men by Jesus Christ**" (Rom. 2:16.) God "hath appointed a day in the which he will judge [krino] the world in righteousness **by that man whom hath ordained;**" – the Christ, head and body "one new man." – Acts 17:31.

From this standpoint – of "God the **judge of all,**" we need not be surprised if we find not only that the world's judgment (trial) by Jehovah is committed to the well beloved Son, but the Church's judgment (testing, trial) also. Hence our Lord's statement, "The Father judgeth [krino] no man, but hath committed **all** judgment [krisis] unto the Son." (John 5:22.) This **judging** in the Church is not only referred

to in the parables of the Pounds and Talents, etc., but the Apostle particularizes respecting it in 2 Thes. 2:8-12. And here the statements respecting the Father's part and the Son's part are so intertwined as to prove that they are united in the one work of judgment – *of* the Father, *by* the Son. In this text *krino* is rendered "*might be damned.*"

Again, "ye that are spiritual" are to take part in the work of judging the Church now; – especially each one is to *judge himself* and help each other to look into the perfect law of liberty (Love) by which all are now being judged (Jas. 2:12) under the New Covenant. "If we would judge [*dia-krino* – "thoroughly judge"] ourselves, we should not be judged [*krino*]. But when we are judged [*krino*] of the *Lord* we are chastened, that we should not be condemned [*kata-krino* – "judged down"] with the world."

It is in harmony with the above that the Apostle declares our Lord Jesus "the Lord, the righteous *Judge*," who will give him his crown of life (2 Tim. 4:8); and in harmony with this thought that the Church, the Lord's body, is being judged now, under his supervision, and is not (directly) in the Father's hands for judgment, is the Apostle's expression in Hebrews 10:31, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." To be judged by Jehovah directly, none of the imperfect race of Adam could stand – all would fall under his just sentence: but under the New Covenant, God is dealing with the Church now as "the body of Christ" – so long as we severally abide under the robe of Christ's righteousness, our wedding garment, – not imputing our trespasses unto us, but unto our "Head" who died for us. Nevertheless, we (the Church) are "accepted in the Beloved" in a manner different from the world: they will not be accepted at all, nor have any intercourse with the Father until the close of their trial at the close of the Millennium. – 1 Cor. 15:24-28.

Similarly Jehovah is the Creator of all things; yet he does this by proxy through him who was "the beginning of the creation of God." (John 1:1.) Likewise it is written, "They shall be all taught

of **God,**" yet Jesus was the Teacher sent of God; and we are in the school of Christ, learning of him.

With much Christian love, very truly your brother and servant in the Lord,

– THE EDITOR.
