

## Kanzo Uchimura's Christian thoughts and his protest against government

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### I. Introduction

After Japanese national isolation was canceled by U.S. Navy Commodore Matthew Perry in 1853, several Protestant Christian leaders appeared in Japan's history. Among them, one of the most prominent is Kanzo Uchimura. In the context of the history of Christianity in Japan, Uchimura is especially noteworthy for his particular form of Christian faith known as Mukyokai (no-church). However, the reason for his general view appears to be a little different. History classes in junior high and high schools, for example, teach that Uchimura caused Fukei Jiken ,otherwise known as the lese majesty incident, which was considered a display of disrespect to the emperor. Students also learn that Uchimura was a pacifist who objected to the Russo–Japanese War. From these issues, the general image of Uchimura as a prophetic believer who dared to put himself in difficulties is derived. Yet, although his name is well known, the substance of his Christian ideas is less familiar. The manner in which his prophetic beliefs were derived from the Bible also remains largely unexplored.

It is certain that Uchimura was critical of Japanese society, and continually appealed to

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its people. His intent, however, was not made to organize social movements. Uchimura's philosophy was highlighted when Sojiro Saito, one of his disciples, intended to refuse military service and tax for the Russo–Japanese War. Despite his opposition to the war, Uchimura traveled a great distance to Hanamaki and tried to persuade Saito to desist. His reasoning was that a refusal of military service and taxes is a perversion of the Bible message, and to put family and friends into trouble by doing so is not in the spirit of love. In *Pacifist's Attitude in Times of the War*, which was written after the outbreak of the Russo–Japanese War, Uchimura stated:

“We did our best to avoid the war before it broke out. But as the outbreak of the war became reality against our hope, now we have begun to think how to recover peace ... Needless to say, our pacifism is not for ourselves, but for nation, society, and people ... Duties and responsibilities and objectives of pacifists are to keep peace.”<sup>1)</sup>

“The anger of our nation's people has been poured on the enemy like the water from the flood. We cannot stop it by calm advice. We are pacifists, but that does not mean that we are not rational people. So we will not be foolish to try to stop the battle by shouting out peace.”<sup>2)</sup>

As a pacifist, then, what was Uchimura to do? He insisted on consoling the families of soldiers at the front<sup>3)</sup> and working towards the happiness of all families. Forest planting, bird protection, river development, soil fertilization, and many other projects were insisted to increase “common peoples' happiness,” as a positive aspect of pacifism.<sup>4)</sup> His activities against the war were generally accomplished in prudent and indirect ways.

It seems that Uchimura's cautious approach and actions against society were reasons for differing attitudes among his disciples regarding Japanese militarism. Among the second-generation Mukyokai Christians were leaders such as Tadao Yanaihara, who was forced out of office because of anti-government rhetoric, and Megumu Masaike, who opposed the war thoroughly. Osamu Ishiga, who actually resisted the draft, was also indirectly influenced by Uchimura. In contrast, leaders such as Toraji Tsukamoto and Koukichi Kurosaki justified Japanese militarism and its war-based expansion; they believed the war met the will of God. In addition, men such as Kim Kyo-Shin and Ham Sock-Hon from Korea applied Uchimura's lessons to their own lives and became involved in the Korean liberation movement, which

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1) Kanzo Uchimura, *Senji ni okeru Hisenshugisha no Taido (Pacifist's Attitude in Times of the War)*, (1904), Uchimura Kanzo Zenshu (Complete Works of Uchimura Kanzo, cited hereafter as Zenshu) XII, Iwanami Shoten (1981), p151. (All of Uchimura's texts quoted here were translated by the author of this essay.)

2) Ibid, pp151-2.

3) Ibid, p152.

4) Ibid, p155.

was based on the Bible and Christian beliefs. Because such diversity existed, it is difficult to say that there was an element in Mukyokai Christianity that led people to protest against the government. Disciples made their decisions alone, acting on their own ways of thinking.

Uchimura made a significant point of being a free, independent person. Therefore, he recognized that he must respect his disciples' freedom while requiring stringent adherence to doctrine. In this regard, Uchimura's distrust of humans as organizations or groups cannot be missed. It remains unclear whether this was an attitude acquired through Fukei Jiken or it was his Samurai characteristic (Uchimura believed that a Samurai is an independent person), but Uchimura had a strong commitment to individuality. Uchimura believed that a group could easily become partisan and that partisanship has a tendency to exclude those who are different from its members, while an independent person can be friends with everyone. How, then, was his thinking expressed in attitudes toward society? And on what information were his ideas based?

## **II. Uchimura's Christian thoughts and social criticism**

### **1. Uchimura's Christian thoughts and social criticism**

Indeed, Uchimura had a critical perspective on society, according to his Christian faith. Therefore, he could keep a critical mind and a sense of distance against the imperial state. His thoughts were not relegated to his mind, however, and he occasionally expressed them actively. Fukei Jiken, witnessed by many, is a prominent example. Although the display was an important issue concerning freedom of religion, Uchimura was not trying to unfold a campaign against the state for human rights. His opposition to the Russo-Japanese War, which is another well-known example, was certainly evident, but his intent, again, was not to establish an actual movement.

Though Uchimura kept a close eye on the Meiji government, he didn't ever plan to change the mechanism of the Empire itself. He did not get involved in any demonstration activities or organized opposition movement. He was critical of any violent means. He did not agree with any action that would disturb the order of society, whatever the reason.

We should remember that we cannot adapt our contemporary standards of political consciousness to emulate Uchimura's ideals. While it can be said that his political consciousness was somewhat extreme, and we can estimate that Uchimura had low political awareness, it is also understood that citizens of his generation could not feel a real possibility of democracy in those days. At 66 years of age, he first voted in the 1928 election, which was during the first Japanese universal suffrage when only men could vote. It is not unreasonable that Uchimura, who also had a childhood experience of the Meiji coup, felt that politics are moved arbitrarily by select, privileged people. When Uchimura criticized the Meiji government, he often used the term "Hanbatsu (clanship) government". It appears that he shunned politics. To be involved in such a movement meant entering the world of "privileged

people,” and the system might have seemed too profane or secular and unbearable to Uchimura, who had very strict idea of purity.

Uchimura’s political consciousness is further illustrated in text.

## 2. Christians and politics

Shozo Tanaka once criticized Uchimura’s inconsistency in political consciousness. (It is not recorded as text by Tanaka, but it appears in Uchimura’s writings.) Tanaka requested him to be involved in political activity, not only studying Bible. Uchimura had the following objections:

“Some say that now is the time to abandon the Bible and stand up, and that means we should stop studying Bible and be engaged in the social activities. But we cannot receive the meaning.”

“First, the Bible is food for our soul. To abandon Bible is for us to abandon provisions. No army goes to battle without provisions.”<sup>5)</sup>

To Uchimura, the Bible was the basis for all, and there could not be a movement away from it. However, the fact that he had relations with Tanaka shows that he did not turn his eyes away from social problems. Although he did not “stand up” with Tanaka, Uchimura cared for him. It was reported that Tanaka had the Bible beside him when he died, although he was not a Christian.

What was Uchimura’s idea of Christians being involved in politics? A contemporary of Uchimura, Tokio Yokoi moved on to politics from the world of Christian missionaries. Yokoi was a benefactor for Uchimura, offering help when Uchimura was experiencing hardships after Fukei Jiken. Uchimura said the following words when Yokoi became a politician:

“I wonder why a good-hearted man like Yokoi became the government official of the evil-hearted Meiji government. But I believe that it is not because Yokoi’s heart became evil. The government must have deceived him by using terms of humanity and patriotism ... I love Yokoi’s innocent heart, who believes that Japan can be saved by the government. I feel compassion for his heart, who felt disappointed with religion. I will not blame him for this, because the world of religion is as corrupted as the world of politics.”<sup>6)</sup>

Uchimura also commented when Yokoi died, and his basic position appears to be

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5) Uchimura, Seisho wo Suteyo to Iu Chukoku ni Taishite (Against the Advice to abandon the Bible), (1902), Zenshu X (1981), p96.

6) Uchimura, Yokoi Tokio Kun no Shuukan wo Kikite (On Hearing the installation of Yokoi Tokio), (1901), Zenshu IX (1981), p117.

unchanged.

“(Yokoi), wanted to save Japan, in his life. Though you had achieved not a little through twenty years of your mission, you felt it provoking because it was still far from your ideals.

Most sad words heard from your mouth was this, you told me one day...

Mission is useless. I... I'll turn to politics and quit mission.”<sup>7)</sup>

“Through politics, you wanted to save the country, but the politics killed you mentally. Evil is no question in the Japanese politics today.”<sup>8)</sup>

Considering issues of scale and efficiency, Yokoi seemed to have chosen the political approach to save Japan. In contrast, Uchimura mentioned “evil-heartedness” of the government, and corruption. Uchimura tried to change Japan as a whole by changing individuals through telling the truth of the Gospel, but he knew his ways were time-consuming. As a matter of human reality, there is a limit to waiting, even in praying and believing in God's intervention; something tangible is needed. It appears Uchimura believed that dealing with problems by actual means was not his role.

### 3. Uchimura's dislike of politics

Uchimura's aversion to politics, especially regarding democracy, has been criticized from the perspective of today.<sup>9)</sup> After experiencing World War I, Uchimura said democracy and imperialism are same because both are the politics of human beings, and for the ultimate solution, the only way is through God's direct intervention. *The League and the Darkness* written 1919, states:

“Democracy is the politics by the people, for the people ... and from the respect that they are politics done by people, there is no difference between American democracy and German imperialism.”<sup>10)</sup>

Japanese politics, from the World War II defeat through the present, show that Uchimura's words might not be entirely wrong. Japan has a form of democracy, but it is difficult to feel

7) Uchimura, *Yokoi Tokio Kun no Tameni Benzu (Speaking for late Yokoi Tokio)*, (1928), Zenshu XXXI (1983), p153.

8) Ibid, p155.

9) Characteristics and problems of Uchimura's criticism on democracy are pointed out in detail by Katsuhiko Kondo in *Democracy no Shingaku Shisou (Theological Thoughts of Democracy)*, (2000), Kyobunkan, pp437-440. The indication that Uchimura lacks the viewpoint of church history and history of thoughts is especially important.

10) Uchimura, *Renmei to Ankoku (The League and the Darkness)*, (1919), Zenshu XXIV (1982), p553.

that one can change its society by voting. Regardless, a society that can be influenced in some way by each citizen should function better than a society moved by a few privileged people. A society of freedom and independence, which Uchimura promoted, then becomes possible.

Uchimura's radical dislike of politics was obvious. He said Martin Luther's Reformation was a failure, in the sense that it used a political approach. Uchimura evaluated Reformation itself in the following manner:

“To defeat the great power of the Catholic Church, Luther depended on two forces. One was the political power, another was the Bible. And both the political power and the Bible did harm to him and his followers.”<sup>11)</sup>

“Lutheran reformation was successful partly because he appealed to German nobles' patriotism, and there was the origin of the harm, since the ecclesiastical authority moved from the Catholic Church to the German government. Sacredness of Pope was denied and the King was admitted as being sacred. Since then, the Lutheran Church became the state church of Germany, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. Then, the government established the doctrine and installed the pastors. That was not different from the Catholic Church, as both became secular. Influence of earthly kings and nobles over religious activity is the great harm left today by Luther after four hundred years.”<sup>12)</sup>

How, then did Uchimura think the problem of relations between religion and politics were to be solved? He pointed out that political issues turned into the issue of dominance and elimination, and he insisted of further Reformation.

“Now we are in need of a second Reformation ... we need the reformation with love, not only faith. Of course, not without faith ... in the course of reformation, we reach love through faith. That will be a reformation of the Lutheran Reformation, and we should get over Luther as reformers.”<sup>13)</sup>

This comment shows Uchimura's concept of changing the world by approaching the minds of each citizen, rather than changing the political power directly by involvement in the organization or group.

This is evident through his interpretation of Romans 13. Paul's claim that we should obey the authority of the world was interpreted by Uchimura as follows:

“Under any political system and in any era, a power to maintain order in a nation is

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11) Uchimura, *Ruteru no Nokoseshi Gaidoku* (Harm that Luther Left Behind), (1917), Zenshu XXIII (1982), p417.

12) Ibid, p418.

13) Ibid, p425.

necessary. Since the Christian's way is to love everyone and even our enemies, we should obey and give our love not only to a good nation, but also to a bad nation. Even if we are under tyranny, we should obey and give our love to those rulers who persecute us. This is what Paul meant."<sup>14)</sup>

Uchimura basically supported Paul's claim that we should obey the authority of the world, and he interpreted the claim as an extension of the teaching of love, especially the love for the enemies. He wrote:

"When the government of the nation was too corrupt and became the enemy to the people unmistakably, or one's nation was conquered by a despotic nation and people were suffered, is it wrong to be rebels and make a revolution?"<sup>15)</sup>

"The case like that is very rare, and even though it is right to resist the government on those occasions, we cannot say that we always have right to resist ... Even if political injustice is unbearable and people are suffering from it, Christians should act only through peaceful means."<sup>16)</sup>

"Christians are people who moved their citizenship in heaven, so things in this world matter little."<sup>17)</sup>

Thus, Uchimura thought that means for resistance must be limited and peaceful. According to Uchimura, Socrates, who obeyed the wrong law and killed himself by drinking poison, and Gandhi, who maintained non-violent means,<sup>18)</sup> had real Christian manners, yet both were non-Christians. In addition, Uchimura estimated the Japanese government in that period to be a "relatively good government"<sup>19)</sup> and said "We should obey from our heart — our conscience — with the virtue of obedience."<sup>20)</sup> *The Study of the Epistle to the Romans* was written in 1921, just before the Japanese government began to rush into full-scale militarism.

Although Uchimura was not a man of action, his deeds were at times inconsistent. Fukei Jiken is an example of resistance against the government as a consequence of his ideas.

The following chapters describe the relationship between Uchimura's political

14) Uchimura, *Romasho no Kenkyu* (The Study of the Epistle to the Romans), (1921), Zenshu XXVI (1982), pp403-404.

15) Ibid, p405.

16) Ibid.

17) Ibid, p404.

18) Uchimura describes Gandhi's movement as "nonresistant," but it seems that the meaning is what we call "non-violent" today.

19) Uchimura, *Romasho no Kenkyu*, p407.

20) Ibid.

consciousness and Christian thoughts through interpretation and acceptance of the Bible, which was his main activity.

### III. Uchimura's social criticism and his interpretation of the book of Daniel

#### 1. Uchimura's social criticism and his interpretation of the book of Daniel

Hereafter, the focus of this essay is on Uchimura's understanding of the book of Daniel. This book was chosen here because Daniel was the prophet who also worked as a politician faithfully among the non-Judaists, his so-called enemies, while maintaining his own faith. In *The Study of the Book of Daniel* Uchimura described the book of Daniel, as "notes from the great politician who left so many achievements, served King Nebuchadnezzar the Great, crowned 606 B.C."<sup>21)</sup>

Uchimura also commented on the book of Daniel in *The Life of Daniel* written in 1906, but the focus of this essay is mainly on *The Study of the Book of Daniel* written 1920. In this period, Uchimura had already passed his Second Coming movement, and his Christian thoughts had already been accomplished. Therefore, the text written in this period is useful for deriving the characteristics of Uchimura's Christian thoughts.

During this period, Uchimura lectured on a series of continuous Bible studies at the Japanese Health Society hall in Otemachi, Tokyo. Before discussing the book of Daniel, he talked about the Ten Commandments of Moses. After Daniel, Uchimura continued with a discussion on the book of Job. After Job followed the lecture series on "Epistle to the Romans."

*The Study of the Book of Daniel* is composed of seven chapters and Uchimura discussed the book of Daniel from chapter 1 through chapter 6. He spent two lectures on chapter 2, so there were seven total lectures. Uchimura chose Daniel as the theme at that time, he said, because "When the cries demanding the reformation of the world are loud and people are feeling uneasy like today, there is an urgent necessity to reveal what the Bible observes about the future of the world and the end of human history. For the purpose, the book of Daniel is the best."<sup>22)</sup>

In the first lecture, Uchimura explained the outline, the historical background, and authenticity of the book of Daniel. He said: "As the Bible is written spiritually, only spiritual believers can fully understand it. Guided by God, we will be able to judge professional theologians." He insisted that it should be read under the light of faith, rather than historicity.

He then discussed about the scene in which Daniel and his fellows, as prisoners, refused to eat food given by palace in order to keep the teachings of Judaism, and Uchimura stressed the importance and difficulty of maintaining one's faith.

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21) Uchimura, *Danieru Sho no Kenkyu* (The Study of the Book of Daniel), (1920), Zenshu XXV (1982), p284.

22) Ibid, p283.



“However, the first trial of faith was given. At that time, Daniel was a 14- or 15-year-old boy. Even so, he said to the chief official on behalf of four, ‘As Israelites, we have food that we should eat; God we should worship. We are not to eat food prohibited by law, food that has been offered to idols.’ This was a very bold declaration, given by prisoners without a country, in a palace of a great nation, who absolutely rejected to eat food that was also eaten by the king, for their belief.”<sup>23)</sup>

“Daniel served five kings successively, did his best in governing the country and benefiting people, and keeping his faith lived his life as a politician unparalleled in the world for seventy years. Its sprout was in religious struggle in his youth that he refused the king’s order and rejected eating food. As he won this first small problem, he could keep good fighting even though he was put into lion’s den in his later days.”<sup>24)</sup>

In this way, Uchimura said that even small teachings should be kept strict because that would defend the foundation of one’s faith.

“The trial begins when a youth finishes his school and goes into society. To drink a glass of alcohol or not, the problem itself is small, but his eternal destiny is divided there by the decision made about the small problem.”<sup>25)</sup>

Uchimura never drank alcohol, and he noted some conflicts with people around him when he was a public servant and a teacher. But he thought that one’s faith must be kept as one’s faith, without pandering to one’s surroundings. However, causing trouble thoughtlessly and deepening conflicts should be avoided. Uchimura praises Daniel by saying “We must learn the attitude of rejection of Daniel; he rejected, but he didn’t provoke people uselessly with violent language ... It was the heroic boldness of Daniel that made him serve five kings successively without losing this attitude, keep peace, and maintain his faith until his death.”<sup>26)</sup> Uchimura’s idea that one should be devoted to one’s faith, but at the same time practice peacefulness is reflected here as well.

Uchimura continued, referring to the fact that Daniel was a political prophet, and said that that is the uniqueness of the book of Daniel.

“The reason why we are especially interested in the Book of Daniel is that Daniel himself was statesman-prophet, unlike many other prophets. Prophets like Jeremiah or Ezekiel

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23) Ibid, p286.

24) Ibid, p287.

25) Ibid.

26) Ibid, p288.

were born in religious families, so they had less contact with secular world than Daniel did. Daniel is both prophet and politician, and he surely is the representative, the model of sacred politician...One who wants to be a Christian politician should follow Daniel. And he prophesied the future of the world to the end from his standpoint as a politician. Not pure religious prophecies, future visions of the world's matchless politician."<sup>27)</sup>

## 2. Uchimura's view on history and his social criticism

In the second and the third lectures, Uchimura explained the historical background of Daniel 2, particularly giving a detailed description of an advanced civilization and the prosperity of the empire of Babylon. In addition, he emphasized the firmness of the faith of Daniel and his fellows by saying, "In the midst of the huge city of the great idol-worship nation, those four Jewish youths kept their faith to their God, Jehovah, which they had learned when they were in the mountains."<sup>28)</sup> Uchimura then advanced to the dream of Nebuchadnezzar.

The king saw the dream of the statue that had a gold head, silver arms and chest, copper abdomen and thighs, and iron and clay feet. Daniel interpreted the dream as the indication of the prosperity, decline, and disruption of Babylon. According to Uchimura, it was indicated by Daniel, whose mind was political, in the idol-worship country of Babylon,<sup>29)</sup> "so the style of the dream was Babylonian, that is, idolatrous at all"<sup>30)</sup> and "the description was political."<sup>31)</sup> Uchimura, however, said that its spirit was Jewish and Christian.<sup>32)</sup>

The motif of the fall of great empire represented in this dream can be applied to any great empire in history as well as Babylon, said Uchimura. He also thought that the "modern democracy" corresponds to the part of disruption of the great empire and its authority. If so, what lay in the future of Japanese society, which had an enthusiastic movement demanding democracy, will be decline, he said. And Christ, was to save the world from it. Therefore, he said that this prophecy is "Christian".

However, Uchimura thought that believers should not simply wait for it:

"Possibly, one may say 'If so, we would get rid of all of our activity and only just wait.' Such remarks of mockery mostly come from theologians' table talks, but the fact is opposite. See the life of Daniel, who stood alone solemnly serving five kings of two dynasties for seventy years, delivered people of the world and lasted his life as a great

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27) Ibid, pp288-9.

28) Ibid, p290.

29) Ibid, p295

30) Ibid

31) Ibid, p296.

32) Ibid.

politician, while other politicians repeated disappointment and discouragement nervously. There is a clear distinction between those who believe the Bible as it is written, believe in Christ's second coming and building of the Kingdom of God, and those who do not. Those who believe will at least never be hopeless.<sup>33)</sup>

Thus, the apocalyptic events led by the second coming of Christ and God's direct intervention in history was believed by Uchimura to be the source of hope that makes people face the reality in front of them.

### 3. Christians in pagan world

Uchimura interpreted Daniel 3 in his fourth lecture and told the story of three friends of Daniel's who refused to worship the statue of Nebuchadnezzar. Their lives were at risk, and God's power saved them.

Uchimura praised the three friends for coping with imminent death through the power of faith, and he pointed out that it is in the time of trial that one can really feel "God is with me."

"Small Nebuchadnezzars are everywhere today ... they try to make you worship all sorts of idols to show their power or to require their subordinates' obedience."<sup>34)</sup>

"Don't be afraid of persecution made by them; don't try to avoid those persecutions saying faith is faith and life issues are life issues. Do not lose the once-in-a-lifetime occasion to have the honor of having the Son of God as your friend by yourself."<sup>35)</sup>

It should be noted that Uchimura did not expressly say that God will reward Nebuchadnezzar, who put Daniel's friends in such a situation, or those "small Nebuchadnezzars," who had power in Japanese society at that time. Uchimura's thinking was passive, and he did not believe that the social system itself that endangered Christians' faith and life should be changed somehow.

Uchimura did not think it wrong as a man of religion that Daniel served the king of Babylon, who is a pagan. Rather, he regarded it as the duty of important responsibilities. In the fifth lecture, which focused on Daniel 4, Uchimura stated:

"If Daniel had a greedy mind, it was the chance to control and wield his power over the king and extend his influence over the nation. But he did not think of himself at all. He

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33) Ibid, p301.

34) Ibid, p306.

35) Ibid, p308.

loved, felt afraid, and dared to remonstrate for the king. Here is a real, loyal vassal.”<sup>36)</sup>

In Daniel 4, king Nebuchadnezzar has a bizarre dream, and Daniel interprets it. The king turns out to be “driven out from human society” to “eat grass like an ox,”<sup>37)</sup> just as Daniel said. It was opportunity for Daniel to take the king under his control, but he did not. Therefore, Uchimura praised Daniel as “a real, loyal vassal.”

In the sixth lecture, Uchimura interpreted Daniel 5, in which phantom fingers wrote letters on the wall. Uchimura related the episode to Revelation 18 and said that after material civilization reaches its peak; next comes only collapse.

“Here we must ‘go out of the great Babylon,’ according to the words in the Bible (Revelation 18:4). Then what will we have to rely on instead of this Babylonian civilization? There is only the Bible ... Decades ago, Christians advocated democracy and were regarded as the progressives of the time, but now, communism or claim for universal suffrage are much talked of, and Christians are regarded as out-of-date instead. A standpoint of a Christian is like a rock standing out from the sea. The water moves, but the rock alone stands firmly. The ebb tide and high tide may come and go just like that, but the Christians will never move along with the tide.”<sup>38)</sup>

In the seventh lecture, Uchimura discussed Daniel 6 and the adult Daniel being thrown into the lions’ den. Here too, Uchimura said “We are sent to this world to fight the battle for God. To keep our faith although being humiliated by those persecutors is the reason why we became Christians<sup>39)</sup> ... Who should be pitied are not Christians put in the hole, but those persecutors of this world who think they can settle the matter by performing those dirty means.”<sup>40)</sup> He concluded that the trial given to Daniel was the “great lesson for encouraging Christians.”

As is evident in Uchimura’s interpretation of the book of Daniel, the position of Daniel in Babylon, which was a pagan nation, was repeatedly compared to the position of Japanese Christians also living in a pagan nation. He insisted on the importance of keeping faith, not pandering one’s surroundings easily. At the same time, he encouraged love toward those pagans in power, and peacefulness in protesting their wrongdoings. What gives Christians the criteria of how to behave in the pagan world is the Bible. Bearing the trials given to them is interpreted as strengthening their Christians faith. Therefore, Uchimura did believe in seeking

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36) Ibid, pp309-310.

37) Good News Bible, Today’s English Version, American Bible Society(1976), p859.

38) Uchimura, Danieru Sho no Kenkyu, pp322-323.

39) Ibid, p329.

40) Ibid.

solutions to change the system responsible for the trials. In this sense, Uchimura's thoughts were passive. He believed the solution is given directly by the hands of God with the final judgment. But he said it is not intended for Christians to merely wait for that final judgment. Instead, Uchimura said that they can receive hope to face current problems by believing in God's final solution.

#### IV. Conclusion

If the Bible is a never-changing rock, does it mean that Uchimura's standpoint, founded on the Bible, will stay the same? The answer is no. The Bible does not reveal only a single standpoint. There is diversity and also contradiction in the Bible. We can read, for example, that God will save all the human beings, or the ones that God chooses to save. Uchimura believed that the principles of the world change but the Bible does not; this is his interpretation alone.

According to Uchimura's assertion that the Bible never changes, one must always go to the Bible for basic meaning. Although the words themselves do not change, there must be some range in its interpretation according to the times and occasions. Despite the fact that Paul's letters remain constant, for example, a new meaning was understood by Luther.

One reason Uchimura claimed his Mukyokai Christianity is that the church denominations that came from the West had their own particular Western historical backgrounds, so Christianity in Japan fit closest to the historical background of Japan. Mukyokai Christianity is the new Christian style derived from Uchimura's interpretation of the Bible. Although Uchimura said he was just following God's instruction, he learned God's intentions by reading the Bible, not by feeling a personal inner-exchange with God.

Uchimura avoided having the human world represent the absolute being by knowing God's will and placing the kingdom of God against the human world. This enabled him to maintain a sense of distance against the Empire of Japan.

On the other hand, a possibility exists of regarding the human world as meaningless, since it is not God's. In Uchimura's dualistic thinking of distinguishing God's world from the human world, he believed that one should protest strongly when one is disturbed in maintaining one's faith; otherwise, one should follow the authority of the world.

It is evident that Uchimura's statements on democracy include that type of issue. Uchimura was not indifferent to the real world. He maintained until his death a continuous appeal to the world. The behavior of some of his disciples also illustrates this point.

Certainly, Uchimura was able to have hope by leaving the final decision to God, and his criticism on the society is strong because it is based on his faith. However, from the standpoint of viewing this world objectively through individual and internal faith, it might be difficult to find broad support. When society is criticized from a religious viewpoint and its explanation is also religious, it offers only poor persuasion to the general public. Uchimura's

thinking did not make produce a “movement.” It appears that the problem must be regarded together with the issue of Uchimura’s religious community.

Seen as a thinker for social reform, Uchimura might be viewed as an inconclusive person or a fake reformer whose inside is conservative. Uchimura, fundamentally, was a man of religion. His passive—or negative—resistance might be a target of criticism, but it is also possible to evaluate that a view that includes a scope greater than that of Uchimura. In this case, the Mukyokai principle of Uchimura, fundamentally, has an open nature; so it would be more positive to seek future possibility in its openness.

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