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"JESUS AND JAPAN" IN THE THOUGHT OF KANZO UCHIMURA:

A STUDY IN A THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION FOR

THE INDIGENIZATION OF CHRISTIANITY

IN MODERN JAPAN

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Historical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

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May 1983

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Kanzo Uchimura is becoming more and more known among the Christian communities around the world as the originator of the Non-Church or Mukyokai movement. The thought presupposed in this movement is that salvific faith can be given directly from God Himself without the mediation of the institution called church, and that salvation is very well available outside the church and without the ritual called baptism. He contends even that "[w]hen living faith fossilizes, it becomes the church: the church is the fossil of faith,"¹ and that "Christianity minus churches is the Way, the Truth, and the Life."² As this movement gradually wins the recognition of an original formulation of Christianity distinctively different from the traditional forms of Western Christianity, the interest in the theological conception of its founder is increasing among Western theologians and other scholars of human science. His ideas and the movement based upon them have been chosen as the objects of advanced level dissertations, though still

¹Kanzo Uchimura, Shinko Chosaku Zenshu [Complete Writings on Faith], 25 vols. (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1962-66), 18:88. Hereafter cited as Shinko.

²The Complete Works of Kanzo Uchimura (written originally in English), 7 vols. (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1971-73), 3:244. Hereafter cited as CW.

quite a few in number.³ Emil Brunner, who got personally acquainted with the movement in the early fifties during his stay in Tokyo as a guest professor at a Christian university, acknowledged its renovative significance for the future Christianity not only of Japan but also of the world.⁴ The interest in Uchimura's thought goes now beyond academic "curiosity" to the search for some substantial impulses for the Christianity of tomorrow.

In Japan, however, the Non-Church movement has been standing in a less friendly relationship with the other Protestant churches, due to the former's critique against the latter's "formalism," "compromise," "corruption," and so forth. Yet, the founder of the movement, who was more caustic than his disciples in this regard, remains in high esteem among pastors and laymen of the churches. The fact is, that although they are not in agreement with Uchimura's idea of Non-Church Christianity, they are feeling spiritually nourished by his

³ John F. Howes, "Japan's Enigma: The Young Kanzo Uchimura" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1965), and Carlo Caldarola, "The Mukyokai Movement in Japan: Western Christianity and Japanese Cultural Identity," (Ph.D. dissertation, California University, Berkeley, 1971); in addition, Raymond P. Jennings, Jesus Japan, and Kanzo Uchimura: A Study of the View of the Church of Kanzo Uchimura and Its Significance for Japanese Christianity (Th.M. dissertation, The Berkeley Baptist Divinity School, Berkeley, California, 1955).

⁴ Emil Brunner, "Die christliche Nich-Kirche-Bewegung in Japan," Evangelische Theologie, (4, 1959), 147-155. His concluding remark runs as follows: "Die protestantische Kirche wird nur durch Umbildung der Kircheninstitution im Sinne Wahrer brüderlicher Gemeinschaft-aus-dem-Glauben weiter bestehen können. Darin ist ihr bis jetzt kein besseres Beispiel gegeben als das über Mukyokai-Bewegung Japans. So aber bekommt diese nicht nur Bedeutung für Japan, sondern für die ganze Christenheit."

"simple faith in the Cross,"⁵ encouraged by his uncompromising obedience to the call from on high for the sake of the cause of faith, and inspired by his pronounced Puritanism. These influences of Uchimura have been purifying the churches in a fallen world and inspiring them toward the idealism of faith ever afresh.

This is not to imply that Uchimura's influences are limited to Christendom in Japan. His writings have also been read eagerly by non-Christians for more than a half century. Historians, philosophers, sociologists, novelists, educators and others occupied in human sciences are among the readers of Uchimura's literary productions. His separate books have sold hundreds of thousands of copies in paperback form. A prestigious secular publisher, Iwanami Shoten, has recently launched his voluminous and expensive Complete Works for the third time since Uchimura's death, thus attesting to the perennial influence and popularity of Uchimura.

The reasons for this "popularity" can be traced in several directions. One of them is that Uchimura lived out his life in an existential search for the identity of the Japanese as a nation, under the unique historical circumstance in which traditional Japanese (Oriental) values were challenged to the foundation by the inflowing Occidental

⁵A Church of Christ missionary observes one important aspect of Uchimura's significance as follows: "I consider that the reason for Uchimura's influence and his contribution to Christianity are not his non-churchism but his simple faith in the Cross he has left in the Complete Works. Almost all the coworkers in the churches, with whom I have a cordial fellowship, call Uchimura "Sensei" (or Teacher). They are reading his writings, receiving from them a strong encouragement to the financial independence [of Japanese Christianity], to the Bible study, and to the evangelism of the pure Gospel," Kyo Bun Kwan Publication Department, ed. Gendai ni Ikiru Uchimura Kanzo [Kanzo Uchimura in the Perspective of Today] (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1966), p. 126.

civilization causing a chaotic state in their orientation in the question of spiritual value. And, since this particular situation has remained unchanged in its essentials, the contemporary Japanese find themselves still in the same situation and are seeking their identity as Japanese.⁶ Uchimura went the way before them, struggling to find through his Christian faith, though without abandoning his being a Japanese, that is, without abandoning the traditional Japanese spiritual and moral values. What he gained through his experience and reflection, namely, a perspective of Japan's identity as a nation given a specific mission, prepared through her history of many centuries for the salvation of the world, is finding echoes among the contemporary Japanese as a model for the search for their identity.⁷

⁶In these years there have been numerous publications in Japan, dealing with the problem of the identity of the Japanese. Among others: one analyst writes: "In these ten years there have been lively discussions about the Japanese Who are we the Japanese after all? . . . And all the discussions about the Japanese tell of the lack of our self-confidence. We are not sure about our behavior either internationally or domestically In fact, however, this kind of discussion is not of recent date, nor only after the World War II. We have been conscious of our Japaneseness since the opening of the country and through the Meiji Restoration . . ." Hideaki Kase, Nihonjin no Hasso Seiyojin no Hasso [The Thought Pattern of the Japanese and of the Westerners] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1977), p. 241-42.

⁷We find a thought strikingly parallel to the basic identity motif of Uchimura in a book of a retired Kyoto University professor who has written several titles on the problem of the identity of the Japanese: "For the [future] direction of present nationalism [as an expression of the yearning for sure national identity], it is quite essential for us to make our common feeling [of responsibility] the creation of a new world civilization, standing on the tradition of Japan and actualizing its particular merits. Through this endeavor, we are to constitute out of ourselves a mission-community [使命共同体], through which we are to have our opinion heard for the welfare of the world and make a contribution to it." Yuji Aida, Nihonjin no Ishiki Kozo [The Structure of the Japanese Mind] (Tokyo: Kodan Sha, 1970), p. 205-6. He is, however, not a Christian, and the foundation for his thought is quite different from Uchimura's.

Another reason for Uchimura's popularity is that he is looked upon as a nation's hero, who fought out his life against the nation's moral decadence in the modern era.⁸ Uchimura is further regarded as a true Japanese, a samurai par excellence, who demonstrated in his life the specific Japanese Bushido way of existence.⁹ That non-Christian scholars find Uchimura a Japanese rather than a Christian is remarkable. The conspicuous Japanese horizon in Uchimura's thought, constituting a living guide for the search of identity, will explain the unique phenomenon that Uchimura as a distinctive Christian thinker is enjoying so much popularity in a country where Christianity has been regarded for the most part as a "foreign" religion.

Another striking fact about Uchimura is that he, more than anyone else in the modern history of Japan, either Christian or non-Christian, has brought forth outstanding personalities from his disciple flock, who, occupying leading positions in government, society, and

⁸A prominent literature critic remarks about Uchimura: "He [Uchimura] is not merely a representative Christian. He was the man who, responding to the challenges of the dawn of the modern era [with its vehement impact of Western civilization] and its decadence, which were surging in Japan then, could manage them with his thought [gained from his faith] of the Second Coming of Christ. He was a hero in the sphere of practical will [实践的精神界] rather than a genius of thought; he was a warrior always prepared for a battle, fearing no death." Tetsutaro Kawakami, Nihon no Autosaida [Outsiders of Japan] (Tokyo: Chuo Koron Sha, 1978), p. 225.

⁹A well-known historian, observing the tenaciousness of the traditional ethos in man's interior, speaks of Uchimura as an example: "Neither able to become the West through imitating it nor to actualize the essence of the Orient, the nation was allowing undecidedly a pedestrian hypocrisy. Against this kind of society, Uchimura was ventilating his indignation, exclaiming, 'what a misery to be born in such a hypocritical society under such a hypocritical government.' And what Uchimura found as existentially meaningful in life is, I think, the tension in the life of the Bushido spirit." Tatsuya Naramoto, Bushido no Keifu [The Genealogy of Bushido] (Tokyo: Chuo Koron Sha, 1975), p. 136.

educational institutions, have played a vital role in the formation of the spiritual backbone of the modern Japan.¹⁰ Justifiably he may be designated the "teacher of the modern Japanese."

Although Uchimura, because of the broad spectrum and horizon of his thought, can be studied from historical, cultural, literary or other points of view, as has been done, he is first and foremost a Christian thinker. The pivot of his thought is the Christian faith. It is therefore essential to understand his thought world with reference to his Christian faith or theological concepts, if one is to understand him properly.¹¹ Nevertheless, one must be aware that Uchimura is a "theologian" for his own class.¹² He was even called

¹⁰ Cf. John Howes's statical observation of the spread of Uchimura's disciples in the services for the nation, cited in: Raymond P. Jennings, Jesus, Japan and Kanzo Uchimura (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Swan, 1958) p. 4. (This book of Jennings is a publication of his Th.M. dissertation mentioned in note 3 above, adapted for general readers.)

¹¹ Vis-a-vis a possibility to assess Uchimura more in cultural-historical categories, a researcher emphasizes the necessity of seeing Uchimura primarily as a religious thinker, saying: "Uchimura is first and foremost a religionist [宗教家] who lived in the Christian faith. That one is a religionist is to say that his total life . . . is strongly, deeply and broadly founded upon religion as its center. This postulates that any study of Uchimura must grasp him primarily as a religionist." Norihisa Suzuki, Uchimura Kanzo to Sono Jidai [Kanzo Uchimura and His Time] (Tokyo: Nihon Kirisuto Kyodan Shuppankyoku, 1975), p. 13.

¹² If we are to understand theology as an endeavor to understand, interpret, and explicate the data of faith systematically and "objectively" by rational means, and theologian as one who more or less professionally is engaged in the endeavor, Uchimura is not a theologian. He himself denies theology thus understood, saying: "Faith, being life, cannot be systematized nor defined; becoming a theology, faith dies." Shinko 14:180. But if we understand theology in a broader sense as an existential understanding of the meaning of faith and theologian as one who seeks it, Uchimura is a theologian. He says: "Luther said that 'theology is a kind of music.' Where there are perfect harmony and infinite joy, where there are the union of the universe and life, and the harmony of reason and spirit, where there is a throbbing joy for

"a great X,"¹³ because characteristic inconsistencies and contradictions in his sayings and writings can be observed, which do not allow for an even, consistent and straight understanding of him. His words are more intuitive and immediate than reasoned and systematized.¹⁴ What he "experienced" as a truth, he believed as such and proclaimed it with the fullest conviction, even if it stood in contradiction to another truth uttered on a different occasion. Not a theory, nor a system, but "facts" which he experienced as truths have the primacy in his thought.

What makes the interpretation of Uchimura more complicated is his complex thought pattern: he may be designated as an orthodox Protestant in doctrinal position¹⁵ and a transcendentalist ("liberal"),¹⁶

all of these, there is a true theology [本当の神学]. Thus, every Christian is as much a theologian as his knowledge [of these things] permits." Ibid. p. 178. When we designate Uchimura as a theologian, we use the term in this sense.

¹³Cf. Hitoshi Masaike, Uchimura Kanzo Den [Kanzo Uchimura's Biography], 2nd ed. (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1977), p. 593.

¹⁴"The best thought is," says Uchimura, "the primal thought [最初の思想]. It is the thought which gushes out freely from the deep well of Nature [天真]. If one adds his reflection and thought [思考] to it, it cannot but become impure. So-called 'deliberation and reflection' make only the [best] thought of Nature into man's artificial foolery." Shinko 8:119-20.

¹⁵"Uchimura in all of his writing on Christian themes, except as regards the Church (or better, the churches), was quite orthodox," Jennings, p. 46, (emphasis is original). Of course, the validity of this statement depends on the definition of "orthodoxy" and on the accuracy of it. The content of Uchimura's "orthodoxy" will be visible in the course of this study.

¹⁶An interesting viewpoint is presented in H. R. Burkle's observation of Uchimura as a "Christian Transcendentalist." He sees it fruitful to "compare him [Uchimura] with the nineteenth-century transcendentalists William Ellery Channing, Henry Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Horace Bushnell." Burkle characterizes transcendentalist as one who emphasizes individuality, spontaneity, personal independence, naturalness, rationality and lofty optimistic idealism. H. R. Burkle,

a scientist ("evolutionist")¹⁷ and a mystic,¹⁸ all with good justification. He is multi-dimensional and defiant to a neat categorization.

While all these facts explain the tone of freedom and the broadness of horizon in his faith and thought, but on the other hand they make it more difficult for researchers to draw up a satisfactory overall picture of Uchimura's complex ideas, and this difficulty is compounded by the massive amount of source material. Still, however, the remaining, even increasing significance of Uchimura challenges us to scrutinize his thought.

"Uchimura Kanzo: Christian Transcendentalist," Japan Christian Quarterly 28 (April, 1962):115-25. By proving that the characteristics of a transcendentalist are applicable to Uchimura to a great extent he opens a way to understand Uchimura from a "liberal" and rationalistic viewpoint.

¹⁷Uchimura was trained in natural science. He loved nature, and always felt himself strongly interested in natural science. It may be noted in passing that he found in the experimental method of natural science an ideal mode of the human recognition of reality, founded upon "tangible facts." This method, he believed, was quite valid in the recognition of spiritual reality *mutatis mutandis*. "For me," says Uchimura, "religion is my science translated into the spiritual sphere." Shinko 15:235. And as a "scientist," he espoused Darwin's evolution theory as valid. It is important to note that like other evolutionists in the latter half of the last century, he used evolution as a category for the interpretation of the history of mankind. Though modified by better recognition of the actual state of reality, Uchimura remained throughout his life an evolutionist, reflecting this belief in his interpretation of the Second Coming of Christ, *infra* pp. 47-49.

¹⁸"I read," writes Uchimura, "that W. Axling, an American missionary of a Baptist church, introduced me as a Japanese mystic in his lecture made in the United States," Shinko 18:194. And further: "Nothing is more abhorrent to the Englishmen than mystics. They call even me a mystic," *ibid.* 24:51. In these words, Uchimura protests being called a mystic, probably feeling himself designated as "heterodox." Uchimura defends himself on the one hand by classifying Luther as "a mystic" and Paul as "the greatest of all mystics." CW 3:32, and, on the other hand by contending the authentic element of faith in mystics as their desire to "have communion with God immediately" and to "come directly to God without the mediation of the churches and bishops." Shinko 6:202.

One of the most challenging themes of Uchimura's theology is his formulation of "Japanese Christianity," a form of Christianity originated in Japanese spiritual soil. Uchimura's "Japanese Christianity" is challenging because it claims to be the restoration of original Christianity free from both Greek doctrinal speculation and Latin institutionalizing of faith. Early in the development of his theological reflection, Uchimura came to embrace the idea that the interaction between the powerful salvific reality designated by the name "Jesus" and the nation's rich moral and spiritual heritage designated by the name "Japan" should bring forth a genuine Christianity, which should replace the "dying" Christianity of the West and save not only Japan but also the whole world.

Coming from a Lutheran perspective, however, one should realize that Uchimura's "Japanese Christianity" places the main emphasis on the moral aspect of the believer rather than on the doctrine of salvation as was the case with Luther's Reformation. This necessitates a closer examination as to whether Uchimura in his exposition of Christianity is truly evangelical, evangelical in the sense that the Gospel is understood, primarily and essentially as favor Dei for sinners in a hopeless situation. "My friends say," Uchimura once wrote, "that my religion is more a form of Judaism than the Christianity of the Gospels."¹⁹ In fact, this observation of his friends is crucial, for it points out the important feature of moral concern in Uchimura's exposition of Christianity. As if to endorse this observation himself, Uchimura never tired of denouncing the churches for their "moral shortcomings, corruption,

¹⁹ CW 1:142.

compromise, etc.," while he yet remained unwilling to suffer together with struggling churches.²⁰ In a sense, he was more a prophet denouncing men for their sins and shortcomings, than an apostle willing to suffer for them in their frailties, who is moved by the sympathy that originates in the forgiving Gospel. It is therefore vital to question whether Uchimura after all is evangelical in his proclamation of "Japanese Christianity."

When one observes Uchimura's predominant concern for and emphasis on the moral qualities of the believer's life, one feels a challenge to the evangelical Christianity which centers on the forgiveness of sin as the core of the Christian message of man's salvation. And in view of this concern and emphasis of Uchimura which seems to form an essential presupposition for his formulation of "Japanese Christianity," this study intends to examine whether or not Uchimura's "Japanese Christianity" is a congenial actualization of the Gospel effected by Christ on the Cross and explicated by the apostles, particularly Paul. In our attempt to accomplish the intention of this study, we shall limit the scope to Uchimura's understanding of salvation with its presuppositions and its essential bearings on his attempt at the indigenization of the Gospel. The reason for our choosing salvation as

²⁰"It is no doubt a joy for Christians to come together every Sunday for brotherly fellowship. However, one should not sacrifice his conviction [of faith]. For him the soul must be more important than [the concern for] churches. If, therefore, it appears to spoil my character and destroy my faith, I resolutely cease to go to churches. [In fact,] I do not hesitate to assert that the reason for my refusal of going to any church of today in Japan is the same one for my not going to a vaudeville theater, that is, I believe the churches of today are harmful to me morally." Shinko 3:6.

the central topic of this study is to be found in the fact that a theologian's concept of salvation, whatever it might be, is in the last analysis the surest index to what he regards as the ultimate issue of the Gospel. Then, it goes without saying that the other aspects of Uchimura's theological thought will be taken into consideration as far as they have bearing on our attempt to understand Uchimura's soteriology.

With this intention and scope in mind, we will organize this study as follows. In Chapter II, we shall sketch the outline of his life and work as well as the development of his theological understanding of the whole realm of reality so that we may gain insight into the framework of Uchimura's thought.

In Chapter III, we will take up the question of what the salvation the Gospel offers is in Uchimura's understanding, and of how man can obtain this salvation in his thought. As an essential constituent of this chapter, we will examine the significance of "Jesus" for Uchimura's understanding of salvation.

In Chapter IV the presuppositions of Uchimura's soteriology will be investigated, asking what his "epistemological" datum is, what his view on the revelation of God is, and what the final norm of Uchimura's theological judgments is.

In Chapter V, we will learn how Uchimura, according to his "epistemological" principles, evaluates the indigenous cultural and religious heritage in his theological reflection, and then, how he thinks of the possibility of a "synthesis" of the Gospel and the indigenous values of Japan and how he perceives the perspective of this "synthesis" for all of Christianity and the world.

In the Conclusion, we shall summarize the outcome of this study, and answer the question about the congeniality of evangelical Christianity with his "Japanese Christianity" by evaluating its outcome.

Endeavoring to grasp Uchimura's understanding of Christianity, this research will use a systematic or doctrinal approach to the source material. But, since Uchimura is not a theologian in the systematic sense, this procedure will require justification. He has not left any systematic work on his thought, nor did he intend to produce any. Relying on his own conviction that a spiritual insight, given intuitively and immediately in his Bible study, and meditation and prayer, is more genuine and authentic than the one insight reflected and mediated through the intellect, Uchimura strongly abhorred any systematization of spiritual insight, contending that it is contrary and alien to the dynamic life in faith. This conviction of Uchimura explains, in fact, the prophetic character of Uchimura's writings as well as the contradictions in them.

But it does not follow from this feature of Uchimura's writing that he thought simply on an ad hoc basis and wrote thereafter without indication of any integrating ideas for his thought as a whole. On the contrary, by disregarding the strict logic required for a system he could accentuate more freely what he regarded as primary and essential. Yet if it could be shown that Uchimura remained consistent in certain themes and emphases (which this study intends to document), a systematic, doctrinal approach would be justified, for a consistency in certain themes and emphases would reveal that his thought, after all, is an organic whole, and thus make it possible to set it up as an object of theological analysis.

Another methodological remark is in place here regarding the span of time over which the source material was written. Uchimura's authorship covered some forty years, and his views and emphases were naturally changing. Historical circumstances affected the formation of his thought deeply. Therefore it becomes necessary to consider the nature of the change in his thought. If the change is indeed substantial, and if it is affected by historical circumstances, we ought to take historical data and their sequence into consideration for our understanding of Uchimura's thought. But, on the other hand, if the change is one or another form of development of an already-held position, the detailed historical consideration of the source material can be largely dispensed with in this study, for this study aims primarily to crystalize Uchimura's fundamental and consistent idea of man's salvation, which in its turn constituted the foundation of his concept of the indigenization of Christianity in Japan. As we shall prove later in this study, Uchimura remained consistent in his fundamental idea of salvation, and this makes it possible for us to do our study without going into historical details.

As to the primary sources, this study uses the Kyo Bun Kwan version of Uchimura's complete works. It is to date the newest one, launched in 1960 and completed in 1973, consisting of our parts: Uchimura Kanzo Seisho Chukai Zenshu [Kanzo Uchimura's Complete Expositions of the Bible], 17 vols., Uchimura Kanzo Shinko Chosaku Zenshu [Kanzo Uchimura's Complete Writings on Faith], 25 vols., Uchimura Kanzo Nikki Shokan Zenshu [Kanzo Uchimura's Diary and Letters], 7 vols., and The Complete Works of Kanzo Uchimura, 7 vols. In addition to these, we

shall be using volume 20 of the Iwanami version of Uchimura Kanzo Zenshu (published in 1933, in which Uchimura's numerous letters written in English are edited untranslated) and volume 15.

The main body of Uchimura's complete works was produced in the form of shorter articles and essays on various themes of the Christian life, and of primarily shorter expositions of the Biblical books, originally written over a period of thirty years for his own magazine, Seisho no Kenkyu,²¹ or Biblical Study. Articles and essays on various topics are edited thematically in the Shinko Chosaku Zenshu, while expositions on the Biblical Books are edited in the Seisho Chukai Zenshu under the names of the respective books of the Bible. The former includes also his earlier works published in book form. The Complete Works consists of his earlier works composed in English such as How I Become A Christian²² and The Representative Men of Japan,²³ the articles written in

²¹See, infra, p. 50.

²²Among the massive literary works Uchimura has left, "How I Became a Christian" is most well-known and representative both in its English original and in its Japanese translation. "I might," wrote Uchimura in the introduction, "just as well call it [his diary upon which the work was to be built] a 'biologist's sketchbook,' in which is kept the accounts of all the morphological changes of a soul in its embryological development from a seed to a full-earned corn," CW 1:15. Although this book is not an accurate biographical description of half his life, it is an important source to learn how Uchimura made his spiritual procession from the initial embracing of Christianity as a noble moral religion to the full recognition of the salvation of Christ in faith. In this work Uchimura's basic pattern of thinking is as well observable, namely, that he appropriated the central points of the Christian faith step by step, relying upon his own experience [実験], without feeling dependent on or obliged to the traditional doctrinal formulation of faith. This work describes how Uchimura existentially found "Jesus" as the ultimate meaning and possibility of man's life. (CW 1 is identical with this work.)

²³This work is the second and last one composed by Uchimura in English in book form. "Our business in these chapters [of the present work]," wrote Uchimura in the initial chapter of the first edition of

English in the English column of a daily for which he was the English editor some years, and of short reflections, mediations, admonitions, and the like, printed in a bilingual form of English and Japanese on the first page of the magazine Seisho no Kenkyu, of his articles and editorials in an English periodical which Uchimura launched in his last years under the name of The Japan Christian Intelligencer,²⁴ and of other miscellaneous articles written on various occasions.

Since this study uses the Japanese sources to a great extent, some explanations are to be given concerning the quotation and translation of the source material. Because Uchimura's work in Japanese has not been translated into any of the European languages except in short extracted forms, the number of source references will be greater and the length of the quotations longer so that the ordinary English reader

this work, (which was deleted in the revised version) "is to study [a] few representative Japanese, and try to show the different phases of the 'Spirit of Yamato [Japan]' that we make so much of," Kanzo Uchimura, Zen-shu [Kanzo Uchimura's Complete Works, Iwanami version], vols. 15 and 20, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1933), 15:199. Hereafter cited as Iwanami. Uchimura then chooses five personalities whom he regards as concrete manifestations of the best of Japanese spirituality; Takamori Saigo (1827-1877), a great and heroic politician at the dawn of modern Japan, Yozan Uesugi (1746-1822), a benevolent feudal lord, Sontoku Ninomiya (1787-1856), a "peasant saint" who lived industriously and under nature's (moral) law, Toju Nakai (1608-1648), a Confucian scholar who defied the high call from feudal lords for filial piety to his mother and remained as a teacher for the villagers, and Nichiren (1222-1282), a Buddhist reform-minded priest, dedicated to the "indigenization" of Buddhism. These figures are projected through the prism of Uchimura's mind desiring to articulate what he deemed as the prototype of Japanese spirituality. "Dieses Buch," writes Uchimura in the "Nachwort" to the German version of the work, "stellt mich mein gegenwärtiges Selbst dar. Es zeigt den ursprünglichen Stamm, auf den mein gegenwärtiges christliches Selbst eingepflicht worden ist," *ibid*, p. 317. In fact, this book intends to describe "Japan" in the Christian faith, while "How I Became . . ." tells of Uchimura's finding "Jesus." (CW 2 is identical with this work.)

²⁴ See infra, p. 47.

may have a better chance of access to the sources. All the quotations from Chukai, Shinko, and Nikki are translated by this writer. Quotations from Iwanami are from the English original, if not otherwise remarked.

Japanese terms will be given in brackets for clarification and reference where required. Japanese names are written in the Western manner, that is, given name first and surname last.

CHAPTER II

KANZO UCHIMURA'S LIFE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS THOUGHT

Kanzo Uchimura was born in Edo (now Tokyo) on March 23, 1861, the son of a samurai.¹ Japan was then in the midst of a turbulent transition period between its time as a backward feudal nation and its status as a modern state. The Tokugawa shogunate, which had been in power over the whole nation for the last two and a half centuries was functioning upon a policy of strict surveillance over rival feudal lords in regard to their accumulation of military and economic strength and rigid seclusion of the country from the outside world. Now it was about to give way to a new form of government under the direct rule of the emperor.²

¹As to the birth date, Uchimura himself wrote, "I was born, according to the Gregorian calendar, on the 28th of March, 1861," The Complete Works of Kanzo Uchimura (written originally in English), 7 vols. (Tokyo: Kyō Bun Kwan, 1971-73), 1:17. Hereafter cited as CW. This is, however, due to his miscalculation in the conversion of the Japanese calendar into the Western one. He was born, according to the former, on the 13th of the 2nd month in the 2nd year of Man'en, which corresponds to March 23, 1861, as we have above. Cf. Hitoshi Masaie, Uchimura Kanzo Den (The Biography of Kanzo Uchimura) 2nd ed. (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1977), p.25.

²The term shogunate is derived from shogun, or a general, in this context, the emperor's general, who in theory should govern the country or part of it on behalf of the emperor. The title and rank of shogun was therefore given to a military lord formally by the emperor. Shogunate as a form of government was introduced first in the twelfth century. The Tokugawa shogunate represented the culmination of this government form. Seizing the power in 1603 after a fierce struggle

This historical trend in which the Tokugawa regime was waning in its power position had in it several circumstantial drives both domestic and international. To mention the most important ones the Tokugawa regime which had been run on the principle of agricultural economy could not survive in the face of the impact of a newly emerging commercial economy, which, on the one hand, corroded the economic foundation of the Tokugawa by allowing its household to be run by credit while there was not enough means to pay back, and which, on the other hand, permitted some feudal lords and several enterprising merchants to accumulate enough wealth to influence the policy of the regime for their own favor. Ironically enough, all this development was made possible by the political and social stability that the Tokugawa regime had provided through their policies of strict surveillance over the rival lords and rigid seclusion of the country from the rest of the world.

This latent trend of the Tokugawa's decline in its power and economy turned out to be a patent controversy on the competence and legitimacy of the hegemony of the Tokugawa, when it could not take a

with other military lords, the Tokugawas endeavored strenuously to consolidate their power position. One policy of great importance was the seclusion of the country from the outside world. Being afraid of the invasion of the Western powers, particularly through the influence of Catholic Christianity, the Tokugawa regime shut the doors to the world. This policy, which lasted throughout the rest of the regime, strengthened the position of the Tokugawas and provided a so-far unknown stability in the country, in which learning--even that of Western learning through the Dutch who, being Protestant, were allowed to trade with the regime--and monetary economy developed to a great extent. The political system, however, was kept frozen in the pre-modern stage of feudalism with its agricultural economy, due to this seclusion policy. The discrepancy thus originated between the cultural and economic development on the one hand, and the pre-modern political framework on the other became one of the main drives to the search for a new political system. See Edwin O. Reischauer, Japan Past & Present, 3rd ed. (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd. 1964), p. 96-107.

resolute position to continue the seclusion policy vis-a-vis the United States' demand, backed by cannon, on the opening of the country. In fact, the United States, together with other Western powers that were out, to a considerable extent, in Far Eastern waters for colonial and commercial enterprises in the mid-nineteenth century, needed replenishing ports for their vessels, thus articulating the demand on the opening of the country. With no means at its own disposal to repulse the demand by force, the Tokugawa yielded and complied with the opening of the country. This "ignominious" submission to a foreign power triggered the vehement resentment of the samurai of those domains, mainly in the Western part of Japan, which had traditionally opposed the Tokugawa regime, and it was those samurai that eventually overturned the Tokugawa regime and came to power in the name of the restoration of the direct rule of the emperor.³

³Japan's modernization began with the opening of the country after the two-century long seclusion. However, this opening was initiated by force from without, that is, the Western powers which were then scrambling for colonies in Far Eastern waters with their supreme military power. Their presence for example as experienced in the Opium War in the neighboring country was felt to be threatening to the nation's independence and security. The Tokugawa, initially trying to preserve the nation's sovereignty simply by continuing the seclusion policy, came to understand it as infeasible vis-a-vis the military-backed demand for the opening made in 1853 by Commodore Matthew C. Perry of the United States. As other Western countries, the United States primarily needed the protection of their ship-wrecked sailors and replenishing ports for their ship. The Tokugawa, then, had no other choice than to comply with the demand and to open its several ports to Western nations. Acting against the predominant claim for the continuance of the seclusion policy of the emperor's court members and feudal lords in opposition to the Tokugawa, the Tokugawa revealed its incompetence in defence, and thereby lost its authority and confidence. The young samurai from the anti-Tokugawa domains of western Japan, who were burning with patriotism for the nation's future, had, however, learned the need for opening the country to introduce Western technology through the bitter experience of the nation's hopeless inferiority of military capacity in several skirmishes with the Western powers. And they thought the strengthening of the nation could only be realized in a new government under direct imperial rule.

This restoration of the emperor's direct rule, known as the Meiji Restoration after the name of the Emperor Meiji, was officially implemented in 1868. The fall of the Tokugawa was the fall of those samurai who, loyal to the Tokugawa, had been enjoying political, social and economic privileges. Because the new government consisted of those samurai in opposition to the Tokugawa, most of the pro-Tokugawa samurai were excluded from the possibility of careers in the new regime, and their sons were also excluded.⁴

The house of Uchimura, whose feudal lord was a vassal of the Tokugawa, had to share the destiny of the fall. As a boy Kanzo Uchimura experienced this misfortune as his own. His father, though, an able samurai with thorough Confucian learning,⁵ could not find his way in the new era and retired from active life in his early forties, thus impressing the collapse of the old order more painfully on the mind of the young Uchimura. This meant that in his early boyhood Uchimura could not

⁴After the Restoration, all the important governmental posts were occupied by the young samurai from the feudal domains of Western Japan, which were historically anti-Tokugawa. The Tokugawa samurai had to find ways themselves to realize their ambitions and potentials outside the main stream of political leadership. It is to be noted that all those who came to embrace the Christian faith and became distinguished leaders of the incipient Protestantism in Japan were, with a few exceptions, from the unfavored Tokugawa domains. Aizan Yamaji, a contemporary Christian journalist who himself was a son of a Tokugawa samurai, wrote on this point. "It is essential to a historian dealing with the [early] times [of Protestantism in the country] to note that those young men [Masahisa Uemura, Youich Honda, Kajinosuke Ibuka and Masayoshi Oshikawa], who, confessing the new faith, determined to struggle [for a new era] in the society, were those who could not ride on the current of the time," Aizan (Yakichi) Yamaji, Kirisuto-kyo Hyoron [Essays on Christianity] (Tokyo: Keiseisha, 1906; reprint ed. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964), p. 25.

⁵CW 1:19, "My father was a good Confucian scholar, who could repeat from memory almost every passage in the writings and sayings of the sage."

identify himself fully with his father as his ideal and with the value system his father was representing. In addition to this moral or value-based uncertainty, Uchimura must also have experienced the external uncertainties caused by the fall of his class together with the deprivation of various privileges, and these uncertainties may be reflected in his singular "religious sensibilities," of which he spoke in connection with the anxiety of his earlier life.⁶ Uchimura was then forced to stand on his own feet and to find his way in life in existential uncertainty.⁷

The most attractive way for the sons of the unfavored samurai to seek a future career was to become conversant with the Western civilization in terms of both human science and technology, which was eagerly sought as indispensable for the modernization of the nation.

⁶Ibid. p. 18. Cf. 21, where he specifically describes how intensely he, among other things, implored one god to assist his study, another god to protect his house from fire and robbery because of his father's constant absence from home, leaving him and his mother alone, and the other god to vindicate his veracity.

⁷A few of Uchimura researchers point out that his singular "religious sensibilities" were closely related to existential uncertainty originated from the inept image of his father after the Restoration and the collapse of the sacrosanct Confucian value system his father had represented. Although he occupied some miscellaneous posts in local governments for a few years after the Restoration, his father retired completely from an active life around the age of forty and transferred the headship of the house to his sixteen year old son. Thus, Uchimura experienced the collapse of the traditional value system in his own personality. The boy Uchimura was, then, driven to find out something which could sustain his uncertain life, and only native gods were available for him. Cf. Norihisa Suzuki, Uchimura Kanzo to Sono Jidai [Kanzo Uchimura and His Time] (Tokyo: Nihon Kirisuto Kyodan Shuppankyoku, 1975), p. 26. Yuzo Ota, another Uchimura researcher, says: "Can we not say that Uchimura's "religious sensibilities" in his boyhood point . . . to his inner confusion and uncertainty on values" for the same reason described above, Yuzo Ota, Uchimura Kanzo: Sono Sekai-shugi to Nihon-shugi o Megutte [Kanzo Uchimura: His Universalism and "Japanism"] (Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1977), pp. 25-29.

So Uchimura, as other boys in the same situation, began to learn English close to the age of twelve in order to prepare himself for Western learning.⁸

In 1876, the new government established an agricultural college at Sapporo to initiate a development program for the uncultivated island of Hokkaido. W. S. Clark, a Puritan scholar from the United States was sent there as the first president to lay the foundation of the college. During his brief stay of eight months, Clark, with his masculine and noble, somewhat "samurai-like" personality profoundly influenced all of the students of the first class and it so happened that they all came to the Christian faith.⁹ Before he left Japan, he drafted for the students

⁸ It is of great importance that Uchimura's formal education began with learning English. This eloquently symbolizes that the old, traditional learning seemed then, with the collapse of the old political system, to have been brought into discredit. In fact, Inanzo Nitobe, Uchimura's contemporary and close friend for life, the author of *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, recalls the early days of his youth: "Japanese learning was then completely out of fashion. Very few read Confucius and Mencius. And very few cared about the Japanese language . . . [instead E]nglish was the more in vogue," quoted from Yuzo Ota, *ibid.* p. 8. "I learnt," says Uchimura, "all that was noble, useful, and uplifting through the vehicle of the English language," *CW* 1:105. The study of English thus played a major role in the formation of Uchimura's thought world. Through the study of English he was exposed to the new ideas and values of Western origin which, with their marks of a superior civilization seemed to overshadow the cultural and spiritual heritage of the nation. Yet the ideas and values of the West remained ambivalent in Uchimura's mind, for they stood in a peculiar tension with the traditional indigenous values, which Uchimura had imbibed from early boyhood, thus constituting an essential ingredient of Uchimura's interior world. In fact it is necessary to have this kind of ambivalence in mind when we are to understand Uchimura's fluctuating attitude towards the West, cf. *CW* 1:19-23.

⁹ For W. S. Clark's background and his work and influence in Japan see William Billow, "The Famous Dr. Clark," *The Japan Christian Quarterly* 25 (July 1959):179-82. In a quotation appended to the article above, we glimpse an image of Clark projected through the mind of his disciple in Sapporo, Masatake Oshima. According to him, Clark, in

a document called Covenant of Believers in Jesus.¹⁰ Each was to sign his name under it. This in fact was the genesis of the so-called Sapporo Band.¹¹ Though left alone, these boys remained in the new faith with increasing enthusiasm.

While Uchimura continued his study in English in Tokyo, the Government offered to those students of English an invitation, with full

an occasion of sending a copy of the Bible from America, advised him: "Do not become dogmatic." This advice seemed to stand for Clark's intentions in Japan. Clark wanted, while still in Sapporo, to set up an Antiochian Church, founded upon the freedom of faith and free from "Juda[istic dogmat]ism." He wished to "set up a new ideal church" in "a new land [, contrary to America,] where people can worship God in spirit and truth according to the dictates of their own conscience." And "[his] hope was realized," says Oshima.

¹⁰The Covenant, beginning with an introduction in which a solemn oath is given to God and each other to live as faithful disciples of God, with emphasis on such things as performing "with true fidelity every Christian duty" and living "in strict compliance with the letter and spirit of his teachings" as an expression of their gratitude for the atoning death of Christ, includes "articles" on the Bible as the infallible guide to eternal life, on God as the Father, Ruler and Judge, on salvation by faith in Christ, on the Holy Spirit guiding Christian life, on eternal punishment of those rejecting the Gospel; a promise to live up to the Ten Commandments; admonishing to prayer and to mutual assistance on which their fellowship is constituted; and finally a "desire" for the Holy Spirit for assistance in Christian life, see CW 1:26-28. It is interesting to note that the convenanters intended to enter into "some evangelical church" in due time.

¹¹"The Sapporo Band," as a designation of a Christian group originated at a frontier town in the northern main island of Hokkaido is mentioned with close reference to two other similar Bands. The Yokohama Band and the Kumamoto Band, both of which are so called according to the places of their origin. Just as the Sapporo Band was brought into being by the interaction of the inspiration of an American with missionary passion with searching students of samurai origin, in exactly the same way were the Yokohama and the Kumamoto Bands; the former by J. H. Ballagh (1832-1920) and S. R. Brown (1810-80), and the latter by Captain L. L. Janes (1838-1909). The most well-known of the Yokohama Band is Masahisa Uemura, who devoted his whole life to building up an indigenous Japanese church; and of the Kumamoto Band, Danjo Ebina, who was occupied with the relevance of Christianity to the nation's destiny and social questions in general. Kanzo Uchimura was going to become

government scholarship aid, to the Agricultural College. Struggling with financial scarcity, Uchimura decided to accept this invitation. In September 1877, Uchimura sailed for Hokkaido to start a new study there, hardly dreaming that there was a new faith waiting for him. Upon his arrival at Sapporo, he and other freshmen were at once "assaulted" by the sophomores who were burning with evangelistic zeal. Though resisting the evangelistic attempt at the beginning, Uchimura eventually accepted the new faith, partly "forced" by the sophomores, and signed his name to the Covenant in December of the same year.¹²

Of essential significance to Uchimura in embracing Christianity was its monotheism, that "there was but one God in the universe," and this monotheism was by no means merely formal, but a content-filled, "glad tidings" to him. Having grown up in an uncertain existence, caused by the collapse of the old, sacrosanct values during the short transition

the leading figure of the Sapporo Band with his 'Non-church' Christianity. These three Bands, each representing its own direction, constituted the fountain head of Japanese Protestantism.

¹²Uchimura's initial relation to Christianity seems to be ambivalent in nature. Historically, Christianity was considered as an evil religion, illegal for the Japanese to embrace for more than two centuries in Japan. Although the ban against Christianity was lifted officially in 1873 under the pressure of Western countries, the anti-Christian sentiment in general was alive. The notion of Christianity as evil and foreign was very probably rooted deeply in Uchimura's mind. However, he found, while studying English in the metropolis, opportunities to go to a church "in a foreign quarter," Sunday after Sunday. "Its music, its stories, the kindness shown to me by its followers, pleased me immensely," recalls Uchimura. Although he calls it a "Sunday excursion to the settlement" and "sight-seeing" instead of "truth-seeking," we suppose that something substantial for his "religious sensibilities" was there. Going to church every Sunday strongly implies that "its stories [sermons?] should have some impact on him, possibly shedding light on his existential uneasiness. This background seems to explain well why Uchimura, though initially opposing it, accepted the new faith and, in spite of its forcedness, joyfully reaffirmed it as giving him a "new spiritual freedom." Cf. CW 1:24-26.

period, between Tokugawa and Meiji, Uchimura was seeking a "fixed star" to guide his life and thought. So far, he had only native gods to pray to for support and protection. The native gods, however, had more tormented his insignificant soul with their superstitious, often contradicting claims, than they really helped. But now he found in the new faith the one sovereign God to "back and uphold" his uncertain existence.¹³ Furthermore, this "discovery" of the one God in the universe would be to Uchimura the same as to recognize that the universe and its moral order of justice and righteousness were being maintained by no other than this sovereign God,¹⁴ reaffirming the moral ideals in which he had been brought up. In fact, Uchimura found the ideals of

¹³In speaking of "[t]he practical advantage of the new faith" as liberation from the bothersome "superstitions," Uchimura uses such phrases, rich in connotation, as: "I was taught that there was but one God in the Universe One God, and not many, was indeed a glad tidings to my little soul . . . [I was no longer bothered by punishments of gods for not complying with their claim to prayers and abstinence,] for I found the God of gods to back and uphold me Monotheism made me a new man I thought I comprehended the whole of Christianity, so inspiring was the idea of one God." CW 1:28-29.

¹⁴The close relationship between the monotheism and the affirmation of the moral order in the universe in the initial stage of Uchimura's thought is surely not read expressis verbis from the source material of an earlier date, but well inferred from his later sayings. "The most comforting of all thoughts is that God is. God is; He exists; He liveth; He worketh; Oh what a comforting thought: Therefore the world is being brought to perfection; unrighteousness cannot prosper forever" CW 4:118. "GOD IS. Oh, blessed thought!" CW 3:146. His disciple, Taijiro Yamamoto, commenting on the master's "GOD IS," says that "this is the foundation of foundations, and the essence of essences, of the author's [Uchimura's] faith," CW 3:361. "I often think," says Uchimura in another place, "that the most precious thing is that righteousness [正義] is, after all, done in the universe." "There is no Gospel more joyful, cheerful and comforting than this." "Justice is the law of the universe." "The most foolish are those who cannot embrace this simple, primeval [原始的] faith." "This universe is after all a universe filled with hope." Kanzo Uchimura, Shinko Chosaku Zenshu [Complete Writings on Faith], 25 vols. (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1962-66), 14:261. Hereafter cited as Shinko. We understand that in Uchimura's

Christianity overwhelming even those of Bushido and Confucianism.¹⁵

Christian monotheism thus understood was to Uchimura tantamount to a sure affirmation of the meaningfulness of the universe in spite of its contradictory appearance. The thorough-going optimism and idealism in Uchimura's subsequent thought found its initial fixation in this monotheism.¹⁶ "My reason and conscience," says Uchimura, "responded 'yea.' [to the faith in one God.]"¹⁷

Uchimura and the other boys who signed their names under the Covenant formed at once an intimate Christian fellowship which

thought the faith in the existence of Supernatural Being(s) and its (their) relation with the moral order of the universe is "primeval faith" which has been existent in native faith but clearly identified first by Christian Monotheism. It was, therefore, most probably the case with Uchimura who, even as a boy, was keenly sensitive to righteousness in the society, cf. Kanzo Uchimura, Seisho Chukai Zenshu [Kanzo Uchimura's Complete Expositions of the Bible], 17 vols. (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1960-62), 11:215. Hereafter cited as Chukai. "Recognizing [in Christianity] as the one God the Creator of the All in heaven and earth, my thoughts gained unity [統一せられ], and the chaotic All [混乱せる万物] became a perfect Universe," Shinko 13:32. "Don't look upon this Universe as a succession of Chances and Haphazards. This is a Rational Universe . . ." Kanzo Uchimura, Zenshu [Kanzo Uchimura's Complete Works, Iwanami version], vols. 15 and 20, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1933), 20: 167-68. Hereafter cited as Iwanami.

¹⁵See infra. p. 31, note 27.

¹⁶In his diary on May 26, 1886, Uchimura wrote: "Much impressed by the thought that there is so much more good in this world than the evil. Birds, flowers, sun, air, - how beautiful, bright, balmy; . . . The world needs but one thing to make it a paradise, and that is the Religion of Jesus Christ. Am getting to be a real optimist; . . ." CW 1:154. And, in March 1926, "'In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.' 'There shall be no more curse; there shall be no night there; God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.' Between this beginning and this end, I like to read all history, both natural and human. In a word, I like to be a Christian in my view of the universe. I am an optimist, yea an incorrigible optimist!" CW 4:18. Cf. CW 1, p. 174.

¹⁷CW 1:29.

overlapped with joyful student life. Together in the surroundings, of the beautiful nature of the still untouched northern island, they served one another for the purpose of cultivation of faith through their own Bible Study and mutual discipline in common life, since an ordinary ministry was neither available nor very much necessary to them there. This simple and intimate, non-ritualistic, and Bible-centered fellowship which was well-satisfying to them all, became to Uchimura the proto-type of Communio Sanctorum, which, after their graduation from the College, was to be concretized in Sapporo Independent church, free from any missions with their doctrinal complexities and preferences,¹⁸ and eventually coming to constitute one remote cause of Uchimura's Non-Church Christianity."

Having graduated from the College in 1881, Uchimura at once became a government official in Sapporo Prefecture and worked for the improvement of fisheries there. But his uncompromising uprightness did

¹⁸ Their graduation necessitated a church outside the College. They naturally envisaged a plan for a church built upon the fellowship they had at the campus. One problem emerging to the surface for this plan was that one of them was baptized by a missionary of the Church Missionary Society "denominationally" belonging to the Episcopal Church, while the others by a missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Mission thus to the Methodist Church. However, sharing the same faith in every respect, these young Christians did not see any reason to have separate worship because of the denominational difference of the missionaries by whom they were baptized. Both of the missions were unfavorably disposed toward the plan for an independent church, wishing to retain them in their church. Thus, they came to see the "evil" of denominationalism. Besides, the simple and non-ritualistic, "practical" and undogmatic Christianity transmitted by W. S. Clark was more congenial to their faith and sentiment. Constituting their independent church, they withdrew their membership from the respective churches, desiring to be bound directly to, and dependent only on, God. "Our independence," says Uchimura more positively, "was not intended as a revolt against Methodism, but as an expression of our real attachment to our heavenly Master, and of the highest sentiment of our love to our nation." CW 1:81.

not allow him to stay long in the position in which he had to live with "the corruptions of the officers" and their "little partiality."¹⁹ At the end of 1882, he came to Tokyo on an errand for the Sapporo Independent Church but did not return to Sapporo again. He held the post until he resigned in April of 1883.

In Tokyo Uchimura, as the "representative" of the church in Sapporo, made a broader acquaintance with the Christian leaders, winning a reputation as a vigorous Christian scientist among them, and came to experience a more "refined" Christianity. Uchimura, however, could not find satisfaction for his soul in it having been used to a more simple, direct, "rough" Christianity. And so a "vacuum" was created in his soul.²⁰ At the same time he was also uncertain about his "life-course." Asking "how can I be most serviceable for the sake of God and mankind?" he could think of "biology," "fishery," or "ministry," none of which, however, could be chosen definitively as his "ordained work," although the last weighed heaviest.²¹ To find out his God-given "life-service,"

¹⁹ Iwanami 20:61. Cf. p. 48, where Uchimura says: "My present official position is loathsome, oppressive, unsatisfactory and corruptive We the Christian officers in Sapporo-Ken [Prefecture] are great stumbling blocks to the oppressive and arbitrary administration of 縣 [Ken, or Prefecture]. Men with pure conscience, high aspiration after truth and honesty, cannot endure such."

²⁰ CW 1:90.

²¹ Iwanami 20:78-79. In fact, since signing his name on the Covenant Uchimura always felt an inner urge to ministry, which became intense after the graduation in the form of a question: "Whether I be a fisherman of Hokkaido, or a fisherman of Galilee, . . ." p. 41, but as he later says, "[m]y too great nervousness, rough character, deficient eloquence, as well as weak sensibility forbid me to take this work [ministry] as my life-service to society. Moreover, my large family to be supported with my weak struggling health is a grand obstacle to this work."

Uchimura would have many difficulties to go through, but for the time being he was to remain unsettled.

In the meantime, Uchimura became acquainted with a Christian girl versed in Western learning, named Take Asasa. This acquaintance developed into thoughts of marriage. Though Uchimura's mother opposed this marriage because Take was "too wise, too learned, too intellectual, etc.,"²² they at last got married in the early spring of 1884. Unfortunately their marriage soon became an unhappy one, because Take could not get along well with him and his mother.²³ After only six months in marriage, they were divorced. They intended their marriage to be of service to God and mankind but it completely failed, leaving a deep scar in Uchimura's soul and remaining an agonizing enigma to him.²⁴ In the

²²Iwanami 20:86.

²³Take was a woman with a new spirit, which made it difficult to get along well with her mother-in-law who was quite traditional. Take seemed, according to Uchimura's letters mentioning her, to be quite independent and assertive, which must have found its expression in an untraditional behavior for a young wife at home (a young couple usually lived with the husband's parents), who was supposed to be obedient and self-denying. Uchimura's ideal of a wife was of such a woman who would push from behind the fully loaded wagon of her husband climbing up a hill (see Iwanami 20:112). The direct occasion for divorce was some "evidences" Uchimura found for Take's being spiritually "unfaithful," which was understood to give warrant for divorce according to Matt. 19:4-6. But the deeper reason was Uchimura's ambivalent and fluctuating attitude toward the new and the traditional in his view on cultural values, for he on the one hand was attracted to Take's newness, while at the same time taking offense in the ill-relation between mother and wife, cf. Yuzo Ota, p. 33-37.

²⁴"Prayers for a good wife have received answers just as contrary as can be. 'Father, what have I done to thee to receive such a severe punishment? Have I not been desirous to serve thee, and have not my prayers been to show forth Thy glories? Is my God a deaf?' Such questions as these came up to my mind at a time, and in fact I was overwhelmed with glooms and disappointments. 'The Lord must have forsaken me. There need be no more endeavor on my part to serve my God', - thought I," Iwanami 20:126.

depth of sorrow and disappointment, Uchimura decided to cross over the Pacific to America, which he thought was responsible for his faith, in order to heal the inner sorrow and to find a new start in life.

In November 1884, Uchimura set foot on the soil of America. During the first months Uchimura worked at an institution for a feeble-minded children at Elwyn, Pennsylvania. He took at his own initiative most menial works for the children there, trying, besides the exercising of Christian love, to subjugate his pride in these activities and discipline himself to attain "the state of inward purity," through which he wished to "inherit the kingdom of heaven." But his services--rather his self-discipline--at the institution, contrary to his wish, revealed to him his "innate selfishness" "in all its enormities," bringing him into "unspeakable agonies."²⁵

Seeing no way out of this torment in philanthropical work, Uchimura moved in the early fall of 1885 to Amherst College to search after inner peace as well as to study both natural and human science. Uchimura received the warmest welcome from Julius H. Seeley, the president of the college. He embraced the "exiled" student with deep sympathy and fatherly love, providing him with a full tuition and room scholarship. For two

²⁵CW 1:125-26. He was then trying to earn righteousness through his endeavor toward inner purity. In a letter written in the early days, that is, before he began the attempt at self-righteousness, we read among others as follows: "'Stop murmuring, my soul,' I cried; 'thou, like Luther has been trying to justify thyself with thy works.' 'Just shall live by faith.' 'Look to Jesus upon the cross; trust upon Him, and cleanse thyself in Him, and in Him alone.' I bursted into tears. I had felt myself to be blameless because I tried my best, and with right intention. No, I am all unrighteousness. Thank God, for His mercy in Christ Jesus," Iwanami 20:134. Uchimura had by this time recognized the need of Christ for his righteousness. We shall have occasion later to deal with this tension in Uchimura's thought.

years Uchimura studied hard and in fact did well in all the subjects except philosophy.²⁶ His diligent academic pursuit was rewarded with the degree of Bachelor of Science (although he, being a special student, was not entitled to it), all due to Seeley's sympathetic arrangements for Uchimura.

The most important of Seeley's acts of assistance to Uchimura, however, was that the president helped his troubled student see "the atoning power of Christ." In fact, since the very beginning of his Christian life, Uchimura strenuously endeavored to live up to the moral ideals of Christianity, for his acceptance of Christianity was to a great extent motivated by moral concern.²⁷ But in his striving to reach moral purity he only became painfully aware of his inner impurity and sinfulness, without seeing any sign of holiness in his actual inner life. To be sure, he knew well the message of the atonement of Christ, but his inner agony was not settled thereby, for he, being

²⁶Uchimura studied at the College such subjects as: geology, mineralogy, crystallography; German, Greek, Hebrew; the Bible, history, philosophy. "In Philosophy," Uchimura says, "I was a total failure. My deductive Oriental mind was wholly incompatible with rigorous inductive processes of perceptions, conceptions and all that. . . . We [Orientals] are poets and not scientists, and the labyrinth of syllogism is not the path by which we arrive at the Truth." CW 1:147.

²⁷"When I came in contact with Christianity," Uchimura says, "I was overwhelmed by the loftiness [高潔] and majesty [威嚴] of its morality. I recognized my impurity and imperfectness. . . . But regrets [of my past impure acts] do not help. Now only to become a good man [善人]," Shinko 1:71. The mode of a samurai's becoming Christian, is observed as follows: "Generally the samurai had embraced Confucianism, then the conversion was made in their minds from Confucianism to Christianity. But this conversion was in general not a revolution. It was rather seen as the development or perfection of Confucianism," Mikio Sumiya, in: Ko Kuyama ed. Kindai Nihon to Kirisuto-kyo: Meiji-hen [Modern Japan and Christianity: The Meiji Era], (Tokyo: Sobunsha, 1956), p. 66.

conscious of himself as a moral being, could not see any real solution of his problem of sinfulness in "mere" declaration of justification. He had to see the way to become really holy and just for his problem to be solved. One day, while he was struggling with the question of why he should not be cleansed from his inner sinfulness for all his Christian life, Seeley advised him not to look into his inner self but rather to look outside to the crucified Lord.²⁸

At this suggestion, Uchimura finally attained to the salvific insight that it was Christ, and not himself, who could really purify him and overcome his sinfulness. In his diary on March 8, 1886, most probably the very day of Uchimura's "rebirth," he wrote as follows: "Very important day in my life. Never was the atoning power of Christ more clearly revealed to me than it is today. . . . Christ paying all my debts, can bring me back to the purity and innocence of the first man before the Fall. Now I am God's child, and my duty is to believe Jesus. . . . He will use me for his glory. . . ." ²⁹ Discovering in Christ more the power for overcoming his inner sinfulness than "mere" forgiveness of sins, Uchimura at last reached the solution of the moral

²⁸Shinko 23:118. "What you [Uchimura] are doing," suggested Seeley further, "is like a child who, planting a tree in a pot and anxious about its growth, pulls it from the pot everyday to see and ascertain its growth. Why do you not wait your growth in peace, leaving it to God and the sun?"

²⁹CW 1:153.

problem of his inner world.³⁰ From now on Uchimura's attention was to be concentrated on Christ the Restorer of original purity both in faith and work.

No less important than the discovery of Christ was his rediscovery of Japan during these years. For Uchimura--just as for most Christians of samurai background--Japan was a datum for his existence and, in a sense, another name of himself.³¹ However, overwhelmed by the brilliance and superiority of the Western civilization, Japan seemed

³⁰This emphasis on Christ's power overcoming man's "innate" sinfulness--rather than on forgiveness for the sake of Him--is essential for Uchimura's Christianity, which to a great extent consists of man's perfection and his really becoming good. We shall deal with this theme later, but as specimens of this trend of Uchimura's thought, we include here the following quotations: "The work of Christ's saving the world is twofold. The one is to teach man to lead a perfect life, and the other is to take man's sin on Himself to erase [消除] it. The former is the final purpose of the salvation of the world, while the latter is the necessary means [必要手段] to it, I Pet. 2:21. If a perfect man [完全的人] is to be made, sin must be removed which makes man imperfect. For if he is not liberated from sin, he cannot but sin," Shinko 1:152. "Depend on Me [Christ]! I atone for your sins, lead you from good to good, and let you become a power to save the world for me!" Ibid., p. 165.

³¹"I am an old-fashioned believer," wrote Uchimura in his later years, "who cannot, even if I wished, abandon the idea of the nation [國家的觀念]. The main reason for our becoming Christians in the first years of Meiji Era was our faith that Christianity should be most effective [有力である] to save the Japanese nation. We become Christians encouraged by the love of the nation [愛國心]. On this point, I believe, it was the same with the late Mr. Nijima, the late Mr. Honda, Mr. Kozaki, . . . Mr. Ebina, . . . Mr. Uemura, etc.," Shinko 24:330. Included here is the following observation: "The fact that the Christian leaders of the early years were enlisted in from them [the unfavored samurai] is to be seen, besides as due to their need of religious support caused by their social dislocation, . . . as specifically motivated by their psychological habit, surviving from the former days, to pay attention as the elite of society to the destiny of the nation." Ota, p. 94.

to Uchimura almost "good for nothing."³² This implied the lack of Japan's identity, and consequently also of Uchimura's own existential identity. In this sense, the rediscovery of Japan and her identity had been present in his mind as an existential mandate, and its urgency was particularly intensified during his exile in America.

Far away from the "motherland," Uchimura often found himself in solitude, painful though favorable for thinking of and reflecting over, Japan. Incidentally, while still at Elwyn, he happened to read in the Book of Jeremiah, where he found a suffering patriot and most tender human being "in the strength and weakness of humanity." Affected by the greatness of Jeremiah and finding an essential parallel between the prophet in Judea and the great men in the history of Japan, Uchimura hit upon the idea that the God of Jeremiah did indeed also speak to the great men of Japan, and thought that God did not leave his country "entirely without His light and guidance." "The thought was inspiring beyond my power of expression," wrote Uchimura. Patriotism, "somewhat quenched by accepting a faith . . . exotic in origin," was intensely revived in Uchimura's mind.³³ The process of the rediscovery of Japan seems to have been completed at the end of the same year of the discovery of Jesus, when he wrote on December 5, 1886 as follows: "Much impressed by the

³² Writing to his father from America in 1885, Uchimura deploras of Japan's "nothingness" in comparison with what he has experienced in America: "I cannot but say that our Japan is in every respect nothing and nothing [何物、何物、何物、何物]," and "Seen from here in the midst of the civilized country [America], Japan rather seems to be like a bean. A miserable feeling arouses within me by the thought that this precious life [of mine] should be spent out in a tiny corner of the Orient," here quoted from Ota, respectively p. 35 and p. 162.

³³ CW 1:141-42.

thought that God's providence must be in my nation. If all good gifts are from Him, then some of the laudable characters of my countrymen must be from on high. We must try to serve our God and the world with gifts and boons peculiar to ourselves. . . . A blessed and encouraging thought that J - [Japan] too is God's nation."³⁴ Finding Japan in the providence of God, Uchimura came to see the nation's theological raison d'etre. To clarify the implications of this raison d'etre thus won would occupy Uchimura's theological reflection from now on.

Toward the end of the stay at Amherst, Uchimura's inner problems were solved in the essential, and by this time he was fully convinced that his life-work ordained by God should be "ministry." After graduating from the college in July of 1887, Uchimura entered Hartford Theological Seminary in the fall to become "a good intelligent priest."³⁵ But he soon came to experience "spiritless theology" which was "the driest and most worthless of all studies." He wrote: "Rather disgusted with works in the recitation rooms. We discussed upon hell and purgatory in New Testament exegesis, and on equally unsubstantial subjects in Apologetics."³⁶ In fact, he found no subjects relevant to ministry in Japan except the Biblical languages. The seeming absence of

³⁴Ibid., p. 160-61.

³⁵Iwanami 20:184. It is of interest to note that Uchimura at this point seems to be prepared to become a "priest." His amusing remark "I think 農學士兼理學士 [Bachelor of Agriculture & Science] sound very good for a clergyman" (Ibid., emphasis is mine)" supports this view. He otherwise rejects in the strongest terms the thought of his becoming a "priest" and "clergyman," cf. CW 1:170-73.

³⁶CW 1:174-75.

seriousness among the students and various forms of vulgarism offended him deeply.³⁷ Disillusionment at Hartford, however, convinced Uchimura that he had now had sufficient education available at school for his ministry in Japan. After a few months stay at Hartford Uchimura determined to terminate his "exile" in America.

"[M]y Christianity came originally from New England," thought Uchimura, "and she was responsible for all the struggles caused there-by."³⁸ "New England" on her part met his claim to the responsibility to the full by helping her "spiritual" son find "Jesus" and "Japan" in her bosom. And this discovery of "Two Js" was identical with the establishment of another J, namely Uchimura himself, whose self-chosen Christian name was Jonathan.³⁹ Originated during his stay at Amherst was Uchimura's well-known dictum, a paradigm for his life and thought: "I for Japan; Japan for the World; The World for Christ; And All for God."⁴⁰ Though nothing particular was gained in America apart from the

³⁷"To see students laughing and jesting while discussing serious subjects is almost shocking." Ibid. "One thousand dollars with parsonage, 'twenty dollars sermon upon Chicago anarchy,' and similar combinations of such words and phrases sounded very discordantly to my ears," *ibid.*, p. 180.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 144.

³⁹On the "three Js" we refer to Shin Ohara, Hyoden Uchimura Kanzo [Kanzo Uchimura: His Life and Thought] (Tokyo: Chuo Koron Sha, 1976), p. 87, in which we read: "With America as a mirror, the young Kanzo who chose Jonathan for his Christian name became awakened to his self, got in touch with Christ (Jesus), and reconsidered his fatherland (Japan). Well-known as it is that he emphasize 'Two Js,' Uchimura was probably thinking of Three Js, considering his Christian name Jonathan in addition to 'Jesus and Japan'."

⁴⁰This dictum was written on the title page of his old English Bible, intended to be the inscription on his tomb.

B.S. degree in respect to a worldly career and success, Uchimura "won" himself as a "Christo-national,"⁴¹ his own coinage for a Christian existing "Pro Christo et Patria."⁴² With this harvest Uchimura returned home to Japan in May of 1888, after three and a half years of "exile."

Back in the fatherland, Uchimura defined himself as a "Patriotic Christian of the extreme left."⁴³ The first assignment waiting for him was to superintend a college in Niigata, a city some 250 miles northwest of Tokyo, which had been established a year before by non-Christian people of the city, though they desired that it be run on Christian principles. He assumed charge of the college under the rationale of its constitution, that it was national, independent from any foreign mission, though he felt uneasy when informed of several unpaid missionary-teachers there. In his work, Uchimura wanted to see the substantial permeation of Christian spirit among the students, and "paid little attention to the increase of the (sic) 'converts'."⁴⁴ And specifically at the college, he intended to make Japanese out of the students first and then cultivate them to true Christian patriots who would be useful for the nation and the world. For this purpose he invited a Confucian

⁴¹In a letter, written to one of his American friends after returning home we read: "You know, my principle is Christo-national, and any institution in my country which is not Christian and at the same time which is not national has but very little of my sympathy," Iwanami 20:191 (emphasis is original).

⁴²This phrase is attached to his life-work monthly Seisho-no-Kenkyu, or The Biblical Study, articulating his cardinal concern.

⁴³Iwanami 20:196.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 191.

teacher and a Buddhist priest to introduce the students to traditional values through their teachings and he himself lectured⁴⁵ about the prophet Jeremiah, through whom he hoped to help them learn "a most exalted type of patriotism."⁴⁶ This idea of ministry soon proved to be irreconcilable with that of national workers, and especially of missionary-teachers whose interests, he thought were found in "the numerical addition of the church membership."⁴⁷ Due to this "radical" and hasty approach, Uchimura's initial attempt at the realization of his ideals ended as a complete failure within a few months, and he returned to Tokyo. The ideas lying beneath this incident were of prototypal significance for his ministry. Although Uchimura failed completely in his endeavor to cultivate true Christian patriots out of his students through the permeation of noble Christian spirit and ethics, the ideas contained in this endeavor of Uchimura were of prototypal significance in the sense that Uchimura throughout his life never abandoned the conviction which formed the presupposition for these ideas, the conviction of the power of the Gospel to "refine" man's moral character, and of the necessity of trying this power in the actual condition of life.

The failure in Niigata presaged, as it were, Uchimura's life for several years to come, filled with turbulence and misery. In the metropolis, Uchimura taught natural science at some schools. Heavily burdened

⁴⁵"I am trying," wrote Uchimura in a letter from Niigata, ". . . to teach them [the students] that the true heroism and lofty patriotism are possible only by being filled with the Spirit of Jesus. . . . So I do not indulge in much of 'religious forms.' I do not preach, but give lectures, Ibid., p. 193-94, emphasis in original.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 193.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 191.

by financial responsibility for his family and struggling with his poor health, Uchimura's existence was far from comfortable. But even in the trials he knew himself as "more than a conqueror through Him."⁴⁸

To his consolation and help, Uchimura married his childhood friend, Kazuko Yokohama, in July 1889.

In September 1890, he assumed an important position as supervisor at the First High Middle School, an elite institution in Tokyo. He wished to influence the students there with the spirit of Christ through his own example, to win or make morally and spiritually useful men for Christ and the nation.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 198.

⁴⁹In a letter to his American friend, he wrote about the students of the school and their moral standard: "The general demeanor of the students is admirable. Their ideal is high, and their ethical conception is not inferior to some of the noblest young men I knew in America. And yet they are 'poor heathens' mostly." In reference to this observation, Uchimura was bringing to expression his idea of ministry: "Yes, . . . if ethical culture is all what man needs, I do not wonder if some Christians with shallow experiences are not pleased to hear of good morality of heathens, saying that if such be the case, what is the use of sending the gospel to the heathen. My idea is, the higher a man's ideal, and the perfecter his life, the greater is his need of the Gospel Truth. I wish you to understand that my work among these students is by no means 'evangelistic' in the common American acceptance of the term. But this much I am firmly convinced of, that if Christ shines through me, they may see Him in me." Ibid., p. 200-201, (the first emphasis is mine; the second one is original.) It is of interest to note that Uchimura in his early ministry did not attempt "evangelistic" work. In fact, such works might be impossible in a public institution in the more or less "reactionary" anti-Western atmosphere of the time. But the crucial point of his understanding of ministry and therewith his understanding of Christianity itself remains. Uchimura thinks of Christianity, as we can see here, in terms more of the cultivation of man's naturally given morality and ideals toward their realization, than of the divine message of sin's forgiveness and of salvation from the wrath of God. Uchimura's procedure of ministry seemed to be that he first showed the students of high aspirations the ideal life of a Christian, spurring them to raise the question about its secrets; then, he introduced them into "the Gospel Truth" as the message of forgiveness

By this time, the Governmental efforts to reorganize the country into a modern state had made progress to such an extent as to promulgate the so-called Meiji Constitution in 1889. Although the constitution followed the Western (German) model in form and material, it articulated the traditional authoritarian and paternalistic principles according to Confucian concepts in the absolutizing of the emperor's power, the latter being also to curb the overwhelming influence of the "liberal" thoughts of Western origin including Christianity. In October 1890 the so-called Imperial Rescript on Education was issued to reinforce the principles of the constitution and apply them to the general education of the emperor's subjects.⁵⁰

of, and the conquest of, sins, through which only a truly perfect life is to be made possible. It is therefore to be said that an ideal and perfect life is alpha and omega in Uchimura's thought.

⁵⁰ A constitution had been on urgent demand for the government leaders both domestically and internationally. To abolish unequal treaties with the Western countries especially in form of extraterritoriality, they had to provide as soon as possible a constitution which would qualify the nation as a full-fledged law-governed state. Domestically, they needed a new political and ethical order functioning to the best for the rebuilding of the nation after the collapse of the old system. The Western ideas of liberalism and democracy seemed as such to the leaders more thwarting the nation's growth, bringing out an anarchical chaos rather than constructively replacing the old system for the consolidation of the nation. To meet these needs, the leaders produced the so-called Meiji Constitution after the pattern of Bismarck's Germany, in which the emperor's absolute rulership was made the pivot of the whole. The Constitution was then presented as the emperor's gracious gift to his subjects. The Rescript was intended to reinforce from within the emperor's absolute position and the traditional ethical principle as the guideline for the life of the subjects. Through the issuance of the Constitution and the Rescript the government wished to consolidate the nation after the turbulence of transition by reviving the old Confucian principles of social hierarchy with the emperor sitting on the top. As to the wording of the Rescript in translation, see R. Tsunoda, Wm. T. de Bray, and D. Keen, comps. Sources of Japanese Tradition, 2 vols., Introduction to Oriental Civilizations (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1958) 2:139-40.

Early in the next year, the High Middle School held a ceremony for the reception of the Rescript with the emperor's signature on it. At the ceremony every one was required to bow to ("worship") the copy of the Rescript to pay reverence to the emperor. On his turn Uchimura, following his Christian conscience, declined to comply with the requirement. At this sight the faculty and students reacted vehemently against him, accusing him of grave lese-majesty. Known to the public, this incident occasioned the camps of nationalists and Buddhists, being antagonistic toward Western civilization in general and Christianity in particular, to contend that Uchimura's behavior was a sure proof of the incompatibility of Christianity with Japan's national polity.⁵¹ Because of this incident Uchimura was deprived of his position at the High Middle School, "abandoned by the nation" he loved so much, and visited by a serious pneumonia. His wife, Kazuko, nursing her afflicted husband day and night for months, was eventually exhausted to death, Uchimura himself being ostracized from society.⁵²

⁵¹The incompatibility of Christianity with Japan's national polity [国体] was most clearly contended in 1893, two years after the lese-majesty incident, by a philosophy professor at the Tokyo Imperial University, named Tetsujiro Inoue, in a series of articles in scores of magazines under the title, Collision between Education and Religion, Kyoiku to Shukyo no Shototsu [教育と宗教の衝突]. He asserted in the main that the universalism of Christianity was quite at variance with the idea of concentrated loyalty and devotion to the glory and interest of the nation, that the traditional virtues of loyalty to the superior and filial piety were not duly honored in Christianity, that Christianity was of other-worldly orientation which would divert attention from the necessary constructive work of the nation, and that its universal love was detrimental to the nation built upon the principle of the proper distinction of human beings into superior and inferior status. See Shin Ohara p. 155-59.

⁵²In his Kirisuto-shinto no Nagusame (Consolations of a Christian) Uchimura describes his tragic experience in the incident, among other experiences, as follows: "My present position is like that of a

During years following the lese-majesty incident, Uchimura had no work except temporary employment at a few Christian schools. Now the pen was the only thing left at his disposal! Well aware of the potential of written words, he brought his pen into full use, both in Japanese and in English, that he might win his fellow countrymen to Christ and defend the equal moral status of "heathen" Japan vis-a-vis Western Christendom. As witness to this writing activity Uchimura's major works in book-form originated during this period from 1893-1895.⁵³

Along with these writings he wrote for magazines and periodicals penetrating and piercing articles on social and moral justice which did not remain unnoticed in the circle of journalism. In January 1897, upon an earnest request, he assumed editorship of the English column of a popular daily called Yorozu Choho. With his rigorous English Uchimura attacked the injustice, immorality and insincerity of society. But he was not able to stay long in this post; he desired rather his own medium through which he could more freely and directly criticize society and thereby admonish the nation to truthfulness and sincerity.

Quitting himself from the daily in May 1898, Uchimura at once launched a magazine called Tokyo Dokuritsu Zasshi, or The Tokyo

poor wife who, ever trying to be faithful to her only husband and praising him on every possible occasion, was though divorced by her beloved husband on a trivial misunderstanding. Like her, I have now no house under heaven to hide me, am ashamed to see others, and left alone with unspeakable sorrow and loneliness," Shinko 1:21.

⁵³To mention some of them: Kirisuto-shinto no Nagusame (Conso-
lations of a Christian), February 1893; Kyuan-roku (Search after Peace,
August 1893; Dendo no Seishin (True Spirit of Christian Ministry), Feb-
ruary 1894; Japan and Japanese (or Representative Men of Japan as
changed in later versions), November 1894; and How I Became a Christian,
May 1895.

Independent, together with several journalists of the same aspiration. Through this magazine Uchimura and his associates intensified their attack on society.⁵⁴ But due to inner conflict among the associates, the magazine was forced to discontinue two years after its initial publication. Uchimura saw, however, that the true reason for its termination lay in the changing times in which the magazine's negative, "destructive," function became no longer necessary, needing to be replaced by a more positive "constructive" work.

In October of 1900, Uchimura started his lifework Seisho-no-Kenkyu, or Biblical Study, a magazine designed to infuse into the nation the true life of the Christian faith for the purpose of Japan is reform from within.⁵⁵ This magazine, though a unique attempt--in a

⁵⁴In an answer to the advice of a philosopher to work more constructively in his writing, Uchimura expresses the intention behind his social criticism which was the reason for the launching of the magazine: "A farmer who sows seed with the thorn unburned is a fool. A builder who does not dig to the rock below for the foundation is a fool. Do you, sir, attempt to build a strong nation on a society like sand with its hypocrisy, ostentation and frivolity? I do not want to engage myself with such a fruitless effort like that. Hence, I am doing the tough work of destruction," Shinko 20:176.

⁵⁵The idea of the issuance of a magazine dealing with the Bible in Japan arose in Uchimura's mind already during his stay at Amherst (see Shinko 20:197), but the circumstances of the time proved the opportunity ripe for him to bring the idea into materialization, as he wrote: "The Japanese society has now reached to the extreme point of disappointment, and now needs hope. Its sins and evils are pointed out, and there seems to be no single piece of true life in it. I, though detesting the Japanese society so far, have come to have a deep compassion over it," (Shinko 20:191). In the same vein, he wrote in the "declaration" of the magazine's principle: "The Bible says 'there is a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. On either side of the river was there the tree of life, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations,' Rev. 22:1-2. I do not know under heaven and on earth anything but this Gospel to heal the nation. Why does not this magazine make now its appearance in the public." (Ibid., p. 193).

non-Christian country like Japan then--dealing with the Bible, won many readers across the country through Uchimura's convinced and determined message of a life in high Christian ideals, enjoying a constant circulation of three to four thousand copies per issue throughout his life.

Along with evangelistic work through the magazine, Uchimura was holding a Bible class for a smaller circle in his own home, which in the course of time grew larger and larger and became the largest Bible class ever held on a serial basis in the country both during and after his lifetime. In this sense his Bible class was a unique phenomenon in Japan.

As the magazine and the Bible class were being established, here and there across the country groups of those who came to faith through his ministry rose up, independent of any organized churches and without any professional ministry. Organized under the name of Kyoyukai, or Fellowship of Friends in Faith, this constituted the beginning of Mukyokai, or Non-Church, Christianity as a distinctive church-historical phenomenon in Japan. Committed to taking care of these groups, Uchimura visited them regularly either at his own initiative or on their request. He understood this form of Christian fellowship as true and congenial to the new life manifested in Christ, being free, spiritual, truly indigenous, independent, and without institutions to coerce creeds and dogmas.⁵⁶

However, virtually detached from secular affairs since the issuance of Seisho-no-Kenkyu (except his criticism of the opening of the

⁵⁶On Mukyokai Christianity, cf. infra. 285-301.

Russo-Japanese War⁵⁷), and confining himself in the circle of his followers,⁵⁸ Uchimura gradually came to experience that his spiritual resources, which had found renewal in his confrontation with the evils of the society, were being exhausted.⁵⁹ He felt that he had nothing substantial left to write on in the magazine, even to the point considering its discontinuance.⁶⁰ He was thus groping for a way out of this spiritual slump.

What was the real reason for this spiritual slump? Uchimura had only experienced increasing widespread moral decadence, for years in spite of his and other sincere men's attempts to reform the nation

⁵⁷Uchimura was not a pacifist by birth; formerly he believed in the possibility of a righteous war, as he penned an article, "The Justification of the Korean War," in 1894 (CW 5:66-75). This war was waged under the pretext of the peace of the Orient. But upon Japan's victory over China, he experienced that the war had been, in reality, a "piratic" war, and was deeply disillusioned with the concept of a righteous war. Since then, he remained a pacifist. Now he appealed passionately not to open the war front with Russia, for it was part and parcel immoral, each nation seeking her selfish interest over the sacrifice of the lives of innocents. The common point in these contradicting positions as to war is that in both cases the question of justice and righteousness were the motive of Uchimura's thought.

⁵⁸In a letter dated March 12, 1907, Uchimura wrote: "In these days I have no intercourse with anybody, only enjoying my life with the Greek Testament and a small number of independent believers scattered over the country. Everything in the world seems to me ridiculous, and a life apart from Christ totally meaningless. The more I look on the government, society and churches, the more I become tired of them . . ." Iwanami 20:497, here translated from Japanese.

⁵⁹"Pray especially that the Holy Spirit may descend upon me abundantly so that I may speak the will of God, and not the wisdom of man . . .," wrote Uchimura in a letter of January 29, 1910, Iwanami 20:562, and later "I have lost the Holy Spirit somehow; my pen does not glide over the paper smoothly. I am going to suspend the March issue of the magazine," (February 10, 1910), *ibid.*, p. 563; translated.

⁶⁰See the letter of January 26, 1911, *ibid.*, p. 595.

and society; the morality of people was not improved; righteousness and justice were not sincerely cared for; the evil dominated unhindered while the righteous suffered; the nation lacked high moral aspiration. He was becoming aware of the unchangeability of this world into the better one. If it were unchangeable, we could reason it would be meaningless for him still to work for its betterment. In fact, the world had already failed to endorse his idea of the meaningfulness of the Universe, being unable to accept the concept of moral ideals.⁶¹ There must be another reality which, transcending this fallen world, would constitute the ultimate and true reality, to whom Uchimura's eyes were to be open.

What occasioned Uchimura to see this new dimension of faith, the reality beyond, and thereby renewed his spiritual vigor, were the premature death of his daughter, Ruth in 1912, and the outbreak of World War I in 1914.

Ruth was the first child born to him and his wife, Shizu, whom he married in 1892 after the death of his previous wife, Kazuko. Resembling her father in feature and disposition, Ruth was most

⁶¹With the establishment of the ministry through the magazine Uchimura seemed gradually to give up his early attempt to reform the nation from within. Yet, this sapped his spiritual vigor. Cf. his words in these years: "'What is Christianity? Is it worth having?' This is the greatest question, after all. My answer to this is: 'Christianity is dying to this world; therefore it is worth having.' It was the greatest mistake to regard civilization as the supreme good [最大の善]; civilization is no other than the way to destruction," (in the letter of November 16, 1908, [ibid., p. 527]; the sentences in single quotation marks are written originally in English.) And "There are many unpleasant things in this world, but the Gospel of Christ comforts us more than enough. We for our part will hand over this world to the evil men, and wait for our opportunity in the Kingdom of Christ," October 27, 1905, Iwanami, 20:527 translated.

affectionately loved by him. Taken by an illness of unknown cause, she died at the age of only eighteen. Uchimura's "heart of Rachel, crying for her child, refuse[d] to be comforted."⁶² But he made his own the life of Resurrection through Ruth's death with her calm assurance of going over to the blessed life beyond.⁶³ Ruth's death demonstrated to the depth of Uchimura's mind as a fact that death was only a transition to the real life. Furthermore, throughout this tragic experience Uchimura came to see the whole of the world more in the light of the reality beyond.⁶⁴

If Ruth's death occasioned the re-orientation of Uchimura's thought in terms of the reality beyond in his personal sphere, World War I did it more extensively in his theological sphere. This war "most meaningless, most miserable, and worst,"⁶⁵ waged among the Christian nations plunged Uchimura into the abyss of scepticism about God's rule

⁶²Ibid., p. 644.

⁶³"Her [Ruth's] last words . . . were 'Mo yuki masu' (Now, I will go.) She only passed away, and a distinct smile on her face showed that she did not go to a bad place, but to a good, beautiful country. . . There was clear continuity from this world to the next, almost a demonstration of the immortality of the soul and the existence of the future life," wrote Uchimura in his letter to his American friend. Ibid., p. 644-45.

⁶⁴By Ruth's death, he wrote, he definitely was released from all the ambitions, even from the religious ones such as attempts to provide the original, apostolic Christianity in the country or the best possible translation of the Bible: "I feel as if I were buried together with my dear daughter. This feeling [~~is~~], I believe, is not a bad thing. This feeling, I believe, certainly is the most precious feeling God gave me through her death," Shinko 20:315.

⁶⁵Ibid., 13:24.

over the world.⁶⁶ And when America, which Uchimura quietly wished might play a mediating role for the fighting parties, took part in the War, his skepticism was turned to despair.⁶⁷ Sweeping away the last piece of hope for peace, the War forced Uchimura to find elsewhere a new foundation of his faith in the triumph of justice and righteousness.

In this spiritual abyss, Uchimura happened to read an article in The Sunday School Times in the early fall of 1916 entitled "Is The Truth of Our Lord's Return a Practical Matter for Today?" through which he began to see light in the faith that Christ at His parousia, and not man, should establish His eternal kingdom. Through the intensive study of this truth in the Bible, Uchimura found in it the definitive solution to the tormenting contradiction between the steadily worsening world and the rule of justice and righteousness. Filled with overwhelming joy in this discovery of the truth, in 1918 he launched Sairin-Undo, or the Second Coming Movement to proclaim for the nation "the great Gospel for all the people."⁶⁸

The faith in the Second Coming of Christ provided Uchimura, as no "wordly-oriented" thought or observation could do, with the joyful

⁶⁶"War begets war; woe begets woe. The world is now almost brought at an impasse. Is that ideal of Prophet Isaiah [Is. 2:2-4] a mere dream? Cannot the peace of the world be realized eternally?" Ibid., 13:12.

⁶⁷"Thus, [the contradiction between] the ideas won through my learning and the development of the times brought me into the abyss of despair." Ibid., 13:26.

⁶⁸Ibid., 13:122. "It is a great mistake to regard the Second Coming of Christ as concerning only the church and Christians. The Second Coming of Christ is a matter of the Universe, of mankind, and of the world [宇宙問題あり、人類問題あり、世界問題ある]. It is therefore a matter to which the attention of all people is to be awakened." Ibid., p. 46.

and satisfactory answers to the questions he had been asking in his personal life and theological thought. "The faith in the Second Coming of Christ. . .," he said, "has solved the enigmas of life for me. It has removed the sorrow and pain of death. It has united me with Nature eternally, and given me the hope of receiving eternal life in the perfected heaven and earth with my redeemed body."⁶⁹ The parousia of the Lord was to Uchimura "the restoration of the saints," "the triumph of justice and righteousness," "the last judgment," "the realization of God's rule," in sum, "the summary of all the hopes of mankind."⁷⁰ With this firm assurance of the victorious outcome of the history of mankind, the Christians could transcend the reality here below no matter how dark and contradictory it might appear, and live out a triumphant life in the undiluted Christian ideals of justice and love.⁷¹ The completion of God's Universe was thus ultimately assured by faith in the parousia of the Lord, and the development of Uchimura's thought reached its completion.

The Sairin-Undo itself was short-lived, lasting one and a half years. The last ten years of Uchimura's life were calm. From September

⁶⁹Ibid., 13:38.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 33.

⁷¹Then [, upon the Second Coming of Christ], justice and righteousness shall truly be triumphant; peace be prevailing; love become the law of mankind. . . . Then, it shall become evident with all the things. Blessed are the day and the time! Knowing that the day and the time shall surely come, I am released from all the doubts in my mind about life. Now, I am never disappointed no matter how deeply mankind may become fallen, and the churches corrupted; no matter how rampant hypocrisy may become, and injustice dominate. All the clouds of life are now cleared, and everything is evident. Now, I may only obey the commandments of Christ without being disturbed by its success or failure [in this world], and will march on untiringly and without fear. I thank God! Again, I thank God." Ibid., p. 36.

1920 to June 1923 Uchimura held Bible lectures, gathering several hundreds of people every Sunday in an auditorium at the center of Tokyo. The lectures given on the Decalogue, Daniel, Job and the Romans bore the mark of his testament, as if reinforcing the pillars of Uchimura's Christianity which was built upon his faith in the triumphant outcome of the Universe.⁷²

In March 1926, Uchimura still had enough spiritual vigor to start a new periodical under the name of The Japan Christian Intelligencer. Its purpose was to articulate to the wide world in English what he had received through his experience as a Japanese Christian as the true and original Christianity, which he believed would revive the dying Christianity in the West. It lasted for two years.

In his very last year, Uchimura made his will clear that the magazine Seisho-no-Kenkyu be discontinued after his death and his Bible classes dissolved, wishing to leave no basis on which to form another new denomination in his name among the already existing ones. He was determined to remain to the last, even beyond it, a consistent champion of Mukyokai Christianity, believing that no fixed forms were free from stifling the life of the Gospel. It was enough, Uchimura was convinced, only to leave Truth behind, for Truth would take care of itself.⁷³ On

⁷²The Decalogue corresponds to his idea of the world governed by the holy commandment of God; Daniel of the heroic, unwavering allegiance to God as His witness; Job of the way truly to appropriate the truth of salvation through various sufferings in life; and Romans of the salvation sola gratia and sola fide. Although actual contents of this last point will be discussed in extenso later.)

⁷³Kanzo Uchimura, Nikki Shokan Zenshu [Kanzo Uchimura's Diary and Letters], 7 vols. (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1974-75), 2:327-28. Hereafter cited as Nikki.

March 28, 1930, Uchimura breathed his last, praying triumphantly for the happiness of humanity, the prosperity of Japan, and the completion of the Universe.⁷⁴

To bring into relief the framework of Uchimura's theology as sketched above, it is helpful to recapitulate the main points in the development of his thought somewhat as follows: First of all, Christian monotheism affirmed Uchimura's postulate of the harmony and meaningfulness of the Universe and his existence in it. But this postulate, though affirmed by the faith in the one God, was challenged throughout his life by his own sinfulness, the moral inability of the fatherland, the premature death of his daughter, and the hopeless trend of the world toward destruction. Through his personal and spiritual struggle each challenge to the initial postulate of his was met with the answers given in his Christian faith; sin's power was overcome by Christ's presence within, death by His resurrection, and the chaotic appearance of the present reality by faith in the second coming of Christ. Through all of these the original postulate of Uchimura was reaffirmed. As a result of this assurance of the completion of the Universe by the Power Beyond, every Christian and every nation was challenged by God to live up to the ideals of justice and love and to become as holy as God himself.

⁷⁴"If God wills, I will survive and work. But nothing evil will ever come upon us anytime in all eternity. The Universe, Everything and Life are all good. There is no limit to what I want to say now. I pray for the happiness of mankind, the prosperity of Japan and the completion of the Universe," said Uchimura two days before his death, Masaïke, p. 629.

CHAPTER III

UCHIMURA'S CONCEPT OF SALVATION

In the preceeding chapter we have attempted to describe the main line of Uchimura's life with the intention of getting to know his work, as well as of delineating the framework of his theological thought that was shaped by the various experiences which he made vis-a-vis the events encountered in his life. There we have learned that, in painful struggles interwoven both of personal tragedy and of theological doubt, Uchimura through his faith in God as the Lord over the world and history overcame one by one the obstacles that were, in his view, standing in the way of ascertaining the ultimate actualization of the moral reality of the universe. With the certainty of the meaningful outcome of the universe thus gained, it became possible for man to endeavor, or take part in God's endeavor, toward a better actualization of the true, moral reality of the universe in this world at large and in the life of an individual.

Now in this chapter we will try to penetrate to the core of Uchimura's theological concern by examining his understanding of salvation in that framework. The reason for our choosing the concept of salvation for the procedural pivot of the observation on the central concern for Uchimura's theology is based upon the fact that any religious thought, ultimately, is an attempt to find out a convincing answer to the question about the agony and alienation of human existence, that is, "salvation" explicitly or implicitly, and that "soteriology" is the

point toward which all the other loci are converging. Uchimura does not make any exception in this regard. By examining the contents of Uchimura's soteriology, we will come to recognize most clearly what Uchimura, in the last analysis, looks upon as the ultimate issue of the Christian message of salvation.

In the following we shall pursue Uchimura's soteriological points of view step by step. Our procedure is as follows: first, under the heading of "Christ Alone," we will consider Uchimura's intense concentration on Christ in his theology in general and soteriology in particular. There we shall see his "Christ Alone" (conceived of as the antithesis to all the "external" factors of Christianity) as an index, to his soteriology, signaling its specific feature. Second, we will then take up his concept of sin to analysis, and learn the important soteriological implication of "Sins forgiven and annihilated," namely, his strong emphasis on sin's factual annihilation. After this, in the third section under the heading of "Salvation as perfection," we shall examine Uchimura's concept of salvation as "perfection," the concept which is built upon his concept of sin. Finally, we attempt to understand the meaning of Uchimura's "Christ Alone" for the "Becoming like Christ" as the ultimate content of salvation in his thought. Prior to the analysis of Uchimura's soteriology, however, we make our theological standpoint clear, from which we in the following try to examine, understand and criticize Uchimura's soteriology.

Uchimura is said to be "quite orthodox" "in all of his writing on Christian themes, except as regards the Church (or better, the

churches)."¹ True, by his emphasis on "Christ alone," "grace alone," and "faith alone,"² Uchimura gives his readers a strong impression of being a "quite orthodox" Protestant Christian. But we want to investigate in what theological context Uchimura uses these "orthodox" Protestant formulae and expounds them. In fact, whether or not Uchimura is really orthodox depends on what definition one gives of "orthodoxy" when viewing Uchimura's theology. In order for us to make a proper evaluation of Uchimura's "orthodoxy," we must have in hand an adequate definition of orthodoxy for our present purpose. We propose our definition as follows: Orthodoxy in Protestantism is solus Christus, sola fide primarily, continually and essentially for remissio peccatorum. Orthodoxy thus understood is nothing but being evangelical, evangelical in the sense of God's unconditional mercy toward sinners for the sake of Christ the Crucified. The bases for this definition are Article IV of the Augsburg Confession and the Answers 21, 60 and 115 of the Heidelberg Catechism, for we understand that these confessional documents, respectively of Lutheranism and the Reformed tradition, represent Protestant orthodoxy in the sense of the evangelical faith.³ Thus,

¹Raymond P. Jennings, Jesus, Japan and Kanzo Uchimura (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Swan, 1958), p. 46.

²"Christianity is God's grace to be appropriated by man's faith. GRACE AND FAITH almost exhaust Christianity." The Complete Works of Kanzo Uchimura (written originally in English), 7 vols. (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1971-73), 3:48. Hereafter cited as CW.

³The Augsburg Confession, Article IV, "we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith. . . ." Theodore G. Tappert, translator and editor, The Book of Concord, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 30. The Heidelberg Catechism, Answers 21, 60 and 115 respectively as follows: "True faith is . . . also an assured confidence which the Holy Ghost

whenever we use such expressions as "orthodox Protestant," "Protestant orthodoxy," or similar ones in dealing with Uchimura's theology, we mean by them orthodoxy as defined above.

In connection with the theme of orthodoxy, which we understand as the term for the congenial exposition of the Biblical message of salvation, we will have yet one soteriological remark included here as a help to understand Uchimura's soteriological position. In orthodox Protestantism, the problem of man is seen as his sinfulness and its accountability before God his Creator and Lord. Because of his wilful and rebellious deviation from God's will, man is severed from the life-giving fellowship with God and is now under the curse of "sin, death and the devil," which is nothing other than God's holy wrath universally revealed and imposed upon man as His reaction against man's sins. Being completely unable to amend this situation, man is totally lost in the curse of his own sinfulness. For the lost man, however, God has out of pure mercy provided him with salvation, that is, the restoration of the original fellowship between God Himself and man, through the vicarious death of His Son on the cross as the atonement for man's sins and guilt, and it is offered to man as the forgiveness of sins to be appropriated

works by the Gospel in my heart, that not only to others, but to me also, remission of sin, everlasting righteousness and salvation, are freely given for the sake of Christ's merits," "[I am righteous before God] only by a true faith in Jesus Christ; so that though my conscience accuse me, that I have grossly transgressed all the commands of God, and kept none of them, and am still inclined to all evil; notwithstanding God, without any merit of mine, but only of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ . . .," "All our life-time, we . . . learn more and more to know our sinful nature, and thus become the more earnest in seeking the remission of sin and righteousness in Christ . . .," the text according to: James I Good, Aid to the Heidelberg Catechism (Cleveland: Central Publishing House, 1904).

through faith in Christ the Redeemer. Forgiveness of sins is God's deliverance of man from His own just condemnation of him for the sake of Christ's redemptive death, and His acceptance of him into His mercy and fellowship, while man is still remaining a sinner in himself. Since man, even after his regeneration and in the process of sanctification, remains, as totus homo, et peccator in himself, and continues to sin in the deepest depth of his existence, and ever knows himself in his sinfulness as liable for God's wrath, as unworthy of His mercy, and as lost before Him, he can only live by the faith in the promise of sin's forgiveness, that is, that God ever remains the God of mercy and forgiveness for the sake of Christ. For him as et peccator, forgiveness of sin is and remains the issue of his faith; it is what makes the Gospel the message of salvation. The ultimate issue in the orthodox Protestantism is thus forgiveness of sin in this sense and nothing else. With this understanding of salvation in mind, let us proceed to examine Uchimura's soteriology.

"Christ Alone"

In his experience of salvation, a Christian knows himself bound to Christ his Savior in a unique manner. Christ is more than a great teacher who, through his posthumous influence, may lead his followers to salvific truth. He is for a Christian the living Savior who, through the living communion with His disciples, supplies His own life to them. Uchimura for one, no less than anyone else, knows himself deeply and inwardly bound to the living Lord in his experience of salvation.

Uchimura asserts that Christianity, or what constitutes it, is not "a church, or churches," nor "creed, nor dogma, nor theology," nor

"the bible, nor even the words of Christ," but "a person, a living person, Lord Jesus Christ."⁴ Apart from "a church or churches," Uchimura in reality would not deny the other items as the necessary constituents of Christianity. What Uchimura points out in these words is the essential necessity of the living communion with Christ for Christian existence. For, regardless of the correctness of Uchimura's observation on the conditions of the churches in his times, he felt that the living fellowship with Christ was jeopardized in the churches with many secondary "accretions" by their concerns for the "external" things. The living Christ is to Uchimura literally "one thing needful."

What does, then, Uchimura mean by "the living Christ" in his Christian existence?

Zinzendorf said, "He alone, yea, He alone!" Yea, Christ alone, just Christ alone! He is not only my Teacher, my Brother and my Friend, but He is my Righteousness, my Sanctification and my Redemption as well (1 Cor. 1:30). He is my Life, my Resurrection (John 11:25), my Passover (1 Cor. 5:7), my Highpriest (Heb. 3:2), yea, He is my All (Col. 3:11)! My Religion, my Moral, my Salvation, my Heavenly Kingdom, yea, All are found in Christ. Away from Christ, my Christianity does not exist, nor my faith, nor my hope, nor my love. I can live, move and exist only in reliance upon Him (Act 17:28).⁵

In view of this rather poetic "manifesto" of Uchimura's faith we may offer a prosaic paraphrase of it as follows. To Uchimura, Christ is the One accompanying him in his life as the most ideal Companion,⁶ who, as a

⁴CW 3:36.

⁵Kanzo Uchimura, Shinko Chosaku Zenshu [Complete Writings on Faith], 25 vols. (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1962-66), 15:120. Hereafter cited as Shinko.

⁶"I know He [Christ] knows me in my inmost soul, takes me for what little good there is in me, and forsakes me not for much evil that He sees in me. . . . When my friends and countrymen, churches, bishops,

Teacher at side, daily teaches him Living Truth afresh,⁷ who shares his sorrow and misery, and who comforts him in trouble of every kind.⁸ Moreover, Christ is the Savior who has removed his sin, who effects in him sanctification, and who will complete his salvation.⁹ Christ is also the One who fulfils his deep inward spiritual needs,¹⁰ who is the moral ideal inspiring an aesthetic longing for its attainment,¹¹ and who is a new spiritual universe transcending this imperfect world.¹² In fact,

all and every body forsake me as a rebel, a heretic, a dangerous man, then I know Jesus will take me up. I may be ostracized by my society . . . , yet Jesus remains my Friend all the same." CW 4:85-86.

⁷"My wisdom is in the living Jesus Christ. I preach while listening to Him. I write while learning by Him. He is my Teacher at my side, who gives me the Living Truth afresh day by day." Shinko 7:64.

⁸"The One whom I invoke is . . . my Savior the Man Jesus, who, possessing the same nature as mine, tastes my pains. He is my Friend and Lord Jesus," Shinko 7:81.

⁹We will discuss on this theme in Uchimura in the following in extenso. Infra pp. 103-16.

¹⁰"Christ is God near to me. He is the most intimate Friend of mine. Christ is my God as well as my Comrade [同志]. He perfectly fulfils all the needs of my whole self." Shinko 7:77.

¹¹"Jesus of Nazareth was the perfection of humanity. . . . As I ponder upon His sinless life I cannot but bow my knees before Him and literally worship Him. . . . I find myself ennobled and exalted by worshipping Him." CW 4:83.

¹²"In the Epistle to the Ephesians, the words 'heavenly places' are used five times. . . . The words do not mean what we commonly call the Heaven or the Upper World. It means the world of spirit or the spiritual world. . . . It is the world which now is within us. . . . It is in this world, but not of it. And the believer is one who was translated from this world to this different world, that is, . . . the world of spirit. And in that world, Christ Himself is righteousness and life and sanctification and redemption. In that world, if there is any virtue peculiar to the believer, that is only faith. All other virtues are Christ Himself; the believer seeks there nothing else but Him." CW 4:98-99.

this itemization of the significance of Christ could be inadequate in view of Uchimura's undivided devotion to Christ. Christ is Himself the meaning of the total reality. He gives meaning to everything meaningful. All that Uchimura yearns here and now, there and eternity, he finds fully actualized in Christ. Christ is for Uchimura literally his All. In fact, the passage quoted above is virtually a doxology, witnessing to Uchimura's intense experience and conviction of the all-sufficiency of Christ for fulfilling man's needs.

At another place Uchimura speaks of "Christ Alone" somewhat more specifically, which is illustrative of Uchimura's emphasis on Christ Himself. "Christ is my All," he says and mentions important items besides those mentioned in the quotation above, ". . . my Baptism, my Holy Communion, my Church. . . . I do not need anything nor any rituals [儀式], but Christ Himself."¹³ The item of particular interest in this quotation is that Christ is played off against the sacraments and the church which administers them. In view of his denial of the sacraments as necessary means to salvation,¹⁴ Uchimura seems to contend that what one expects to obtain from the sacraments and from joining the communal life in the ordinarily institutionalized church, can be in reality gained far more perfectly from Christ Himself in the living fellowship

¹³ Shinko 7:65.

¹⁴ "I cannot believe that Baptism and Holy Supper are necessary for the salvation of [the] soul. I myself have never participated [in the] Holy Supper in these fifteen years. Yet, I do not see my faith is cooled down for this reason. Rather, by a special grace of God, I feel coming nearer and nearer to God every day and every month." Shinko 14:202.

with Him.¹⁵ In fact, the sacraments and the church are for Uchimura external representations of the reality of Christ,¹⁶ and are liable to such a deterioration that they play a role in the externalization of faith in Christ which is essentially inwardly and internal.¹⁷ "Christ alone" is in the last resort "one thing needful" also in antithesis to all the others that are imperfect and external.

¹⁵"No churches in this world are perfect. Churches constituted by men are all imperfect just as all men are imperfect. . . . Seeking a perfect satisfaction [完全の満足] in them one cannot but be disappointed. But to win a perfect satisfaction is not difficult. It is in Jesus Christ. Committing my soul to Him, and becoming his disciple and a member of Him, I at once win a perfect satisfaction today." Shinko 18:23.

¹⁶As to the sacraments, Uchimura says: "I do not believe in [the validity of] Baptism and [the] Holy Supper as the rituals of the church. However solemn, no rituals have any power to save the soul of man. . . . But I believe in Baptism and Holy Supper as the signs [of the inner salvific experience] of Christian faith. These two things are called sacrament. And 'sacrament' means 'Holy Thing' or 'Mystery,' which later came to mean 'the sign of Holy thing,'" Shinko 14:196. In Uchimura's terminology, "mystery" designates an inscrutable mystical experience in man's interior of God's communion (cf. "Religion must be mystical." Shinko 15:121). As to the church; "It is not the church that makes faith, but it is faith that makes church." Shinko 7:131; "The Christians are those who receive the gifts of the Spirit immediately from Christ. Hence, it is not necessary for them to receive the spiritual gifts from the church or from the hands of a pastor. Since the Christians build the church to share [the gifts received immediately from Christ] and come together, they do not become the burden of the church, rather they become the power to move her." Shinko 14:27-28.

¹⁷"The Baptism of water does not save man. Only the Spirit of God does this. I met many of those who are saved without receiving it, as well as those who, though having received it, are still not saved. Thus, my experience, my common sense and the Spirit of God dwelling in me tell me in unison: 'To make the Baptism of water necessary for salvation is a superstition.'" Shinko 7:223. "Many forms of illusion [迷信] and erroneous belief [誤信] . . . have been accumulated on the sacraments . . ." Shinko 14:205. As to the problem of the church, we will deal with in extenso in the later chapter, cf. infra, pp. 285-96.

Completely in harmony with his concentration on Christ Himself, Uchimura also admonishes one to go directly to Christ without making any intermediary between Christ and oneself. He says:

Come, come, come to Jesus! There is no need to go through such founders of churches as Luther, Calvin, Wesley, or through such men called Apostles as Paul, John and Peter. Come directly Jesus, who is humble, meek, brave, sincere, and you shall gain peace in your heart.¹⁸

No human being, however saintly and noble, can ever stand in comparison with Christ. Christ making Himself available for anyone who seeks Him sincerely,¹⁹ there is no reason for one's being dependent on less perfect and less pure persons for his salvation. Ultimately, "Christ Alone" is sufficient for salvation.

When Uchimura asserts "Christ alone" in his Christian existence, Christ is however not alone, but is intimately and inseparably together with Uchimura himself. He is Uchimura's All in the sense that Christ ultimately excludes everything other than Himself in His fellowship with Uchimura; that is, "Christ and Uchimura alone" in the immediate and direct fellowship with each other. The assertion of "Christ Alone" thus entails that Uchimura--in the immediate communion with Christ--is, in principle, himself sovereign in his conviction of faith, transcending all the other dogma traditions.²⁰

¹⁸Shinko 7:78.

¹⁹"Christ who is Spirit does not confine Himself. He dwells in the spirit of anyone who trusts in Him with humble heart." Shinko 18:24.

²⁰"Alone with God and Me," is the title of CW 3. And, characteristic enough, he has the following words in the forward: "The writer's standpoint is pronouncedly antagonistic to all man-made systems and institutions, so much so that he was characterized as a 'spiritual Bolshevik' by more than one ecclesiastical authority. Be it so; the utterances will stand or fall, as they accord with facts or not. The

The passages quoted above are genuine specimens of Uchimura's concentration on Christ. As here, so throughout his literary production over a period of several decades, is the theme "Christ Alone" of the pivotal significance for Uchimura. This is partly because Uchimura understands that the living Christ Alone saves him. As one of the important corollaries of "Christ Alone," we are to bear in mind throughout our study that everything to be effected for man's salvation (whatever the actual content of salvation may be conceived of by Uchimura) is understood as solely caused by the living Christ present in His disciple. Uchimura is never tired of stressing "Christ Alone" in this respect.

Already our cursory look at Uchimura's "Christ Alone" indicates that the context, in which the formula stands in antithesis, for example, to the empirically conditioned reality of the church, is different in nature from that of solus Christus of Reformation in which remissio peccatorum is given a preeminent significance which embraces all the fallen reality. As to the more concrete contents of Uchimura's "Christ Alone" we will delineate them step by step in the course of this chapter, and will also determine their significance for Uchimura's concept of salvation. For the present purpose, it is sufficient to take note of Uchimura's characteristic concentration on Christ for man's salvation.

Lord God reigneth, and not men; and we may be free, brave, and independent in all utterances . . ." CW 3:6. Uchimura's "Alone with God/Christ and me" as antithesis to "all man-made systems and institutions" (as if not seeing that his own theological views are, in their own way, as much "man-made" as all the other "systems") has a crucial bearing on his understanding of salvation; he is ultimately dependent on his own experience of God/Christ in his understanding of what salvation is. This amounts in fact to the question of theological epistemology, with which we will deal in the next chapter.

Although not directly related to the theme "Christ Alone," two implications from the passages quoted above should be mentioned and called to attention. The one is Uchimura's literary device, what we may call an "either-or" rhetoric, in which Uchimura tries to effect the maximal emphasis on one specific point in a given situation by disparaging the other points which, being themselves quite essential in their own right, can be emphasized in like manner in other connections.²¹ It is essential to be aware of this fact, lest one should be completely mistaken in his understanding of Uchimura.

The other is the character of Uchimura's literary style. Even upon the basis of a few quotations like those we have noted we notice clearly that Uchimura to a great extent expresses his thought in more poetic language, revealing also his intuitive disposition in thinking.²² This fact renders his utterances impressive with rich poesy rather than

²¹"Uchimura was given to strong language. That is, he often overstated his case to get his point across. Almost every statement of Uchimura can be shown to be modified or balanced by another statement of his made at another time." Jennings, p. 44, emphasis in the original. However, in view of many contradictions which Uchimura's "overstatement" causes in the literal meaning, it is our task to judge whether a given case of apparant contradiction is due to a literary rhetoric or is a genuine contradiction. We cannot categorize Uchimura's contradictions as rhetoric pure and simple, for if that were so we would have to attempt to harmonize one case with the other, which would make it impossible to attempt to understand Uchimura properly. Nor would that kind of harmonization do justice to Uchimura. Uchimura stands on his own words.

²²One of Uchimura's contemporaries, Chogyu Takayama, says: "You [Uchimura] are not a practical leader of society [經世家] nor a philosopher nor a religionist [宗教家] but only a poet," here quoted from Yuzo Ota, Uchimura Kanzo: Sono Sekai-shugi o Megutte [Kanzo Uchimura: His Universaliam and "Japanism"] (Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1977), p. 132. This is an overstatement on the side of Takayama, but yet points "one aspect of truth (Ota)" of Uchimura's poetic disposition.

conceptually defined. Still, it is our task to crystallize the conceptual core of Uchimura's understanding of salvation, which constitutes the basis for his indigenous theology, through careful analysis and examination of the texts.

"Sins Forgiven and Annihilated on the Cross"

On the deeper levels of his consciousness, man either keenly or vaguely knows himself as a being under suffering, misery and anxiety. He seeks, consciously or unconsciously, "liberation" from these manifestations of his existential estrangement, to use a contemporary term. In Christian faith, this estrangement of man is conceived of as the consequence of the inscrutable and still most real disorder of man's existence, which is called sin. Sin is understood as the cause of all the miseries originated in man's estrangement from the true, "authentic" life. Sin is thus the problem of man. Salvation is therefore ultimately the solution of this cardinal problem, the solution which makes it possible for man to live a life with the original meaning of his being in sure hope even amidst the estranged reality of this world.

However, the problem of sin can be conceived of in various ways, as it has been witnessed in the history of theology, both in terms of its nature and reality, and of its dimensions and intensities.²³ And

²³We will here include in a form of a "catchword" some of the views on sin merely for the purpose of gaining an impression of how sin's nature and its intensities have been conceived through the ages: corruption, evil desire, error ignorance (Apostolic Fathers), disobedience to God's will (Irenaeus), vitium originis, sin is hereditary, which goes beyond the actual sins of an individual (Tertullian), an offense against reason due to error or weakness (Clement Alexandria), superbia, amor sui, privatio boni, non posse non peccare (Augustine), the beginning of man's life is without sin (Cyril), withdrawal of good (John

the understanding of sin is virtually correlative to the understanding of salvation. When we try to understand a theologian's soteriology, it is essential for us to delineate his conception of the problem of sin, for his conception of the problem of sin functions as the basis for his own "formulation" of the issue of Christianity. Since this holds true of Uchimura's thought, we shall first of all examine his conception of the problem of sin, especially because he claims to give, through his formulation of Christianity, the restoration of a true, authentic, original Christianity.

Now we start to look at what Uchimura himself experienced and thought in his struggle with the problem of sin. In the previous chapter, we briefly touched upon some aspects of his struggle in the problem of sin in connection with the description of his search for inner peace. There we learned that Uchimura exerted himself to the utmost, through philanthropic work, to subjugate his pride and to "reach the state of inward purity." Yet, even his strenuous endeavor for this aim completely failed and rather revealed to him his "innate selfishness" "in all its fierce enormities," bringing him down to "unspeakable agonies."²⁴ In the following we will go further into this agony of Uchimura and see more precisely around what his struggle with the problem of sin is turning.

Damascenus), concupiscentia, defectus justitiae originalis (Thomas Aquinas), so deep and evil corruption of nature as unknowable to reason (Luther), sine metu Dei, sine fiducia erga Dei et cum concupiscentia (Melanchthon), God is primus auctor peccati (Zwingli), only a distortion of the nature (Schleiermacher), "Sin is judged by God as ignorance" (Ritschl), Das Nichige (Barth).

²⁴ See, Supra pp. 29-30.

"When I first came into contact with Christianity," recalls Uchimura, "I submitted at once to its noble and majestic moral. I discovered myself really and utterly ignoble in the light of the ideal of the Bible." Uchimura continues to confess: he did not care very much in his lying before he had no knowledge of the moral of Christianity; he felt joy in himself when others failed; he wished to get success for himself even at the cost of others; his whole pursuit was directed toward his own reputation and wealth, and so forth. "I behaved myself as if a gentleman," adds Uchimura, "while in reality I was just a petty man. My aim was mean; my thought was impure. Thinking of this and that, I was ashamed of myself; I wished I could hide myself, if any hole available, lest I could be seen either by God or man."²⁵

With this painful confession, Uchimura reveals indirectly and more impressively his keen sensitivity and deep concern for moral ideal as the essential of man's existence. Needless to say, Uchimura was by no means failing to meet the standard of respectable moral in an

²⁵Shinko 1:71. Emphases are ours. Here, it is convenient to include some expansion on the ideas behind the underlined phrases, the ideas which imply some important traits of Uchimura's experience of sin's problem, which in their own turn help us better understand the nature of his experience. In his whole life, Uchimura held "a petty man" [小人] in deep contempt. "A petty man" is one who is a coward and insincere in his practical conducts, mean in his thought, and low in his ideal. "Those who believe in this God [who is the Creator of the immense universe] and follow His teaching," wrote Uchimura a few years before his death, "must not be petty men. Yes, they cannot be so. A 'petty good man' can be safely regarded as a bad man. A pastor who is a petty man . . . cannot be a child of God," Shinko 9:117. See also Kanzo Uchimura, Nikki Shokan Zenshu [Kanzo Uchimura's Diary and Letters], 7 vols. (Tokyo Kyo Bun Kwan, 1974-75), 2:93; 4:339-40. Hereafter cited as Nikki. Recognizing himself as such a petty man, Uchimura could not bear his own smallness. He felt deeply ashamed of himself. The expression "hide oneself into a hole if available" is a typical expression of a deep feeling of shame in Japanese. Let us bear these features of Uchimura's thought in mind for further observation.

ordinary sense. His moral sincerity was respected and admired by many. But Uchimura himself was not satisfied with the external appearance of morality. He should be pure and noble in his inner disposition. For this reason, we can easily surmise why Uchimura was so deeply disgusted at his own inner moral deficiency. He felt himself really far away from the moral ideal of Christianity. And he blamed himself and was ashamed of his own moral qualities.

Vis-a-vis the notion of omnipresence and omniscience of God, his agony was intensified the more. Uchimura recalls:

When my heart was scrutinized by the Spirit of God, I found no place behind which to hide myself. . . . My dirty inner impulses, my mean thoughts, my sins committed in secret, the diseases of my heart . . . --What can I do with these things? . . . Though, ashamed of myself for my sins, I would flee from God, He would not let me escape. . . . God is a God of judgment and not a God of forgiveness.²⁶

The Spirit of God laid bare Uchimura's secret moral deficiency to such an extent that he could not but seek any place wherever to hide himself in order to avoid further exposure of his inner misery. He would flee from God, for utter shame. Why for utter shame? Because he felt himself too mean and too base in the light of the moral standard of God. "Although man is in possession of duty and power [義務と力] to be pure," says Uchimura, "he is not pure. Although man is qualified to become [like] an angel, he often is so miserably down to become [like] a beast."²⁷ This is what Uchimura experienced.

Tormented by this awful recognition of his own sinfulness, or rather his own ignobleness, he felt no pleasure in life, lost appetite, suffered insomnia, and so forth. This was to Uchimura a life under

²⁶ Shinko 1:79.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 70.

"fear and trembling." He went to some "well-known pastors" for spiritual assistance, although he was very hesitant because of shame. But these "well-known pastors" did not have any experience like Uchimura's own.²⁸ Between the lines Uchimura seems to say that his experience of sin's reality was so deep that even the "well-known" pastors could not yield any positive help to him in that miserable situation.

"Uchimura's religion is," says one observer, "most intensely a religion of experience. To match the depth of his despair, his sense of sin, and his experience of the redeeming love of Christ, one must go to St. Paul, St. Augustine, Luther or Bunyan."²⁹ This observer seems to give an impression that Uchimura experienced the reality of sin in the same direction and in the same intensity as those men mentioned did. But we will see that this observation needs an essential qualification to be valid for the characterization of Uchimura's experience of sin.

One thing we must take note of in our survey so far of Uchimura's experience and recognition of sin's problem is that he understood sin's problem primarily, not exclusively of course, as failing to live up to the moral ideal of Christianity. Because of the failure on the side of Uchimura vis-a-vis the "noble and majestic morality of Christianity," he felt deeply ashamed of his moral shortcomings, before his own self, God and the others.³⁰ The intensity of Uchimura's agony

²⁸Ibid., pp. 79-80.

²⁹W. H. H. Norman, "Non-Church Christianity in Japan," The International Review of Missions, 46 (October 1957):381.

³⁰We take special note of the concept of shame [恥, 耻辱] in Uchimura's description of sin's experience. In addition to the passages above, we will quote the following two passages to see from other viewpoints how Uchimura thinks of sin and shame. "In order for us to be

might well be comparable with, let us say, that of Luther's. But the decisive point is that Uchimura did not experience or understand the problem of sin in terms of God's absolute holiness and His wrath against the sinner, as Luther did in his own struggle. Uchimura's experience was more of moral nature than of religious nature,³¹ however,

saved by Christ, we have to be thrown down into the abyss of shame [恥辱の淵], our own sins being brought to light by God." Shinko 3:117; "Conversion begins with shame [羞恥]. . . . When I hear that, as I was putting Christ to the Cross, God loved me with the same Cross, I cannot bear of the feeling of being ashamed of myself." Shinko 5:134. Uchimura says also: "Redemption is a virtue [美德] on the side of God, it is shame [恥辱] on the side of man, for, since man has sinned, redemption became necessary for God." Shinko 12:48. What is shame in our context? Shame is an existential disturbance in one's conscience arising from the situation of being deprived of one's own honor and dignity through the recognition of one's ethical and moral unworthiness vis-a-vis the others who should have approved them to him. Shame thus presupposes the ultimacy of one's own honor. The inner pain arising from one's honor cannot be then be healed by anything but the real restoration of the lost honor. Uchimura's experience of sin must be seen as the experience of shame before God with the same structure of it described above. More we shall see later.

³¹When Luther was in the abyss of his struggle with his own sinfulness, it was the question of the radical rebellion of his own self against the holy God. Even at the climax of repentance, he discovered he did not seek God wholeheartedly as prescribed but rather his own self, contradicting fundamentally against the First Commandment that, according Luther's own explanation, demands that he should "fear, love, and trust in God above all things." In face of the holy presence of God with the claim on man to absolute fear, love and trust, Luther's experience of sin was profoundly religious. Uchimura's experience of sin is, on the other hand, of a different character. Standing in a context where theological as well as church-historical backgrounds were non-existent, Uchimura did not see the religious dimension of sin clearly. God in Uchimura's thought does not stand against him; He was rather on the side of Uchimura. Sin's problem is for Uchimura rather the question about the moral quality of his self, than that of the relation to God. In his discussion of Dostevsky's discovery of the true nature of sin, Jaroslav Pelican has the following comment which will illustrate the point here: "A sense of sin was more than a feeling of guilt, it was the feeling of profaneness and unworthiness. Forgiveness of sin, therefore, was not the act of God by which He forgot a given number of deeds against the Ten Commandments, but the act of God by which I was made worthy of His fellowship. The root of moralism has been the assumption that the sense of sin was moral rather than religious in its derivation, and that

deep and intense his experience may sound.³² His agony is to be understood as an inner reaction against his own ignobleness and shame due to it, which originated from his own zealous yearning for the realization of the moral ideals in himself, rather than "fear and trembling" in the presense of the Holy God. His strenuous endeavor to reach "the state of inner purity" in search for inner peace supports our observation.³³

This particular feature of Uchimura's experience of sin's problem must be kept in mind when one is to understand Uchimura's Christology and soteriology, yes, his theology as a whole, for this understanding of sin's problem constitutes the very foundation of his theological thinking.

(After having observed Uchimura's main concern in his struggle with the problem of sin not as being confronted with the wrath of God, we have to hasten to say some words about Uchimura's idea of the wrath of God. To be sure, Uchimura knows of the wrath of God, and he speaks of the wrath of God occasionally--although he often outright and unequivocally denies its objective existence--, but even then it has no substantial and real weight in his thought, as we will see in some detail a few pages later.)

therefore the religious sense of profaneness was based upon the moral sense of transgression." Fools for Christ, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1955), pp. 72-73.

³²"So long as one sees Jesus merely as a Teacher [i.e., so long as one remains in sin, not recognizing Him as the Savior from sin] . . ., he always lives a life timidly as if treading on thin ice; he always feels unsatisfied with himself; he always sighs over his lack of virtues; he is sorrowful at the corruption of the world; he is in agony, being able to make better neither himself nor the world." Shinko 10:147.

³³See, supra p. 32.

We will continue in our attempt to learn of the inner structure of Uchimura's understanding of sin. If our observation that Uchimura thinks of the problem of sin primarily in terms of man's morality is correct, we have to suppose that the solution of the problem of sin in Uchimura's thought must lie, again primarily, on the line of the realization of man's moral determination rather than on the line of the "mere" forgiveness of sin, or (to anticipate an important topic in the following) in sanctification rather than in justification.

In a theology where, contrary to Uchimura, the problem of sin is conceived of primarily in terms of the dreadful sense of the total condemnation before the absolute holiness of God because of man's radical sinfulness, sin's forgiveness is salvation in the most comprehensive sense, that is, it is conceived of as the message of the radical change of man's existence from under the curse of sin into the God's unfathomable mercy and love. Here, sin's reality in man is understood as a bottomless abyss in him, which makes it impossible for man to attribute any salvific, "meritorious" values to anything spiritual or moral, in whatever manner, originated in himself. What makes man "et peccator" even in his Christian existence before God is ever there in himself, even after justification, that is, "sin's forgiveness." Hence in this theology, the forgiveness of sin is and remains the one and only salvation, for a sinner can live only by the message of sin's forgiveness.

Now, considering Uchimura's concept of sin, which is different from that described immediately above, we shall ask: does he, in his concept of salvation, consistently follow the logical consequence of his moralistic understanding of sin, so that the concern for sin's

forgiveness occupies a penultimate and "secondary" place in his thought? Let us then, in the following, see more closely what Uchimura thinks of the problem of sin.

Ever confronted with the problem of sin in his own manner,³⁴ Uchimura has reflected much on the nature of sin. Although we often observe Uchimura very much concerned with actual deviations, "sins," from the viewpoint of moral ideal, he was also clearly aware of the very cause of those "sins," the sin of all sins. Since, for the determination of Uchimura's "harmatological" stance, it is essential for us to see in what sense, in which context, and against what theological background Uchimura speaks of the sin of all sins, we will quote three passages:

Asking what the sin is, we are then to answer it is "rebellion," i.e. the sin of rebellion which man has committed against God. And this is the sin of sins, the very origin [本] of sins. . . . What God wanted to remove in Christ was this very sin. The very origin of all the immorality and suffering lies in this sin. . . . Since the sin is rebellion, righteousness is then to return to God and obey Him. . . . As man commits sins because he has removed himself from God, so he becomes virtuous when he returns to God.³⁵

The prophet [Isaiah] accused Israel in Jehovah's place and said, "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." This is the word with which the Father accuses His Children . . . of committing the sin of unthankful disobedience against the Parent [不孝]. The greatest sin among all the other sins is this very sin against the Parent. . . . When one knows how

³⁴"When I look into myself, I do find nothing good in it. Only uncleanness, evil desire, evil passion and greediness are there." Shinko 7:192; "I have sins not conquered yet in myself. Thinking of it, I am sometimes dissatisfied." Ibid., p. 194; "I say to my God asking, Why dost Thou make me perfect instantly even today." Ibid., p. 195; "Even if I want not to sin, it is impossible for me to avoid it in this world of sin, just as it is not to be infected in an area contaminated by an epidemic disease." Ibid., p. 199.

³⁵Shinko 12:114-15. Emphasis is ours.

much care and toil it did cost on the side of his [earthly] parents to bring him up, he can hardly go against them. Even with human parents it is so, how much more with God the Parent! He had to put enormous efforts in the creation of man. . . . And this very man has rebelled against God! Nothing can ever be found comparable to God's disappointment and grief in this regard. . . . What is the result of this? "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it." No happiness comes upon the unthankful and disobedient, nor peace upon the rebellious. If one wants to reform man to the root, he must give him the true religion. . . . The true religion is the way to remove the very origin [本源] of sins, that is, the way to heal man's rebellion and make him wholly good.³⁶

The sin is the most grievous event ever occurred to man. It is the violation of God's majesty and the defilement of man's own being as spirit [靈性].³⁷

In these quotations in which he designates the sin of sins as "rebellion," "unthankful disobedience" and "the violation of majesty" vis-a-vis God, Uchimura presents another, more "religious," understanding of the nature of sin, which at first glance seems to force us to abandon, or at least to modify our observation above, that Uchimura thinks of the problem of sin primarily in terms of moral ideal. Still, we do not fail to notice a conspicuous feature of all the quotations above, namely that while he speaks of the nature of the sin he does not leave the mentioning of his strong moral concern.³⁸ This indicates that his "religious" recognition

³⁶ Kanzo Uchimura, Seisho Chukai Zenshu [Kanzo Uchimura's Complete Expositions of the Bible], 17 vols. (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1960-62), 6:29-31. Hereafter cited as Chukai. Emphasis is ours.

³⁷ Shinko 13:290. Emphasis is ours.

³⁸ In a short essay with the title "Sin and Perfection" which, written a year before his death, will show how consistently Uchimura thought of the problem of sin in terms of morality, he wrote among others as follows: "Perfection [完全] is our duty [義務]. . . . Every one of us must endeavor with all his might to become perfect. Even a Chinese sage said: 'From the Emperor to commoners, it is all alike essential to regulate one's own conducts [身を修めよ].' To regulate one's own conducts is to say: to become a gentleman [君子], a

of the problem of sin may still be subordinated to his moral concern, so that the real dimension of the problem of sin in man's existence³⁹ can be in reality overlooked.

Actually, in the deepest depth of the problem of sin, one could hardly speak of the sin and the betterment of man's morality in the same breath, for the sin as the rebellion against God involves a dreadful situation as its own consequence, namely that man's own rebellion against God throws himself into the inexorable judgment and wrath of the holy God, in which he has no hope whatsoever, except the sheer forgiveness on the part of God. Thus, the real intensity of man's hopelessness as the result of his rebellion against God becomes visible first against the background of the reality of God's judgment and wrath. The deep recognition of the reality of the sin as the rebellion against God, and that of the significance of the forgiveness of sin can be obtained only on the basis of the recognition of the real dimension of God's judgment and wrath over against man's rebellion. If the problem of sin is understood in this way, it would follow that, while one speaks of the problem of the sin, he would have no room for discussion on the man's moral betterment.

true man [人らしき人], a perfect man. . . . God does not however command us to become perfect by our own power. He provides us with all help [援助]. First, He forgave our sins with His Son. He grants, then, the Holy Spirit to us, through whom God lets us conquer sin. With all means available, God helps us to become perfect from within and from without." Shinko 12:24. We will discuss the concrete contents of sin's forgiveness and perfection in the following in extenso. Here, we just take note of Uchimura's predominant concern for morality.

³⁹Cf. supra. note 31.

When, as already indicated, Uchimura speaks of the problem of the sin and man's restoration in morality in the same breath, it hints that something theologically crucial may be missing in his soteriology, even though his words on this matter may sound "orthodox" at first glance. What can that be? We presume it is Uchimura's denial of the real and substantial existence of God's wrath. On this point, in fact, we have already made a cursory remark a few pages ago. There, in connection with the description of Uchimura's experience of agony, grief and shame with regard to the reality of sin, we pointed out that his experience consisted primarily in terms of his own inner reaction to the failure to live up to moral ideal, and not in terms of a dreadful experience of God's holy wrath. Now, we will take up in some detail the remark of ours as to the wrath of God in Uchimura's soteriology.

In general, the "image" of God in Uchimura's thought is compassionate, benevolent and benign, and this in a straight and undialectic manner. This vein can be already seen, in one of the passages above, in his use of parent symbolism for the description of God-man relationship. Though the Isaiah text itself uses this symbolism, Uchimura in his exposition employs it in a characteristic way. Actually, he uses this parent symbolism extensively to visualize the relationship of God and man. An example is:

That there is [ample examples of] parental love in Nature [as we plainly observe among human parents and animal ones alike in her], is the best evidence that God who is the Origin of all is Father as well as Mother. Nature is the manifestation [表現] of God Himself through visible things. The most precious thing in Nature is Love, and the best manifestation of Love is parental love.⁴⁰

⁴⁰Shinko 9:57. Emphasis is ours.

In a sense, it is quite striking that Uchimura conceives of God not only as Father but also as Mother! By including the mother image in his concept of God, he makes his own understanding of the wrath of God clearer.⁴¹ In fact, even when he speaks of the wrath of God, Uchimura does not conceal this "motherly" overtone:

Seeing that man violates the majesty of God and breaks the Law of the Universe, God feels in Himself a deep grief for man and becomes anxious about man. This, I think, is the wrath of God. . . . Although God has not anxiety [otherwise], His heart is filled with anxiety, seeing His children sunk in sins and wrong deeds in defiance of His will. This [feeling of anxiety] is the wrath the Father has over against His children, the wrath filled with tears, which is the other side of His love, the wrath holy and precious.⁴²

God is affectionately disposed toward His children, men, as good human parents are toward their own children. He is really the Father anxiously

⁴¹Speaking of a conspicuous inclination of Japanese religiosity toward the notion of God as Mother who knows no "punishment, wrath, judgment," but embraces Her children unquestioningly, Shusaku Endo, a Catholic novelist, says the following: "What the Kakura Kirishitan [literally, the hidden Christians, meaning the early Catholic Christians who, throughout the Tokugawa era, hid their religious identity in order to avert the severe persecution by the regime imposed upon of fear for the infiltration of Christianity the "evil, instigative" religion], statistically speaking, did worship was not 'Deus' [i.e. God the Father] nor Jesus but Mary. . . . In them, the religion of the Lord [主の宗教] was converted to the religion of Mother [母の宗教]. . . . This fact does not limit itself to the Kakure Kirishitan. Probably, I feel, the religion of Father has great difficulty to take root in the religious psychology of the Japanese. I imagine there is in the religious psychology of the Japanese something which converts Buddhism or whatever religion into the religion of Mother." Shusaku Endo, Nihonjin wa Kiristokyo o Shinjirareru ka [Can the Japanese Believe in Christianity?] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1977), pp. 234-36. Specifically of Uchimura, Ota quoting Uchimura's designation of "the Christian God" as "my Mamma, the gentle Spirit of God." (CW 1:154, emphasis is original) suggests that what Uchimura felt supported in his existence of the earlier years was rather "motherness" [母性] rather than "fatherness" [父性], pp. 13-14.

⁴²Shinko 9:76.

waiting for the return of the Prodigal Son. Something more striking is that Christ died, according to Uchimura, not only for us men, but also for God, "yea especially for God!" He, God the Father, rejoices now that He, because of the death of Christ, can at last forgive sinners.⁴³ It sounds as if God had been anxiously waiting for the time when he could forgive sinners. What Uchimura would bring to the fore through these words seems to be that God, as the Parent of man, in His mind has already forgiven sinners; the only remaining thing is the fulfilment of the claim of the Law, while God for His own sake would seem to "feel" no need for atonement or other things for His forgiveness of man. We quote to substantiate this view point:

When God forgave our sins, it was not with [the death of] Christ [キリストをもち]. Through Christ [キリストにより], God showed that He forgives our sins. It is not first with [the death of] Christ that God forgave our sin. Rather, God has been forgiving our sins since the beginning of this world, just as Christ forgave our sins. But God's forgiveness is not a mere forgiveness. He forgives our sins while He Himself suffers for our sins just as Christ suffered for our sins.⁴⁴

As far as this passage is concerned, Uchimura unequivocally says that God has already forgiven our sins prior to or irrespective of the death of Christ. The death of Christ (perhaps with His earthly life) is the paramount expression of God's eternal forgiving love.

To see the non-existence of God's wrath in Uchimura's thought from another viewpoint, let us take up just one more example of Uchimura's thinking. If God, Uchimura reasons, who is the Superior to man, is indeed a God, He must be the Redeemer of man, for the benevolent will can be observed, to some extent, even among men, some of whom, when they

⁴³Ibid., 12:60.

⁴⁴Ibid., 7:201.

are in the position of the superior to the others, will be benevolent toward them. If, therefore, it were not the case with God, He would not have been worthy of being called God. But in fact, Uchimura continues, through Christ who descended to this world as the incarnation of the benevolence of God, we can now recognize that God is truly our Redeemer, "not contrary to our idea [われらの理想に反する]."45

Uchimura proclaims God's love movingly through his tender sensitivity. However, the issue here is not his fully legitimate emphasis on God's sheer love, but the fact that his notion of God's love is monistic in nature, mindful virtually only of God as a sheer Benevolence. In Uchimura's notion of God, His holy wrath in its authentic sense is totally missing which is to safeguard God's sovereignty against man's presumptuous incarceration of Him in the framework of man's moral categories. God's sovereignty manifested in His holy wrath is the vital aspect of truth on God which, by unceasingly calling man into repentance from his presumption, leads him to the love of God obtainable only through the forgiveness of sin. Once, however, one defines God's love in his own terms unwilling to know of God's sovereignty and holiness over against him, he inevitably ceases to be a sinner, which in its turn converts the love of God in the Gospel into something else fitting in with man's morality.

This moralization tendency in Uchimura's thought can be noticed already in his use of analogies from somewhat idealized parent-child and superior-inferior relations. The phrase "not contrary to our ideal"

⁴⁵Ibid., 12:48.

in the quotation above amounts to the deadsolutization of God, rendering it difficult for Uchimura to grasp the aspect of discontinuity between God and man. Thus conceiving of God in optimistic human terms, Uchimura concludes that, after the redemptory death of Christ, God's wrath is objectively non-existent.⁴⁶ God is now standing on the side of man, ready to encourage and assist him in his moral rehabilitation.⁴⁷

⁴⁶This optimistic and humanizing characteristics of Uchimura's concept of God can be most clearly seen in his assertion of universalism of salvation, both in terms of the non-existence of God's wrath and of the immanentization of God Himself: "Since 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us' (Gal. 3:13), our sins are already removed from the presence of God. Now God, even if He would, cannot have wrath over us. Through the death of Christ on the Cross, the wrath of God as well as the curse upon the mankind [人類] are eternally removed. There exists nothing that stands in the way between God and mankind." Shinko 5:127-28, "That God has saved the world is to say that He has saved the whole world, that is the whole mankind [人類全体]. God has saved both those who believe in Him and those who do not, both those who heard the name of Christ and those who did not, both the good and the evil; He has saved every human being. For me, anything less than this is not the Gospel. Nor can I attribute less love than this to God the Father who is the Creator of all the universe. Believing that God is love, I cannot but believe this much to say the least. For me, as God who does not save the whole mankind is not God." *Ibid.*, pp. 131-32.

⁴⁷"When God helps man, He helps man to help himself, just as the good father and mother or the good teacher do. When God helps, He does not appear to help. The greatest gift and help of God is to give man a holy, strong will. The meaning of Jesus' saying: "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him" (Luke 11:13), is nothing other than this. . . . For the Holy Spirit, identifying Himself with the spirit of man [人の靈に同化して], works as his spirit. By the help of God, I become a good man to perform the will of God." Shinko 15:137. "When God saves me while Himself dwelling in me, He does not claim the merit [功] of my salvation for Himself; rather, He will credit me with the merit. Such is the modesty [謙遜] of God. Although God saves me through Himself, He does not make me without merits. Rather, He will accept me as a good child of His. . . . Although God translates His good deeds [自己の善行] into us and He does the good deeds by Himself through us, God praises [賞めたい] us for them. O, the infinite love of the Heavenly Father. . .!" *Ibid.*, 16:148.

In view of the analysis above, we must conclude that, even when Uchimura speaks of the sin as the rebellion against God, he after all conceives of the problem of sin in terms of morality, in the context of man's moral rehabilitation, and against the background of "monistically" understood God's love.

If, as we have observed so far, Uchimura conceives of the problem of sin in terms of morality, and if the ultimate concern is then the rehabilitation of man's morality, the forgiveness of sin is necessarily of penultimate significance for Christian existence. If God's wrath is non-existent now, and if the forgiveness of sin is the objective reality on the side of God about which man only has to know, there is, once receiving the forgiveness of sin, logically no real rationale for talking about it as the ever-recurring issue and concern for Christian existence. To dwell upon the problem of sin would be barren if not forbidden.⁴⁸ The problem of sin must be left behind once forgiven, and one has to work toward becoming virtuous and good by God's help. The forgiveness of sin is thus of preliminary and penultimate significance for Christian life.

Now, however, Uchimura in numerous places in his writing sets the emphasis on the significance of the Cross and the forgiveness of sin, and that diligently. In this, if taken as it sounds and without further questions as to the actual contents of the emphasis, Uchimura might be among those who lived by the message of sin's forgiveness alone. This appears to gainsay what we have observed above, which necessitates a further analysis of what Uchimura means by "the forgiveness of sin."

⁴⁸Cf. infra pp. 98-103.

"Crucifixianity" was Uchimura's proposal for a new name of Christianity when he felt that many things alien to Christianity passed for Christianity. With this coinage of the new name for Christianity, Uchimura wanted to express the idea that the core of Christianity is the cross of Christ. Uchimura says:

Christianity is essentially the religion of the Cross. It is not simply the religion of Christ but the religion of Christ crucified. . . . The Cross is not merely a symbol of Christianity; it is its centre, the corner stone upon which its whole structure rests. Sins forgiven and annihilated on the Cross, blessing promised and bestowed on the condition of believing acceptance of what happened upon the Cross; - indeed, no Cross, no Christianity.⁴⁹

The whole phraseology in this passage unmistakably bears the mark of the Pauline emphasis on the centrality of Christ and His cross for salvation. "Forgiveness of sin on the cross and blessing through faith" can be fully interpreted to be strictly Biblical and orthodox. In view of this "orthodoxy" of Uchimura expressed in the quotation, we notice, at first glance, that our observation would not fit in with the impression gained here.

How shall we, then, understand the seeming tension between the "theology" found in the passage above and what we have observed so far upon the basis of the utterance of the same Uchimura? Do we here, in Uchimura's thought, find another version of Christianity different from that we have learned so far? Or are there some connecting links which will do justice both to the "orthodox" version, and to the "moralistic" one which is primarily concerned with man's moral rehabilitation by the power of God?

⁴⁹CW 3:132-33.

Our problem lies in the fact that a theological formulation, unless put in a form precisely worked out, can amount to an empty sack into which one can both put and read even contradictory theological ideas. It is therefore necessary for us to be precise in order to gain conceptually an exact meaning of a theological formulation. It might be foreign to Uchimura's way of thinking to engage in this "hair-splitting-like" effort. Yet, in order to find out what is actually going on between the "two versions" of Christianity in Uchimura's thought, we now have to examine what Uchimura does mean by the paradigmatic formulation which is found in the passage above, namely, "sins forgiven and annihilated on the Cross," for we notice a tangible clue in the combination of the words, "sins forgiven and annihilated," which suggests some links between the "two versions."

Now, we will listen to what Uchimura says of this theme:

Christ was crucified to save me, and with His blood shed on the Cross He redeemed me, and with His death He removed my sin [罪を取り除きたるなり]. This is the essential meaning of the Gospel. . . . God in Christ removed man's sin.⁵⁰

I am saved by the extinction [消滅] of sin, which God rendered in Christ.⁵¹

One feature which seizes our attention in these quotations inclusive of the passage a few paragraphs above, is that Uchimura, almost invariably when he speaks of the forgiveness of sin, uses a terminology that points strongly in the direction of rendering the sin into non-existence. Besides "annihilation" [絶滅], "removal" [除去], and "extinction" [消滅] which we have already come across, Uchimura uses also such terms as "wiping away" [拭去], "eradication" [根絶], "Blotting

⁵⁰ Shinko 12:160-61.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 59.

away" [抹殺], "deletion" [削除], "killing" [殺す]. In view of strong terminology, we inevitably must ask: why is Uchimura inclined to that extent to insist upon the "ontic annihilation," as we may designate it, of the sin or sins? His concern with this "ontic annihilation" of sin occasionally overwhelms his concern with the forgiveness of sin. As a matter of fact, Uchimura says that, "for the Christians, the forgiveness of sin is the eradication of sin."⁵² To make the point clear, let us quote:

The forgiveness of sin in the Christian faith is the annihilation of sin; sin was crucified and killed. God has now completely dismissed what is called sin from His heart. And the Christians believe the forgiveness of sin in this sense.⁵³

These words very clearly indicate that the "ontic annihilation" of sin occupies, to a great extent, Uchimura's reflection in connection with the settlement of sin's problem.

This strong emphasis on the annihilation of sin in Uchimura's utterances may lead us to wonder whether he is unaware of the actual reality of sin and its manifestation in our Christian lives. To be sure, he was well aware of that reality even after the receiving of the forgiveness of sin.⁵⁴ What, then, does Uchimura want to express with these terms all pointing to the "ontic annihilation" of sin? Now, let

⁵² Shinko 14:192.

⁵³ Ibid., 12:76.

⁵⁴ "The horror of sin is the experience of its accusation [詰責]. Many individuals often kill themselves, not able to bear it. When sin is forgiven, this horror is also taken away. As a result, although sin's ugly form [いやらしき形] remains, its sting has been removed. As a result, sin remains as a feeble power [微弱な力]. . . . Even if it is not possible for us to do away with sin completely while we are in flesh, it is the status of the forgiven sinners that sin has no dominion over them." Shinko 12:77.

us take a look at some passages which contribute to elucidate Uchimura's thought on this point. He says:

Jesus removed the sin, that is, He brought us back to God by healing our rebellion [against God].⁵⁵

Jesus provided us a great salvation. He removed man's sin; He opened the way for man to reconcile himself with God.⁵⁶

He [Christ] has annihilated the very sin [i.e. man's abandonment of God], that is to say, the chasm [斷隙] between God and man has removed by [the death of] Christ. And, man returning to God, the sin is removed [completely] to the root.⁵⁷

These quotations are only a few specimens of Uchimura's utterances on the "annihilation" or "removal" of "the sin." The invariably recurring theme in these passages is the equation of the annihilation or removal of sin with the reestablishment of God-man relationship. What does this equation imply? In order to grasp the meaning of it, we shall examine the last passage in the quotation above for some detail. There Uchimura speaks of sin's annihilation rendered by the death of Christ and of sin's eradication through man's returning to God. This seems implicitly to presuppose a twofold aspect of the annihilation of "the sin," namely the settling of the account of man's guilt with God by the death of Christ and the reestablishment of God-man relationship by man's returning to God. The image "chasm" in the passage helps us see the relationship between the two aspects. It may be reasoned in the following way. Simultaneously with his rebellion against God, man has initiated a chasm between himself and God by "abandoning God." But in so doing, he incurred guilt with God, which made it impossible for him to return to God without further ado, namely constituted "the chasm" from on God's side.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 85.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 116.

⁵⁷Ibid., 3:209.

While man thus finds himself in a situation of impasse, God has annihilated all the consequences of man's rebellion ("the sin") on his side, that is, "the chasm" is removed from on God's side. Man's sin no longer has any "ontic" reality on the side of God. When Uchimura says that Christ "annihilated" the very sin, it is to be understood as the ontic annihilation of sin's reality before God. Now the way is open to God. The path is made available for man by the death of Christ to return to God. Once man returns to God via this path, the "chasm" from on the side of man, "the sin," is also annihilated, that is, "eradicated." Further, returning to God, Uchimura means, man is restored to the original relationship with God, being now obedient to the will of God.⁵⁸ "When the sin is 'being away from God,'" says Uchimura, "the righteousness is 'returning to God.'"⁵⁹ Against the background of this view on Uchimura's thought, we understand the equation of the reestablishment of the God-man relationship with the annihilation of sin, namely that man, being allowed to return to God, is now standing in the original relationship with God, which is the very opposite to the sin, the rebellion against God. Once the rebellion is removed, there is no sin any more in its "ontic" sense. To illustrate this viewpoint of sin's "ontic" annihilation, let us quote a passage:

The very purpose of Jesus' descending to this world was . . . mainly to remove the sin. . . . God judged my sin in Him and forgave me for the sake of His merit. . . . A mark of the thorn called "sin" will remain, but the thorn itself is already pulled away. Now, it is much easier for me to avoid evils and do good things, than it was before, I being liberated from the fetters of evil.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Cf. supra, note 46.

⁵⁹ Shinko 12:13.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 10:147. Emphasis is ours.

What we see through our observation of Uchimura's understanding of the solution of sin's problem, is that the matter that counts ultimately is not the removal of sin's guilt, and its forgiveness--though indispensable as the penultimate--but the removal and annihilation of the sin itself, which is the very root of all the evils, that is, the rebellion against God. The sin redeemed and the original God-man relationship reestablished in the real sense of the term, man is now "factually" righteous and without sin in its "ontic" sense, for there is no enmity anymore between God and man.

The theological presupposition of this view of Uchimura on the solution of sin's problem is to be seen in his optimistic anthropology, which apriori excludes the thought of man's radical sinfulness which fills the Christian existence with the problem of sin. Uchimura understands man as more "lovable" and not so evil as the total depravity of man would suggest.⁶¹ In general, Uchimura conceives of the situation lying between God and man as governed by "good-will," as it were, both on God's side and on man's.

⁶¹"Through the misdeed of our First Parents, the 'parent-child'-like relationship [親子的關係] between God and man was broken. We call this deplorable severance 'the Fall of Mankind.' We do not say, however, mankind has lost all of its good nature [善性], nor its intellect [知能], nor its virtuous nature [徳性]. But mankind has lost God the Father." *Shinko* 12:12. "Nothing is in the world so beautiful and lovable [うらわしく愛すべき] as a repentant sinner." *Ibid.*, 7:203. "Christ loves me because I am man . . . The holy image [聖き像] of which it is spoken in connection with God's creation of man in His own image remains in me though faintly. Christ loves me for this image. . . Christ laid down His life to save the holy figure [聖き身] from the sin. . . Christ loves me because of the good and beautiful which still remains in me. Though I am imperfect, I am not totally without something valuable . . . He recognizes the good and beautiful in me. . . And He loves me because of my faith in Him." *Ibid.*, 10:102; in speaking of sin's seriousness, Uchimura still maintains: "If we could

Thus, the "chasm" between God and man has been removed; the problem of sin lies now behind, while God and man are, so to speak, standing on the same side and fighting together for the conquest of the "remaining force" of sin and for the realization of man's moral ideal. When, therefore, Uchimura says "sins forgiven and annihilated on the Cross," he means that, thanks to the Cross of Christ which has removed all the obstacles between God and man, punishment as well as rebellion against God, man is in essentially original fellowship with God, willing to obey God's will fully.

As we have come so far, we are to sum up the main points of our observation to round up this section. Uchimura thought that the sin was now non-existent "ontically" both on the side of God and that of man, because, forgiven and brought back to God through the cross of Christ, man found himself in the original relationship with God, which was "factually" man's righteousness. The validity of this theological viewpoint, however, depends on whether it is theologically and "practically" valid that man finds himself in God's original relationship without being affected by the remaining sin in his inside. We should rather ask whether it is much more so that man, even after "coming back to God" through the merit of Christ, finds in himself a rebellious abyss which drives him to seek the forgiveness of sin by way of daily repentance in order, as "et peccator," to cross the "chasm." We will come back

follow this theory [about sin as disease and deficiency naturally inherent to man so that it would not be necessary to take it seriously], we might feel the burden of sin lightened and not have to take it seriously. But if I am satisfied with the theory, the most beautiful thing in my innermost part will be extinguished and perished together with it." Ibid., 15:49.

to this point later. The most important point in this section is, again, Uchimura's intense concern with the annihilation of the sin itself. As we have so often seen, Uchimura's primary concern is with man's morality as the basis for man's self-affirmation.⁶² He was deeply disturbed by the experience of his moral deficiency and agonized very much of it. Concerned primarily with the problem of sin as moral deficiency, Uchimura felt that the forgiveness of sin is not the ultimate answer to the solution of the problem of sin. To him the ultimate answer must be tangible rehabilitation of man's corrupted morality which should, in one way or other, lead to man's realization of his moral determination even while here on earth. Such a theological stance that man remains in his own right undeniably "et peccator" is repugnant to Uchimura's soteriology. In order for man to become really good before God, men and himself, the sin must be reduced to non-existence "ontically," otherwise a great part of Uchimura's theology which is based upon man's aspiration toward "moral perfection" would be in ruins.⁶³ (On this point

⁶²In this section we have spoken much of morality as the predominant concern in Uchimura's thought on the problem of sin. At the close of this section it is helpful to include some remark on the nature of morality in our context. Besides the actual observance of a moral code, morality is more the manifestation of a way of life in which one endeavors to attain noble character for himself, which in its turn affirms his "autonomous" ethical value as a spiritual being. "The punishment unmistakably imposed upon him [who stands against God]," says Uchimura, "is the degradation of the quality of his character [品性の墮落]. That is, he becomes unable to see holy and noble things but to seek ignoble and mean things. This is the most horrible punishment . . . ever imposed upon him." Shinko 7:193. Morality thus understood is, however, in principle self-centered, and is close to a manifestation of homo incurvatus in se.

⁶³"The work of Christ for the salvation of the world is twofold. The one is to teach mankind the perfect life; the other is to make extinct the sin of mankind by bearing it in His body. The former is the ultimate goal of the salvation of the world [救世の最終の目的],

we will see in the following.) As a matter of fact, Uchimura found his inner peace when he came to experience that, as it sounds characteristic of him, "Christ, paying all my debt, can bring me back to the purity and innocence of the first man before the Fall."⁶⁴

Salvation as "Perfection"

What we have learned in the preceding section is that in Uchimura's thought the problem of sin is settled by God in the redemptory work in such a manner that for man the power and reality of sin is essentially and objectively already done away with. God in Christ has swept the ground in man's interior, as it were, for the implanting of something new. Hence, such a central theme as the forgiveness of sin in orthodox Protestantism, especially in Lutheranism, is made something preliminary and preparatory to the more essential. In fact, we have already indicated to some extent that Uchimura's concern is turning ultimately around the restoration possibility of man's corrupted moral nature. In this section we shall attempt to analyze Uchimura's understanding of justification and sanctification as salvation and his concept of faith through which to attain salvation. In this way we come to see the structure of Uchimura's soteriology in clearer relief.

Uchimura uses the term justification in two ways: on the one hand he equates it with the forgiveness of sin, and on the other hand

while the latter is instrumental to the former. If one wants to make a perfect man, he must first remove away his sin which make man imperfect, for unless man extricates himself from sin, he cannot cease to sin." Shinko 1:152.

⁶⁴See supra, pp. 30-31.

he conceives it as factual justification, or sanctification in the sense of moral renewal and progress. Consistently enough with his view on the solution of sin's problem, Uchimura allows himself, in no way, to be absorbed only into gratia remissionis. He sees something detrimental to Christian existence in the "overemphasis" on the forgiveness of sin.

Truly, it is the greatest joy for sinners to be justified by God. . . . Many Christians are therefore so inclined to lay an exclusive emphasis on this, as having no occasion to see the other aspects [of the blessing of God], imagining Christian salvation is exhausted here. This is, we may say, a shortcoming of Lutheranism and Calvinism. Jesus Christ is not only our righteousness but also our sanctification. . . . It is sanctification that we acquire all the beautiful virtues of Christ in our personalities, particularly His profound and warm love, the love by which He loved us.⁶⁵

For Uchimura, to be justified in the sense of being forgiven for sin and accepted as righteous into the fellowship with God is not salvation in the full sense of the term; it is rather only the beginning of full salvation.⁶⁶ And this full salvation is not only man's wish but God Himself wills it. He says:

We say that God justifies those who believe in Him. What is this to say? To justify us is to God not to declare us righteous: God is not merely a Judge, so He is not satisfied with declaring sinners not guilty, nor with acquitting them from their sins. . . . [For God,] to justify is to make righteous, that is, to create righteous heart in sinners. . . . With God forgiveness of sin is

⁶⁵Shinko 12:67.

⁶⁶"First, every one must be healed from his rebellion against God. Otherwise his salvation does not begin. One should stand up and go to Father to say: I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. This is the first step of salvation. Man going back to God with repentance and God welcoming him with love, his salvation begins. To be justified is not to be saved. To understand so is a great error." Chukai 11:133.

not juridical [法律的] forgiveness, but a factual [事实的] one. He is not satisfied until He has made sinners factually righteous.⁶⁷

Yes, it is beyond any question that, believing in God, one's sin is forgiven for the sake of Christ's redemptory work and he is taken into God's fellowship. Still, according to Uchimura, if he remains "et peccator," one is not saved in real sense. The factual salvation is to conquer sin in one's self and to see the moral ideals realized in this self, although the realization of moral ideals may remain partial.⁶⁸ Corresponding to this view of salvation, Uchimura says that Christ's redemptory work is not yet completed. The event on the Cross then was just the beginning of the whole process called salvation, which is now going on in our hearts. The effect of the redemption of Christ becomes actualized in us when "Father and Son, descending to our hearts through the Spirit," "produce the fruits of conversion" in us and, "for our sake, i.e. becoming ourselves, make us sinless and accept us in the Devine fellowship."⁶⁹ Thus to Uchimura, salvation is not merely salvation from sin's consequences before God. It is rather to become sinless through factual conquest of the power of sin.

More articulate expressions for this kind of salvation in Uchimura's thought are the obtainment of "perfection" [完全] and the "realization of ideals" [理想の實現], which are used interchangeably

⁶⁷Shinko 12:68.

⁶⁸"What is it to say to be saved? Needless to say, it is to be saved from sin. It is to see on my person factually what Paul said in Rom. 6:14, namely, "Sin shall not have dominion over you." That is, we come to control ourselves easily; ideal [理想] does not remain ideal, but comes to see its realization in us (even if it may be partial)." Ibid., p. 114.

⁶⁹Ibid., 16:149.

in Uchimura's writing. And in fact these things are other names for sanctification for Uchimura. Even ahead of any detailed analysis we can surmise a certain direction in his understanding of sanctification as the obtainment of perfection or the realization of ideals in man. In other words, it seems to be the completion of man's moral and personal character for man's own sake, which, we must say, remains in the sphere of man's aspiration toward ideal morality. We have already come across a characteristic expression of his for this, namely, the acquisition of "all the beautiful virtues of Christ in our personalities." With this sort of understanding of sanctification as salvation, it is quite natural to find the forgiveness of sin completely overshadowed in Uchimura's soteriology.

Uchimura's idea of "perfection" is sublime and vigorous. To become "perfect" means to actualize in one's own thought, word and deed the goodness, the trueness and the beautifulness which make up the perfect nature of God.⁷⁰ Consequently it is to become pure and blameless,⁷¹ to be motivated in all things solely by love,⁷² to be ready to offer one's own life to the cause of love and righteousness,⁷³ and so on. In a word it is to become like Christ,⁷⁴ because He is "the perfect Man."⁷⁵ And salvation in the full and true sense is no less than this.

⁷⁰Ibid., 14:54.

⁷¹"Salvation is nothing but becoming a perfect man [完全者]. In the words of St. Paul, it is not having spot, or wrinkle," and "holy and glorious." Shinko 12:129.

⁷²Ibid., 8:97. ⁷³Cf. infra. pp. 115-17. ⁷⁴Shinko 7:246.

⁷⁵"By believing in the perfect Man [完全者] Jesus. . . . we eventually come to make His perfection to our own." Shinko 12:132.

Since Uchimura strongly insists upon man's "perfection" as salvation, he emphasizes therefore that "the goal of Christianity is to make man perfect."⁷⁶ In his view all the other religions are existing just to cover man's sinfulness and his weakness.⁷⁷ But Christianity is, Uchimura contends, a religion of real power [実力の宗教],⁷⁸ a power which overcomes man's sinfulness and makes him morally perfect. "The mover of [man's] good nature [善心の発動者] and the fulfiller of righteousness [正義の実行者], that is, the great power of God to save man, this is Christianity,"⁷⁹ says Uchimura. He thinks that precisely in this power lies something specifically different of Christianity from all the other religions. All the other religions are not in possession of the real power, and therefore cannot place the claim of perfection as salvation on man. Only "the way of God," Christianity, can therefore confront man with the potential of becoming perfect.

To say that man can become a child of God while remaining in imperfection is to despise [the true intention of] God. Only he who is like God is a child of God. And without becoming a child of God, no one can enter His kingdom and participate in its glory. Salvation is nothing but to become a perfect man. . . . Christianity is the way which makes man morally [道徳的に] perfect.⁸⁰

Is all this possible for man with all his sins and weakness? Would it not be insuperably difficult, not to say, impossible, for ordinary mortals to attain the perfection claimed above? In fact, Uchimura admits that "to become perfect is something which even the saints and

⁷⁶Ibid., 12:128.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 129.

⁷⁸"The raison d'etre of Christianity is . . . in its power. God is not [a topic of] discussion but a Real Power. Life is not theory but action. The religion which is to save mankind, introducing God to it, must be a great power." Ibid., 15:66-67.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 69.

⁸⁰Ibid., 12:129-30.

sages in times past could dream of but never succeeded to attain."⁸¹ But, Uchimura declares that it is possible through the way of God, Christianity, which leads "the most imperfect mortals" to the perfection like that perfection found in God Himself. But how does it then become possible, in concrete terms, for us ordinary men and women to attain to that perfection? Of course not by our own power of any sort. It is only possible by the power of God/Christ which man receives into his inner self through faith. Yes, it is faith in and through which the divine power is to be made available for man's perfection. "Faith is," says Uchimura, "the shortcut to the attainment of perfection."⁸² Our question arises at once: What is the faith which makes man perfect as Uchimura asserts?

The term "faith" is used, just as other theological terms, to mean different things. In its broadest use, "faith" designates the whole Christian religion. In the present context we understand it as one of the most essential factors of soteriology. Its actual content is necessarily interlocked with the content of salvation. In Lutheranism--to take it as a viewpoint from which to see Uchimura's concept of faith in contrast--faith is essentially and primarily defined as the correlative to the Gospel or God's promise of sin's forgiveness for

⁸¹Ibid., p. 128.

⁸²"The way of faith [信仰の道] is easy; it is simply to trust. Then, light [光明 enlightenment and hope] comes to me; power is given to me; defilement leaves me; the Holy Spirit dwells in me. Faith is a shortcut [捷路] to the attainment of perfection." Ibid., 7:140.

Christ's sake.⁸³ The background for the Lutheran concentration on the indissoluble correlation of faith and the forgiveness of sin is the Lutheran awareness of the constant and unceasing need of man in his Christian existence for sin's forgiveness as the ultimate in salvation, received through faith upon the daily repentance of sin.

For Uchimura, faith is conceived of differently, and that in accordance with his own understanding of the solution of sin's problem and his concept of salvation based upon this solution. We will see in the following some basic characteristics of Uchimura's concept of faith in the process of appropriation of salvation.

"My religion is," says Uchimura, "all faith. There is no effort in it except it be an effort to believe."⁸⁴ However, faith is not merely to believe something. For Uchimura, it is an effort constantly to "leave one's self as it is in His [Christ's] hand."⁸⁵ Faith is an effort to live one's life wholly according to the principle of Christ and by His power. Faith as an effort in this sense is the basis for all the other efforts in his Christian existence. It is, in other words, the all-comprehensive way of Uchimura's life.

⁸³In dealing with justification as forensic imputation [and not as factual implanting] of the righteousness of God as the core of Lutheran soteriology, Werner Elert speaks of faith as the formal [i.e. devoid of every empirical psychic content] correlative to the promise of the forgiveness of sin: "Exactly as in Luther, [so also in the Formula of Concord,] faith is referred exclusively to the promise ([SD III,] 31): as an act of man it is altogether empty. What gives it its significance in the act of justification is exclusively that which is conferred on it from beyond all subjectivity: the 'merciful reconciliation of forgiveness of sins, which is presented to us out of pure grace solely through faith in the promise of the Gospel' (30)." Werner Elert, The Structure of Lutheranism, trans. Walter A. Hansen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), p. 104.

⁸⁴CW 3:104. Emphasis is original.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 172.

Placed in Christ, faith is then a powerful thing, "a perennial spring of strength,"⁸⁶ which effects man's perfection.

Faith in Jesus does not remain mere faith. This faith causes the transformation of heart [改心] and becomes manifest in good deeds. . . . When we believe in Jesus the Son of God, we cannot but become pure eventually as Jesus is pure. . . . We are gradually transformed, from glory to glory, into the image [聖像] of the Lord. The change is not ambiguous but certain. The more we look unto the Lord Jesus, the more His image infects itself in our body. How precious this is! We can become perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect. Truly, we can become factually the children of God.⁸⁷

In this passage, faith in Christ is designated with another phrase, namely, "look unto the Lord." This is, in fact, a characteristic way in which Uchimura describes the "mode" of faith. Besides "look unto the Lord," as we have in the passage above, Uchimura uses in numerous places similar expressions like "looking unto Jehovah,"⁸⁸ "looking upon my crucified Lord,"⁸⁹ simply "looking unto the Cross,"⁹⁰ and so on. What are the implications when Uchimura so devotedly speaks of faith in these phrases?

I, looking up unto Him in my weakness, am supplied with strength, mysterious yet intensely real, I work outside of myself, as it were but in full possession of my consciousness, Himself merged in myself

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 198. Cf. Ibid., p. 172.

⁸⁷Shinko 12:131.

⁸⁸"We are saved by looking unto Jehovah. As the result of this, our faces shine. Christianity is the religion of looking-unto [仰望] through and through. . . . For the believers, there is no other way than this for his sanctification [聖化] and improvement [向上]." Shinko 7:160.

⁸⁹"As I look upon my crucified Savior with eyes of faith, I am transformed into His image from glory to glory I do not try to build my character, but by constantly looking unto Him, am I gradually made like Him. Faith is the secret of Christian perfection." CW 3:166.

⁹⁰"The Cross is the assurance [of salvation]. Sins may remain, or may not; but I am not to look unto my sins, but unto the Cross. The Cross does sanctify. . . ." CW 3:68. Emphasis is original.

or rather He working through me, as me - the greatest condescensions on his part, and the highest of all glories on mine.⁹¹

What this passage particularly tells us is that faith as "looking unto Christ" is a sort of contemplative and mystical devotion to Christ which brings one's inner self into an intense and real experience of somewhat mystical union with Christ.⁹² And through this "looking unto Christ," becomes the Divine power of one's own for sanctification and good deeds. Faith thus conceived is the correlative to gratia infusa rather than that to gratia remissionis.

Speaking of faith as "looking unto Christ," Uchimura is overwhelmingly concerned with sanctification, transformation and the like. But this concern of Uchimura intrinsically pre-supposes the undeniable

⁹¹CW 3:172.

⁹²In Uchimura's writing we recognize a salient tendency of mysticism. It is preeminently connected with Christ. We take a few specimens here: "There are some who claim to know me well. Perhaps they know me well. But I am not one I. Occasionally [時に]. 'Certain One' [ある者] visits me with the Presence. . . . I am not one but two. And those who do not know of my great Companion, do not know my deep and noble part." Shinko 7:78-79; "My Christ here and now is not somebody else than myself [, He is myself]. Christ and I are not two separate persons [二→別の者], as if He were He, and I were I. I have translated my whole being into Christ. Yea, I strain myself to do so daily." Ibid., 10:150. In numerous other places where Uchimura speaks of Christ as his All, which we might call Uchimura's "Christ is my all" -utterance, we trace more or less the tendency of mysticism similar to that in the quotations above. Besides these "Christ-bound" mystic tendencies, Uchimura seems to have had more general mystic experience. In an article of his reception of the Holy Spirit, Uchimura says: "There is nothing better than this [the Holy Spirit] in this world. . . . I want nothing. I want to possess only this (the Holy Spirit) to eternity. . . . O, what a peace, calmness, and assurance! . . . My past is all forgotten; my future is filled with all hope; I see the meaning of life; suffering's problem is all beautifully solved; I feel the heaven is clear, the earth is firm, trees and grasses, the sun, the moon, and the stars, all have sympathy with me. What would the heavenly kingdom be, if this were not it?" Ibid., 9:168-69.

presence of sin in his existence. It is impossible to escape the problem. How does he then conceive of it in view of the "looking unto Christ?"⁹³ In fact, Uchimura looks unto Christ whenever confronted with actual sins in himself. However, it is characteristic to Uchimura that, in this idea of "looking-unto," God the Holy against whom sins are committed is in effect absent as such. This indicates again that sins are experienced as moral failure rather than as something which ultimately amounts to the violation of God Himself. It is for this reason that Uchimura is so passionately concerned with the removal of sin. To Uchimura, sin is not something to be forgiven -- "forgiven" in its primary and genuine sense -- but something to be empirically taken away. Hence, what man needs in the last analysis is not the forgiveness of sin -- it is as such already given objectively for the purpose of being

⁹³The observation here is made on the basis of the following and similar passages: "Sins must be recognized but must not be gazed at. . . . We must immediately look unto the Cross of Christ. He nailed our sins on the Cross (Col. 2:14). Looking unto the Cross of Christ, sins cease to be sins, and turn out to be grace to our hearts." Shinko 12:78. "If I sin today, I look unto the Cross of the Lord. If I will sin tomorrow, I will also look unto the Cross of the Lord. However often I may sin, whatever sin I may commit, I will do the same. . . . This [looking unto the Cross of the Lord] is the only salvation for man and world. Why it is so, I do not know. It seems just as the sun-beam is necessary for man's health although one has only a partial explanation of it." Ibid., p. 158. "God lifts up Christ on the Cross so that He may save every one who looks unto it. Why is it so? What is the theological explanation of it [i.e. this way of salvation]? But I know the Blood of Christ cleanses my sins. When I look unto Him on the Cross, I recognize immediately that the burden of my sins falls down from my shoulders." Ibid., 10:140. "When we look up unto Christ on the Cross, what is called sin disappears from our hearts. The agony of sins is removed by the death of Christ, quicker than the fever abates by quinine, and more certainly than the pain disappears by morphine. Why is it so? Why is such an unintelligible thing like a cross necessary for the removal of sins? . . . Thus some people ask and blame us. We do not know ourselves. . . . What is most certain, however, is the effect [of the Cross] itself." Ibid., 15:60-61.

known, and not, once known, to be sought--,⁹⁴ but His power to remove sin from man's self. And it is precisely man's "looking unto Christ" through which the spiritual and moral power of the Divine flows into man's soul and cleanses it by removing sin.

In connection with "looking unto Christ" vis-a-vis the actuality of sin's problem, Uchimura also has to reject "looking into one's self" or "self-examination" [自省].⁹⁵ Uchimura contends that "looking into

⁹⁴ Speaking of salvation in terms of sin's forgiveness, Uchimura says: "Mankind [人類] has been already judged for its sin in Christ. Mankind is forgiven its sin in Christ. Mankind has returned to God in Christ. Now, God sees mankind with love with which He loves Christ. Mankind is already saved. Only, every one does not recognize this salvation. We are already in grace. We are saved only by recognizing this in our heart." Shinko 7:240.

⁹⁵ For the better understanding of the following, it is helpful to include some "genetic" background of Uchimura's antagonism toward self-examination. This antagonism surely has its root in his own experience of intense agony caused by the self-examination in which he was forced to recognize his moral impurity and defects. Uchimura considers this agony-inflicting self-examination as inherited from Confucianism, in which it is taught that man should examine himself thrice a day (O, teachers of this world [Confucianists], ye provided me with agony over half my life, by preaching self-examination to me! Ibid., 7:135). Having applied this teaching in his Christian life, Uchimura was still more tormented by the more radical moral claims of Christianity, which exposed mercilessly his impurity and ignobleness and, thus, left nothing over but utter despair. We may think that, just in that situation, he could have found liberation from this agony by believing in God's forgiveness of sin promised in the Gospel of the Crucified Christ. However, conceiving of sin as a moral problem, Uchimura could not find it in the forgiveness of sin. Instead, he obtained liberation in the experience of the atoning, i.e. cleansing power of Christ, given while "looking unto Him on the Cross." From the very beginning of his Christian existence, Uchimura conceived of the sin as something definitely to be removed. Hence, self-examination which, in his understanding, will cause nothing but the "barren" recognition of one's sinfulness, is meaningless. If ever, self-examination has meaning only where the forgiveness of sin is understood as the ultimate ground for man's existence by those who recognize in themselves the manifestations of the self-deification tendency and feel themselves constantly in need of the forgiveness of sin from God.

one's self" is the very opposite of the inspiring "looking unto Christ," thus only detrimental for the attainment of higher perfection in Christian life. For self-examination can tell only of one's own sinfulness and impurity, sapping the aspiration toward perfection.⁹⁶ "Man dies by self-examination," says Uchimura.⁹⁷ "Self-examination is necessary as a[n initial] way to Christ," he also means, "but once man has recognized Him [as his Righteousness and Sanctification], it is harmful and of no use,"⁹⁸ "except to make man only humble."⁹⁹

Uchimura's rejection of self-examination, however, leads us to raise a question: to wit, is it not exactly the necessary and meaningful function of self-examination to "kill" us and make us humble, in order for us to recognize our incurable propensity toward hybris and self-sufficiency which, concealed even in a most pious devotion, leads us astray from the fellowship with God which can be only authentic on the basis of sin's forgiveness? To be sure, self-examination would be of no use if it should not lead man to a "fruitful" repentance before God. However, what matters in Uchimura's rejection of self-examination is not the denial of such a "barren" self-examination, but the denial

⁹⁶"Self-examination does not produce hope and joy, nor activity; it is only a negative force [消極 勢力]. . . . When one [, however,] turns his eyes from himself and look unto Jesus Christ. . . , he is redeemed, sanctified, and eventually made like Him in His image. . . . In this [looking-unto], one finds the efficacy of the Gospel, its power and its infinite possibilities." Ibid., 22:52-53.

⁹⁷Ibid., 16:29.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 58. "Introspection is a harmful thing [禁物] for faith. Do not look into yourself. Look up [unto Christ], and you will be cleansed without your knowing." Ibid., 12:120.

⁹⁹Ibid., 16:52.

of self-examination as such. Why does Uchimura, then, insist on refrainment from self-examination as such, which seems to us tantamount to "skipping over" the reality of sin which undeniably remains in man even after being justified?

In fact, unless totally put under the illusion of his own "holiness," one needs no intense self-examination to recognize his own sinfulness and impurity. The more one is conscious of moral purity, the less he needs self-examination, for the recognition of impurity and moral deficiency should be there prior to it. Actually, Uchimura's untired warning against self-examination paradoxically reveals his constant confrontation with the problem of sin. In this confrontation, Uchimura is thinking of the problem of sin in terms of morality. Once sin's problem is recognized in terms of morality, it should be also solved by morality. Morality, however, does not approve the "forgiveness" of moral deficiencies; it approves only its restoration.

This moralistic idea of sin in Uchimura's thought can be also seen from another viewpoint. If he had recognized sin on the "religious" level, that is, if he had experienced his sin as the violation of God Himself, he could not have solved the problem simply by disregarding it and looking up unto Christ for sanctification. For, who in the world would dare to disregard sin, if it had been experienced as the violation of God Himself. Thus, when sin is--as we have seen above-- understood as the moral problem, with sanctification (or moral perfection) as its logical solution, the notion of sin as the violation of God Himself must be rejected, for, in this notion of sin with its intrinsic contradiction against any habitual sanctification, there is no room for sanctification

as the solution of the problem of sin. This is the reason why Uchimura consistently insists on looking away from himself and looking unto Christ, from whom the healing effect from sin to the original purity flows on man.

In line with his understanding of salvation as sanctification Uchimura envisions Christian existence as in the process of attaining to ever higher perfection; nothing, nor even one's own sinfulness, should ever stand in the way for the marching on toward fulfilment of his moral determination. God Himself wills man's "infinite growth."¹⁰⁰ Uchimura says in a characteristic way:

By looking into myself, I go down; by looking up to God, I come up, just as the sun-beam draws me up to heaven. I, looking up to my Lord, feel as if, by spreading the wings of faith, ascending to the throne of God.¹⁰¹

Uchimura's concept of faith as "looking unto God/Christ" is the correlative to sanctification, and not that to justification, that is, the forgiveness of sins. Faith is instrumental in sanctification. We may put the observation above, somewhat schematically, in the following way: both Uchimura and Luther experienced the problem of sin as dreadful reality, and both found their way out of the problem in Christ, but according to their respective ways of experience and understanding of the problem of sin, they in their faith went to Christ for the different solutions; Uchimura for sanctification, while Luther for justification.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 7:140.

¹⁰² "The defect of Christians in the Protestant church Luther initiated is their contentment with being justified, considering it as salvation itself. But Paul says Christ is your justification, Sanctification and Redemption. To sanctify is to make the justified stronger

To sum up this section: sins' forgiveness is already given to mankind objectively and universally, as the presupposition to the full salvation, that is, factual justification, sanctification or perfection. Through faith, that is, through inner mystical devotion to God/Christ which leads to the field of the Divine power, the full salvation, that is, perfection is set in the process of being realized in man.

"Becoming Like Christ"

"Christ Alone" is the sub-heading of the first section in this chapter where we are trying to analyze the structure of Uchimura's soteriology. The intention behind this procedure was to make ourselves

. . . . Being justified, I am on the way of salvation. The Gospel is the way to lead the believers to salvation. We must not stop by the stage of being justified; rather, we must be sanctified. . . . Wesley made great contribution to the Christian Church when he emphatically advocated the need of sanctification and, in doing so, warned the content Christians in the Lutheran Church. Salvation is not completed with this [sanctification]. Redemption follows sanctification. When the effect of sanctification reaches its zenith, bringing us into the perfect salvation, and when our spirits come to wear our new, i.e. spiritual, body, thus moving freely, we are completely redeemed. In other words, the redemption is that we, being freed from the bonds of all sins, attain the sphere of perfection." Chukai 11:278-79. The following are some words Luther wrote on April 8, 1516, to his friend George Spenlein: "Therefore, my dear brother, learn Christ and him crucified. Learn to praise him and, despairing of yourself, to say, 'Thou, Lord Jesus, art my righteousness, I am thy sin. Thou has taken what is mine and hast given me what is thine. Thou hast assumed what thou wast not and hast given me what I was not.' Beware of aspiring to such purity that you no longer appear to yourself as a sinner nor wish to be one. For Christ dwells only among sinners. That is why he came from heaven, where he dwelt among the righteous: to make his home among sinners. Always reflect on his great love and you will have his sweet comfort. If we were to find peace for our consciousness through our own sorrows and endeavors, why should Christ have died for us? No, only in him, and through a cheerful (fiduciale) despair of yourself and your works, will you find peace," quoted from: Karl Heim, The Nature of Protestantism, trans. John Schmidt, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), p. 105.

aware, in advance, of the almost exclusive concentration in Uchimura's thought on Christ for man's appropriation of salvation, while leaving open the question of the actual content of that "Christ Alone." In the course of our analysis of his soteriology, however, especially in the preceding section we have already caught a few glimpses of the implications of the "Christ Alone." In the following, as the last section of this chapter, we find it required, for doing justice to that concentration on Christ in Uchimura's soteriology, to offer a separate observation of the "significance" of Christ in his concept of salvation. Although this might look repetitious somehow, it is quite essential for us to see Uchimura's soteriology from the view point of his "Christology."¹⁰³

Having established in the preceding sections that the ultimate content of salvation in Uchimura's thought is sanctification in the sense of man's factual and "habitual" moral perfection or the realization of moral ideals in man, our question is now: What is the inner relationship between this understanding of salvation and the "Christ Alone" in Uchimura's soteriology?

¹⁰³ In Japanese there are two terms for the interpretation of the person and work of Christ. The one is Kirisuto-ron [キリスト論], which corresponds to Christology in its systematic-theological sense; the other is Kirisuto-kan [キリスト観] or View of Christ, designating a more intuitive, personal, and "practical" understanding of Christ. Since Uchimura is not a systematic thinker, nor is it to be expected from him any rounded Kirisuto-ron or Christology. His is rather Kirisuto-kan, describing how he experiences Christ and understands Him in his own person. Hence, when we use "Christology," "Christological," these words are used in the sense of Kirisuto-kan. (To our knowledge, Uchimura himself does not use Kirisuto-ron nor Kirisuto-kan, although he employs -ron [論] and -kan [観] in such connections as Kirisuto-Shinsei-[神性 . divine nature]-ron and Jujika-[十多架, Cross]-kan; still, his is virtually Kirisuto-kan in speaking of Christ.)

"To obtain salvation is," says Uchimura, "to become like Christ."¹⁰⁴ In fact, "to become like Christ" is a more concrete expression of salvation. "Sanctification," "perfection," and "the realization of ideals in man" are all other names for "becoming like Christ." Uchimura is often passionate when he speaks of "becoming like Christ" as the essential issue of salvation. With some rhetorical exaggeration perhaps, he contends that "all men who are like Christ are saved regardless of their hearing or not hearing His name, or of their being inside or outside the Church."¹⁰⁵ These words certainly give witness to how vigorously Uchimura is advocating the idea of "becoming like Christ" as salvation.

Being intensely concerned with "becoming like Christ," Uchimura often raises the question, "How can one become like Christ?" Answering this question Uchimura says:

We desire to become like Christ. By imitating Him, however, we cannot become like Christ. We can become like Him to some extent first when we submit ourselves to Him. We cannot compete with Him in good deeds. By receiving Him into our hearts, we can let Him bear good fruits in ourselves.¹⁰⁶

With this answer to the question, Uchimura implies two aspects of the significance of Christ for man's salvation: one is Christ as the Prototype of man who is to be "saved," the other is Christ as the "Realizer" of the Prototype in man. Actually these two aspects of Uchimura's Christology correspond to Christ's humanity and deity in their respective functions for man's "becoming like Christ." The theological theorem that Christology and soteriology are intrinsically interrelated

¹⁰⁴ Shinko 7:246.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

with each other holds also true of Uchimura's soteriology, and the "two natures" of Christ is understood in accordance with the idea of salvation as "becoming like Christ."

Let us now look at the aspects of Uchimura's Christology. From his proposal of the idea of salvation, preeminently, as "becoming like Christ," we can reasonably expect that his "Christological" interest should be much concerned with the humanity of Christ, the man Jesus. In fact, it is unmistakably the case with Uchimura. For the sake of logical order, however, let us examine the deity of Christ, as expressed in Uchimura's writing, prior to his understanding of the humanity of Christ, for, as we shall now see, the deity of Christ provides the "cosmic" framework of, the presuppositions necessary to, and the agency for, the realization of "becoming like Christ" in man.

"I declare," writes Uchimura in order to leave no room for doubt of his position as to the deity of Christ, "that it [the deity of Christ] is the foundation of Christianity as well as the rock of my salvation."¹⁰⁷ In what sense is the deity of Christ the "foundation" and "rock" of salvation? Uchimura explains:

That Jesus is God is of crucial significance for us today [as was in the New Testament times]. . . . To be saved, the world needs a powerful and great Savior, who not only teaches the Way but also is able to effect the Way over the whole mankind and in the whole world. It would be of no use to expect the completion of salvation for my own soul, as well as the nation and the whole mankind at large, if there were no God the Savior [神の子救者]. . . . If Jesus had been merely a man, my salvation would be illusion. Things like the reform of society and the building up of the heavenly kingdom would be nothing more than dreamy thoughts of a poet. The only hope of the world and the whole of mankind lies in the living Jesus Christ who possesses the nature [素性] and power [実力] of God.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 10:67.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 46.

For the real transformation of this world and the completion of man's salvation, the divine power of Christ is the only means. Thus, the deity of Christ is most indispensable for man's salvation.

In what way, then, is the deity of Christ manifest? For Uchimura as well as "those who made the New Testament," Christ the God is among other things, identical with "the creator of the universe and the center of the all."¹⁰⁹ As we have seen in chapter 2, Uchimura's thought is frequently operating with the constitution of the universe. The meaningfulness of the universe and of the total reality is one of the Uchimura's constant concerns in his theological reflections.¹¹⁰

We will now quote an illustrative passage on the "cosmic" significance of the deity of Christ. Commenting on Col. 1:16, Uchimura exclaims:

The Christ[o]-centric universe! Jesus of Nazareth, the manifestation of the central power of the universe! Love is the power which moves and upholds the universe, and Jesus' love is the highest and deepest and purest conceivable. To say, therefore, that "the universe consists (holds together) in Him" is not unreasonable. The power that binds the sweet influence of [the] Pleiades, and looses the bands of Orion, will be found, in the last analysis, to be this love. . . . Jesus my savior the central power of the universe!¹¹¹

Christ is the powerful reality of love ruling this universe. Just because of this immense reality of Christ, the meaningfulness of the universe and of the all is assured against any kind of skepticism and nihilism even when one is confronted with contradictory appearance in the actual existence.¹¹² Thus, Uchimura's pre-Christian postulate of

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Supra p. 183.

¹¹¹ CW 3:244-45.

¹¹² At another place Uchimura likewise comments on the same verse as follows: "That God created this universe in Him [Christ], through Him and toward Him has a great practical significance of mankind. What is the purpose of the universe? What is its consummation? What are its ideals? Destruction? The survival of the fittest? The

the meaningfulness of the universe is also affirmed by the deity of Christ manifested in love.

The other way around, Uchimura also affirms the deity of Christ in the love manifest in His earthly life. The love observable in His earthly life is for Uchimura the most eloquent vindication of and insurmountable witness to the deity of Christ. "God is love," reasons Uchimura, "the perfect love. . . . If God is in His nature love, He [Christ] who revealed it to the full out of the abundance of the love, must be the Son of God."¹¹³ This perfect love manifest in Christ in his earthly life--the love which is none other than the vital and dynamic reality permeating the universe and conquering all destructive forces--is the Divine Power which was and is able to remove man's present "anomalous"¹¹⁴ existence into accordance with the meaningfulness of the universe. For Uchimura, Christ, who has factually removed his

universe is falling into the despotism against the ideals of virtuous men [仁者]? . . . 'No,' replies the Bible. It says that the universe is created toward Christ, in Christ, through Christ, i.e. toward Love, in Love and through Love. The purpose of the universe is Love, the means of its being called into existence is Love, and its principle [原理] and spirit [精神] is Love. What precious a message!" Shinko 10:90-91. Col. 1:16-17 are the verses which Uchimura often (24 times, according to Shinko 25, the index volume of his writing in Japanese) comments on and refers to as the locus classicus for Christ the God as the ground for the ultimate meaning of the universe. It is worthwhile to note that in dealing with Luke 9:20, he comments on Peter's confession, "[Thou art] the Christ of God," in terms of Col. 1:15-17. Chukai 9:145-46.

¹¹³Shinko 10:61-62.

¹¹⁴"Christ alone is the Normal [as Man]; mankind as a whole is anomaly [変体]." Ibid., 7:83.

sin, must be God, for only the Divine Love is capable of "absorbing man's sin into its limitless atmosphere and annihilating it."¹¹⁵

The deity of Christ is thus tantamount to the affirmation of the meaningfulness of the universe and also to the annihilation of the reality of sin. The most crucial issue in Uchimura's advocacy of the deity of Christ is however Christ's capability of indwelling in man to work out in him salvation, that is, "becoming like Christ." A Christian is not saved by Christ the Teacher--although His posthumous influence might be counted as the greatest of all the other saints and sages, but by Christ the Savior, that is, Christ the God, who saves man from sinfulness and brings him to moral perfection, that is, "becoming like Christ."¹¹⁶ Let us now have his own words on this point:

Christ is a moral miracle; with Him on my side as Comforter (literally, strengthener) I too become a little Christ. . . . By His presence in my heart, He maketh me, even me, perfect, even as my Father in heaven is perfect.¹¹⁷

In the way shown above the deity of Christ is the invincible guarantee for the meaningfulness of the universe, for the facticity of sin's annihilation for man, and for the realizability of man's "becoming like Christ."

Having learned the significance of the deity of Christ for salvation as Uchimura conceives it, we will now observe his concept of the

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 175

¹¹⁶"We are not saved by the historical [歴史的] influence of the one who was buried in the tomb. We need a Savior of power who is working now." Ibid., p. 60.

¹¹⁷CW 3:254.

humanity of Christ to see the specifics of "becoming like Christ" and to consider the deeper soteriological context in which he speaks of the humanity of Christ.

Salvation in Uchimura's thought presupposes the tangible knowledge of what the Man Jesus is like. Deducing from the Gospels--the records of the Lord in the flesh--Uchimura never tired of describing the concrete moral characteristics of Jesus. He is the perfect Man who "perfectly fulfilled man's duties."¹¹⁸ He is a commoner, "an ideal Commoner," who, despising all the worldly ranks and glories, loved ordinary manual work; who loved nature and children; who was rich in real wisdom which could not be obtained at a man-made school; who felt more at home among sinners and publicans than at the royal palace.¹¹⁹ He is the One unknown, "the great One unknown," to the secular world, even unknown to the churches surrendered to the spirit of this world.¹²⁰

Jesus is an Idealist, even "the greatest Idealist,"¹²¹ who resolutely lived up to "the ideals [which] are the only unchangeable

¹¹⁸ Shinko 7:74.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 10:141.

¹²⁰ "Jesus is said to be great. He is indeed great! Since He is great, He is small, so small that He has not been known to the world. . . . In fact, Jesus is not known yet. The Jesus the world praises is not Jesus. That is no other than an idol. The known Jesus is the Head of the Church, a great religionist, conquering the world through his followers. . . . I [for my part] want to be a disciple of Jesus, the great One unknown to the world, hiding Himself from the wise but revealing Himself to the small. . . ." Ibid., pp. 13-14.

¹²¹ "He [Jesus] was an Idealist [理想家], more than Goethe, Schiller, Rafael, Beethoven or any other poet and artist. Idealist: Although there have been numerous idealists in the world, there is no such an idealist as Jesus. He endeavored to live up to the ideals and offered His own life for them at the age of thirty-three. Is not He truly great?" Ibid., p. 27.

reality in eternity."¹²² In His commitment to the realization of ideals, He was a Man of sincerity. Being so sincere in this, He was also "radical" in His attempt at bringing the ideals into realization.¹²³ Just because of this sincerity and radicalness, He was labeled as Beelzebub and as a sinner by His opponents. He is therefore "the Friend of the sinners" who, sincere and radical like Jesus in their commitments to ideals, are referred to as "unbelievers, heretics, and sinners by 'the church-Christians.'"¹²⁴

¹²²Ibid., 12:210.

¹²³"Jesus was true and sincere [誠實]; He was therefore radical and extreme [過激] at times. Now and then He was so radical and extreme that some people thought He should be outside Himself. . . . As far as I know all the great men were radical and extreme. . . . How much more with Jesus the King of mankind. . . . Christians are the disciples of Jesus; they are therefore not allowed merely to enjoy a life free from any confrontation, only advocating common sense and harmony. At times, they cannot but be furious and radical and extreme [as . . . the faithful disciples of Jesus." Ibid., 10:185-86.

¹²⁴"It is said that Christ is the Friend of sinners. Yes, it is true; he was the Friend of sinners and publicans (Matt. 11:19). However, it does not mean that He is the Friend of evil men. Doing evil things, one becomes an enemy of Christ. . . . It means rather that He is the Friend of those whom the churches and church-Christians [教會信者] refer to as unbelievers, heretics or sinners . . . [and of] those whom the nation and her politicians regard as rebels, foes and traitors of the nation. . . . That Christ is the Friend of sinners is to say that He is the Friend of those who have been made sinners by this false world. This is to be understood from the fact that He was Himself called by the Pharisees and scribes as the Head of Beelzebub, that is, Satan. He who was misunderstood so extremely has a deep sympathy with those who likewise are misunderstood." Ibid., pp. 105-106. Commenting on this particular passage, Kazoh Kitamori, a prominent Japanese theologian, says: "Therefore 'sinners' [in Uchimura's thought] are not in fact the enemies of God, but only 'those whom people in this false world call sinners.' Those whom God loves are 'sinners who have repented,' 'hearts which sorrow for their sins.' In short, these are lovable sinners. It is certain that what we have here is completely different from the gospel of Paul and Luther. According Paul, Christ died for us while we were still enemies (Rom. 5:10). Sinners are not lovable, but hateful people, 'hated . . . and hating' (Titus 3:3). According to Luther, God did not save 'false sinner,' but 'real

Jesus is "a Son of Nature," who had no contamination of man's presumptuous pedantry and sophistry in His personality. Just as nature was profound, He was profound, so profound that it is impossible for any analytical mind to grasp Him properly. Because of this profundity, He appears "a Man of contradiction" to men with a shallow understanding of reality.¹²⁵ He continues in this vein.¹²⁶ With some rhetorical

sinner.' And for that reason, grace is not 'false grace,' but 'real grace,' vera gratis." Kazoh Kitamori, Theology of the Pain of God, trans. unknown (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1965), p. 92; emphases are original.

¹²⁵"Why did Jesus have so many contradictions? It is because He was not a scholar. His philosophy of life, if He had any, is not something He obtained from reflections and meditations, training and learning. He was not a man of passion for learning. . . . He did not appear in the public as the Savior after cultivation and meditation over many years. . . . Jesus was the Son of God; He was therefore the son of man in the most genuine sense. He is not something like a jewel polished by men's hands. He was 'the stone [which] was cut out of a mountain without man's hands,' Daniel 2:45. Nor was He an artificial flower made by the skillful hands of a woman. He was a Rose of Sharon. It is easy to analyze an artificial flower into its elements; it is, however, impossible to know even one petal of a natural flower thoroughly. Since Jesus is the Son of God, so He is the Son of Nature. The difficulty in understanding Him is just like that in understanding Nature. . . . We are always to pray that God may give us the heart of Jesus so that we may be able to recognize the great harmony of God in the contradictions of Jesus." Ibid., pp. 181-84.

¹²⁶What we notice as a conspicuous feature in Uchimura's description of the Man Jesus is that, in describing Him, Uchimura in reality speaks of his own ideals, occasionally even of himself in his experience. The Jesus described in this manner is a duplicate of Uchimura himself or his ideals. In fact, it is Uchimura's "innate" tendency to speak of himself whenever he deals with anyone admirable. It is the case also when he speaks of Paul. It is not otherwise with Jesus. In fact, he pointedly says: "Since he [Christ] dwells in my spirit, I feel Him as my own self." Ibid., 7:68. However, to speak of Jesus in terms of one's own ideals or even of himself entails the moralization of Him as well as one's self-absolutization in the way of an uncritical identification of oneself with Jesus. In Uchimura's case, it seems that Christ is molded into Uchimura's ideals rather than that Christ frames Uchimura's ideal for Christian existence. From this we mean that even in speaking devotedly of Christ one unconsciously can justify himself in his morality; it subtly amounts to the problem of homo incurvatus in se which as the sin of sins can only be solved by the forgiveness--in its literal sense--of God.

hyperbole, Uchimura makes the point how intensely he is concerned with the ideal life which he finds there in the Jesus in the following passage:

My ideal is Jesus of Nazareth [and no other men, be it Moses, Jeremiah, Paul, John, or Cromwell, Carlyle, Yozan, Nanshu]. If I can live my life as He lived His, that is, as He grew up in poverty; as he worked; as He cried out His conviction with no fear for anyone; as He died while forgiving His enemies' sins; as He was hated by the religionists and politicians, then I do not care whatever happens to me after my death; it would not matter if I even go to hell or if my soul perishes. To live such a life is the supreme happiness and glory.¹²⁷

The "sublime and pure character"¹²⁸ of Jesus fascinates Uchimura profoundly. He even feels within himself an "unusually strange yearning for Christ."¹²⁹ What is the reason for the deep fascination in Jesus found in the words of Uchimura, who aspires to the highest realization of perfection? Is the mere perfection of humanity as humanity, in contrast to the divine perfection, sufficient to explain the profound fascination of Uchimura in Jesus? No, it is more than that. We now consider what it is. Let us quote a passage here which will lead us to understand it:

Apart from any speculation about His [Christ's] nature, one fact is significant and clear as daylight, that Jesus of Nazareth was the perfection of humanity; that He was a miracle simply as a man; that He was the Lord of mankind in His perfect personality. As I ponder upon His sinless life, I cannot but bow my knees before Him. . . . Indeed, I do not derogate myself by adoring Jesus; on

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 55.

¹²⁸ "One great reason why I love Jesus is no doubt His sublime and pure character [高くと清潔なり]." Ibid., 10:141.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 103. "I feel in myself an unusually strange yearning [-種異様のあり] for Christ. Even though I am not too sure whether He is God or man, something in myself is strongly drawn toward Him. Irresistably I call Him, O Lord!"

the contrary, I find myself ennobled and exalted by worshipping Him. Jesus-worship is the highest form of hero-worship; it is not idolatry; it is legitimate worship which free human beings are bound to offer to "the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."¹³⁰

The perfection of humanity and the perfect personality found in Jesus unresistably brings Uchimura on his knees before Christ. In this passage Uchimura in fact implies that the perfect personality as the perfection of humanity reveals something essentially Divine in terms of "sinless life," that is, morality, and even that the perfect humanity of Christ is essentially identical with His deity.

How does Uchimura, then, understand the relationship between the humanity and the deity of Christ, if there exists the direct continuity between the natures? Is not there the intellectually unbridgeable chasm between them as the mystery of Incarnation? At one place Uchimura offers a singular statement on the question: "Since Christ was Man, so He is God."¹³¹ He seems to assert that the humanity of Christ as such--since it is perfect--, constitutes the deity of Christ. This further suggests that perfect humanity and deity in general have one and the same essence in common. Let us now follow what Uchimura says:

Man was originally the manifestation [表現] of God. God's creation of man is God's self-manifestation. If someone asks what God is like, it is most appropriate to answer by saying, He is like man. Man is the child of God. As the child is like its Parents, so is the Parent like His child. We know of God by seeing man.¹³²

By saying that God is like man, Uchimura, of course, does not mean a corporeal likeness between God and man. What he is saying in this quotation is that God and man are of the same nature of being, that is, God

¹³⁰ CW 4:83.

¹³¹ Shinko 10:68.

¹³² Ibid.

and man are of the essence of spirit.¹³³ Although we, the ordinary human beings, are so defiled in our spirits with impurity, ignobleness, meanness, and other moral deficiencies that we are no longer like God,¹³⁴ it is yet quite otherwise with Christ, who "alone is man, while all the others, though being called man, in reality are not man."¹³⁵ Now, if Christ is said to be God as a true man,¹³⁶ it presupposes the view that when humanity as such is perfectly actualized in terms of its moral determination given by God at the creation, it then stands in its original identity with the nature of God. The premise for the equation between perfect humanity and deity is that God is ultimately the moral Being who is "the embodiment of all that is good, true, and beautiful," all of which man as the creation in God's image is determined to

¹³³"Since my spirit is standing over all the universe, no synthesis of all things, however subtle and mysterious, can give birth to my spirit. Only spirit can beget spirits. . . . I am . . . a child of God who is the Spirit." Ibid., 9:39. "There is a vacuum within me which no pantheism can fill. The reason for it is evident; it is because man bears the nature of God [神の性] in himself, and is therefore infinite [無限的] and more than the universe." Ibid., p. 15. "The union of God and man [神人合体] . . . must be a spiritual union, for, being Spirit, God can only be united with man in spirit." Ibid., 12:110. "Spirits can be united with one another. And although there is a difference between the spirit of God and that of man in terms of quantity and the degree of purity, there is no qualitative difference between them" Ibid., 3:132.

¹³⁴Supra, note 109.

¹³⁵Shinko 7:74.

¹³⁶"The ground for the fact that Christ is God, I do not find in His miracles. His resurrection and ascension are not sufficient to prove His deity. The ground for the fact that Christ is God is found in his perfect life, which did not use any strategem; which firmly maintains principle; which knew no compromise with the demands of this world; which sacrificed itself for the salvation of others; in sum, the life that was absolutely selfless. What is this if not the life of God [神の生涯]? The main reason for my worshipping Him as God is found in his pure life [純潔なる生涯]." Ibid., p. 48.

actualize in his being as well.¹³⁷ Since Christ actualized the Divine moral qualities to the fullest as man, He is at the same time God in that moral nature that ultimately "constitutes" God's Godhead.¹³⁸ The formula: "Since Christ was man, so He is God," is to be understood in this sense.

When the perfect humanity of Christ in terms of morality is identical with His deity, and when humanity as such in its perfection is identical with deity, that is, the moral nature of God, this identity opens up a new soteriological perspective of "becoming like Christ." Namely, it entails the view that when we, who are man (though defiled with moral deficiencies) as Christ is man, come to realize and actualize our original moral determination, we become then like Christ, which in turn is no other than becoming like God as the moral Being. In this sense, Uchimura conceives of "becoming like Christ" as the deification of man in the sense of moral perfection.

¹³⁷"The greatest answer given to this question [about the chief end of man] was that by the Westminster divines, which was this: 'Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever,' . . . God is the embodiment of all that is good, true and beautiful; and to glorify Him is to show forth His perfection in all our thoughts, and words, and deeds." CW 7:202.

¹³⁸It is to be noted here that Uchimura apparently means by "the deity" of Christ (used as identical with His humanity) something different from that of Christ in the capacity in which He sustains the Universe, annihilates sin's reality, and works out salvation in man. When he speaks of the "deity" of Christ in this connection, he is thinking of it in the sense of the Divine nature as the perfection of moral qualities, of "all that is good, true and beautiful." "Jesus is God," says Uchimura, "not because He performed miracles; nor because He was born miraculously; nor because He resurrected and ascended with His body; but because He taught with authority like God; because He did [what He did] in a holy manner like God; because He died beautifully like God. Seeing Him as man, I recognize him not to be man but to be God." Shinko 7:86.

In this section we have made observation on Uchimura's concept of salvation from the viewpoint of his Christology. We now see that the deity and the humanity of Christ are both sine qua non for man's salvation in a manner characteristic to his concept of "becoming like Christ," or moral perfection. "Jesus is," says Uchimura, "the Savior of mankind," that is, the One who in the capacity of His deity has annihilated the sin and its power and is working in man the salvation, "as well as the Ideal of those who are to be saved," that is, the Prototype unto which man is to be saved.¹³⁹ Christ as the Savior and the Ideal is the complete salvation of man.¹⁴⁰ To round up this section, we shall quote a passage in which Uchimura expresses his joy over "becoming like Christ" in somewhat ecstatic language:

Christ dwelling in my spirit, thankfulness becomes my life. There is, then, no good deed that I cannot do. I can forgive any sins of all of my enemies. I can suffer hardship of any kind. I am a brave man of righteousness and a rich man in love. I feel then that even my unclean body emits sweet fragrance in every direction. If this is not salvation, resurrection, and ascension, I do not know what salvation, resurrection or ascension is like!¹⁴¹

Let us now sum up what we have learned in this chapter. Salvation is, in Uchimura's concept, man's factual sanctification, "habitual"

¹³⁹Shinko 7:239.

¹⁴⁰"There must be an ideal and there must be a power to realize that ideal. The Christian ideal is Christ, and his power is the Holy Spirit. The Christian looks intently at Christ, but looking alone does not make him a son of God. The Spirit works within him, and makes him to appropriate to himself the beauty of holiness he is looking at. As was said by St. Paul: 'We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory to glory, even as by the Lord, the Spirit,'-- II Cor. 3:18. The model before us, and the spirit of the model to conform us thereto, --how perfect is the Gospel!" CW 3:144-45.

¹⁴¹Ibid., p. 55.

moral perfection, the realization of ideals in him, in a word, "becoming like Christ." For this factual and "habitual" sanctification, the sin and its power has been "ontically" annihilated by the cross of Christ. Believing in Christ who died for the removal of the sin from him, man receives the forgiveness of sin, which is the annihilatation of the sin itself as well as its guilt in man's existence. On the basis of the forgiveness of sin in this understanding, man is now placed in the process of being factually and "habitually" made like Christ by the same Christ, who, dwelling in him in his faith (that is, "looking unto Christ"), works it out in him. Christ the powerful and ideal Savior alone effects the salvation in man: "Becoming Like Christ." Once this salvation is shown, it is man's "duty to believe Jesus."¹⁴²

¹⁴²CW 1:153.

CHAPTER IV

UCHIMURA'S THEOLOGICAL EPISTEMOLOGY

Through our analysis of Uchimura's soteriology in the preceding chapter, we have learned that according to him salvation in the Christian faith must go beyond "mere" forgiveness of sin or justification, and should find its reality actualized as the sanctification of man in the sense of moral perfection or "becoming like Christ." We have also noted that he is fully convinced of its realizability in such a way as to be demonstrated "empirically," although he is at the same time aware of its quantitative incompleteness while in the present order of history. Along the way we have noted as a vital point that this type of soteriology cannot be originated in a theological context in which the abysmal reality of man's sinfulness before the Holy God is experienced and recognized in man's existence with its sometimes latent though real intensity. Putting the matter positively, what should make it possible for Uchimura to conceive man's salvation as sanctification in the sense mentioned above, is his moralistic (therefore, at bottom, "optimistic") view of man's situation before the holy God and also his non-dialectic and straight concept of God as the sheer Benevolence and Goodness. This is, we have noted, due to the fact that, in Uchimura's soteriology, this cardinal theological concept totally falls short because, in the matter of man's salvation, God sovereignty transcends the

empirically observable moral quality of man and his rational grasp of the ultimate order of reality, which transcendence is indicated by the reality that man is inscrutably and yet really under the curse of sin.

When Uchimura's soteriology, which seems to us deviating from the ultimate issue of the Gospel, is due to the absence of the transcendental aspect of the God-man relationship, this leads us to the question of his theological epistemology. This very absence is in its own turn due to his understanding of the way or ways by which man can obtain knowledge of God and man in their mutual relationship. Thus, in this chapter we shall study Uchimura's theological epistemology to a greater extent in order to understand more clearly the foundation of Uchimura's soteriology, and further, to see an organic link which connects his soteriology with his concept of the indigenization of Christianity in Japanese spiritual and cultural soil, the indigenization which is required, according to Uchimura, for the salvation not only of Japan but also of the world as a whole.

Prior to a detailed analysis of Uchimura's epistemology, however, it should be helpful for us to make our own position clear as to what the relationship of soteriology and epistemology is according to the theology of the Reformation, particularly that of Lutheranism. The transcendental aspect of the God-man relationship which we have seen missing in Uchimura's theology is, in fact, the theological context in which the Gospel in the sense of sin's forgiveness by grace alone and justification by faith alone is understood. As the term itself already expresses, this transcendental aspect of the God-man relationship, above all the "mystery" of man's existential tragedy that man, in spite of

being created by God, must will to rebel against God's own person, defies any of man's attempts to "grasp" it through rational scrutiny.¹

As long as, therefore, one operates with a rationalistic immanent epistemology in his theological thinking, he must a priori "immanentize" that transcendental aspect of the God-man relationship, if he ever wants to gain an "intelligible solution" to the questions arising in that mystery of man's existential tragedy before God as well as for himself. Once "immanentized," however, it becomes impossible to grasp theologically the transcendental dimension of man's sinfulness, and one can consequently obtain only an "optimistic" view on man.² The

¹Werner Elert, The Structure of Lutheranism, trans. Walter A. Hansen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), pp. 28-35, has a lucid presentation of the Lutheran understanding of sin's reality, especially in terms of original sin, which transcends man's rational apprehension; he writes among other things: "'Man's heart is inscrutable' (Cor hominis inscrutabile est), says Luther where he appropriates the Pauline expression 'enmity against God.' Thus the nature of sin itself actually becomes incomprehensible in more than one sense. . . . It is impossible to express in greater sharpness the inadequacy, in Luther's sense, of the conception which defines sin merely as deviation from the right path. But even in Luther's general conception of sin--not only of original sin--that unresolvable contradiction [of human existence] is kept alive precisely in this way. The Creator creates the creature, watches over it, guides it. But He creates it in such a way that it is able to fight against Him, yes, to hate Him. As a result, He Himself must reply to this with death and destruction." Pp. 31-32. The following words are a pointed formulation of what we have said above of the relationship of epistemology and soteriology in Uchimura's thought: "Where there is [rationally gained] knowledge of sin, man's thinking is no longer directed toward God; it is directed toward himself." P. 34.

²On the locus of sin in the Smalcald Articles, Luther speaks of the "hereditary sin" as "so deep a corruption of nature that reason cannot understand it." As the consequence of ignorance of the true nature of the "hereditary sin," Luther mentions as "error and stupidity" seven points originated in natural knowledge of man's situation, all of which hold man's natural capacity for righteousness, to be moralistically

immanent-rationalistic epistemology must further reject any transcendental concept of the God-man relationship as "irrational" and absurd, for to it it is incomprehensible that man should be made accountable for what is beyond his power. This will then lead to a moralistic understanding of salvation, to be sure, not in the sense of salvation through moral works but of salvation as moral perfection.³ The basic presupposition of this kind of conception is the thought that man is, after all "only" weak in his endeavor or to become what he should be according to the determination given by Creator, but not positively rebellious against God. From here, then, the immanent-rationalistic epistemology is not very far from raising the question of theodicy.⁴

understood. These points are, therefore, optimistic as to their view on man's nature. Cf. Theodore Tappert, trans., ed. The Book of Concord. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 302.

³To be noted is a logical consequence of the idea of salvation as moral perfection, as found in Uchimura's thought, that salvation as moral perfection turns out, in actuality, to be a sort of salvation through works ["Maybe my heavenly Father accepts my endeavor to be perfect as perfection, and admits me to His kingdom where all are perfect."] [Emphasis is original]. The Complete Works of Kanzo Uchimura (written originally in English), 7 vols. (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1971-73), 3:236. Hereafter cited as CW.

⁴In fact, theodicy motives are very strong in Uchimura's formulation of Christianity. As all questions of theodicy lead to the attempt to "justify" God before man's "congenital" quest for meaning amid apparent meaningless reality, they presuppose man's relative innocence which allegedly would not deserve the meaninglessness man experiences in his existence. Seen from such a viewpoint, what we shall learn from Uchimura's writings concerning the ultimate destiny of mankind and the universe can be taken as Uchimura's version of theodicy, motivated by such a thought as is found in the following quotation: "If all the effort of Nature and mankind should end up with destruction, our life should be total disappointment. God could never be love. We can save this great irrationality of our life only by [the faith in] the world to come [which God must provide if He is really God]. Kanzo Uchimura, Shinko Chosaku Zenshu [Complete Writings on Faith], 25 vols. (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1962-66), 13:280. Hereafter cited as Shinko. "If God is

In order, therefore, to "recognize" this profoundly tragic situation of man before the holy God from which man has to be saved and for which man has to find "healing," man needs God's special revelation witnessed in the Scripture given to be interpreted in the light of Christ the Crucified, whose "Eloi, Eloi, lama, sabachthani?" is the penetrating witness to God's holy wrath against man's abysmal sinfulness. In fact, the recognition of man's real tragedy before God as the result of his self-willed rebellion can be known as such and identified as such only through God's special revelation exclusively given in Christ. All this says, namely, that the Gospel understood as forgiveness of sin for the sake of Christ presupposes an exclusive epistemology solely anchored in God's revelation in Christ. Thus, the interpretation of the Gospel congenial with its ultimate intent is only possible through the qualitatively unique and exclusive revelation of God in Christ.

With this remark on the relationship between soteriology and epistemology, we are now ready to proceed to a detailed analysis of Uchimura's epistemology. As the main issues in this chapter, we will deal with the questions: Through what media can one, according to Uchimura, come to know God and His will in view of man's reality and destiny? and, What is the ultimate content of God's will which Uchimura conceives of as given in these media? When we summarize the analysis of the two main issues mentioned above, we shall see what the characteristic

really God, His will must be done; His holy design be accomplished. God must be the Perfect One [完全者]. His will must be perfect. He is God only if His perfect will is done. We acknowledge God's existence by observing His perfect will being [fully] realized." Shinko 9:95.

feature of Uchimura's epistemology is with regard to his concept of God's revelation. In the following, we will, to begin with, consider the "tripod" of the media for God's knowledge in Uchimura's thought, namely, "nature, history and [the] Bible." In the treatment of this "tripod," we shall spare more pages for the analysis of Uchimura's understanding of the Bible than for the other two items, since Uchimura, particularly in speaking of the Bible, articulates his total view and understanding of the message of Christianity. Along the way, we will see what Uchimura understands to be mediated to man as the content of God's will through these media, because form and content intrinsically go hand in hand. We will then crystallize the unifying point in Uchimura's multi-faceted epistemology under the head of "Facts and Experience as the Foundation of God's Knowledge," in order to see the theological link between soteriology and epistemology, which explains the structure of Uchimura's theology in his exposition of the Christian message of salvation.

The Tripod of God's Knowledge

Speaking of Uchimura's theological epistemology, we have to pay attention to the fact that he would not, on his own initiative, let himself go through formal theological education. As we have seen, he left Hartford Seminary just a few months after his entering there, finding in theological subjects taught there no relevance for his ministry and, therefore, his own theology, except the Biblical languages.⁵ For this reason, Uchimura's theology is entirely self-taught, or perhaps as he

⁵Cf. supra. p. 35.

would say, "God-taught." What is the explanation for Uchimura's "incompatibility" with theology in an ordinary sense? Is it not his own concept of theology which had been established prior to his serious engagement with theology? What then is this "a priori" concept of theology, or, more specifically speaking, of theological method?

As a matter of fact, Uchimura already had an established concept of how the knowledge of God was to be obtained, even prior to the entrance at the seminary. As early as April 1885, that is, while he still stayed at Elwyn, he wrote down on the front flyleaf of his old English Bible the following dictum concerning the source of God's knowledge:

There are three witnesses to the Truth, viz. Nature, Man, and Bible. We cannot have the true conception of one of three without the correct understanding of the other two. They are the Trinity of one Eternal Knowledge, the Trifold Manifestations of one Godhead.⁶

Further, in a letter dated December of the same year, Uchimura expresses the same idea from a somewhat different viewpoint:

Study God's methods in Nature, in Bible, and in Man, especially as revealed in History, and learn that the lily of the valley, planets, and constellations, and the tenderest feeling which touch upon thy heart, are God's voice to thy soul.⁷

In this passage we find a new element in "the Trinity of one Eternal Knowledge . . . of God," namely "History" which according to Uchimura is virtually identical with "Man," in the sense of "Man" constituting "History" as the externalization of his conformity to or deviation from the divine will and design.

⁶The facsimile picture on the frontpiece of Shinko 11.

⁷Kanzo Uchimura, Zenshu [Kanzo Uchimura's Complete Works, Iwanami version], vols. 15 and 20, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1933), 20:168. Hereafter cited as Iwanami.

What we discover in the passages above is a "positivistic" tone of theological epistemology. In fact, "religion must be . . . made 'tangible' and scientifically comprehensible,"⁸ says Uchimura. Presupposed is the idea that the manifestations of God is not "narrowly" confined within the special revelation witnessed in the Scripture,⁹ but one and the same truth ("knowledge") of God is there also in Nature and History in a "tangible" and scientifically comprehensible manner.

This "Trinity" of God's knowledge as the epistemological principle remained throughout his life as something constant and constitutive in his theology. In 1903, that is, nearly two decades later, he wrote on the same theme as follows:

I want to investigate the Bible, Nature and History, and on [the result of investigation in] these things I want to lay the foundation of my faith. The mystery of God, the facts of Nature, and the experience of Mankind; laying the foundation on these things, my faith will not err.¹⁰

Again, in 1927, a few years before his death, he speaks of the same "Trinity of one Eternal Knowledge" in the following manner:

⁸CW 1:176.

⁹"The point of departure of the Teacher [Uchimura]," says one of the prominent disciples, Masao Sekine, " [in his theological thinking] that God's revelation is not narrowly confined within the Bible, is a new viewpoint which was attained very recently under the contemporary situation of Christendom both in Japan and in the world. . . ." Uchimura Kanzo Igo Yonju-nen [Forty Years After Kanzo Uchimura] Toshio Suzuki, ed. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971), p. 23.

¹⁰Shinko 7:129. A similar idea can be observed in one of his discourses made in connection with Sairin-Undo, 1918, where he says: "The 'Our Lord Jesus Christ will appear again,' is not a 'cunningly devised fable' (2 Pet. 2:16). There is [on the contrary] deep reason for this. First, the Bible teaches this clearly. Second, my spirit responds to this [affirmingly]. Third, Nature agrees with this. Fourth, history explains this." Kanzo Uchimura, Seisho Chukai Zenshu [Kanzo Uchimura's Complete Expositions of the Bible], 17 vols. (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1960-62), 14:172. Hereafter cited as Chukai.

The evidence [証拠] of God's existence is in the Bible. . . . Studying the Bible assiduously, we clearly see God's wisdom, power and love. And the whole universe proves [the truth of] the Bible. Stars and planets, and all the things on earth; astronomy and geography, philosophy and poem, the biographies of great men and the history of mankind, all these things give witness to God.¹¹

These two quotations taken from his later years show how constant the tripod of God's knowledge is in his theology. We observe a harmonious and unconcerned coordination of Nature, History and the Bible as the "positive" media of God's knowledge. Although the emphasis and mutual relationship among them is varyingly characterized as Uchimura develops his thought, it does not involve any fundamental change with regard to the harmonious complementarity within this tripod. Nature, History and the Bible are the "Trinity" of God's knowledge and, therefore, also "the Tripod of Faith."¹²

This epistemological tripod of Uchimura, namely, Nature, History and the Bible standing harmoniously and complementarily on the "equal" footing for mediation of God's knowledge, leads us to a preliminary examination of an important problem inherent in the tripod. Considering the tripod, we at once take note of an essential difference between "Nature, History" on the one hand and "Bible" on the other, in terms of the "quality" of God's manifestations or revelations. As a matter of fact, "Bible," according to our understanding, is the witness of God's dealing with man in judgment and salvation in history, the witness which is verbal and conceptually articulated in its ultimate themes.¹³ For

¹¹ Shinko 11:25.

¹² Ibid., 7:129.

¹³ What we mean here by "verbal and conceptually articulated in its ultimate themes," is nothing but the Lutheran emphasis on the essentialness of the external word, which has its theological premise in its

this reason, the Bible as the witness has in itself, when acknowledged as such, the authoritative and normative significance for the formation of the concept of God vis-a-vis man.¹⁴ "Nature and History," however, being ambiguous in themselves, have nothing in themselves that unequivocally provides any basis for the true knowledge of God. They need, in any case, an interpretative key outside themselves in order to mediate, in one way or another, God's knowledge meaningful to man's existence. This interpretative key may be an insight rationalistically obtained or constructed from an empirical observation of "Nature and History," for instance, progressive evolutionism, as we can find in Uchimura's writing.¹⁵

concept of the objectivity of salvation having occurred extra nos and given as an alien gift. The objectivity of salvation necessarily presupposes a clear conceptual delineation of what salvation is.

¹⁴"In the controversy with Carlstadt who denied the sufficiency and the autogenous clarity of Scripture," Elert writes, "Luther stated very sharply that the Spirit works only through the external Word and that it is precisely the externality of the Word which protects faith from the suspicion of illusionism." Werner Elert, p. 185.

¹⁵We shall see more of Uchimura's evolutionistic framework of thought later in this chapter. Here it will be helpful to have a passage which gives a clearly articulated expression to his evolutionistic position: "Among the scientific books [I have read], it is Darwin's the Origin of Species that influenced me eternally. I read this book over and over again, which taught me the reason governing the evolution of the living creature. It is this book that, from the very start, made me a Christian and a evolutionist at one and the same time. By this book the direction of my thought was fixed. It is by this book that the truth was deeply imprinted in my mind that since Nature is [in] evolution, all things must be [in] evolution. . . . From the beginning, I have been convinced that evolution theory is not an enemy of Christianity. On the contrary, I realized that Christianity should be rather interpreted in accordance with this theory." Shinko 20:128. Emphasis is added.

Considering this qualitative difference between "Nature, History" on the one hand "and the Bible" on the other, we find it impossible to conceive of the tripod as the mutually harmonious and complementary media for the undifferentiated knowledge of God without in effect, rendering the Scripture something different from what we described it to be above. For, according to our understanding, the Bible is, as the verbal witness to God's will of judgment and salvation, that which gives meaning to "Nature and History" as the manifestations of God. But this interpretative order cannot be reversed, that is, "Nature and History" do not prove the Bible, having no inherent, "built-in" meaning in themselves. The Bible as the witness to God who, when He reveals "His heart," reveals it sub specie contraria in Nature and History, needs no interpretative key outside itself for the signification of its message of salvation. In fact, the knowledge of God given through the Bible must stand "on its own feet," for its message of salvation stands constantly, while in this aeon, in contradiction to the appearances of "Nature" and "History."

Thus seen, we must say that Uchimura's harmonious and complementary coordination of the tripod can be conceived of only by way of a "metaphysical" idea of the ultimate reality, constructed on the basis of empirical observation of "Nature" and "History." As long then as the "positively" observed "Nature" and "History" is held to have a message of definite content beside "Bible," and since this idea presupposes one or another interpretative key outside "Nature and History," it is "Bible" that is necessarily brought into harmony with that metaphysical idea, at the cost of the former's qualitative uniqueness and "independence."

In the following, we shall consider "Nature, History and Bible" individually and learn the basic feature of each as a medium of God's knowledge, in order to see more clearly the structure of Uchimura's epistemology, which conditions the formation of his soteriology.

Nature

"Nature is," says Uchimura, "material representation of God." His purpose of the creation of Nature is to show Himself in and through her. As the "material representation of God," she is to man as broad, sublime, deep, mysterious, wonderous as God Himself is. Conversely, "God is like Nature." As the creature of God, Nature is surely not God, but through knowing her, one can know God in His greatness, His power, His wisdom, His goodwill, His love, and so forth. All the mysterious phenomena and the wonderous activities in Nature are God's own work.¹⁶ As a natural scientist by education, Uchimura has a profound sensitivity for the appreciation of Nature's inscrutable miracles, and he reads in her that God is unceasingly working in her. Espousing the validity of Darwin's evolution theory, Uchimura sees Nature progressing toward her perfection through God's "endeavor."¹⁷ Nature is thus an eloquent manifestation of God's being and working.

As the representation of God, Nature is the one harmonious whole, a great symphonic masterpiece, a stupendous painting, all with contrast but without contradiction.¹⁸ A shallow observation may register many contradictions and miseries, and force us to conclude that her end should be a total annihilation. When we see her deeply, however, there

¹⁶Ibid., 9:64.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 97-105.

¹⁸Ibid., 15:237

is no reason for disappointment, for we perceive in her the decrease of evil and the increase of good.¹⁹ Harmony and progress are the true marks of Nature, which vindicate God as the God of harmony and progress. For just this reason, Nature is filled with joy and hope.

To be sure, God's self-manifestation in Nature is not for its own sake. It is to tell man about God Himself and His will. "Mountains, rivers, valleys, trees grasses, and all the other phenomena in Nature" "convey God's will to us, thus being the second (perhaps first) Bible," says Uchimura.²⁰ Occasionally God will communicate Himself directly to man in Nature so that he may recognize His will immediately.²¹ "Ordinarily," however, Nature teaches man about God's will through her laws, for it is the very manifestation of God's own will. "Following Nature's law," says Uchimura, "we are walking with God. . . . The first Bible, that is, the Bible itself, conveys God's will immediately, while the second Bible [Nature] conveys the same will of God mediately through the sensory organs. God's law and Nature's law are one and the same in essence."²² Following Nature's law, which is identical with God's will, all the phenomena, be it in the field of fauna or of flora or in the

¹⁹ Ibid., 22:163.

²⁰ Ibid., 10:252.

²¹ "Shall we. . .," writes Uchimura in a biographical sketch of his hero, Takamori Saigo, "deny to our hero a voice direct from Heavens splendour, as he roamed over his favourite mountains. . . . Did not a 'still small voice' often tell him in the silence of [the] cryptomeria forest, that he was sent to this earth with a mission, the fulfillment of which was to be of great consequence to his country and the world? Why did he mention Heaven so many times in his writings . . . if he had not such visitations. . . . We believe he found One greater than himself and all the universe, holding secret conversation with him." CW 2:17.

²² Shinko 9:65.

inorganic sphere, provide man with rich instruction in the truth of life, in moral guidance, and also in warning against man's folly, heartlessness and presumption.²³ Seen in this way, "Nature is a Great Teacher" for man.²⁴

Being God's self-manifestation through realia, Nature has a specific advantage of tangibleness and concreteness in conveying God Himself and His will to man. "In fact," says Uchimura, "it is impossible for man to reach reality, truth, and God, without first standing 'on the solid foundation of Nature.'²⁵ Even Jesus built "His doctrine on the solid foundation of Nature."²⁶ "It is insufficient," says Uchimura, "for us to study the way of faith only in the Bible; we must search for it in the facts of Nature which is before our eyes."²⁷ To be sure, he does not de-emphasize the importance of the Bible; what he is saying is that the Bible must be complemented by the facts of Nature so that man's knowledge of God and His will may be a balanced one. In this sense, the study in Nature is indispensable for the true, adequate

²³ Ibid., 10:252-53; *ibid.*, 24:187.

²⁴ Shinko 10:252.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 15:235.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 10:279.

²⁷ Kanzo Uchimura, Nikki Shikan Zenshu [Kanzo Uchimura's Diary and Letters], 7 vols. (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Swan, 1974-75), 4:365. Hereafter cited as Nikki. "And Nature is truly God's revelation not inferior to the Bible. One who makes light of Nature by crying 'The bible, the Bible; [special] revelation, revelation [天啓]!' is in fact ignorant of the value of Nature as God's revelation. . . . Nature is poetry, philosophy, prophecy. Studying Nature in depth, we can discern the depth of God. With the eyes capable of reading [the language of Nature], Nature is herself the Bible. By studying the constellations of stars or the animal world, we can learn the heart of God manifested in Christ [イエスキリストにあらわれし神]." Chukai 8:57.

and tangible knowledge of God. "Studying in Nature," admonishes Uchimura, "we are to penetrate through Nature to God Himself."²⁸

Although Nature is in herself a genuine representation of God who is "the embodiment of all that is good, true and beautiful,"²⁹ she does not look like that to man's ordinary observation. It is, however, solely caused by man's fallenness from Nature. "Man alone has lost his nature in Nature," says Uchimura.³⁰ Man is therefore not able to perceive Nature as she is. When man sees Nature as in disharmony and struggle, it is because he sees her with his own fallen heart.³¹ "Nature is," observes Uchimura, "God's garments; we must therefore have such a pure heart as is found in God when we get in touch with Nature."³² For she opens her treasury only to those who approach her with the heart of humbleness.³³ To have a pure and humble heart which is required from man in order to perceive Nature and ultimately God in a proper manner, is to say that man returns to Nature in himself. Put in another way, returning to Nature in himself, man willingly comes to have faith in God, through which in turn he can authentically appreciate Nature and praise her "without contradicting to reason."³⁴ Return to

²⁸ Shinko 8:302.

²⁹ CW 7:202.

³⁰ Shinko 22:235.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 22:319.

³³ Ibid., p. 228.

³⁴ Speaking of how to come to faith in God, Uchimura gives an illustrative expression of the point here: "To believe [in God] is to say that we acknowledge the voice of Nature [自然の聲] arising within ourselves as the true voice [真の聲, God's voice?]. Just as the heart of a babe longing for its mother is a heart naturally arising, a heart deep, strong and true, so are our hearts longing for God also naturally arising within us. When we refrain from taking this [fact] as superstitious and rather acknowledge it as the heart of Nature herself

Nature is thus an indispensable prerequisite for man in knowing God and His will revealed in Nature.

In the above, we have sketched Uchimura's view on Nature in its basic feature. What is quite essential in Uchimura's theological epistemology found there is his understanding that Nature, in her own right, unequivocally mediates God and His will to man, provided that he is sincerely and adequately disposed toward her. Uchimura means that Nature shows God's glory, His law, His working in her, and the way of faith, that is, the way of Christian existence. Apparently, however, this is only one side of the coin. As Uchimura himself is aware,³⁵ Nature shows also destructive power and meaningless reality, which in themselves cannot be rationalized so easily. She is far from unequivocal in terms of her message of God to man. In addition to this, we are also to say that Nature, as the totality of non-verbal phenomena, has in herself no definite message to man's troubled existence. She is necessarily liable to be interpreted in order to be a definite message or witness to man. This entails that any view on Nature implicitly presupposes an interpretation. The interpretation thus presupposed then, is either of a rational-immanent or of a transcendental-theological character. In Uchimura's case, where the "autonomy" of Nature is

implanted in us [by Nature], then true faith arises in us. Observing, then, all things with this faith, we perceive all things as the work of God, and can realize them and praise their beauty without contradicting reason." Ibid., 9:32-33.

³⁵"Nature, seen from without, is truly beautiful. But a cursory glance at her backside proves a terrible reality which is unbearable indeed, especially that of insect world whose 'struggle for survival' in many cases we cannot bear to look on. . . . [It is] the very hell. . . . Thus, Nature is not a good teacher. "Nikki 4:339.

unmistakably indicated as a medium for God's knowledge in the like manner as the Bible is,³⁶ we have to maintain that he interprets Nature on an immanent-rational basis and, consequently, also what she is supposed to mediate as God's knowledge in the same immanent-rationalistic manner. This entails, however, a different concept of God's "heart" from that of the Reformation, namely, a moralistic-optimistic one, at the same time necessitating the exclusion of the transcendental dimension of man's existential reality before God.

History

In speaking of Uchimura's concept of history as a clue to the understanding of his theological epistemology, it is convenient, in advance, to have in hand some basic aspects of his view on history. The invariable conviction which lies in Uchimura's concept of history throughout his life is that the whole universe with mankind as its crown should be heading toward its positive completion. This conviction, however, finds different expressions in his thought according to his own experience of historical reality in the course of life. Initially he is firmly convinced of the validity of the evolutionistic pattern of

³⁶To illustrate how heavily Uchimura, despite his occasional negative remarks, feels himself drawn to Nature as an essential source of God's knowledge, it will be useful to quote a passage written in a context where the Bible is said to be the principle book to be read while Nature is the thing to be studied: "To be studied is Nature, not the laws codified by men nor institutions nor the customs of society nor the dogma of the church, but Nature as she is. Mountains, rivers, trees, grasses, fish, birds, animals. . . . Nature is not merely Nature. She is God's will and His design. She contains the deepest truth. . . . She is the principle of morals, the foundation of politics. To study Nature is not a hobby but a duty." Shinko 19:24.

historical progress toward perfection.³⁷ But this rather unconcerned optimistic view is not able to hold its own at the face of the outbreak of World War I, which completely undermined all the evolutionistic optimism, including Uchimura's. He experienced this as his theological crisis. What saved him from this crisis was his "rediscovery" of the meaning of the second coming of Christ for the completion of history. He now comes to understand that it is not man but Christ Himself who at His second coming should bring man's history to its ultimate goal.³⁸ Since Uchimura thus modifies his concept of history in terms of its modes of completion after the crisis, it is advisable to take first the initial concept and then the modified concept, for this modification affects his understanding of history as a medium through which one comes to know of God and His will. Through all this, we attempt to observe epistemological implications of his basic conviction of the completion of history.

History is for Uchimura "Truth Written Large." What does he mean by this phrase? It is the law that governs both man's reality and the course of the world which consist in the moral universe. In its narrower sense, this phrase is the truth of moral law, that "injustice does never endure for long while justice eventually shall triumph." For Uchimura, this is "a great gospel" which history so plainly teaches us.³⁹ To be sure, behind this moral law God does stand as the Author and Executor of it. Uchimura can therefore say that history is in reality "God's Providence Written Large." God's providence is,

³⁷ See note 15 above.

³⁸ Cf. supra. pp. 43-44.

³⁹ Shinko 15:263.

however, according to Uchimura, not so difficult to grasp as it may sound. It is such a simple thing as that those--individuals or nations--who, despising the law of justice, exalt themselves, shall be lowered, while those who, being humble, in themselves, follow the law, shall be raised and prosper."⁴⁰ Hence, all the ups and downs of individuals and nations in history are God's government of the world in commendation and judgment according to the law.

What one can learn in history unambiguously is the fact that justice, after all, prevails while injustice is doomed to perish. In this sense, history is "the best textbook of morality" written with actual events in history.⁴¹ "History is," says Uchimura while quoting Carlyle, "the Bible, if studied deeply."⁴² It is therefore man's part to learn God's law which governs the world and leads its history, for in it one can most tangibly recognize God's will and intention for man's existence.

Uchimura thinks, however, that history is not only an objective demonstration of God's law or the moral law. It is also "the record of the progress of mankind which shows the providence of Heaven most clearly."⁴³ In fact, history is "God's enterprise for the education of

⁴⁰ Ibid., 21:68.

⁴¹ Chukai 1:76. God's textbook [of man's morals] is History and Nature. The Bible is the best history," says Uchimura in the same place.

⁴² Shinko 6:205.

⁴³ Shinko 1:205. "Through History," Uchimura continues, "we consider the past and gain insight into the future, thus coming to know the movement of mankind as a whole [人類全体の運動]."

man."⁴⁴ By showing His will in historical processes, God has led mankind from a lower stage of development to the higher ones in religion, culture and moral. In this sense, history is a science which investigates the process of the growth of mankind. The history of mankind thus constitutes a striking parallel to the process of evolution which Uchimura finds in Nature. On the basis of this concept of the parallel development both in history and Nature, Uchimura understands that the ultimate goal for both is their perfection.⁴⁵ It is therefore quite essential to "investigate the principle of the progress of mankind" and to "grasp the will of Heaven revealed in the progress of the world,"⁴⁶ in order for us to determine the course of our lives in conformity with "the principle." The history of mankind is progressing toward the sphere of perfection "month by month," "year by year," says Uchimura. This evolutionistic and optimistic concept of history has been one of the cardinal foundations upon which Uchimura's theological reflections are based. His definition of the nature of Christianity as the only adequate basis for a new civilization,⁴⁷ his concept of salvation as

⁴⁴Chukai 1:109

⁴⁵"History is the record of the progress of mankind, or [the description of] its ["biological," as it were,] growth [発育]. . . . Mankind is, just as Nature is, evolutionistic [ally determined]. Its end is not annihilation but the perfect growth [完全なる発育]. Even if some part of it may fall however deeply, mankind as a whole is progressing toward the sphere of perfection month by month, year by year." Shinko 4:109-10.

⁴⁶Ibid., 23:287.

⁴⁷Speaking of the definition of the nature of Christianity in Uchimura's thought, we have to note that one of the main questions Uchimura embraced in the very early stage of his Christian life, around 1883, was: What kind of Christianity is capable enough of saving mankind?

man's perfection, his idea of the necessity of the restoration of the original Christianity and of Japan's calling in history of the world--all are to be seen against the background of this evolutionistic and optimistic concept of history. But, as we have already remarked, the outbreak of World War I comes to shake to the foundation this unconcerned concept of history of Uchimura's, invalidating through its meaninglessness all the empirical facts with which Uchimura has been able to support his concept of history. What comes to rescue him from the theological chaos caused by the War is his rediscovery of the second coming of Christ, which he understands shall bring the history of the world to its completion. Such completion now can be conceived of as possible, not by way of man's gradual development or progress, but only by the supernatural power of Christ. This is to say that while the basic conviction of Uchimura about the outcome of history of mankind, that is, the perfection of mankind, remains unchanged,⁴⁸ the foundation

(Nikki 2:371). "It is quite interesting," says one interpreter of Uchimura commenting on the question, "that he [Uchimura] calls into question, over against [his "inspiringly" obtained idea of] God, Christianity itself, which he has already embraced. Usually, God is conceived of from the [teachings] of Christianity. But Uchimura examines Christianity and inquires into it from [his idea of] God." Arimasa Mori, Uchimura Kanzo (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1976), p. 29. The new civilization which is required in the face of the decay of Occidental as well as Oriental civilization must be a Christianity "capable enough of saving mankind." "A civilization begins," says Uchimura, "with religion; civilization is the general name of the totality of life. Religion is then the basis for life. Man becomes as he thinks of God. God the Father of Christ is the best God. To execute the will of God as it is revealed, is the ideal of mankind [and it is the realization of a new civilization]." Shinko 15:303. Cf. *ibid.*, 11:200.

⁴⁸"The purpose of the second coming of Christ shall not be different from that of the First. When He came at the First Advent, it was in order not to judge but to save the world. It must be the same when He shall come again." *Ibid.*, 13:45.

for this conviction is changed. At this point, Uchimura seems to have discarded all the empirical supports for his conviction about the ultimate goal of history and to resort to the Biblical message of the parousia of Christ, which he preferably understands as the time of the final completion of the process of history moving toward perfection, rather than the Last Judgment upon the history of the world in the divine righteousness.

In reality, however, Uchimura, now after the crisis, again tries to find both in nature and in history tangible supports for the completion of the history of mankind by the second coming of Christ. For instance, in order to be convinced of the validity of the abrupt completion of history at the second coming on a rational basis, he resorts to mutation theory and argues that it is not contrary to scientific observation.⁴⁹ Some years later, Uchimura seems to return to the old position as to his concept of history.⁵⁰ All the histories, according to Uchimura, if observed deeply enough, tell that mankind is, after all, God's creation, and is led by Him on the way to the final

⁴⁹Shinko 13:52. "A new phenomenon which bursts out suddenly is not contrary to the law of Nature [as observed also in the spiritual sphere, say, "Paul's conversion on the way to Damascus occurred in one day, or my becoming a 'parousia-believer [再臨信者]' on one morning after forty years of Christian life]. God will, thus, transform the world as a whole in a sudden manner when time is come," writes Uchimura in the same place.

⁵⁰In 1923, a few years after the calming down of the Sairin-undo, Uchimura writes: "God follows certain ways when He accomplishes his enterprises. Beauty replaces ugliness; good triumphs over evil; perfection [of all things] shall come at the very last. The way of evolution is the way in which God accomplishes his enterprises." Ibid., 9:65.

destination, that is, perfection.⁵¹ No impediments occurring in history can change the main direction of God's creation; "man's trivial failure" cannot destroy the original purpose of God with His creation. Firmly convinced in this fact we can gain from history, we are to commit ourselves to the main direction of God's endeavor in history, and through this commitment our lives become a victorious marching on toward God's final will for man, that is, perfection or the realization of ideals.⁵²

Without further ado, it is quite understandable that Uchimura was constantly facing the hard reality of history which would not endorse his thesis that history in itself should justify the expectation of an "impartial" observer of it for the triumphant outcome. In one passage written in his last years, Uchimura attempts to validate his basic conviction of history in the following way:

Will and not Force was the source of all things. Will is purposive; it works not by chance; and judging by my own will which must have come from the Original Will, the Will that called forth the Universe

⁵¹Ibid., 22:164. "Great historians," says Uchimura in another place, "let us hear this 'Basal Tone' ['the melody of the eternal Gospel'] with their historical works. All histories, if only looked on deeply, will show the same, namely that also mankind, created and being led by God, is progressing toward the goal God destined for it." Ibid., 22:164.

⁵²"Petty philosophers and petty theologians engage in questions about God; while isolating this or that part [of the total reality], they wonder whether or not God exists, or whether or not He is potent, as if [the destiny of] the universe would be dependent on their own notions. God, however, has His own great goal. He will attain the goal, surely destroying all the enemies in the way. Our own small sorrow, misery and the like do not matter. Our nation may perish. But God has, taken on the whole, realized His ideals. We must believe this. In so doing, we must, in Christ and with Him, become thorough optimists [徹底的樂觀主義者]. We should lead our life victoriously, always singing praise." Ibid., p. 165.

into being must be a merciful, loving will! . . . As Good Will created the universe, the end thereof must be perfection. . . . The believer in God, the good Will source of all things, cannot be a pessimist. On the very face of the universe, he reads hope and perfection waiting [for] all things.⁵³

Thus, what Uchimura should resort to for the support of his basic concept of history is God as the Good Will which he deduces rationally, that is, from the analogy with his own will. It seems that Uchimura ultimately has to abandon all objective historical facts as the basis for his asserting the triumphant outcome of history and now to seek it in God Himself given rationally. Inconsistent as he is in his thought, however, Uchimura never abandons his attempt to support his historiographical conviction through the empirically demonstrable facts. Such an attempt tenaciously presupposes an epistemological axiom that one and the same law should govern both the visible things and the invisible things--the visible things functioning, as it were, as certain indices of the invisible--, which axiom in turn constitutes the basis for the analogy principle in the cognition of the ultimate reality.⁵⁴ But the

⁵³ CW 4:18-19.

⁵⁴ This epistemological principle will be dealt with in extenso in the last section of this chapter. As a helpful reference for our present consideration, we will quote the following passage from Heinz Zahrnt, Luther deuted Geschichte (München: Verlag Paul Müller, 1952), p. 29, which also makes clear what we have been concerned with regarding the relationship between epistemology and soteriology, or put in terms of our problem, immanent epistemology and moralistic soteriology:

Wenn ich Gott unmittelbar im Sichtbar-Anschaulichen [i.e. 'ex analogia entis'] constatieren zu können meine, dann werde ich ganz von selbst bestrebt sein, mir und meinem Tun den Anschein einer solchen sichtbar-anschaulichen göttlichen Bestätigung zu geben. So wird die theologia gloriae zum Motor weltlichen Machtstrebens. Dieses Machtstreben versteht sich selbst moralistisch. Wer in dem geschichtlichen Erfolg das sichtbare Zeichen göttlichen

passage quoted above is a clear indication that even within Uchimura's own thought it is found to be impossible to read out the meaning of history in the empirically given data unequivocally, since he in the last resort has to look on "God's will" for the foundation of his optimistic conviction concerning the meaning of history. When, in spite of this fact, Uchimura still insists that history should mediate, in its autogenous terms, its triumphant outcome to man's rational observation, it is in reality no longer history itself that mediates but a metaphysical postulate, namely, God's purposive will as described in the above quotation, that supports his historiographical conviction of optimism. In this postulation, we shall contend, Uchimura conceives of God rather as the ground for the rational affirmation of the meaning of history vis-a-vis its actual tormenting ambiguity, than as the limits of man's cognition of God's will - the meaning of history - through the empirically available data.⁵⁵

Wohlgefällens erblickt, der wird in seinem Handeln auf moralische Korrektheit bedacht sein und sich auf das göttliche Recht und die gute Sache berufen, überzeugt, dass sie die sicheren Bürgen des geschichtlichen Erfolges sind. Kurzum, wer nach Werken urteilt, der wird auch Werke tun. Luther sieht die 'vita contemplative cum suis speculationibus' und die 'vita activa cum suis operibus' als einer und derselben Grundhaltung an. Spekulation und Moralismus stammen aus der gleichen Wurzel und haben dasselbe Ziel: auf jedem der beiden Weg erstrebt der Mensch einen direkten Zugang zu God -- 'ex operibus.'"

⁵⁵What we are stating here is, in a word, the relativization (or, put a little more strongly, deprivation) of God's absolute sovereignty vis-a-vis man's rationality and morality. God is "incorporated" into the framework of man's immanent-rationalistic and moralistic cognition. The consequence of this is nothing but "making God after man's image." Judged from our own theological position, in which man's radical sinfulness before God is fully acknowledged and confessed in faith, Uchimura's concept of God, as found in the quotations above and also in the preceding chapter, seems to be a striking illustration of

Now we will add to the presentation our interpretation of Uchimura's concept of history as a medium of God's knowledge. Uchimura maintains with maximal emphasis that God leads the history of mankind through His providence and law with the effect the justice, in general, is enhanced, while injustice in like manner is punished. According to Uchimura, this is, we shall say, the lesson history seems to give us, though it stands on very tenuous ground. All the same, we have still to ask: Is God's ultimate will, "His heart," toward the sinful thus lost mankind, truly revealed in this external manifestation of the law of justice and injustice. Is not even this pattern of the correlative retribution of justice and injustice so equivocal that we could not read the will of God in it unmistakably? Shall we not sooner say that evil after evil, rather than good after good, has been prevailing in the course of history so that, even though the agents of different kinds of evil change, it is, after all, predominating in the world? Is not even justice often of make-believe character, which, though in itself and objectively promoting the external welfare of mankind, is in reality done by noble and ignoble forms of selfishness? In actual fact, history particularly viewed in the light of Lutheran anthropology, is rather the history of God's judgment over man's evil and presumptuousness than His commendation of man's goodness.⁵⁶ In the light of this observation of

man's incurable tendency toward securing the meaning of existence in terms of his own cognition, rather than by the word of sin's forgiveness given "from outside" as this justification of man's existence before God.

⁵⁶"Beschichtliche Bewegung," says Zahrnt in his presentation of Luther's view on history, p. 149, "entsteht erst in dem Augenblick, wo die Machtfrage gestellt ist, d.h. wo der Mensch sein Schicksal selber in die Hand nimmt und Gott nun genötigt ist, seine Gottheit gegen sein

history, we notice that Uchimura holds a simplistic interpretation of the consequences of justice and injustice in history. It is important to note that he conceives of God's government monistically. He understands, namely, that God, ultimately, rules this world according to His moral law which, standing on the same footing as man's rational idea of moral law, can be fully grasped by man, and which, manifesting itself in historical events, can be interpreted unequivocally. But what Uchimura understands as God's history is in reality only one aspect of God's government of this world, namely His preservation of the world from the total destruction of it by the power of sin in man. In fact, this monistic understanding by Uchimura of God's government in history is an inevitable consequence of rationalistic epistemology, and it provides the framework for his optimistic concept of history.

Another crucial point found in Uchimura's concept of history is his vague idea of man's sin in historical reality. When he conceives of history as "the record of the progress of mankind," he presupposes that sin's problem should be overcome through gradual progress, that is, sin should be curable by evolutionistic development.⁵⁷ Again, this

Geschöpf mit den mitteln seiner Schöpfung zu behaupten. Wo Geschichte ist, ist immer auch schuld; und wo God in der Geschichte handelt, da ergeht sein Gericht über den Menschen [wie Luther sagt]: 'omnia opera et verba Dei sunt iudicia.'"

⁵⁷When man's existential situation is conceived of in the conceptual category of evolutionism, sin is de facto no longer understood as rebellion of man's person against God, and it is therefore an issue outside of the Reformation soteriology, that is, not in the category of justificatio sola fide. Sin is grasped rather in the category of imperfect-perfect. This is to be considered as the keynote of Uchimura's exposition of Christianity, as we have seen in the preceding chapter. Here, let us include some quotations which show this feature of Uchimura's thought pointedly: "Nature is imperfect, but it is not Nature

view is only possible on the basis of an "empirical" observation of man's morality either in its perfection or defects. However, when sin's reality in this world is seen without illusion, history rather tells that it is going toward its judgment and abolition rather than perfection and completion. The same vague idea of sin's problem is to be observed when Uchimura resorts to God's good will as the foundation for his concept of history. In like manner, man's sinfulness is kept out of the scope of his thought. To be sure, God is sheer good. But man's rebellion against Him will not allow the conclusion that God's good will should be the same toward man as it was before the Fall and bring mankind eventually to perfection. If God takes man's sin seriously, man's history filled with sin's intense reality must be judged. In fact, His judgment is being carried on in history, in the form of war, calamity, pestilence, personal tragedies. Since Uchimura does not take sin's reality before God seriously, his concept of history turns out to be abstract and illegitimately optimistic, unable to grasp the true situation of man before God and his reality in history.

Thus, history in itself offers no definite and unequivocal meaning of its course. Uchimura ultimately finds it outside history, namely, in the Second Coming of Christ and in God's purposive will. And he obtains it on a rationalistic basis. We have seen, however, that this

alone that is imperfect. No, the whole of mankind is imperfect. What is more, Christians are also imperfect. Mankind is imperfect; Nature is imperfect. Just as the latter is waiting for perfection, so is the former." Chukai 11:208. "The purpose of the creation of heaven and earth is the perfection of mankind." Ibid., 1:23; "The purpose of life is the perfection of the self [靈魂]. Nikki 4:285; "God is the Great Merciful One who earnestly waits for our perfection." Chukai 4:34.

rationalistic view does not do justice to the historical reality. Where is to be found the definite meaning of history vis-a-vis its chaotic feature? For Christians, there is no other place in which to obtain the definite message of history but in the crucified Christ. In his ignoble death we recognize the meaning of the otherwise inscrutable history, not by rational "seeing," but by believing that in that ignoble place God revealed "His heart" toward man under an enigmatic and painful existence in history, sub specie contraria. In the seemingly total meaninglessness of the cross of Christ, God has revealed his unfathomable mercy and love, which made history "meaningful" as the summons in the form of judgment to the grace of God in Christ.⁵⁸

The Bible

Thus far we have described Uchimura's view on Nature and History as the media of God's knowledge given to man's empirical and rational observation, and discussed its validity as the basis for theological epistemology. The discussion is not complete before we describe Uchimura's view on the Bible as one medium which constitutes, together with nature and history, his concept of the tripod of God's knowledge. Now,

⁵⁸An immanent-rationalistic interpretation of history is a priori doomed to failure as an attempt to discern the meaning of history, either in the form of an unwarranted optimism which must suffer sooner or later in the face of hard reality, or in the form of hopeless nihilism. The meaning of history is only possible on the transcendental basis, that is, on the faith that God's work in history is transcendent over man's rational calculation and judgment on the basis of empirical data. Again, Zahrnt offers a pointed remark on this issue here:

Aber eben weil wir in der Geschichte nicht einem starren Nomos, sondern dem personhaft-lebendigen Willen Gottes begegnen, gibt es die Möglichkeit der Gnade. Der Gericht, das die Weltgeschichte vollzieht, ist ohne Gnade. Es ist auswegslos. . . . Wo das Gesetz beherrscht, dort gibt es nur Tragik, aber keine Gnade. Die Möglichkeit der Gnade ist nur dort gegeben, wo Gott als 'regula omnium'

we turn to a discussion of his understanding of the Scripture, and see what is the inner relationship between nature and history on the one hand and the Scriptures on the other. This investigation of the character of the relationship is essential for our understanding of Uchimura's theological epistemology and of its bearing on his concept of Christianity. For, despite his seemingly simple coordination of nature, history and the Bible as the reciprocally complementary source for the mediation of the rounded knowledge of God toward man, there exists, as we have seen above between nature and history on the one hand and the Scripture on the other a distinctive difference with regard to their respective nature as the media of God's knowledge. In fact, natural phenomena and historical events are both nonverbal, and can therefore by themselves signify no definite message; they need interpretation from outside for their signification. The Bible, on the other hand, is verbal and definite in its message. It is autonomous and does not allow itself to be molded by alien castings. Confronted with the Bible, there is only either acceptance or rejection of its message in the process of its interpretation. Already this formal consideration of the matter makes the equal complementarity of Nature, history and the Bible problematic. But, as we have already seen, Uchimura never abandoned his idea of the harmony and complementarity of the three media of God's knowledge. In view of this fact, our question in the following is:

[that is, God transcends man's immanent rationality as the basis for deciphering of history] der Geschichte mächtig bleibt und das Gericht in seiner souveränen Freiheit als Mittel seiner Liebe handhabt." Pp. 193-94.

How does Uchimura understand the formal character of the Bible? and what does he regard that the Bible mediates as primary?

The most general answer given by Uchimura to the question of what the Bible is is that it is "the book written for communicating the holy will [聖意] of God."⁵⁹ or "in a word, the book written about God," which "most clearly and most truly teaches us" "about God's nature, His will, His power, His love, etc."⁶⁰ In this sense the Bible shares with nature and history the task of imparting the knowledge of God's nature and His will. From this point of view Uchimura's secondary usage of the term "Bible" is to be understood. "All things in the universe," says Uchimura, "the manifestations of God's holy will, and any book that accurately reflects the matters and things in Nature is, I hold, certainly the reflection of God's will." Darwin's "Evolution Theory" should be taken as one such book. Further, Confucius' "Analects," the poems of Wordsworth, and Carlyle's "History of French Revolution" are also "a kind of gospel," in which one can know the great will [大御心] of Omnipotence.⁶¹ Both nature and history studied in depth are thus "Bible."⁶² What this generalization of the usage of the term

⁵⁹ Shinko 3:21.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 22.

⁶¹ Ibid., 11:27.

⁶² "Nature is the second Bible. The first Bible [Scripture] conveys the will of God itself immediately, while the second Bible conveys the same will through man's senses mediately. God's law and Nature's law are identical in essence." Ibid., 9:65. "History is the realization of prophecies. Interpreting the prophecies properly, we come to understand history and see the works of God in it. Thus, the Bible is not one book, but three, namely, Scripture, Nature and History." Chukai 6:8. "The Bible came into being as the result of man's [continuous] observation with the heart of God [神の心で] on the universe and all the things in it." Shinko 3:21.

"Bible" indicates is that the Scripture in his thought is taken as not qualitatively different from all the other natural and spiritual phenomena; it stands in continuity with other "natural" sources of God's knowledge.

Although Uchimura understands the Scripture as one media among others, in a qualitative sense, he, as a theologian devoted to Bible study the latter half of his life, regards it as a special book. The Scripture is "God's book" and "God's word." Beyond this general view on the nature of the Scripture, Uchimura is, however, contradictory and labile throughout his life. On one occasion he contends that "the Scripture is written by God."⁶³ Although this authorship of God can be understood differently, it is at least clear that Uchimura thinks of the Scripture originating directly from God. As the extension of this thought he asserts the inerrancy of the Scripture, even "in a sense, its verbal inspiration."⁶⁴ At another time, however, he holds that "the Bible is not [identical with] God's revelation; it is evidently the book written by those who have been in touch with God's revelation."⁶⁵ Since the Bible is a book coming into existence through the intermediary of errant human beings, it is only natural that "there are errors in letters, obscurities in historical data, and defects in

⁶³ Shinko 7:110.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 3:120. This viewpoint is expressed relatively early in 1903. Fifteen years later, on the occasion of his defense discourse for Sairin-undo, Uchimura composed an essay titled On the Bible as God's Word as a Whole [聖書全部神言論] in which he proclaims his conviction of the inerrancy of the Bible, saying: "I believe the inerrancy of the Bible. After the forty years of my [experience of] life in faith I cannot but believe so." Ibid., 11:91.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 7:114.

terms of natural science."⁶⁶ It seems that he considers the errors, obscurities and defects not to be confined to external things but also to be found in the spiritual message conveyed through the intermediary of the prophets and apostles when he remarks:

The Bible is not inerrant in all of its part. Christ alone is inerrant. Before Christ there were errors; after Christ there were errors. There were errors in Moses, in David, in Isaiah, in Jeremiah, and in all the other Judges and Prophets. There were also errors in Paul, in Peter, in John, in James, and in all the saints and apostles.⁶⁷

There is also inconsistency or perhaps development in his thought concerning the significance of the Scriptures for man's obtaining of the "real" knowledge of God. In his early period Uchimura is unequivocal in contending that the Bible is not originative for man's obtaining of God's knowledge and experience but confirmative for it. In other words, the Bible is secondary to man's primary experience given immediately by God about Himself. We cannot know God, if not by His immediate self-revelation in our hearts, no matter how much there may be written about God in the Bible, according to Uchimura.⁶⁸ "That we came to faith in God was not because of the words of the Bible; but since the Bible describes what we have experienced by ourselves, our faith is confirmed." Uchimura holds that no books, including the

⁶⁶ Ibid., 11:27.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 7:111.

⁶⁸ "God is greater than the Bible, so He tells us what the Bible does not tell, John 16:13. We must hear God immediately before anything else. Our true teacher is neither Isaiah, nor John, nor Paul, but the heavenly Father. Unless we first come into immediate communion with God in prayer and receive His word immediately [ただちに], we cannot see that the Bible is God's word. We must interpret the Bible with a judgment superior to the Bible [聖書以上の判断を.]". Ibid., 3:24.

Bible, can teach new truths; good and useful books are those which confirm our experiences as true. The reason for the invaluable-ness of the Bible lies in the fact that no other book than the Bible can provide us with "consent and sympathy" toward our God's experience and knowledge.⁶⁹ On the other hand, however, Uchimura in his later years seems to emphasize the originative significance of the Bible, even to the point that he denies the reliability of his immediate experience of God.⁷⁰ "The Bible is," says Uchimura in his very last years, "the word of God; I believe just as the Bible teaches about God, life, salvation, judgment, resurrection, the second coming, the restoration of all."⁷¹

Thus, for Uchimura the Bible is inerrant, primary and therefore authoritative for man's knowledge of God and His will toward him on the one hand, but on the other hand, fallible, secondary, vis-a-vis man's immediate experience of God, and therefore subject to man's own or his God's immediately given judgment. Despite the fact that the former view is by far predominant in Uchimura's writing, it is still important to note that he characteristically tries to maintain independence from the letter of the Scripture.⁷² How he can in fact live with these

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 24-25.

⁷⁰"To rely on the Bible is to rely on the Rock of Ages. Man's philosophy is too superficial. My own experience [臭 駿] cannot be relied upon. Only the Bible, the Word of God can be relied upon." Ibid., 12:162.

⁷¹Ibid., 11:13.

⁷²Cf. note 20 and 27 above. "I feel," says Uchimura, "the time seems to come to me that 'the Book' which is both the book of God and the book of man will be left in my hand as the Only Book, after natural science, history, literature, religion, yes, even commentaries on the Bible, have been abandoned. I do not think, however, that the matter

contradictory positions is in itself an interesting study subject. But what is of vital interest for us in this connection is that Uchimura holds a different "scriptological" position from that of the Reformation's sola scriptura principle. The sola scriptura principle is in fact inseparably connected with sola gratia as the pivotal, message of the Scripture. The exclusive emphasis on sola gratia necessitates sola scriptura, for the former can only be ascertained by the latter. The twofold character of Uchimura's "scriptology" may therefore indicate that the center of his theology is more or perhaps other than sola gratia in the sense of gratia remissionis. This observation is now to lead us into the investigation of what Uchimura considers to be the central message of the Bible. The result of this investigation will show us the inner relationship of the tripod of God's knowledge in his thought.

Trying to find out what Uchimura considers the Scripture to give as its main and most essential message, we face the same difficulty as we have met already, namely, the fact that he places an exclusive emphasis on one aspect of a matter, giving the impression that that aspect is the most essential above all the other aspects, while in reality such is not the case. The same holds true of his utterances on the matter we are now to consider. In the following, therefore, we must

stops here. The time will come when also the Bible will fall from my hand. 'The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life,' 2 Cor. 3:6. Even the Bible cannot escape being the letter. The letter even of the Bible kills man. There have been not a few who were killed by the Bible." Ibid., 20:107.

discern, as it were, "the main and most essential aspect" among "the most essentials."

According to Uchimura, the Bible deals with "God and the all [万有]." To study the Bible is, therefore, to study "Christ," "God," "man," "the universe," "life," "science," "history," and "poems and arts." "If the study of the Bible is less than this," says Uchimura, "I want to abandon it right now."⁷³ In fact, he could have said: "Nothing human is alien to me." But, speaking of the main scope of the Bible specifically, Uchimura sets apart three themes: forgiveness of sin, Christ, and the realization of God's will in history and in the universe. What is the inner relationship among these main themes of the Bible in Uchimura's thought? Is there an "hierarchical" order among them? If so, which one is the primary and which ones are subordinate? And what is the implication of the order among them for theological epistemology? We shall now consider each of the main themes individually.

First, the Bible clearly tells of the forgiveness of sin. For man, there is no greater problem in life than that of "sin and evil." And there is in no other place than in the Bible a place where we can recognize the origin and nature of the problem. "In a sense," says Uchimura, "the Bible is merciless, for it exposes our sins and accuses us while declaring that there is no remedy for it in this world."⁷⁴ The ultimate purpose of the Bible is not to reveal man's sins but to proclaim the forgiveness of sins. We cannot hear the message of forgiveness

⁷³Ibid., 7:115.

⁷⁴Ibid., 11:61.

of sins outside the Bible.⁷⁵ For this reason, the Bible is precious for us.⁷⁶ The evidence of the Bible as the word of God lies precisely in the message of forgiveness of sin, for God alone can proclaim it and no one else.⁷⁷ Thus, forgiveness of sins is "the primary purpose of the Bible [第一目的]." ⁷⁸ Here, however, we must recall what the forgiveness of sins means for Uchimura. "What makes the Bible the Bible," says Uchimura, "is found in the fact that it, while making clear the origin of sin, never omits to provide the way of moving away [免除] from sin; the Bible provides the perfect way of sins' extinction."⁷⁹ The forgiveness of sin in this sense is, as we have seen, the presupposition for "becoming like Christ."⁸⁰

Second, "The Bible is a book which speaks of Christ from beginning to end." writes Uchimura.⁸¹ The purpose of studying the Bible is to know Jesus Christ; to know Him is to gain "the life."⁸² When Uchimura says this, he surely means: "To know Christ is to know His grace," in the sense of forgiveness of sins through Christ's redemptory work. The main emphasis is, however, placed on Christ as the perfect Man. Uchimura quotes often John 5:39: "Ye search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 97.

⁷⁶"The Bible is precious as the book conveying [the message of] forgiveness of sin. . . . It is the book that the sinner should read in order to be forgiven his sins." Ibid., p. 12.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 61.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 170.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 61.

⁸⁰Cf. supra, pp. 103-106.

⁸¹Shinko 7:104.

⁸²Ibid., 11:164.

me." Commenting on "eternal life" in one place, he describes it as "the best and supreme life" [最高至善の生命], "the eternally unchangeable life" [恒久不変の生命], "the life universally present in mankind and the universe" [人類宇宙通有の生命]. "In a word," says Uchimura, "we call the most precious life 'eternal life.'" The most precious life then manifests itself in an Individual. "The best and supreme life," "the eternally unchangeable life," "the life universally present in mankind and the universe," that is, eternal life, is there only in Jesus. His life and the history of 1900 years after his death prove this fact. "The perfect life [of Jesus], that is, eternal life, is the purpose of the study of the Bible," maintains Uchimura.⁸³

Speaking of the Bible in this way as the book of Christ "from beginning to end," Uchimura gives indication of his view on the Bible as the primary source of the knowledge of Christ. But, in several places Uchimura discloses a view opposite that given above. "We cannot," says Uchimura, "grasp the Bible until we grasp Christ." "The Bible is a dead book before we come into touch with the living Christ. First we must touch the living Christ outside the Bible [聖書以外におい], and then we should seek in the Bible sufficient proof about Him."⁸⁴ Here Uchimura seems to contend for the primacy of man's direct experience of Christ before any fruitful engagement of the study in the Bible. In view of Uchimura's criticism of alleged formalistic, institutionalized, and dead Christianity, are we rather to understand this as his cry for the return to Christ, to the living fellowship with the Savior,

⁸³Ibid., pp. 165-69.

⁸⁴Ibid., 7:104

while pointing out the slavery of believers under the letter of the Scripture? Uchimura surely includes this kind of criticism here. In fact, it is impossible for him to know anything about Christ as his Savior without first going to the Bible. It is, therefore, also impossible for him to maintain the absolute primacy of the direct experience of Christ over the Bible in the process of knowing Him. Thus, he may have in mind only a warning against formalistic Christianity under the spell of "Bibliolatry."⁸⁵ However, despite this observation of the matter, the sources imply something substantial lying in the statements Uchimura has made about the primacy of the "grasping" of Christ "outside the Bible."

In the second quotation above, Uchimura holds that we need an immediate experience of Christ and, then, have to seek in the Bible its confirmation as truth. At this point we again recognize the same thought of Uchimura on the confirmative significance of the Bible vis-a-vis man's obtainment of God's knowledge, as we have seen a few pages before. In his view, Christ touches man's heart immediately and independently from the Bible. He says:

Christ is first there, so is there the Bible. [And not vice versa.]
If Christ were not really there, we could not make Him present in us

⁸⁵On one occasion, speaking of Luther, Uchimura offers an interesting remark on "Bibliolatry" which incidentally shows a "critical" distance from the Bible, one characteristic of him: "For emancipation from the chains of the church, he [Luther] became dependent on the Bible. He replaced the inerrant Church with the inerrant Bible. This, as a strategy [for the emancipation], is surely an ingenious one. But the relative truth [i.e. the Bible] cannot be a substitute for the absolute truth. The One, God only is to be worshipped.' So 'the absolute truth is the One, God only.' Regarding the Bible as the absolute truth, one cannot but fall onto 'Bibliolatry,' a form of idolatry, [which is the "evil [罪毒]" which Luther has left]." Ibid., 6:247.

even through the reading of the Bible a "million-times." Christ is not an imaginative being but a Being really existing. Christ is still there apart from the Bible. Hence, valuing the Bible as too precious, we must not attempt to find the living Savior in the old letters.⁸⁶

Although we have difficulty in following Uchimura's logic when he maintains that Christ can be experienced or known in principle independently of the Bible as the sole prophetic-apostolic witness, he speaks in clear terms, as seen in the above quotation, that for our obtainment of the knowledge of Him Christ is not bound with the "old letters." How can this difficulty be solved? The solution seems to be given by answering the question: what in Uchimura's thought renders it possible to conceive of Christ independently of the Bible? In our view, as long as solus Christus is held as sola gratia in the sense of forgiveness of sin, it is necessarily and inseparably bound to sola scriptura, for only in the Bible, that is, the prophetic and apostolic witness of Him can one find solus Christus. Against the background of this way of seeing, we have to postulate that Uchimura's concept of Christ is, in its essential core, different from that of the Reformation's solus Christus, since he regards it possible in principle to obtain the knowledge of Christ independently of the Bible--although in practice he is depending on it invariably. We must, however, take note of this inconsistency, for it reveals the nature of the matter, namely, that the question is, after, all not of the primacy of man's immediate knowledge of Christ or the Bible, but of the interpretation of Christ mediated in it.

What concept of Christ is it then that Uchimura thinks given immediately in principle and mediated in the Bible in practice?

⁸⁶Ibid., 7:106.

We go to the Bible with a wish to know Christ. A man is, however, not necessarily [identical with] the words he has uttered nor the deeds he has done. He is [identical with] Seishin [or will] that communicates itself through . . . his words and deeds, yes, the spirit [聖] is he. We go to the Bible to know the seishin of Christ and receive His spirit.⁸⁷

Here Uchimura holds that the ultimate significance of Christ is to be found beyond His words and deeds. Christ Himself is to be thought of as more than the objective historical events which in the Reformation soteriology are considered as of the cardinal significance. Uchimura means that we should penetrate through the words and deeds of Christ to Himself, His seishin or will, and His spirit.

Since the term seishin is the key to the understanding of Uchimura's concept of Christ in this connection, we must briefly consider what Uchimura means by it. The term seishin may also be understood as "spirit" in the sense of a vital volitional principle directing the total existence of a person toward the achievement of a goal. "The seishin is [something aspiring toward] ideals," says Uchimura.⁸⁸ "What we are to seek is not formula [説] but seishin; the seishin which wants to make progress unceasingly. With this seishin there is no need for deeply involved discussions on various formulae."⁸⁹ He wants, therefore, to be "not a supplier of [theological] formulae and doctrines but a distributor of seishin and life," for "the most precious thing is seishin."⁹⁰ In view of these words, it is important to observe that seishin, as such a vital volitional principle, is assigned the autonomous, intrinsic value in itself, irrespective of the success or failure in the achievement of the goal.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 11:151.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 8:120.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 23:186

⁹⁰ Ibid., 7:310.

On this general idea of seishin, Uchimura speaks specifically of the seishin of Christ in terms of His redemptory work.

Speaking in ethical terms of how Christ has saved mankind, it is as follows: He fulfilled the duties of man, did not bear a grudge against God to the end of life, loved man, showed God to man in His own person, and led him to God. But after His death, His seishin--which is called the Holy Spirit in His case, that is, spiritual life [聖的生命]--has been, more and more, communicating itself to mankind. Thus, He still now lives with His seishin in those who believe in Him.⁹¹

The Christ conceived of in this passage as seishin is again "a perfect, ideal Man" inspiring and aspiring His followers toward "becoming like" Himself. As the perfect, ideal Man, Christ need not be sought in the Bible in principle. Through the amplification of men more or less ideal found elsewhere, one can obtain the idea of Christ, independently of the Bible. We must say, therefore, that it is this concept of Christ which, in spite of his invariable dependence on the Bible in practice when speaking of Christ in concrete terms, makes Uchimura insist on the distinction between Christus and Scriptura.⁹² In the same line of thought as found in the above quotation, Uchimura says that the Bible is "the record of the operations of the living Christ"; what we are to do then is to "receive His spirit and make a new Bible."⁹³

⁹¹Ibid., 12:37.

⁹²To be sure, Christ and the Scripture are not identical. What we want to point out [or "emphasize"] is that Uchimura, in principle, thinks it possible to know Christ independently from the Bible, while we from a Lutheran perspective believe that Christ is not available outside the Bible; that is, our knowledge of Christ totally depends on the Bible. Christ the Savior of men from sin and the Biblical witness of Him are inseparable from each other.

⁹³Shinko 7:105. As an illustration for Uchimura's emphasis on seishin as a core issue of faith, let us include the following passage: "When the ideals of Plato are practiced with the seishin of Jesus, the golden age becomes present in the world." Nikki 4:62.

Our examination of Uchimura's understanding of the Bible as the book written of Christ "from beginning to end" has now shown that the main and ultimate interest with which Uchimura goes to the Bible is to find there Christ the perfect and ideal Man, who is to be the model of man's imitatio, rather than Christ the Savior of sinners from God's judgment and condemnation, and brought to God's mercy and favor. The former Christ comprises, according to Uchimura, the main scope of the Bible, while the latter is a partial, even subordinate aspect of it. What implication has this, Uchimura's Christological position, on his understanding of the Bible as the "unique" book? Sola in the Reformation's sola scriptura is correlative to the qualitative uniqueness of Christ's revelation, which has absolutely no equivalent besides itself for the salvation of man. In Uchimura's case, however, where the main emphasis is placed upon Christ the perfect and ideal Man, what the Bible is interpreted to mediate of Christ to man logically stands in line with man's rational-moralistic ideas. This means that the Bible cannot be unique in a qualitative sense. More important is it that in this concept of Christ the uniqueness of solus Christus and sola gratia cannot be maintained; the Gospel loses its radical character of pure grace and is reduced to the category of moralism. Thus understood, the Bible, and the salvation which is given through Christ witnessed in the Bible, ultimately remains immanent and rational. This immanent understanding of the Bible will, then, stand in continuity with one or another naturalistic and rationalistic view of reality and history, which may be provided by various philosophies dominant at various times. Starting with this observation we shall consider in the following the last of the

main themes we found in Uchimura's view on the Bible, namely, the realization of God's will in history and in the universe.

"The Bible begins with Genesis," says Uchimura, "and ends with the Revelation of John; Genesis is the record of the creation of heaven and earth, while Revelation is that of the completion of them." The Bible is thus "the history of the universe." It tells of "the genesis of the universe, its purpose, and its consummation."⁹⁴ The true agent of this history is, no doubt, God Himself. From the Bible as the history of God's "triumphant march [凱旋的進行]"⁹⁵ demonstrated on earth one can learn the progressive realization of His "holy enterprise [聖護] concerning the universe and mankind, that runs from the past through the present to the future."⁹⁶ Uchimura even holds that the Bible mediates "the heart of God," that is, "how God has prepared the universe and all things in it, and how He sees all the events among mankind."⁹⁷ In these words--we can add more of the similar utterances from his writings,--it is unmistakably indicated that Uchimura is oriented in his understanding of the Bible more "philosophically" than "religiously"--"philosophically," in the sense that his question revolves around the rationale of the universe and of the existence of mankind. We could even maintain that Uchimura is far less "religiously" occupied vis-a-vis his "philosophical" concern, in the sense that the existential confrontation of a sinner with the holy God is virtually non-existent in his thought. This characteristic feature of Uchimura's

⁹⁴ Chukai 1:7.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 11:106.

⁹⁵ Shinko 7:110.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 127.

thought leads us to the question of what Uchimura means by "the will of God," when he speaks of it in connection with the history of the universe and mankind.

The most descriptive term for Uchimura's concept of God's will concerning the universe and mankind is "completion [完成]," as used in the "completion" of the universe and mankind. According to him, God's will has been directed since the creation of them toward "the day of the great completion, . . . the day of the completion of the universe, of the completion of mankind, of the appearance of the new heaven and the new earth."⁹⁸ The intrinsic connotation of the term, "completion," is the attainment of the goal through a gradual process and development. The ever recurring use of this term in connection with God's will again indicates that Uchimura primarily conceives of the realization of God's will as a process through progressive evolution toward the final completion. Quoting "My Father worketh hitherto," Uchimura says that for this reason there is "the evolution of all things," "the progress of mankind," and "the renovation of the world." "For this reason," continues Uchimura, "there is hope for mankind to reach the sphere of perfection." "God is marching on,"⁹⁹ he says in English.

This view that God works toward the completion or perfection of mankind and, together with it, the whole universe, is the leitmotiv of Uchimura's thinking throughout. We must even say that it is the axiomatic postulate of his theology.¹⁰⁰ In what, then, does Uchimura find

⁹⁸ Chukai 17:63.

⁹⁹ Shinko 16:161.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. supra, note 15.

the basis for this view? From one of the passages written in his later years, we can unmistakably learn that God's dealing with his creature cannot be otherwise, for He is by definition the perfect and purposive Will that cannot fail in its undertaking without ceasing to be God's Will. Thus Uchimura articulates his point as follows.

Will and not Force was the source of all things. Will is purposive; it works not by chance; and judging by my own will which must have come from the Original Will, the Will that called forth the universe into being must be a merciful, loving will. . . . As Good Will created the universe, the end thereof must be perfection. Ruin and destruction cannot be the end of Life and Existence. . . . To believe in the ultimate coming of the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, is as reasonable as to believe that Good Will and not Blind Force was the beginner of all things.¹⁰¹

This universe created by Good Will is, therefore, "a Rational Universe,"¹⁰² as he puts it in a letter dated as early as 1885. Forty years later Uchimura also writes that "it is the conclusion of all the healthy philosophies that the end of all things is the completed universe."¹⁰³ This "conclusion" is then, according to Uchimura, completely in harmony with the ultimate scope of the Bible.¹⁰⁴ In a devotional passage written under the title "Genesis 1:1," Uchimura again says that "God's creation must end in perfection," and concludes: "In

¹⁰¹CW 4:18-19.

¹⁰²Iwanami 20:167-68. In 1923, some forty years later, Uchimura says "This world is the world of reason [道理]. Nothing can therefore happen against reason. . . . All things must be explained by reason." Shinko 22:241.

¹⁰³Nikki 3:206.

¹⁰⁴"What great religions and great philosophies teach coincide with one another in the essence. That is, all events and all things are good. The end of the creation is good; the conclusion of mankind is happiness. This is what both faith and philosophy convey to us." Ibid. 4:86.

the very first verse of the Bible are contained all its promises, and all the hopes of mankind."¹⁰⁵

Having seen some of Uchimura's utterances about God's will for the universe and mankind, we now recognize as the conspicuous feature of his theology that God's will, as it has found expression in His creation is, so to speak, the Gospel. Since in Uchimura's point of view, God's will and God's existence are identical with each other, we understand Uchimura's praise of "God Is" as "the most comforting of all thoughts," ("Oh what a comforting thought!")¹⁰⁶ In view of this undialectical affirmation of God as "Good Will," or "a merciful, loving will," we must, however, raise a question: Is this unqualified affirmation of God's will for the "interest" of man tenable vis-a-vis man's existential situation before God, and in the universe? Does not a sober observation of man's actual experience of his own existence contradict Uchimura's unqualified affirmation of God's will? Is it not, further, this contradiction that has been driving men of thought both in modern and ancient times to fatalism and atheism? In fact, does not Uchimura's own repeated assertion of the "rationality" of the universe paradoxically betray itself? Faced with the profound enigma in man's existence, man searched for ultimate meaning, on a rational basis, but, in vain. If the all-benevolent Omnipotence has created the whole universe and mankind--as not only the Bible but even also natural reason should postulate--why is its "meaning" so undiscernable? What is the missing link between God's original will with the creation and the enigmatic and meaningless reality man actually experiences? What is this

¹⁰⁵ CW 3:100.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 4:118.

missing link which should qualify God's original will so that man's existential misery and meaninglessness may be "understood"? It is nothing other than the reality of sin as man's destiny and responsibility at one and the same time. Because of his sin, man is now under the wrath of God although he still remains God's creature. In fact, this reality of man's sin is that which both theologically and existentially makes untenable any unqualified and undialectical application of God's original will to man's empirical reality. Viewed in this way, the reason for Uchimura's "Gospel" found in "Genesis 1:1" must be sought in the absence of the reality of sin in his thought, as the essential problem of man's existence, which is also conceived in the Bible as having cosmological significances.

Our reflection above has shown the inner relation between God's will postulated in an unqualified, "monistic" manner as "Good Will" toward mankind, and the absence of taking seriously into account sin's reality of man as the constituent problem for a theological understanding of man's situation. In fact, the one logically presupposes the other. This we have observed in Uchimura's thought. Once God is "apriorically" conceived as "Good Will," without being considered over against His reality as the Holy One who puts man under His wrath, logically, the real need for salvation disappears; for salvation is ultimately the salvation from God's wrath imposed upon the sinner, the wrath which God as the Lord of all things causes man to experience in the forms of suffering, miseries, alienation, meaninglessness. In this theological category, of Uchimura, however, sin can only be conceived "rationally," namely as failure in morals. This has, a crucial bearing on soteriology.

Salvation turns out to be, in the last analysis, the rehabilitation of man's morality. Accordingly, the cross of Christ is deprived of its cardinal meaning as the fulfilment of man's ultimate salvation which occurred historically on Calvary, being reduced to a demonstration of God's love that is known already prior to it, on a rational basis. Christ is, then, conceived as the Example of moral perfection and "sanctifier," in the same moralistic sense, rather than "Redeemer" from the wrath of God in the sense that "God saves us from God." In Uchimura's thought, since Christ is conceived as "Sanctifier," absorbed in "God's will" directed toward the "completion" and perfection of mankind (and, together with it, the universe), the main scope of the Bible is, we must suppose, not the redemption fulfilled in Christ from "sin, death and devil" for the eternal life in fellowship with God, but the ultimate completion and perfection of what God has initiated by His creation, in which mankind will grow infinitely in God's blessing.¹⁰⁷ Now by turning our attention to his eschatology, which is particularly articulated in the writings originated from the periods of his Sairin-Undo, we shall see what this position of Uchimura will lead to in his understanding of salvation in Christian faith.

"There are," says Uchimura, "three great moments in my life." The first one was to be "found by God,--to be a sinner." The second one was when he found his righteousness, not in himself, "but in Him

¹⁰⁷"Does not Bergson, a great contemporary philosopher, teach that life is infinitely to change and evolve? Is it not his assertion that it is not possible for us to predict how far mankind is to develop, and that man is to become more than man, while the universe is gradually spiritualized [漸次霊化すべし]?" Shinko 13:76.

who was crucified for my sins." At both moments, he had tried to "realize" in himself the empirically establishable righteousness respectively by his own power, at first, and, secondly, by the power of Christ within. Then, Uchimura continues:

A third, and perhaps the last great moment in my life was when I was shown that my salvation is not yet, and that when Christ shall appear again, then, and not till then, shall I be like Him.¹⁰⁸

At this final stage of the development of his faith, Uchimura has found in the second coming of Christ "the central truth,"¹⁰⁹ "the greatest truth,"¹¹⁰ and "the final truth [最終真理]"¹¹¹ of the Bible. To have appropriated the truth of the second coming of Christ is to Uchimura to taste "the sweetest wine given by God."¹¹² What does Uchimura mean by these "superlatives" in the description of the second coming? If the message of the Parousia of the Lord is the central, greatest, final, and sweetest truth of the Bible, what are, in his thought, the implication and the relationship of this message as the final truth vis-a-vis that of the cross and resurrection of Christ? Is the message originating in the first advent of Christ not in itself of the ultimate significance for our redemption, which, proclaiming the cross and resurrection of Christ as the ultimate event taking place for our salvation, gives us the assurance of God's merciful promise of sin's forgiveness? In

¹⁰⁸ CW 3:pp. 86-88.

¹⁰⁹ Chukai 14:73. "Surely we do not err to call this [the parousia of Christ] the center of the truth [真理の中心]." Shinko 13:33.

¹¹⁰ "This very [message of] parousia of Christ is the greatest truth proclaimed aloud everywhere in the New Testament. . . . The central truth of the Bible is, namely, this." *Ibid.*, p. 26. "The parousia is the greatest truth of the truths which Jesus defended with His death." *Ibid.*, p. 78.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

other words, do we not, in that ultimate redemptive event, find already here and now "ein gnädigen Gott," whose promise of sin's forgiveness is ultimately the content of our salvation? What is, then, in Uchimura's thought, the relationship between the first and the second advent of Christ in terms of their significance for our salvation? and how are we to understand the implications of the relationship for the conception of the Gospel?

Already in the quotation above, we can find the soteriological equation characteristic of Uchimura, namely: Salvation is becoming "like Him." What has made the discovery of the message of the second coming "the last, great moment" in his life is the assurance of the message that Uchimura will eventually become like Christ. What then does Uchimura believe about the significance of Christ's vicarious death for our sin? "The atonement [贖罪] of Christ," says Uchimura, "has been the light comforting me for these thirty years, but, advancing to a certain point, I found myself totally unable to be satisfied with this alone. It was the evening of darkness."¹¹³ And the liberating morning light has come through the message of the second coming. In another place, Uchimura seems to offer an explanation for "the evening of darkness," saying

Although the purpose of God's calling me [through the Gospel of justification] is to make me like His Son, there exists [, I cannot but admit,] the enormous distance of heaven and earth between the image of Christ and my own reality. At this point, I cannot but be disappointed. Seeing the [insufficient] result of the [influence of the] Gospel recognizable in those I have evangelized and in myself, I feel a deep unrest [大いなる不安] in me.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Chukai 1:41.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 11:218.

The reason for Uchimura's disappointment and unrest had been the original hope that the Gospel of "the first coming," the cross, for Uchimura, should sanctify those who have received it, in the sense of bringing about their ethical improvement. It is true for Uchimura that the Gospel of sin's forgiveness provided by Christ in His cross makes man righteous before God, but, conceiving the empirically recognizable sanctification of man as the ultimate rationale for salvation, justification of the sinner through the redemptive event of Christ is, in substance, a preliminary among the other preliminaries. And as a preliminary, the significance of the cross and resurrection as the principal eschatological event is reduced to one stage succeeding the previous one and followed by the next one. What this idea implies is that there is no qualitative difference between the time before Christ and the time after Him; in other words, that salvation still remains as God's promise and is not fulfilled yet. In this sense, the expectation of salvation in Christianity does not substantially differ from that of Judaism. Consequently, the second coming of Christ, in essence, overshadows the first in Uchimura's conception.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ This overshadowing of the Second Coming on the First in Uchimura's thought finds, *mutatis mutandis*, a certain affinity with Moltmann's theology of hope. Thus Wilfried Joest's comment on the latter's position seems to be pertinent also here:

Moltmann scheint mit der Verlegung der Volloffenbarung Gottes in noch ausstehende Zukunft dem Paradox einer Behauptung der Vorwegereignung des Zieles mitten im Prozess der Geschichte zu entgehen. Aber ist die definitive und volle Gegenwart Gottes zum Heil des Menschen in der Person und Geschichte Jesu, die dann gleichsam suspendiert werden muss, nicht ein wesentliches Element des neutestamentlichen Zeugnisses der Christlichen Glaubensuberlieferung?"

In this understanding of his own Christian existence, Uchimura gives an unequivocal expression for his conception of the incompleteness of the first advent and the cross and resurrection, incomplete in the sense that even these decisive events constitute only a preliminary and preparatory stage for the ultimate salvation which should be realized, according to Uchimura, in the other advent to come in the future. What then is the theological presupposition which leads Uchimura to this relativization of the all-decisive significance of the incarnation with the Cross and Resurrection? Again, as we have repeatedly seen, it is his conception of salvation as moralistically understood sanctification on the individual level, and as the realization of moral ideals in a kind of theocratic kingdom on the universal level.¹¹⁶ The difference is striking between this soteriological understanding of Uchimura and that of the Reformation. When the latter sees our salvation realized to the full in the event of the cross and resurrection, in terms of the content of salvation, it conceives of salvation as "obtaining a merciful God" who forgives us our sin for the sake of Christ, who has come to die and rise for our blessedness. In this concept of salvation, the love of God shown in the forgiveness of sin through Christ is itself the ultimate content of salvation, in which it is idle and irrelevant to speak of the (moralistically conceived) perfection of man and "the realization of righteousness" by way of the Kantian postulate.¹¹⁷ However, in the case of Uchimura, it is only logical for him

¹¹⁶ Shinko 13:33.

¹¹⁷ "In the world to come, God will make all the righteous righteous, that is, reveal the righteous as the righteous, although He, to a

to regard the second coming as the ultimate, both in terms of time and significance, as long as his conception of salvation is primarily concerned with sanctification, that is, the perfection of man and the completion of the world, for it is for Uchimura at the Second Coming that salvation thus conceived will be really and factually materialized.

In one of the few passages which expressis verbis speak of the first coming as the preliminary one for salvation, we read as follows:

The Bible is the book which records God's attempts to save mankind. . . . [The first mankind rebelled against God and His will, thus being driven away from the Garden. God, however, not despising the creature of His hand, promised His coming down among mankind through the seed of the woman to save it. The Old Testament gives witness to this promise.] Eventually God descended among mankind . . . through Jesus Christ. . . . By His coming the Garden of Eden should have been restored, and mankind should have reached its glorious determination; in the sense, the golden age should have appeared on this earth. He was sufficiently equipped with the power to fulfill this. . . . But mankind rejected him through the Jews, its representative; not only rejected, but even crucified Him. . . . Even at this point, God's plan for the salvation of mankind ended with a complete failure [美事に失敗に終つたのである].¹¹⁸

The promise given in the Old Testament that the savior should come is thus fulfilled in the coming of Christ, though not successfully. The new promise of the New Testament is, Uchimura interprets, the "I come again" of Christ. Uchimura characteristically lets Christ say as follows:

Although I once came down to save my stray people, they rebelled against me and rejected me. Now, I will accomplish my purpose by a different way. I will come again to save my people.¹¹⁹

certain extent, rewards the righteous with the reward of righteousness." Shinko 12:62. "With the [clear] understanding of the parousia of Christ, I have grasped life; I have realized, the meaning of life is in this. Justice shall eventually be triumphant. . . . In this world, though, justice has only the appearance of victory but in reality [never] wins." Ibid., 13:35.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 65-67.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 66.

From this viewpoint, it is now understandable to us why the message of the Second Coming is to Uchimura the "central," "greatest," and "final" truth of the Bible.¹²⁰

From the documentation above, it is now sufficiently clear to us that Uchimura's primary concern revolves around the question of the perfection of mankind and the completion of the universe, thus overshadowing the message of God's mercy in terms of sin's forgiveness which, now as the "realized" salvation with God in faith, will be made manifest as the fulfilment of hope inherent in faith. In the following, we will include a few passages which tell us how Uchimura conceives of the eschatological fulfilment in concrete terms, so that we may grasp the ultimate interest in Uchimura's conception of Christianity.

As we have seen, shaken to the foundation as to his conviction of an evolutionistic progress of the history of mankind in face of the hard reality of destruction in it, Uchimura is gradually forced to modify that conviction. We say he has modified his evolutionistic idea, for he has never abandoned it in its substance. In this evolutionistic conceptual framework Uchimura has formed his idea of Christianity. At first, the ethical influence of the Gospel should promote the moral progress of mankind and the world. The Gospel in this sense should be one, perhaps the greatest, force in the evolutionistic process, standing

¹²⁰ A year before his death, Uchimura speaks of the Second Coming of Christ, which shows that in his very last years he holds intensely a conviction of its message as the greatest issue of Christian faith: "If God grants me health once more, I will proclaim more thoroughly the Second Coming of Christ. This is truly the greatest issue of the universe and life, and the point to which all things converge, and the consummation of history." Nikki 4:307.

thus in harmony with other forces observable in nature and history. But, now, after the "collapse" of the unqualified optimism originating from evolutionism, the second coming of Christ has come to play an all-decisive role in the scheme of progress. Supported by an unshakeable conviction in the positive consummation of history at the second coming, Uchimura proclaims divine power working in the world despite appearance of the opposite. Now let us take one passage from Uchimura's writing:

He [Jesus] did not forsake this earth as unclean. At the side of Father, He is now purifying this earth through the Holy Spirit. When the work of this sanctification is completed, He . . . will come to this earth to govern it with His saints. Christian hope includes the sanctification of this earth, the second coming of Jesus, the resurrection of the believers, this beautiful earth to be [fully] owned by the Anointed of God, upon which the saints will receive the crown of righteousness.¹²¹

As we can see in this passage, Uchimura felt deeply bound to this earth with its fascinating Nature. "'Thy kingdom come,'" says Uchimura, "is not a prayer for our coming to the kingdom of heaven, but for the kingdom of heaven coming down to this earth." At the second coming, all the promised blessings described in the passage above will become reality. "Oh, our hope is this! We do not want to ascend to heaven! Or before we ascend to heaven, we want to see our ideals realized on this dearest [切實] earth of ours. . . . Most surely we shall see with our own eyes the kingdom of heaven realized on this earth."¹²²

"The Bible teaches," he says further, "the realization of the kingdom of heaven here on earth [地的天國]."¹²³ Why does Uchimura so strongly insist upon the realization of the earthly kingdom of

¹²¹ Shinko 13:218.

¹²² Ibid., p. 220.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 81.

heaven? In addition to his passionate love of this earth with the beauty of nature, it is his desire for or "sense of" justice, which must postulate this blessed earth to be given to the just [義者], her "rightful" heirs.

Lo! This beautiful earth is now fallen in the hands of the rich who are the incarnation of selfishness, while the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, have no share in this earth for their life. If this world should end as it is now, there would be no greater indignation [悲憤] for the just [義者] than this [absurdity]. But Jesus says to His disciples: "Wait patiently. I who have the power to subjugate all things to my will, I will, without any human aid, transform all things, realize the new heaven and the new earth, and give them to the just." Yea, let it be truly so!¹²⁴

This passage from Uchimura's writings is one which expresses his conviction of an equalization of "virtue and happiness." The just are, according to Uchimura, those who really and sincerely endeavor to live up to the moral ideals and, thus, realize justice in this world. They are encouraged and strengthened in their following the way of justice by faith in the world to come where justice will be completed. "Justice will surely be done, not in this world, but in the world to come. We sow the seeds of justice in this world to harvest their fruits in the world to come. . . ."¹²⁵ In one passage written a year before his death under the title of "The Necessity of Readvocacy of the Second Coming," Uchimura says among other things:

For the preservation of faith [i.e. Christian life here on earth], the hope of the second coming is indispensable. The Christian morals are not pure morality nor a morality for the sake of morality, but a morality with a clear purpose [of obtaining reward]. . . . Kant would call this an impure morality which aims at reward [報償]. It should not necessarily be so. Morality is not only the law of mind [心の法則] but the law of all things. That

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵Ibid., p. 253.

reward accompanies justice is as certain as water flowing downward. Since the eyes of unfaith cannot see this, it is necessary for us to be shown this by God as a promise and hope.¹²⁶

Speaking in this way, Uchimura shows that he consistently thinks of eschatology in rationalistic and moralistic terms, untroubled about the reality of et peccator in Christian existence. In the theology of the Reformation, where the et peccator aspect of the Christian situation before God is the basis for justificatio sola fide, it is impossible to speak of rewards for man's deeds here on earth in the world to come. For before God, as long as we live here on earth, we remain sinners whose existence and deeds are constantly under sin's influence both without and within and, consequently, need the daily forgiveness of sin even in the so-called "virtuous" deeds. The idea of reward in Uchimura is only possible in a theology where sin's problem is conceived of in rationalistic and moralistic terms, and this is, in principle, irreconcilable with the Gospel, understood as forgiveness of sin in the Reformation theology.

In this part of the present section we have attempted to find out what Uchimura means by "the realization of God's will," which he understands to be witnessed and recorded in the Bible, constituting one of its main foci. We have seen that the ultimate will of God is the completion of the universe and mankind, both of which God initiated at the creation, and, which are now in the process of their full realization. This concept of Uchimura, we have observed, is founded in a rational way upon the idea of God's will, which, as the perfect will, cannot fail to accomplish its original intention. Uchimura thus

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 64.

conceives of the whole process of the history of the universe and of mankind heading in a straight line toward its completion. We have further remarked that in this conceptual scheme of history the cross and resurrection of Christ is, in substance, one more promise added to the promises given in the Old Testament, which is still waiting its fulfillment, and not the ultimate salvation which, given through faith, is already, here and now, a blessed reality for sinners. All these points have made it clear that "the realization of God's will" in Uchimura's thought is more "positively" concerned with the rational and moralistic postulate of the completion of the universe and mankind as the rational and moralistic postulate, rather than with God's redemptive act for man as the sinner taking place in the sacrificial death of Christ.

In this section under the heading, "Bible," we have been trying to find out what Uchimura thinks is the ultimate issue mediated in the Bible. For this purpose, we have selected three main themes which Uchimura finds mediated in the Bible and thus far analyzed each of them individually. Now we are in a position to answer the questions we raised before, namely, is there any "hierarchial" order among the three themes? If so, which one occupies the place of the ultimate and total aspect, and which one the preliminary and partial aspect? And what is the implication of the relationship among them for theological epistemology?

As a matter of fact, we have been implicitly answering these questions in the course of the individual observation of the main themes, progressing from forgiveness of sin as the preliminary and partial aspect toward the completion of the universe and mankind as the ultimate

and total aspect. In fact, speaking of sin's forgiveness, Uchimura thinks of it as a necessary presupposition for factual righteousness. And following this idea, Uchimura is, when speaking of Christ, ultimately concerned with Christ the Sanctifier in terms of both Ideal and Agent of its realization, thus relativizing the significance of the cross and resurrection of Christ at His "First Coming" for man's redemption from God's wrath and sin's curse. We have lastly seen that the ultimate issue mediated in the Bible, to Uchimura, is the realization of God's will in the sense of the completion of the universe and mankind. In his own way, Uchimura believed that this realization was not successful at the "first coming," thus postponing it to the second coming. The second coming is the second "attempt," as it were, of God through Christ to bring the universe and mankind to completion. To the second coming is thus attributed the ultimate significance in the process of the completion, or "salvation," of the universe and mankind. This idea of Uchimura's thus confirms our observation that Uchimura conceives of the completion of the universe and mankind as the ultimate issue of the Bible, and subordinating to it the message of sin's forgiveness and that of Christ as man's Redeemer from sin's curse.

What implication then has this of understanding Uchimura's of the Bible, for his theological epistemology? The ultimate issue in the Bible is the completion of the universe and mankind, and this is, as we have seen above, based upon God's will, which is good and perfect. Since this perfect and good will of God was operative at the creation, the ultimate outcome of the creation must be complete and perfect. This whole idea, we have seen, Uchimura founded upon the will of God in a

rational way, without taking into account that profoundly irrational reality of man's existence called sin. That Uchimura does not see the primary issue existing in this fatal reality should be explained by his rationalistic epistemology in the theological thinking. For, as long as one operates in his theology on a rational basis which, being immanent, inevitably excludes the mysterious dimension of man's existence as the sinner, one cannot but "rationalize," that is, "moralize" the problem of sin. Once the problem of sin is "moralized," the salvation from the sin thus understood is also moralized, that is, it becomes man's empirically observable sanctification. On this rationalistic basis in theological thinking, there is hardly any need for the qualitatively unique revelation, for reason, in principle, can "see" both "sins" and "salvation" only in its own terms. Reason can see man's moral imperfection and injustice prevailing in man's history. Reason can, deducing from the existence of "goodness" in man's reality, postulate an all-benevolent God whose creation must, as far as He is also omnipotent, end with perfection. In a word, God's unique revelation in Christ is not necessary as long as one thinks within rationalistic categories. But the crucial issue is that what reason can "see" by itself, cannot stand in the face of the apparent irrationality and even absurdity of man's existence and reality in this universe, without, in Uchimura's words, "an heroic faith,"¹²⁷ a faith which is in substance not

¹²⁷"Indeed, to believe is the greatest deed of mankind. Any man can doubt; the weakest man is able to doubt. Only strong men can believe; only they can believe in the essential goodness of the universe, and in the fatherly care of its Maker." CW 4:38. Half a decade prior to this vigorous word of Uchimura about faith, Takeo Arishima--who, once belonging to the core group of Uchimura's disciples for a number

different from any philosophical conviction. Uchimura's epistemology is, as his understanding of the Bible shows, rationalistic and immanentistic, hindering him from penetrating to the very problem of man's existence, which can be solved only by the believing acceptance of the Gospel of sin's forgiveness given to man by the cross of Christ. Thus, theological epistemology is crucial for the interpretation of the ultimate issue of the Gospel.

Having thus completed the individual analysis of the constituents in the tripod of Uchimura's theological epistemology, we see now more clearly an intrinsic link between the concept of the media of God's knowledge on the one hand, and the content of salvation on the other. Since Uchimura is firmly convinced of the validity of an immanentistic-rationalistic ("positivistic") epistemology in his theology, he a priori cannot see the real dimension and the true reality of the problem of sin. Thus he is unable to grasp the true depth of God's grace in the message of forgiveness of sin, whose significance as the salvation from man's fallen reality is totally and radically transforming the quality of man's existence to the blessed one amid the contradictory reality

of years and thus having been regarded as one of the most promising successors of Uchimura's position and movement, yet later on "apostatized" from his Christian faith which was to Uchimura himself a great disappointment--had the following word to say in his "semi-confessional" writing: "[To have] faith in God is the privilege of the nobility, which is accorded only to the strong. I cast my eyes on it with envy. But to me the admission ticket is not given. In reality I was outside [the privileged circle] and was only making mere mimicry of the noble people." Ai wa Oshiminaku Ubau [Love Robs Relentlessly] (Tokyo: Shinchosha, 1968 [reprint of Tokyo: Sobunkaku, 1920s], p. 15. A question arises then in our mind: Is faith in God really a privilege accorded only to the strong? From what theological position does this concept of Arishima come?

here and now and, therefore, represents the ultimate content of man's salvation. Conversely, what makes the epistemological tripod possible for Uchimura's exposition of salvation, is the concept of salvation as the ultimate completion of God's creation, both mankind and the universe, the concept which is rationalistically and immanentially postulated. What is, then, mediated by the constituents of the tripod, "Nature, History, and Bible," taken together, is God's ultimate completion of the universe and mankind, with an essential emphasis on the continuity between the present reality here and now and that beyond. Uchimura's epistemological tripod can be thus grasped against the background of this soteriological feature of completion. We are, as we go, making this soteriological orientation problematic from our Lutheran point of view. Whether, however, Uchimura's exposition of Christianity is congenial with the intent of the Gospel witnessed in the Scriptures, is in the last analysis a question of hermeneutical decision, namely, what is, in the exposition of the Gospel, conceived as the ultimate issue of man's salvation.

Fact and Experience as the Foundation
of God's Knowledge

The net result of the preceding section is that according to Uchimura, "Nature, History and Bible" constitute a harmonious and mutually complementary tripod for the knowledge of God. We have then observed that this epistemological tripod which is intrinsically immanent-rationalistic is a priori incapable of penetrating to the very core of man's existential problem, that is, his being a sinner before God in the most mysterious, yet real manner, and therefore

inevitably leads to a soteriological concept different from that of the Reformation. We have seen in a detailed manner that what man, in this epistemology, learns as the ultimate issue of Christian faith is the realization of God's will in the sense of the completion and perfection which is conceived of as the final goal of God's continuous work on His creation, initiated at the beginning and now being carried forward. Along the way we have noted that this conception of Uchimura does not take into serious consideration the cardinal problem of man's sinfulness before God, and therefore is not truly evangelical in the last resort because of the very fact that it passes by the problem. Now in this last section of the present chapter we shall see the formal aspect of Uchimura's epistemology and its structure, which is axiomatically postulated in his thought. Through this, we will gain a clearer insight into the very foundation of Uchimura's formulation of Christianity.

Already in dealing with the epistemological tripod we have noted that Uchimura's theology as a whole bears a "positivistic" mark. This characteristic is due to his concept of God's revelation through "positive" facts. "Since God is a Real Being [實在者]," says Uchimura, "He does not employ any other means than real things [實物] and facts [事實]. Theories are subject to change, but facts remain eternally constant."¹²⁸ "God's language [言辭] is facts;" Uchimura

¹²⁸Shinko 11:29. "When He will convey to us His holy will, He will do this with rocks, through, His appearance in the whirlwind of sand, or by His riding on the raging waves on the surface of the lake. This is an evidence of the fact that God is the God of facts. The so-called 'attaining through Nature to the God of Nature' is the way of searching the God of the Bible, and at the same time the spirit of modern science," says Uchimura in the continuation.

further maintains, "His arguments are facts; the evidences He gives are facts. God does not speak with His voice but silently with facts."¹²⁹ In the same manner, Uchimura places the maximal emphasis on "facts" as the only legitimate and valid foundation for theological recognition in other contexts. "The Bible conveys," holds Uchimura, "the fundamental truths through facts."¹³⁰ As to the presence of Christ in the believer, Uchimura says: "I am dead; Christ lives in me and works. This is not faith nor ideal but a fact, the most certain fact."¹³¹ Uchimura uses the category of "facts" in his characterizing of Christianity: "First of all, Christianity is a fact . . . a great fact. It is the fact that is most clearly imprinted on the history of mankind."¹³² "True religion is," according to Uchimura, "the religion of facts. . . . It is the religion of real things and real power which satisfies the man of common sense."¹³³

Trained as a natural scientist and abhorring "empty speculations,"¹³⁴ Uchimura consciously formulates this emphasis on "facts" against any abstract, theoretical system which goes beyond the immediately tangible and "intelligible." "Facts," as we may see in the

¹²⁹"Relying only on facts that are God's word, our faith is immovable standing on the firm rock." Ibid., 13:136. Ibid., 7:36-37.

¹³⁰Ibid., 11:28.

¹³¹Ibid., 7:69.

¹³²Ibid., 15:17. "Just as Nature," says Uchimura in the same connection. "Christianity cannot be apprehended without [empirical] observation and experience."

¹³³Ibid., 14:60.

¹³⁴"Science and religion are good brothers. They rally hand in hand against their common enemies, speculation and theology." Ibid., 8:280.

above quotations, are in Uchimura's thought that which man can obtain both through empirical observation of "nature and history" and through religious intuition given in his inmost being. Presupposed for this positivistic concept is the idea that "facts" are there collectively as the objective facticity independent of man's subjective "interpretation" of them, for instance, in various forms of theory. Here, of course, we cannot discuss a complicated philosophical problem of the absolute objectivity of "facts," but we can say so much as to say that there is, especially in the sphere of spiritual reality, no such thing as "bare" facts which are purely objective and therefore not conditioned by the subjective "interpretation." The so-called "bare facts" are a fiction. The "objective" facts, therefore, already presuppose certain aprioristically given interpretative elements on the part of the recognizing subject. Perhaps unaware of this subject-object relationship intrinsic to the constituting of "a fact," Uchimura postulated the absolute objectivity of "fact." We notice, however, that at this very point in which Uchimura believes himself most detached from abstract speculations, he confines himself within the more or less "positivistic" categories which a priori cannot do justice to man's deepest reality as God's creature and a sinner before His creator at one and the same time. To Uchimura who has been seeking the certainty of faith, however, "facts" objectively and tangibly given are "the Gospel."¹³⁵ He has therefore the following words to say under the heading of "the Faith of Facts":

Be a child of facts. But do not be a slave of theories. Believe every fact. Even if facts sometimes seem to contradict one another,

¹³⁵"The facts themselves are the gospel from Heaven. They are God's prophecy." Ibid., 22:114.

do not worry about it. All the facts shall be eventually brought into harmony. All the facts, be it of religion, of science, of philosophy, or of daily life, shall eventually appear as one great fact. Being slaves of theories we are often visited by the devil of doubts. Relying, however, upon the facts which are the words of God [神の言葉], our faith is immovable, standing on the firm foundation of rock.¹³⁶

Here in this quotation we unmistakably notice that "facts" are the greatest common denominator of Uchimura's rather "comprehensive" theology. Religion, science, philosophy and practical common sense, as long as they are founded upon "facts" positively given, will eventually be unified in the great harmonious whole which is, as it were, a necessary derivative of "the God of one."¹³⁷ Uchimura's faith is really "faith of facts," or "faith in facts." That all the "facts" which are given positively will be ultimately brought into a great harmony is itself not an empirically verifiable fact. It is a faith. Whether Uchimura's faith in "facts" as a faith which does not stand on empirical "facts" really is immovable, or not, vis-a-vis positive reality, as he himself asserts, is quite another question.

"Experience" [実 験] is now in Uchimura's epistemology as the correlative pole to "facts." "First of all, Christianity is a fact;

¹³⁶ Ibid., 7:136.

¹³⁷ "That God is One means not only His oneness in number but also in quality and in reason as many truths as there are in the universe, there is no truth so deep, broad and beautiful as that of 'God is One.' Applying this truth in every direction, we apprehend all the universe and all the things, let alone, Christianity;" this truth clearly entails, namely, "all the things are in [mutual] harmony," "all the things originating in One Principle [- 元]," "[all]the truths converging to One Truth," "mankind ultimately becoming One great family;" "the foundation of science, the basis of philosophy and the goal of history are all to be found in this old doctrine." Ibid., 9:46-47.

since it is a fact, it is [to be the object of] experience," says Uchimura.¹³⁸ As Uchimura characterizes his faith as "the faith in facts," he describes in like manner his faith as "the faith in experience."¹³⁹ "Faith is, in fact," says Uchimura, "to believe nothing but [what one really] experience[s]; Faith is to acknowledge as a fact what one experiences in his spirit."¹⁴⁰

The Japanese term jikken which Uchimura uses for "experience" has two related meanings. The one is simply "experience" in a more or less passive sense; let us say, a recognition and response to what is given from outside. The other is an equivalent to "experiment" in a more active sense, that is, to test the validity of a statement as a truth through the observation and experience of accordance between the statement and the actual experience of facts. Uchimura uses this term according to one meaning or the other depending on the context, but the basic idea of this term which underlies the two meanings is that the reality is to be grasped and verified by man's empirical experience.

It is highly illustrative to take up Uchimura's concept of the method in which he is to verify Christianity as truth and the true faith. "Do not say," assert Uchimura, "that Christianity is the truth. Determine first what the truth is, and then prove that Christianity is the truth."¹⁴¹ Uchimura seems to have the criterion, prior to Christianity, upon which every claim to the truth must be judged whether it is really so or not. "Is Christianity true," Uchimura asks in another context,

¹³⁸Ibid., 15:17.

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 234.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 13:271.

¹⁴¹Ibid., 8:249.

"or false? This is the greatest question of life. How can we test its trueness or falseness? [Neither philosophy nor history is of any avail for this purpose. Are we then to abandon our search for the answer to this question?] No, we will directly test its power, and build our faith on our experience which neither philosophy nor history can shake one bit."¹⁴² The experience upon which a firm faith is to be built must be as certain as physical truths obtained through rigid experiments. "Even the truths in physics," says Uchimura, "cannot be known nor be proved except through experiment [実験]. How much more is the same to be said of the truths of faith which sit on the throne of all the other truth."¹⁴³ Uchimura can therefore even proclaim that "there is nothing so certain as the experience of the Christian."¹⁴⁴

It seems to us that Uchimura, in his untiring insistence on "facts and experience" as the foundation of faith, has felt in himself an urgent need to anchor his faith and theology on the concretely tangible and intelligible data. What is the reason for Uchimura's inner need? His axiomatic concept of "positive" facts as the ultimately real may be one explanation. We cannot pursue this question further here. In any event Uchimura insists on "experience" as the basis for his faith in its various aspects. In the following, let us take some examples of Uchimura's insistence.

First, of God's existence:

When we say that God exists, it is not because of a philosophical proof. That God exists is experientially [実験的に] proved.

¹⁴²Ibid., 7:133.

¹⁴³Ibid., 14:68.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 89

It is because He appears in our consciousness more clearly and more certainly than anything else.¹⁴⁵

Second, of redemption:

Redemption [贖罪] is a fact of life; it is therefore to be experienced. It cannot be comprehended apart from experience. . . . Tasting redemption in the depth of heart, we understand that redemption is the pinnacle of reason [道理の頂上] and the culmination of morals [道徳の極所]. This doctrine is therefore not understood by every one. . . . Experience is not scholarship. It is a real seeing [真視] and intuition [直感].¹⁴⁶

Third, of the resurrection of the body:

Thus, the resurrection of the body is not a doctrine, but experience. It is not something which the church, disregarding reason, imposes as an article of faith on us for reverent acceptance. It is the sure hope built upon the experience of facts in the believer's daily life.¹⁴⁷

Fourth, of the world to come:

A promise which is not accompanied with the proof provided by real things [実物] is not a promise. The world to come which we cannot experience here and now is an unreliable one. Even if the Bible teaches of the world to come, we could not believe this if there were no tangible facts before us [目前の事実]. . . . Faith is to believe nothing but [what one really] experience[s]. Faith is to acknowledge as a fact what one experiences in his spirit.¹⁴⁸

Throughout all the quotations above, we notice unmistakably that faith is, according to Uchimura, to be supported by experiential proofs which are anchored in facts. In this sense, faith is no longer faith against appearances, but faith in the quite "believable." It is, however, very logical, for faith in Uchimura's thought is aprioristically based upon what is tangible, reasonable, and intelligible. When man can thus learn from "facts and experience" what he is to believe, there is

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 60. What looks like this appearance of God in us, cf. note 34 above.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., 12:30-31.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., 13:199.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., p. 13.

no need for a special revelation of God--a special revelation which, in the traditional theological understanding, differs qualitatively from the universal revelation. The so-called special revelation is then not originative of faith, but strengthening and supplementary to the revelation which has been given via natural means.

What we have learned from the presentation above is that the most fundamental structural characteristic of Uchimura's epistemology is to be seen in his conception of God's revelation as given in a positive manner both objectively as "facts" and subjectively as "experience" for the recognition of its contents. We observe again, as repeatedly before, that Uchimura's epistemology is positivistic, that is, rationalistic-immanentistic. Since it is Uchimura's axiomatic postulation that the reality should be of positively factual nature, the reality of Christian faith, if it is really a true faith as it claims to be, must seem to him to be positively (and empirically) recognizable and demonstrable as such. Here, "facts" are the criterion of truth. Essential in this connection is the premise of this thought, namely, that in his thought the positive facts, which are considered as the reflection of the God-created harmonious and meaningful universe, are "revealing" the ultimate meaning of man's existence in the totality of reality. The salvation which Christian faith claims to offer is then to be confirmed as truth by the messages of "facts" and appropriated as reality through experience in one's inmost being.

In this epistemology, however, it is quite logical that man is bound to take "facts" at their "face" value, while unable to see the identity of such facts as man's religious and moral achievements in the

light of God's qualitatively unique revelation in Christ. As long, then, as a theologian's epistemology remains rationalistic-immanentistic, and faith is understood as dependent upon what can be seen by man's natural capacity of recognition, he is a priori not in a position to have an evangelical faith, the faith which believes in God's mercy and love revealed in Christ crucified, as forgiveness of sin and proclaimed to sinners under the empirical reality of sin's curse. According to what we have learned so far of the basic feature of Uchimura's epistemology, his faith is to be characterized as centering around the "knowing" of the ultimate rationale of the universe, positively given to man's natural capacity of recognition and "following" the knowledge thus gained,¹⁴⁹ rather than as "believing" in God's mercy and love. This "believing" in the midst of man's existential struggle for salvation, lifts him to the "heart" of God Himself who, as Love, has revealed Himself toward the sinner in Christ the Crucified.

Summary

Through the detailed analysis in this chapter, we have learned that Uchimura's theological epistemology is rationalistic-immanentistic and therefore monistic and positivistic. The whole picture of man's existential situation, which Uchimura gains through this epistemology and presents in his writings, is definitely one-dimensional and

¹⁴⁹"I was forced to go to the Cross of Christ by the Great Principle of the universe [宇宙の大道]. . . . I was granted no special revelation [personally addressed to me]; I came to know Christ by way of Kant's 'the stars of heaven and the moral law in my heart,'" says Uchimura in somewhat different context, still indicating his moralistic, that is, "naturalistic," orientation. Nikki 4:247, cf. Shinko 15:104.

undialectic. This is due to the fact that, since this type of epistemology is a priori unable to penetrate to the very bottom of man's existential problem, that is, the mysterious, though awfully intense reality of man's sinfulness before God, it inevitably leads to another soteriological concept different from that of the Reformation, the soteriology of which contrary to that of Uchimura, is built upon the concept of this mysterious reality of sin. Along the way, we have noted that an epistemology cannot be purely formal, that is, neutral to the contents to be gained through it. An epistemology and the content to be recognized through it are, in fact, mutually conditional in a manner intrinsic to the nature of man's recognition of reality. Applying this principle in Uchimura's case, the rationalistic-immanent epistemology is not content-empty, but carries implicitly, already in itself, an axiomatically postulated judgment on the structure of reality. We have then observed that the axiomatic judgment of Uchimura is that mankind and the universe are being carried by God toward their perfection and completion. In Uchimura's theology, this is the key to the signification of the apparent chaos of the immediate reality.

Now, against these epistemological characteristics of Uchimura's thought, we are in the position to confirm the validity of our observation on Uchimura's understanding of salvation as "sanctification, perfection, and becoming like Christ," and to see its theological presupposition. Salvation as "sanctification, perfection, and becoming like Christ" designates the positive, factual upward-process toward the

goal empirically demonstrable to and recognizable by the natural capacity of man's cognition.¹⁵⁰

Alien to Uchimura, as we must say in view of his epistemology, is the idea that our reality of being saved by God for the sake of Christ the crucified is, in this aeon, hidden from man's natural cognition and can be grasped only through faith in the word of forgiveness, "against appearances." Likewise secondary in him is the thought that salvation, as in the theology of Reformation, first and foremost is to "obtain a merciful God," that is, to inherit God Himself who has "proved" His unfathomable love in Christ the Crucified. Thus, within this framework of Uchimura's epistemology, there is no proper room for the Gospel in the sense of sin's forgiveness as the ultimate issue of Christian faith.

In Uchimura's thought, salvation as "sanctification, etc.," as this rationalistic-immanentistic epistemology entails on individual level, is also conceived of on a universal scale. Somewhat analogous to the relationship of macrocosm and microcosm, individual "sanctification,

¹⁵⁰ In contrast to this positivistic feature of Uchimura's epistemology and, therefore, theology, he finds the following characterization of Luther's theology "against appearances": "It was also affirmed [by both Luther and Calvin] that God who made the world was still at work in it and exceedingly active in its history. This attestation, too, rested upon faith, not upon proof. Calvin was willing to offer some evidence of God's activity. But Luther, more often than not, could find no reason for believing in God on the basis of ordinary observation of the world. The world appeared to him as a spectacle of disorder rather than of order, or unreason rather than reason, of injustice rather than justice. His faith triumphed over his inclination, as in the famous assertion that the essence of faith is to believe God just though he looks so terribly unjust." John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, Protestant Christianity (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), p. 45.

etc." is to be conceived of as parallel to the perfection and completion of the universe. Viewed in a different angle, the personal salvation as "Sanctification, etc." must be embedded into the total reality of the universe, which finds in turn its meaning in the ultimate completion, in order to gain the meaningful context of the salvation. From here, we can see why Uchimura is so strongly concerned with the completion of mankind and the universe, that is, on "collective" levels, as we have observed in the analysis of the epistemological tripod. This observation now leads us to the final chapter of this study, in which we shall attempt to understand Uchimura's concept of indigenization of Christianity within this conceptual framework, that is, indigenization as the necessary task for the completion of mankind and the universe.

CHAPTER V

UCHIMURA'S FORMULATION OF "JAPANESE CHRISTIANITY"

"Irrespective of being successful or not in expression," writes Uchimura on one occasion, "a genuine author has always his own thought consistent from beginning to end."¹ In fact, the examination and analysis of his theological thought up to this point in this study confirms that what he speaks of "a genuine author" holds true of Uchimura himself. Even with as many contradictions and inconsistencies as have been observed so far, he has remained consistent in his main emphases on the central issues of theology. One of his recollections made in his last years gives an additional confirmation of his consistency in theological reflection. He writes:

Forty years ago when I was still in Sapporo, two or three great questions were presented to me. Since then till this very day I have been attempting to find the answers to these questions. The first one was: what kind of Christianity was capable enough to save mankind? The second: what was the relationship between Christianity and evolution theory? The third: what is the mission given to Japan? Although I cannot say that I have found satisfactory answers to these questions, I still retain the vigor I had in my student days thanks to the healthy stimuli of such great questions.²

¹Kanzo Uchimura, Seisho Chukai Zenshu [Kanzo Uchimura's Complete Expositions of the Bible], 17 vols. (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1960-62), 8:299-300. Hereafter cited as Chukai.

²Kanzo Uchimura, Nikki Shokan Zehshu [Kanzo Uchimura's Diary and Letters], 7 vols. (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1974-75), 2:371. Hereafter cited as Nikki.

As a matter of fact, we have geared our examination and analysis to the first two questions Uchimura mentions in the above. The first question is in substance identical with that of the definition of the ultimate issue of Christianity. Hence, chapter III has been devoted to the elucidation of Uchimura's definition of Christianity, or put more precisely, of soteriology. There we have learned that Christianity is to Uchimura the power of man's moral transformation or perfection empirically demonstrable and recognizable, in which Christ is conceived of as the Type and the Agent of this transformation. The answer to the first question is then: the Christianity which is capable enough to save mankind is that which first of all recognizes God's power for the perfection of man as a moral being.

Then, the second question concerning the relationship between Christianity and evolution theory is virtually the main concern in chapter IV, only stated with a different emphasis. Holding on firmly to the rationalistic-immanentistic epistemology which is intrinsically presupposed in the business of natural science, and which is also applied by Uchimura in the interpretation of Christianity, he has established the fundamental harmony between Christianity and evolution theory. Although there have been occasional disturbances in his evolutionistic conviction in his turbulent life, Uchimura never has discarded the validity of the cardinal assumption of evolutionistic progress of mankind and all things in the universe. Thus, the question has been settled in his thought by the harmonization of Christianity and evolution theory by rationalistic-immanentistic epistemology.

Now in the final chapter of this study, an attempt will be made to find out what answer Uchimura has given to the third question concerning Japan's specific mission in the process of the salvation of the world. As a preliminary remark to the following it is to be said that when Uchimura reflects upon the question of Japan's specific mission, it is done always in the framework of the concept of Christianity as the most powerful resource for the perfection of man, both individually and as a race, and of all things in the universe. In other words, when Uchimura questions what Japan's specific mission is, he thinks of the relation of Christianity as moral power to the positive feature of Japan's spiritual, cultural and moral heritage.

The background against which the question of Japan's mission has been asked by Uchimura throughout his life is threefold: first, his ardent patriotism which plays a vital role in his theology for it is one of the most existential presuppositions for him; second, his firm conviction of Christianity as the most powerful resource for the completion of mankind and the universe; third, the potential of Christianity has been, in Uchimura's view, jeopardized in the West throughout the history of the Church by human devices and artifices.

The perfection of mankind and all the universe which is the meaning of reality as a whole, however, depends on the full actualization of the potential of Christianity, the potential to transform the present "anomalous" condition into the ideal reality. As a matter of fact, the apparent discrepancy of the potential of Christianity and the continuous failure of the Church to actualize the potential constitutes one of the main premises for Uchimura's burning concern with a new

formulation of Christianity, "Japanese Christianity," by which he means the restoration of the original, powerful Christianity through the Japanese spiritual and cultural heritage.

The analysis of Uchimura's formulation of "Japanese Christianity" in the following will be made along the line of the procedure which is suggested by the threefold background as described above. First, under the heading of "Japan is God's," his passionate love for Japan will be examined as the substantial material for his theology, and his theological interpretation of Japan with her history and religio-cultural heritage will be analyzed. In other words, it will be seen how Uchimura evaluates the specific merits of Japan's spiritual and cultural legacy for the actualization of Christianity.

Second, under the caption of "Christianity Anew in the Land of Rising Sun," an attempt will be made at the analysis of the main assertion of his "Japanese Christianity" both in its negative, antithetical relation to the "Western Christianity" and in its positive claim to the restoration of the original Christianity. Uchimura's well-known assertion of "Non-Church Christianity [無教會的キリスト教]" will be examined in this connection, as well as his grand vision of the mission of "Japanese Christianity" for the salvation of the world.

Through these analyses and examinations of Uchimura's formulation of "Japanese Christianity" in terms of its theological presuppositions, its actual features, and its significance for the grand scheme of the completion of the universe, his theology will be recognized in its most fundamental emphases which, unifying his otherwise

highly contradictory and inconsistent utterances, represent his "thought consistent from beginning to end."

"Japan is God's"

Patriotism As God-given

As indicated by the fact that the question of Japan's mission has remained as an ever actual concern throughout Uchimura's life, the search for the national identity of Japan has been of most vital significance for his theological reflection. It is, in this connection, quite essential to bear in mind that this search for the nation's identity has been strongly motivated by his ardent patriotism. It may be contended that this patriotic passion is one of the most powerful drives in Uchimura's theological endeavor. As a matter of fact, already in chapter II of this study where we have sketched the main line of Uchimura's biography together with his theological development, we have paid attention to how vital a role his passionate patriotism has played in his definition of Christian existence. It is therefore very important to recognize the significance of his patriotism for his theology, for, without this recognition, the real dimension of Uchimura's rigorous attempt to formulate "Japanese Christianity" cannot be grasped properly.

Patriotism seems to be "something irrefutable."³ Particularly in the time of national crisis (in terms of the nation's identity and integrity caused by cultural and physical threats imposed "from outside") the irrefutability of patriotism is often "infinitely," as it were,

³Wolfgang Trillhaas, Ethik (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1970), p. 348.

intensified in the minds conscious of the destiny of the nation, bordering on nationalism with its dubiously ambivalent implications. Finding himself amid an uncertain transition period of Japanese history, Uchimura, like most of his contemporaries of the same social standing, was passionately in search of a new national identity, driven by intense patriotism. To Uchimura, patriotism is love for one's own nation naturally arising in man's heart; it is even of constitutional significance for man's being man.⁴ So fundamental in significance as it is for his existence as man, the patriotic passion cannot for long remain unintegrated with his Christian faith. In fact, it is through his Christian faith that his "irrefutable" patriotism gained the ultimate legitimation of its significance and the firm fixation of its direction and, thereby, its full strength. Now, for Uchimura as a Christian, patriotism is something to be "taken for granted" in a twofold sense, that is, as something "natural" and something literally "granted" by God. "God has given," says Uchimura, "each his own country so that he may develop

⁴Kanzo Uchimura, Shinko Chosaku Zenshu [Complete writings on Faith], 25 vols. (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1962-66), 1:19. Hereafter cited as Shinko. "Love of nation is [a genuine expression of]man's sincerity [至情]. When we love our parents, wives and children, we are not forced; we cannot but love them. Who of us equipped with ordinary senses will not love the country which has given birth to us?" "Love of nation is a genuine feeling of man [至誠]. Just because of this, man is man." Chukai 15:221. It is however question whether "love of nation" is truly constitutive of man's being as man. Hendrik Kraemer says that "the conception of nation as the integrating idea is entirely new to the East, with the exception of Japan to a certain degree," The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1963), p. 22. Even in Japan, consciousness of nation was not present unquestionably. Mikio Sumiya, a historian of modern Japan, says that "the peasants in the feudal era had no consciousness of nation. . . . It can be safely said that in the beginning of Meiji Era there was no national consciousness among the common people." Ko Kuyama ed. Kindai Nihon to Kirisutokyo: Meiji-han [Modern Japan and Christianity: the Meiji Era]. (Tokyo: Sobunsha, 1956), p. 186.

himself together with her. . . . Patriotic heart is necessary not only for the country but also for our own self. The word of Louis XIV, 'l'etat, c'est moi,' should be applied to each one of us in its holy, noble sense." Thus, patriotism as such is "what God has given to us."⁵

To be sure, Uchimura is well aware of the dangers inherent to any form of patriotism. His quotations from Herbert Spencer and Samuel Johnson on the "dubiousness" of patriotism show this awareness.⁶ But Uchimura is convinced of the possibility of positive, salutary, as it were, "Christian," patriotism. "Rather," says Uchimura even, "it is we Christians that [rightfully] monopolize [true] patriotism."⁷ What is, then, the ground for this assertion of Uchimura? The true love for one's own nation is God-given in its literal sense according to Uchimura, and Christians who love God and know Him as the Giver of true patriotism can have it in the true sense. In this sense, therefore, there is no tension in Uchimura's thought between the love for the nation and for God, as clearly illustrated in the following quotation:

If love for the country is a true [and authentic] passion [真情], love for the God of truth [真理之神] is also a true and authentic passion. In a perfect society the two passions are by no means contradictory to each other. By loving God for the sake of the country and also loving the country for the sake of God, all the nation may become holy patriots.⁸

⁵ Chukai 1:10.

⁶ "We cannot find in the patriots of Israel as what philosopher Spencer says, that 'patriotism is egoticism manifested on the nation,' or as what Samuel Johnson says, that 'patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel.'" Ibid., p. 11.

⁷ Shinko 24:32.

⁸ Ibid., 1:20.

What matters then, is to have patriotism purified--to wit, returning to uncontaminated patriotism as it is naturally given, just as, for true faith in God, it is only necessary to return to one's naturally given inner longing for Him.⁹

According to Uchimura, true faith and true patriotism stand in full harmony with each other not only as desired but necessary. What is more, the relationship between the two is understood as mutually indispensable. "My faith is encouraged by patriotism, while my patriotism is purified by faith."¹⁰ This constellation of faith and patriotism finds a paradigmatic expression in his "Two J's," which is written in an "editorial" for his Japan Christian Ingelligencer in a verse-like form:

I love two J's and no third; one is Jesus, and the other is Japan.
I do not know which I love more, Jesus or Japan. . . . Jesus and Japan; my faith is not a circle with one center; it is an ellipse with two centers. My heart and mind revolve around the two dear names. And I know that one strengthens the other; Jesus strengthens and purifies my love for Japan; and Japan clarifies and objectivises my love for Jesus. Were it not for the two, I would become a mere dreamer, a fanatic, an amorphous universal man.¹¹

By this coordination of Jesus and Japan, the reciprocity of faith and patriotism is clearly indicated, which requires further elucidation of its logical structure for the determining of the place of this fervent patriotism in Uchimura's overall theological thinking.

⁹To be noted is Uchimura's axiomatic identification of "naturally given" with "given by God." Concerning the relationship between God and nature. Supra p. 130-35.

¹⁰Shinko 7:208.

¹¹The Complete Works of Kanzo Uchimura (written originally in English), 7 vols. (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1971-73), 54-55. Hereafter cited as CW.

The striking feature which is actually observed in the quotation above is threefold. First is his utterance that Jesus strengthens and purifies his love for Japan. True, as we shall see a little later, there have been no lack of moral "miserics" in the actual Japan which have been more than enough to discourage Uchimura's patriotism. In addition to this, his own patriotism which, as he himself is aware, is not completely free from the temptation to a narrow nationalism, needs a constant correction. Thus, he is certainly in need of Jesus' strengthening and purification. The question is then: in what sense is Uchimura's patriotism to be strengthened and purified by Jesus?

Second is his saying that Japan clarifies and objectivises his love for Jesus. What Uchimura means by his love for Jesus here seems to be identical with his obedience to Jesus, surely as a response to His love shown to him. This is to say that Japan concretizes his obedience to Jesus. In what sense, then, does Japan concretize Uchimura's love for Jesus understood as his obedience to Him?

Third and most significant in this connection is the virtual merging in Uchimura's view of "Jesus and Japan." "Jesus and Japan," though said to constitute two foci of the ellipse, seems to represent one and the same reality together. This merging of "Jesus and Japan" can be more clearly conceived through the following quotation:

Jesus is the place where our future life shall be, while Japan is the place where our present life is. Since future and present are identical [同 -] to those who believe in God, Jesus and Japan is identical to us. That is, our faith is for the fatherland, while our love for it is for Christ. Just as we can have no genuine love for the fatherland apart from Christ, so can we have no fervent love for Christ apart from the fatherland. The main

reason why we believe in Christianity is our conviction that it is the only power available for the salvation of Japan.¹²

In whatever sense it may be meant, "Jesus and Japan" are expresis verbis identified with each other. In the same vein, he emphasizes the reciprocity of Jesus and Japan as necessary for the actualization of love for both. What does this "merging" mean? What is the inner logic of this merging which seems to be quite singular in Uchimura's thought here? What is it, as the "common denominator" for both, that makes this "merging" and identification of Jesus and Japan logically visible? Further, granting that we will find the "common denominator" in the following, what is the implication of that "common denominator" for Uchimura's overall theological scheme of the perfection of mankind and completion of the universe which, according to Uchimura, shall ultimately converge into one reality?

In order to find the answers to these questions, the last questions is to be taken up first, for, as will be seen, upon the "common denominator" for both Jesus and Japan the answers to the other questions will be found.

We find a short passage written by Uchimura in a relatively early period, which is significant as a clue to identifying the "common denominator" behind the reciprocity of Jesus and Japan:

There are two beautiful names. The one is Christ; the other is Japan. The former is the ideal Man [理想の人]; the latter is the ideal country [理想の国]. Serving this and that, we cannot but become idealists in our lives.¹³

¹²Shinko 24:31.

¹³Ibid., 7:50.

The common denominator which is found in this passage is the category of "ideal," which in fact characterizes Uchimura's concept of Christian existence. In this category Jesus and Japan come to represent one and the same reality. In other words, Jesus as the ideal Man represents the fully actualized ideal of man, for which Uchimura is intensely longing to attain himself. While the ideality of Jesus is already an actual reality, that of Japan is, empirically speaking, of a "yet-to-be" character. Notwithstanding this empirical, even miserable, imperfection of Japan,¹⁴ Uchimura never does abandon his own faith in the eventual perfection of her. Japan is to Uchimura potentially, and, sub specia aeternitatis as it were, really the ideal country.¹⁵ Thus, mutatis mutandis, Jesus and Japan represent the ideal reality in Uchimura's thought, ideal with strongly moralistic as well as aesthetic connotation.

It is the discrepancy between the fully actualized ideality of Jesus and the ideality-to-be of Japan, that makes the meaning of the reciprocity visible. That is to say, in view of the ethically ambiguous tendency of his own patriotism which is easily derogated into an

¹⁴"What shall happen to this our Japan? The answer to this urgent question . . . is the only one, namely, ruin. Corruptions of politicians, of educationalists, of Buddhist and Shinto priests, of pastors; swindling, bribery, adultery, theft, burglary, murder, syphilis, divorce, trickery, betrayal . . . these are what newspapers daily report to us. There seems to be no sin committed by the Japanese, which is not found in the catalogue of sin in the Bible." Ibid., 24:33. "How wretched I am, that I was born in this hypocritical society with its hypocritical government, which does not at all allow me to develop my god-given good nature [天賦の良性]." Ibid., 21:265.

¹⁵"Since God is the God of righteousness and love, the Japan this God has created cannot remain a vessel of unrighteousness for long. . . . Since we live in this country which God who is righteous has created, there shall surely come a day when our ideals are realized." Ibid., 24:37.

egotistic nationalism, and, particularly, in view of the morally "miserable" reality of the empirical Japan, Uchimura was surely in need of Jesus, the ideal Man, who, in this context as the ideal Patriot,¹⁶ purifies his patriotism, and who strengthens Uchimura's love for and commitment to Japan with His sure promise of the eventual realization of the ideal Japan. When Uchimura then speaks of Japan's role in concretizing his love for (understood, as we have seen, as obedience to) Jesus, it must be in the sense that the ideals Jesus represents in His person and intends to materialize are to be realized concretely in the perfecting process of Japan in history. Thus, to Uchimura, it is through serving for the perfecting of Japan that his "love for Jesus" gains a concrete, "existential" form, participating through this form in the overall process of the completion of the universe now being carried on by God.¹⁷ It is, then, through the passionate yearning for the realization of the ideals in Uchimura's soul, that "Jesus and Japan" come to overlap.

¹⁶"A sublime, profound and strong patriotism abode in Jesus," which was not directed "outward, but inward," that is not toward physical threats coming from outside, but toward "inner enemies" of spiritual and moral nature. Shinko 10:177.

¹⁷It is Uchimura's firm conviction that services rendered to one's own nation in true patriotism are identical with those for the realization of God's will in the world. "It is a mistaken patriotism to act deeming that the world is for one's own country and it should win dominance in the world. That one's own country exists for the world that to help the country fulfill its mission is a necessary and indispensable way for bringing the world through the fulfilment into the welfare God determined, that we serve the world by serving our own nation, that in order for mankind to enter the sphere of perfection England, America, France, Italy, Russia, Germany, Spain and Portugal are as much needed as Japan, India, China, Persia and so on. . . . God needs Japan. Without Japan the will of God cannot be done perfectly on earth. . . . We must therefore endeavor for Japan for the sake of God and all the mankind in the world." Ibid., 24:250.

Recognizing the fundamental significance of patriotism as an existential datum for his being a man as well as a Christian, we have in the above traced how Uchimura's ardent patriotism came to win its fully legitimate theological status. As we have seen, it is in such a way that patriotism in its "true" sense and faith are made theologically co-extensive, as patriotic efforts for the realization of the ideal Japan along with her moral perfection are equated with obedience to Jesus, who, being, so to speak, the prototype of all ideals, wills and works Himself for the realization of the ideals of mankind and the universe. This is, in fact, of crucial significance for Uchimura's attempt at the formulation of "Japanese Christianity," for patriotism which, though in itself is an irrefutable natural passion, is to be supported and legitimated by the positive, "praiseworthy" traits in the spiritual and moral heritage of the nation, logically entails, when co-ordinated with faith, the essential continuity between that heritage and the message of the Gospel, thus determining a priori the nature of the indigenous Christianity, namely, as a synthetic product of the indigenous spiritual-moral heritage and the Gospel. In fact, this issue of continuity in Uchimura's attempt at the formulation of "Japanese Christianity" shall be the main focus in the following, where we will observe in detail the theological foundation for his indigenization procedure. Thus, it will be helpful to sum up here what we have seen in the above by saying that Uchimura's patriotism, of crucial significance as an existential datum, has found its full integration in his Christian existence, as his patriotism is legitimated as theologically constitutive due to its intrinsic nexus to the "positive" affirmation of the

("naturally given") spiritual-moral heritage of the nation, which in its own turn is and must be posited as an integral part of the overall scheme of the completion of mankind and the universe.

God's Providential Care in the Nation's History

With this basic feature of Uchimura's indigenization theology in mind, we are now ready to investigate how Uchimura sees the theological significance of Japan's culture and religion in concreto. As a matter of fact, the above is an analysis of the logical structure of Uchimura's patriotism in the context of his theology, putting aside the biographical sequence of the development in this regard. Now, speaking in terms of his biography--to observe the "specifics" of his "positive" evaluation of Japan,--it was as we have seen in chapter II, during his "exile" in America that he "rediscovered" Japan as occupying a unique place in the grand universe with its history steadily heading toward completion--morally as well as aesthetically conceived. In Uchimura's own words,:

Looking at a distance from the land of my exile, my country ceased to be a "good-for-nothing." It began to appear superbly beautiful, --not the grotesque beauty of my heathen days, but the harmonic beauty of true proportions, occupying a definite place in the universe with its own historic individualities. Its existence as a nation was decreed by Heaven Itself, and its mission to the world and human race was, and is being, distinctly announced. It was seen to be a sacred reality, with purpose high and ambition noble, to be for the world and mankind. Thrice thankful was I that such a glorious view of my country was vouchsafed to my vision.¹⁸

In addition to Uchimura's innermost affection for his country permeating between the lines, the theological substance for his prospect of the indigenization of the new faith is unmistakably here. Japan with

¹⁸CW 1:122.

her "sacred reality" manifest in her beauty and announced in her universal mission is all "decreed by Heaven Itself." More paradigmatic in his articulation of the theological, "sacred" significance of Japan is the passage which we have quoted already in chapter II in connection with our report of his "rediscovery" of the fatherland. Because of its paramount significance for our further observation, we will cite it here once more, now in its full length:

Much blessed by the thought that God's providence must be in my nation. If all good gifts are from Him, then some of the laudable characters of my countrymen must be from on high. We must try to serve our God and the world with gifts and boons peculiar to ourselves. God does not want our national characters attained by the discipline of twenty centuries to be wholly supplanted by American and European ideas. The beauty of Christianity is that it can sanctify all the peculiar traits which God gave to each nation. A blessed and encouraging thought that J[apan] too is God's nation.¹⁹

This passage is paradigmatic in a threefold sense. Uchimura conceives of God's providence as given positively there, observable in "all good gifts," that is, "the laudable characters of my countrymen." Needless to say, he thinks of the "laudableness" of the countrymen primarily in terms of their religious and ethical traits, which has been shaped by God's providential care through the entire history of the nation for twenty centuries. Second, the fruits of God's providence through the centuries are intended to be instrumental for the realization of God's will, that is, the completion, or "salvation," of mankind and the universe. In Uchimura's thought, the service a nation is designated to render for the completion of the world with her specific religious and moral traits cannot be replaced by that of any other nation. In order,

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 160-61.

therefore, to optimize a nation's instrumentality of the "salvation" of the world, one must nurture all the good religious and ethical traits of one's own nation, for only through the nation's specific traits can God's intention for her be fully realized. Put differently, it is against God's will if all the "laudable characters" which are called into existence by heaven's decree should be absorbed into "American and European ideas," even if--we might add--they come in the name of Christianity. Thus, the individual's service for the cultivation of the positive traits of the nation's religious and ethical heritage becomes identical with his service for the "salvation" of the world. Third, completely in line with his positive evaluation of the "peculiar traits and boons" in the conceptual framework of "salvation" as completion, Uchimura conceives of Christianity as "sanctifying," or integrating into its overall "power field" for "salvation," all the religious and ethical "peculiar traits" given by God to each nation.

God's providential care concretized in the nation's religious and ethical excellencies which are in their turn waiting for "sanctification" and "salvation" in view is thus the frame of Uchimura's attempt at the formulation of "Japanese Christianity." Uchimura actually writes about this theological frame in a particularly illustrative way in a letter to the German publisher of his Representative Men of Japan.²⁰ There he says that there have been in the history of the nation many exemplary teachers in morals or in the way of man, feudal lords, masters

²⁰Kanzo Uchimura, Zenshu [Kanzo Uchimura's Complete Works, Iwanami version], vols. 15 and 20, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1933), 15: 316-18. Hereafter cited as Iwanami.

in agriculture and statesmen, all of whom together have formed the original stock of Uchimura's self, on which his present Christian self is grafted. More importantly, it is not Christian missionaries but such pious, worthy men like Nichiren, Honen, Rennyo--all the native saints of Buddhism--who have taught Uchimura the essence of religion. "The work of the [divine] election," says Uchimura, "was operative in my people for more than two thousand years before I too was elected to be a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ." Then, in the same connection, he also speaks of Bushido or the Way of the Samurai, emphasizing though its "terrestrial" character and therefore limited significance compared with Christianity. By mentioning Bushido in particular there, Uchimura implicitly maintains its prominent position among the "peculiar gifts" endowed by God to the nation. In continuance of this, then, he underscores the indispensibility of these "peculiar gifts" as the preparation for the "fruitful" reception of Christianity. It is, Uchimura maintains, an error, "even a superstition," to believe that Christianity alone can raise Abraham's children from stones. In his view, the realization of the potentials of Christianity, namely the ideals it represents, is dependent on "heredity," which is part of natural law and thereby "God's law," and which therefore cannot be totally abolished by a supernatural religion, that is, Christianity. Referring to the parable of the Sower (Mark 4:13-20), Uchimura holds that it is in accordance with Christianity that "the pure heaven" needs "the chaste earth" in order to bring forth "good fruits"--to wit, Christianity requires certain spiritual qualities indigenous to a nation in which its potentials are to be actualized. "The grace of God," Uchimura states, "must come from heaven as well as

from earth." It is therefore essential to pay due attention to "the earthly part of human beings," that is, the aspects of man's being which are conditioned by the "hereditary" law applied also to religious and cultural sphere, for "the heavenly Gospel" alone is not sufficient for the realization of its ideals.

Thus, giving prominence to Buddhism and Bushido as the two main constituents of the God-given spirituality of Japan and contending their indispensibility for the "fruitful" reception of Christianity, Uchimura now leads us to a closer investigation of these items. In the following we will examine Uchimura's appreciation of Buddhism first and then that of Bushido, paying more attention to the latter due to its more substantial bearing on his formulation of "Japanese Christianity." In our dealing with these items, it goes without saying that we by no means intend to give overall pictures of his understanding of these things. We limit our analysis of them to such an extent as is relevant for our present purpose, namely, clarification of them as "the chaste earth" and God's grace coming "from earth," although a general remark is necessary for both of them by way of introduction.

Pure Land Buddhism

Also in his appraisal of Buddhism, Uchimura is characteristically unsettled and floating, even to such an extent as appearing to us as "schizophrenic," and this even after a possible chronological development of his thought in this regard is taken into account. On the one hand, Buddhism is in his view not outside of God's providence for man's salvation. Speaking of the three great world religions in terms of their respective "heads," Uchimura maintains that "God who sent Christ

to Judea, sent also Buddha to India and Mohammed to Arabia to save mankind." Thus, Buddha has been "the light of Asia."²¹ In fact, both of these statements are made relatively early in 1900, that is, before his launching the Bible Studies in which he comes to concentrate himself on the exposition of the Bible. At that time he seems still to have thought of the possibility of a "higher synthesis" in one form or another. The idea of Buddha, and thereby his teaching, as "a light" finds an echo in a "poem" composed in 1926, a few years before his death, in which he speaks:

Buddha is the Moon; Christ is the Sun. Buddha is the Mother;
 Christ is the Father. Buddha is Mercy; Christ is Righteousness.
 . . . "God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day;
 and the lesser light to rule the night."--Genesis 1:16. I love the
 moon and I love the night; but as the night is far spent and the
 day is at hand, I now love the Sun more than I love the Moon; and
 I know that the love of the Moon is included in the love of the
 Sun. . . .²²

Somewhat later in the same year, Uchimura composed an essay under the title of "Christianity and Buddhism,"²³ where he held among other things that there exists a "fundamental likeness" between both religions, namely that they find "in Love the only weapon which can overcome the world," viewing "the same truth from different standpoints." They are even "essentially one in magnifying Love as the most potent power in the universe." All the other differences, therefore, amount to "nothing when compared with agreement to this cardinal truth," says Uchimura. Perhaps this statement is too "extreme," even in view of Uchimura's rhetoric, having been made in the heat of repudiation of the "egoism, jingoism, and militarism of Europe-America," and consequently we should

²¹Shinko 14:124.

²²CW 4:29-30.

²³Ibid., pp. 57-61.

perhaps take the above statement of Uchimura about the relationship between the two religions with a grain of salt. Be that as it may, and quite apart from the question of the accuracy of Uchimura's characterization of Buddhism in the above, we may at least say this much, that, Buddhism being thus positively evaluated, his thought is not far from its possible integration into Christianity.

On the other hand, however, Uchimura speaks of Buddhism in low, often very low terms. Taking up Buddha himself again as a clue to seeing Uchimura's other viewpoint on Buddhism, we are almost at a loss when we observe the following statement, especially knowing that there is only a one-year interval between the composition of the previous poem and the essay from which this statement was taken:

Buddhism is in truth rather for the philosophically-minded Occidental, while Christianity for the faith-minded Oriental. . . . Buddha himself was an Arian, and the life-philosophy he thought out can hardly be called religion.²⁴

How can this negative appraisal of Buddha be brought into harmony with what he has said in the above? In view of this inconsistency, it might not be totally unfair to Uchimura if we should harbor the suspicion of whether he is opportunistic in his argumentation rather than contradictory--contradictory in a positive sense that our thought, being "one-dimensional" in logical procedure, cannot be coextensive with a reality of many dimensions, and often must resort to "contradiction" or dialectic. At any event, Uchimura is thus negative and critical toward Buddha and what he taught as well. In another occasion, he criticizes Buddhism in the same vein. "No religion," says Uchimura, "has so many

²⁴Shinko 15:284.

loopholes in its philosophical systems as Buddhism. Indeed, it seems to be the sum total of all religions. The fact that there is everything in it may prove that there is nothing in it."²⁵ In fact, we can add here several other statements of his negative view on Buddhism, which compel us to ask whether Uchimura truly is so positive toward Buddhism with its intrinsic philosophical and pessimistic tendency, as might be inferred from his talking of Buddhism as sharing "the cardinal truth" with Christianity.

This hard, even seemingly "opportunistic" contradiction poses a difficult question as to Uchimura's real concern in his speaking of Buddhism, the concern which might lie under this contradiction and make it intelligible to us. Here, however, we are not in a position to elaborate this issue further. Still, in view of his positive evaluation of Buddhism in the above which is, doctrinally speaking, general and unspecified, and also in view of the negative statement of it made concretely in terms of criticism against the "philosophical" tendency in it, we may suggest that his positive view of it is rather nominal while the negative one is quite substantial. If this suggestion of ours hits the mark, Buddhism in its original teaching cannot be a part of "the chaste earth" in Japan. When Uchimura then, notwithstanding this, yet holds that Buddhism has been a medium through which he has learned the essence of faith, such questions inevitably arise in our mind as to what form of Buddhism and what aspect of that form of Buddhism are of particular interest for Uchimura in this connection. With these questions in

²⁵CW 7:220.

mind, let us proceed in our analysis of Uchimura's appraisal of Buddhism as a precursor of faith for the Gospel.

As foreign to the Japanese spiritual soil as Buddhism originally was, it is of little significance for Uchimura to claim that Buddhism as such is part of the "stock" upon which Christianity is to be grafted so as to actualize its transformative potentials as "Japanese Christianity." In fact, it is a "modified Buddhism" Uchimura has in mind when he speaks of the "stock." "Receiving Buddhism from China and India," he says, "the Japanese eventually made the Buddhism of the Japanese out of it. . . ." ²⁶ In Uchimura's view, the "Japanization" of Buddhism was not a long process; soon after its importation into the spiritual soil of Japan in the sixth century, it ceased to be "an Indian Religion." Then he shares the view that "Japanese Buddhism" "is so entirely different from the Hindoo original that had Buddha himself heard it, he would hardly recognize it as anything that came out of his teachings." To be sure, there is not very much meaning in the term "Japanese Buddhism," without references to some concrete entities justifiable in one way or another, since there have been both now and before as many variations of the Buddhist traditions represented in Japan as are found in China — not to mention in India — offering no "homogenous essence" of "Japanese Buddhism." Speaking, however, of specific Japanese contributions to the deepening of the Buddhist thought and its concretization in history as "Japanese Buddhism," the term becomes useful, able to designate specific features of Buddhism prevailing in Japan.

²⁶Shinko 18:110.

Among the various forms of elaborations on the Buddhist thoughts rendered in the spiritual soil of Japan, Zen and Pure Land Buddhist may be said to be most widely known as the specific Japanese contributions to the history of religion. It is, however, the latter, with its distinctive emphasis on "salvation by faith alone" that has been drawing attention from Christian theologians in recent times.²⁷ As a matter of fact, it is this very sect of Buddhism which Uchimura as a Christian thinker always has in mind when he speaks of the religious "stock" indigenous to Japan upon which the Christian faith is to be grafted.

Although it is not the place here to give even a cursory presentation of Pure Land Buddhism with its origin and development, it is still necessary to say some words about it as a minimum orientation for understanding what Uchimura says in the following.²⁸ Pure Land Buddhism was introduced into Japan in the middle of the seventh century from China, where its doctrinal framework had already been established. Its main teaching consists, very simply, in the soteriology that for salvation from this passion-ridden, suffering-filled world to the Pure Land one needs only his sincere reliance on Amida Buddha's infinite mercy

²⁷ It is well known that Karl Barth in his Church Dogmatics calls Pure Land Buddhism "Japanese Christianity." "It is," says Barth, "only the 'Japanese Protestantism' of Genku [= Honen] and Shinran which calls for serious consideration. When I said that its existence is a providential disposition, I meant that we ought not to be startled even momentarily by the striking parallelism of it to the truth of Christianity, but that we should be grateful for the lesson which it so abundantly and evidently teaches," Church Dogmatics, trans. G. T. Thomson & Harold Knight (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), I-2, p. 342

²⁸ In the following presentation of Pure Land Buddhism, the author is dependent, to a large extent, on: Alfred Bloom, Shinran's Gospel of Pure Grace (Tucson, Arizona: The University of Arizona Press, 1965).

and compassion in the recitation of his efficacious name. In other words, the recitation of the name of Amida Buddha in reliance on his Original Vow to save common mortals is considered as the way to salvation superior to the "hard" way through austerities by one's own power. "'All beings' who think even once (or one moment) on the Buddha, sincerely and with faith, when they hear the Buddha's name, will be born in that land."²⁹ Once introduced into Japan, this faith with the promise of the rebirth in the blissful land through this "Way of Easy Practice," soon prevailed, first among the nobles, and then the general populace. It is, however, through the three prominent searchers for salvation--Genshin (942-1017), Honen (1133-1212), Shinran (1173-1262), all of whom Uchimura repeatedly mentions as his "ancestors of faith"--that Pure Land Buddhism eventually came to establish itself in Japan as an "indigenous" religion among the people.

Genshin provided a decisive impetus to the further development of Pure Land Buddhism by making its way of salvation accessible to the "lay" people by his literary work, Ojoyoshu, or Essentials of Salvation, (which is said to be comparable to Dante's Divine Comedy in terms of its description of hell and the Pure Land and of the way from the former to the latter), and also by his paintings especially for the illiterate populace. It is, however, through Honen that Pure Land Buddhism established itself as a distinctive religious movement in Japan under the name of Jodoshu (Pure Land Sect). The main reason for the emergence of this sect as the actualization of the salvific potentials of Pure Land Buddhism consists in Honen's doctrinal articulation that the recitation

²⁹ Ibid., p. 9.

of the name of Amida Buddha made in firm reliance on his mercy and with sincere desire for birth in the Pure Land is the true way to salvation; this "other-power" way of salvation is even superior to the self-power one.³⁰ By retaining, however, the thinking of Buddha's name sincerely, firm faith, and the genuine desire for birth in the Pure Land as the conditions for the efficacy of the recitation of the name of Buddha, Hoenen still moved in the vicinity of the idea of accumulating merits for salvation, which was the cardinal soteriological category even in Pure Land Buddhism.

The decisive breakthrough in this soteriology of Honen and thus also that of the Pure Land Buddhism preceding him, was made by Shinran, the most prominent disciple of Honen, who was also deeply devoted to this master. Through his own experience, made in the strenuous search for salvation, of man's cardinal predicament (man has no sincerity, no firm faith, and is without genuine desire for the birth in Pure Land),³¹

³⁰"When we compare the recitation of Buddha's name to various [austere] works and assert that the former is superior to the latter [as the way to salvation], there is no end of disputes. But when we recognize that the recitation of Buddha's name is the work in conformity with Buddha's Original Vow, [it is easily seen that] mysterious and esoteric works of the Shingon-Hokke sects are no match [with the recitation of the Name, for they are not the work of the Original vow]," said Honen. This quotation is made from: Hisao Tanaka, Kamakura Bukkyo (Buddhism of Kamakura Era) (Tokyo: Kyoikusha, 1980), pp. 125-26

³¹"[In] this present age which is the last, evil age according to the teaching of Shakyamuni," "men in this world are of no sincerity of heart, and even those, it is said, who [deem themselves to] long for Pure Land have only a heart of hypocrisy and flattery. Even when they renounce the world, it is because they are primarily concerned with fame and interest. It must be, therefore, recognized by all that men are without goodness, without wisdom, without a heart of sincere endeavor, and only with idleness. Their inside is empty, filled with vanity, and without sincere heart . . . ," wrote Shinran. Tanaka, commenting on this saying, says: "That we should recognize ourselves to be without sincere hearts, is because Shinran himself reflected on himself." Ibid., pp. 175-76.

Shinran came to the soteriological "insight" that salvation was totally and absolutely dependent on Amida Buddha's infinite and unconditional mercy, that is, salvation is by the absolute Other Power, and that even the heart of reliance on Amida Buddha implicit in the recitation of his name was given to a sinner by Amida Buddha himself. Recognizing this cardinal predicament of man's existence found both in himself and other common men and women, Shinran came to see that it was "evil men" that Amida Buddha primarily and originally had in mind when he intended to establish Pure Land for mortals. Hence the well-known paradox of Shinran: "If even a good man can be reborn in the Pure Land, how much more so a wicked man."³² Thus, Pure Land Buddhism found its soteriological culmination in Shinran's "faith alone" in the sense of the total reliance on Amida Buddha's boundless compassion "vowed" by Amida himself for the salvation of depraved mortals. Thus, Jodo-shinshu ("the True Sect of Jodo-shu") originated.

Having gained some orientation in the main soteriological feature of Pure Land Buddhism, we are now prepared to consider what Uchimura speaks of concerning its relationship to the Christian gospel. "Pure Land Buddhism seems to be Christianity made into Buddhism," says Uchimura. In what sense, then, does Uchimura speak of this? "His [Christ's] righteousness, being appropriated by faith," Uchimura holds, "is regarded by God as my righteousness. This is the old, simple faith, the faith of Paul, Augustine, and Luther, and in a sense also the faith of Genshin, Honen, and Shinran, which gives absolute peace to man's

³²Ryusaku Tsunoda et al., ed. Sources of Japanese Tradition (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1958) vol. 1, p. 211.

soul."³³ On one occasion, having there explicated "the essence of the Gospel [福音の真骨道] "in terms of Christ's death for the forgiveness of man's sin and His resurrection for man's righteousness as clearly taught in the New Testament, Uchimura puts this essence of the Gospel "in the language of the Other Power Buddhism [Pure Land Buddhism]" and says: "'the Vow and works [for our salvation] have been accomplished by the Bodhisattva [i.e., Amida Buddha, so-called in his preparing the Pure Land]; the fruits thereof now emerge in us. . . . The faith which has raised Paul, Luther, Shinran is this plain, simple faith."³⁴ The redemptory act by the Divine and man's reliance on the mercy and love of the Divine shown in the act can, in Uchimura's view, be recognized as the essential elements of both faiths. "If I should," Uchimura hypothetically states, "even return to Buddhism, it would be perhaps Jodo-shu [of Honen] and Jodo-shinshu [of Shinran], for its doctrine of the Other Power [as the basis for man's salvation] is strikingly similar [酷似する] to the doctrine of Christ's redemption."³⁵ From Uchimura's own words quoted above, we may conclude that Uchimura regards Pure Land Buddhism as constituting a substantial point of contact with the Gospel of Christ, as he sees the same truth for man's true existence demonstrated in both religions, namely the absolute faith in the Other Power for man's salvation.

Characteristically, however, Uchimura again offers another, different version of his view of Pure Land Buddhism, which we must take into consideration in order to discern what Uchimura's real concern is

³³Nikki 3:75.

³⁴Shinko 12:92.

³⁵Chukai 10:160.

in his speaking of Pure Land Buddhism. In this version, Uchimura states that there is a "heaven-and-earth" difference between the doctrine of sin's redemption by Christ and that of Amida's "Original Vow" for the salvation of the passion-ridden man found in "Pure Land Buddhism, which is said to be most akin to Christianity."³⁶ He means that this difference is due to the respective concepts of the nature of the Divine. "He [Jehovah] is love--and not mercy-- and since He is love, so He is holy," says Uchimura, while "Amida is all mercy." The main difference between Jehovah and Amida is to be found in this point. "Amida only takes compassion on the weak, passion-ridden common mortals; he will save the wretched mortals by his infinite mercy." Lacking love which includes in itself holiness, Amida has no occasion to raise "the difficult problem of doing away with sins [罪の処分の難問是眞]" in the faith of Pure Land Buddhism. On this point, Uchimura's own words will be an apt illustration: "Buddha weeps for the sins of the world; Christ fights to redress the wrong."³⁷ In fact, "The God of Christianity," who is righteous as well, in contradistinction to Amida Buddha who is only mercy, will never receive a wicked man as he is, Uchimura maintains, but He will first "clothe him with the cloth of righteousness and receive him as righteous," for He detests all those who do evil things.³⁸ Probably the following quotation is the most harsh criticism Uchimura has against Pure Land Buddhism.

The harmful effect of Pure Land Buddhism in our country, which teaches that man is saved by conversion and faith, is widely known. This teaching of salvation by the Other Power, the teaching which

³⁶ Shinko 15:196.

³⁷ CW 4:29.

³⁸ Shinko 23:244.

is considered as completed by Shinran, approves any kind of libertinism and evil doings, succumbs to its [inherent] tendency to overlook all the sins as the [inevitable] work of passion, and eventually will become able to stand side by side with any kind of abominable deeds. Lo, the dirty air permeating this faith and this thought!³⁹

In view of this negative evaluation of Pure Land Buddhism, it is not difficult to understand that for Uchimura, Buddhism, "especially Pure Land Buddhism," with its earnest emphasis on Amida Buddha's mercy, has caused "many hindrances" to the proper understanding of "the Gospel of Christ which is based upon the righteousness of God."⁴⁰ Now, all of these negative statements directed toward Pure Land Buddhism, however, invalidate the "truth" of the Pure Land Buddhism which he finds in the previously discussed context to be "strikingly similar to the essence of the Gospel." We are here facing a diametrical contradiction which is substantial and therefore irreconcilable on the doctrinal level. Still, we must find a tertius comparationis between the two viewpoints on Pure Land Buddhism, in order to see which version is more in accordance with his basic understanding of the Gospel, and for what reason, so that we may discern the basis of Uchimura's real concern for Pure Land Buddhism as part of "the stock."

In the above we have seen that Uchimura on the one hand asserts the essential, even "striking" parallel between the soteriology of Pure Land Buddhism and the Gospel of Christ, and then invalidates on the other hand the force of the parallel by referring to that soteriological core as the source of the "harmful effects" of Pure Land Buddhism. In fact, however, the same argument employed in his criticism of this form

³⁹ Chukai 17:199.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 15:14.

of Buddhism can be directed against the Gospel of Christ--insofar as both are "strikingly" parallel in terms of their soteriological "essence." This dilemma Uchimura himself seems to be aware of.⁴¹ If, as we have seen above, there is no possibility of reconciliation between the two viewpoints of Uchimura on Pure Land Buddhism on the doctrinal level, that is, in terms of the definite content of faith (fides quae, as it were)--this irreconcilability, if Uchimura is consistent, is equally applicable to his understanding of the Gospel--; and if it is not of vital importance for him, as his leaving this dilemma unsolved indicates, to decide on one or the other as the indispensable, objective foundation of his salvation, it is, then, not of the essential significance in his theological concern what man believes in in his existence. The final concern is in reality not on the level of the definite, objective doctrine of salvation, but on something else. What must it be, then?

Uchimura is fully aware of the fundamental difference between Pure Land Buddhism and Christianity in terms of the Divine as the object of faith ("Amida Buddha" and "Jehovah" respectively). "However," says Uchimura, "concerning the attitude of faith [of the believing subject] toward the Object, there is a great deal to learn from Honen and

⁴¹"To be sure, there is a great difference between mercy in Buddhism and the cross of Christianity. But just as Buddhists have won calmness of mind through the simple faith, so Christians have won peace in the same way. There involves, however, a danger of hasty conclusion in this. While deeming that one needs only to rely on God through faith, faith can easily become formalized and come to pay little attention to unrighteous and evil deeds. That Pure Land Buddhism is corrupted, and that Paulinism's evils [パウロ教の弊害] are intense in the West are all due to this danger. But this is not due to the error of the doctrine, but due to the sin of those who believe in this doctrine." Shinko 12:127-28.

Shinran."⁴² In his view, Pure Land Buddhism, especially Shinran's "Jodo-shinshu," is a religion of "pure faith" [純信仰], in contradiction to "Zen, which is a religion of pure work [純行為],"⁴³ and therefore, as far as the attitude of the believing subject is concerned, "evangelical Christianity and Pure Land Buddhism are on the same track."⁴⁴ It seems now that the tertius comparationis which we are seeking between the two different versions of Uchimura's view on Pure Land Buddhism is the religious and ethical quality to be found in the believing subject. Put differently, in either version Uchimura's real concern is revolving around the sincerity, genuineness, and undividedness of the believing subject toward the Object--whatever name He may have. To illustrate this point by Uchimura's own words, we will quote the following passage, which he writes as an editorial remark on an occasion of the including in his Japan Christian Intelligencer of articles of a certain Mori on his own Buddhist faith:

What a revelation to all sympathetic readers of his [Mr. Mori's] articles of what Buddhism truly is among some of its believers! It is not idolatry, it is not atheism, it is not ritualism, it is not an endless cobweb of speculation; but pure faith, faith in the all-merciful Amida, and assurance of salvation by faith alone. I take that Mr. Mori's Buddhism is far more Christian than much of the Christianity of modern Christians.⁴⁵

With this quotation, in which Uchimura praises "pure faith" and "assurance of salvation by faith" so highly without being disturbed by the question of who is to be believed in, we can now safely conclude that what ultimately matters in Uchimura's speaking of Pure Land Buddhism--

⁴² Shinko 12:123.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 16:73.

⁴³ Ibid., 14:66.

⁴⁵ CW 4:170.

and, logically, also of the ultimate issue of the Gospel--is not the object of faith but the religious and ethical quality of the believing subject.⁴⁶ In other words, not the objective foundation of faith for salvation, but the subjective quality of sincerity, undivided faith, and genuine yearning for the ideal future is of decisive importance and significance. According to Uchimura in the quotation above, this subjective quality of faith seems to be regarded as the constituent of being "Christian." In the light of this implicit "definition" of being "Christian," it is quite understandable when Uchimura holds that Genshin, Honen and Shinran with their sincere and undivided faith in Amida Buddha are the most prominent of "many champions of faith God has sent to our country."⁴⁷ In fact, Uchimura maintains, it is "Honen and Shinran" who "clearly [判然と] taught us the essential element of religion [宗教の要素]."⁴⁸

By attaching the constitutive significance to the religio-ethical quality of the believing subject--irrespective of the objects of faith--in his speaking of truth in man's religious existence, Uchimura ipso facto treads on another theological ground than that of the Reformation, in which the Gospel, that is, remissio peccatorum propter Christum per fidem, is zealously held as objectively given. In view of this fact, we

⁴⁶"We do not dispute on name but on substance. We do not reject things because they are called 'Buddhist'; nor do we welcome things because they are called 'Christian.' We dedicate ourselves to the Heart of Love which permeates all things. 'God is love; those who have no love, do not know love.' . . . We therefore, recognize God where love is, and do not decide on acceptance or rejection because of different names." Shinko 8:236.

⁴⁷Ibid., 12:132.

⁴⁸Ibid., 14:59.

must now ask what consequence this theological position of Uchimura's entails in our attempt to understand his concept of the nature of the Christian message of salvation, the concept which ultimately determines his assessment of Pure Land Buddhism as instrumental for the indigenization of Christianity in Japan.

Considering Uchimura's concept of the Christian message of salvation, it is crucial to note the logical necessity that, once the theological center of gravity is definitely and substantially transposed from the objective basis for salvation ("propter Christum") onto the religio-ethical quality of the believing subject to the point where this subjective quality is considered to be the cardinal constituent of "the essence of religion"--Christianity included, there is no question any more about the Gospel as the salvific message sui generis. Put differently, by this transposition of the center of gravity, the actualization of man's innate religio-ethical potentials comes to the fore as the main concern, seeing the raison d'etre of religion (again Christianity included) in its instrumentality thereto, perhaps with varying degrees of "effectiveness" from one religion to another. In the light of this observation, it is quite clear that the salvation-historical event for man's objective redemption faces a grave danger of being reduced to one illustration among many others for the "truth" which all the same leads to the realization of man's innate religio-ethical capacity. The following quotation will, therefore, not surprise us, in which Uchimura speaks of "the essence of religion":

Even if I believe in Christianity and he in Buddhism, it does not necessarily follow from this that I and he belong to entirely different religions, for it is not certain whether the heart with

which he worships Amida Buddha is not identical with the heart with which I worship my God. Since men often worship one and the same object with different names, it is sheer foolishness to quarrel about religions for different names. . . . Since men embrace their respective religions from different motives, . . . the affiliation to one religion or the other must be determined by the motive of faith. . . . One's religion is the view of life he embraces. . . . Irrespective of the objects of worship, all those who thirst after and seek truth and justice affiliate themselves with one and the same religion.⁴⁹

Here again, we clearly observe that in Uchimura's view the main constituent of "true religion," as it were, is not primarily the definite salvific message coming to man "from outside" and therefore being "valid" irrespective of man's religio-ethical quality, but it is rather this quality of man, which is to be enhanced and unfolded by "the object of worship" no matter what names this "object of worship" may bear in different religions.⁵⁰ On another occasion, Uchimura holds, as if to reinforce the impression above, that "true religionists [真の宗教家]" are not concerned with the names of religion, for "religion [not excluding Christianity!] is to lead to [blessed] inner life by receiving into my interior the Eternal Being [永久の実在者]." Buddhism, for instance, is therefore not necessarily "an enemy of Christianity." Every one has full freedom to choose between "Christ or Amidha Buddha as the object of faith." "What matters [in his faith]," says Uchimura, "is to make

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 74.

⁵⁰ This viewpoint is eloquently stated in the following quotation from CW 3:54: "As an independent Christian, I thought I stood alone in this country. But now I think otherwise. Thirteen millions of my countrymen who profess the Jodo form of Buddhism are my brothers and sisters in faith. They take the same attitude towards their Amida Buddha that I take towards my Jesus the Christ. Change but the object of faith, and they are like me, and I am like them. And faith being the human side of religion, by faith we are united in religion, and not by the object of faith."

his inner life assured, vivid, and capable enough to overcome the world." If, therefore, Buddhism is [to some] capable enough to make their inner life filled with "[deep] satisfaction," it is "certainly acceptable."⁵¹ To be noted is that Uchimura in so saying implies that Christianity is surely superior to Buddhism in its "power" fully to unfold man's inner life. The crucial point is, however, that according to his view Christianity is nonetheless not qualitatively different from Buddhism and other religions; the difference is only in the degree of the capacity. Once the Christian message of salvation is thus conceived of, as sharing in its main aspect with all religions and Buddhism in particular the same task of enhancing man's inner life toward its perfection, it is, as can readily be seen, only natural for Uchimura to look upon Christ as "the Realizer [實現者] of the essence of Confucianism, Shintoism, Buddhism and all the other religions."⁵² Presupposed for this view is the idea in Uchimura's thought, namely that this "essence of . . . all the religions" lies in their task to enhance the perfect development of the religio-ethical potentials of man's inner life,--or "the perfection of man's moral ideals," to use a familiar term of ours,--in communion with "the Eternal Being."

Thus, the consistent theme throughout his statements of Buddhism in general and Pure Land Buddhism in particular is the religio-ethical quality of the believing subject, which is, according to Uchimura, typically embodied in Genshin, Honen and Shinran as found in their sincere, genuine and undivided faith and their heroic life in following their religious conviction. This quality of the "ancestors of

⁵¹Shinko 14:37.

⁵²Nikki 3:72.

faith"--the quality consisting of sincerity, uprightness, and heroism, which we might set up as the tripod of "the stock,"--is, in Uchimura's view, to be regarded as one of the precious gifts given by God, that is, a product which in God's providential care has come into being through the interaction between the spirituality indigenous to Japan and Buddhism, particularly Pure Land Buddhism. It is, then, for the sake of this religio-ethical quality of the believing subject that Uchimura occasionally speaks of Buddhism positively. In fact, as far as the doctrinal content of Buddhism, irrespective of its "philosophical" and pessimistic tendency, or the somewhat extreme emphasis in the mercy of Amida Buddha in Pure Land Buddhism, is concerned, Uchimura is by far negative in his assessment of it. However, it does not trouble him insofar as a praiseworthy, noble and heroic life arises in the indigenous spirit through the instrumentality of Buddhism. Actually, Uchimura believes this noble life is realized among the "ideal" Buddhists of the past and present in their "pure faith," which, as we have seen above, is to be understood as the religio-ethical quality of the believing individuals. It is exactly this precious aspect of the "native" version of Buddhism that in Uchimura's concept constitutes "the chaste earth" as the sine qua non for Christianity in the process of the actualization of its own potentials as the force of world-transformation in Japan, for "Christianity alone" cannot "raise Abraham's children out of stones." Conversely, it is also this very aspect of the native spirituality that is to be completed by Christianity, whose raison d'etre, is

ultimately to realize the ideals of indigenous spirituality, for "[the spirituality of] Japan cannot attain to the perfect development without Jesus."⁵³

To be included in the concluding remark above are two observations concerning Uchimura's interpretation of "pure faith" as found in Pure Land Buddhism, particularly in Shinran's soteriology. First, as far as we can see, Uchimura's interpretation of the decisive concern of Pure Land Buddhism is not in harmony with the facts. For, just as in the case of evangelical Christianity, so also in the Pure Land Buddhism of Shinran has the religio-ethical quality of the believing subject never gained the status of independent worthiness--as this is observed in Uchimura's thought, for the very reason that this faith historically arose from the deepest despair of Shinran in his own experience of the profundity of human sinfulness and therefore of the total impossibility of earning salvation to Pure Land by his own being and doing. It is in principle impossible for Shinran to regard his total reliance, "pure faith," as something praiseworthy, and therefore to place any value on the religious quality of the individual who believes in Amida Buddha. True, we agree with Uchimura when he says that there is a striking parallel between Pure Land Buddhism and Christianity. But in our observation it is not in terms of "pure faith" understood as the subjective religious and ethical quality, but definitely in terms of "pure faith" as the "heaven-ward" stretched-out "empty hands of a beggar" who has nothing but his crying for the Divine mercy for salvation, while even despairing of his own faith. In both Shinran's "Gospel of pure grace" and

⁵³ Ibid.

evangelical Christianity, this faith as the "empty hands" presupposes as its sine qua non the "alleinwirksamkeit" of the divine, and man's total "depravity." This certainly excludes a priori such a notion as "pure faith" in the sense of a praiseworthy quality of the believing individual. Quite apart from the question of the theological differences between Shinran's doctrine of salvation and that of evangelical Christianity, we must say that the "pure faith" in the sense of Uchimura's concept of it is, theologically speaking, "a contradiction in terms" and has no basis in the Pure Land Buddhism of Shinran.

Second, the fact that Uchimura is highly contradictory and unsettled in his assessment of even Pure Land Buddhism is, in our view, closely related to the first observation above. Since Uchimura's real concern is the development of the religio-ethical potentials of man, the genuinely "pure" faith is malignantly dangerous to his cardinal theological position. For Uchimura, "pure faith" is acceptable only insofar as it is considered as the praiseworthy attitude of the believing subject and conducive to noble existence. He cannot, therefore, ever praise "pure faith" without immediately adding the proviso that "pure faith" is never without good "fruits," which in turn are the very witness of man's actual realization of moral ideals. As long as "pure faith" is held as relative to the religio-ethical quality of man, this is unavoidable. Rooted in the inherent contradiction in his concept of "pure faith," the fluctuation of Uchimura between the positive pole and the negative one in his assessment of the "evangelical" Buddhism is inevitable.

Bushido

Having finished the examination of Uchimura's real concern in his speaking of Buddhism, particularly Pure Land Buddhism, we will now proceed with the investigation of the second item, Bushido, which together with the "pure faith" constitutes "the chaste earth" for the seeds of Christianity.

"A Japanese, a samurai, and a Christian,"⁵⁴ these are the names with which Uchimura designates himself with equal emphasis on each of them. In fact, throughout his life Uchimura was keenly conscious of his being "a Japanese samurai." Even if in his formative years the era of aristocratic samurai dominance in society was already passé and thereby Bushido too, Uchimura was nourishing in his breast a deep yearning for the ideals of the Way of samurai with its high praise of valorous heroism, fearlessness of death, moral purity, self-control, proper discretion, and the like. Uchimura knows himself fully identified with these samurai ideals when he wants to "become a Japanese samurai made a servant of Christ." How genuine this identification of Uchimura with Bushido ideals is can readily be seen in the fact that he is exceptionally consistent when he speaks of Bushido, to be sure, in very positive terms. In fact, this is quite striking when we consider particularly the characteristic, even "schizophrenic" fluctuation in his assessment of Buddhism. If, then, despite the "problematic" features of Buddhism, Uchimura eventually regards its influence as having been in God's providential care, how much more, we can easily understand, he considers it to be the case

⁵⁴Shinko 20:233.

with Bushido. "I believe," Uchimura confesses, "Bushido is a precious light [貴き光] given to the Japanese by God." Certainly, it is not "the Great Light [Christianity] to rule the day," but it does not lose thereby its value as "the small light . . . to be received with gratitude." For, Uchimura finds, there are "many precious teachings in it which are similar to those of Christianity." In his view, the reason for the Japanese's being "strongly" drawn to Christianity once confronted with its teachings lies exactly in this similarity. Not only is there similarity between Bushido and Christianity in terms of "teachings," but "Jesus and His disciples can be looked upon as the examples [模範] of Samurai." Uchimura, then, articulates the "theological" foundation for this concept of Bushido:

The Japanese are also God's creation and in this sense are God's children. And as is written that God ceaseth not to reveal Himself, He has given witness of Himself for us Japanese and shown part of His light. I believe Bushido is the greatest gift God has ever given to us.⁵⁵

Thus, according to Uchimura, Bushido is God's gift to the Japanese, whose teachings are similar to those of Christianity and the realization of whose ideals can be seen in Jesus and His prominent disciples. With this paradigmatic introduction we will in the following investigate more closely Uchimura's concept of Bushido in view of his attempt at the "Japanization" of Christianity. Prior to this, however, it is helpful for us to have at hand a rough idea of Bushido with its origin and basic features as the "lebensanschauung" of the samurai.

A few words about the origin and development of the samurai or warrior class will provide us with a convenient clue to insight into the

⁵⁵Ibid., 23:180-81.

nature of Bushido.⁵⁶ Since their emergence as a distinctive political power in the eleventh century by taking advantage of a state of "anarchy" which was prevailing in a large part of the country after the collapse of the government by the courtiers in the capital, and until the definite stabilization of the nation by the Tokugawas--one of the most powerful samurai clan--in the beginning of the seventeenth century, the samurai lived in the most turbulent period of the nation's history with fierce struggles for power and fame among themselves. In other words, they lived with their ardent ambitions for power and fame under such an historical circumstance as, due to the lack of order and stability, allowed them to test their ability to materialize their ambitions. But, on the other hand, this forced them to live in a highly precarious, tension-filled existence, as they were constantly confronted with the immediate presence of death. To meet the high chance of defeat and death in this vivere est militare in a noble and worthy way for the sake of their own names, the samurai had to discipline themselves by constant efforts to transcend their desire for life and cultivate the fearlessness of death. Bushido thus originated spontaneously in the minds of those warriors under such an historical condition, as the code of samurai ideals, in terms of their outer behavior as warriors and the attitude of their inner selves both of which were prerequisites for enhancing the honor of their names in victory and preserving the same

⁵⁶In the following presentation of Bushido, this author has gained insight into the main characteristics of Bushido from: Soukichi Tsuda: Bungaku ni Arawaretaru Waga Kokumin-Shiso no Kenkyu [studies in Thoughts of Our Nation as Manifested in Literary Works], (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1978), 8 vols. of Bunko (Pocket-book) edition, particularly from: vol. 4, pp. 206-78 and vol. 6, pp. 101-66.

from disgrace in case of defeat and death. It is, then, quite important for us to keep in mind this fact, that the basic, constitutive ethos of the life-philosophy of Bushido is a product of the warriors whose original day-to-day situation was constantly conditioned by the relentless law of war with its ever-present killing and being killed for the gain or loss of power and fame. Put differently, the matrix of Bushido was the state of constant war, and the main ingredient of Bushido ethos was the concern for the honor of one's own name, which had to be kept in full integrity at the cost of all sorts of sacrifice, even of one's own life. All the virtues of Bushido ultimately converge on this concern for one's own name.

True, there are many beautiful, more "humane" episodes about the samurai's justice, impartiality, compassion, and benevolence even over against the enemies. In fact, ever confronted with the utmost precariousness of his own life, which, despite his alleged preparedness toward death, still remained as a threatening reality to his natural will to live, a samurai very understandably came to feel an inner urge to show benevolence, do justice and embrace compassion for the enemies in his hand, knowing the same fate of the enemies in his hand today might be his own tomorrow. Evidently, however, this "humane" side of Bushido ethos was more accidental and limited than the warrior side. As intrinsic to any war among rival military clans in which revenge and re-revenge so often constituted a vicious circle, cruelty and relentlessness, as seen, for instance, in the total extermination of a clan, exceeded the "humane" manifestations of Bushido spirit by far in number. It is readily seen that even the beautiful, "legendary" cases were only

possible when the interest of the samurai was not seriously at stake so that they might be able to "afford" the deeds of compassion and magnanimity. Be this "humane" aspect of Bushido as it may, it is still important to recognize that the main constituent of Bushido is the concern for the glory of one's own name in the spirit of vivere est militare. This cardinal trait remained throughout its modification by historical circumstances and their accompanying ideas.

With the eventual establishment of peace all over the nation in the beginning of the seventeenth century by the samurai themselves who knew their trade but to fight, they had to redefine their raison d'etre in accordance with this historical phase. However, although with this establishment of peace the era was definitely passé when samuari, being ambitious and confident enough in their capacity, could stake their life for glory and name, the Bushido ideals of fortitude, fearlessness and heroism, with which they identified their meaning of existence, tenaciously persisted in their minds. Thus, there was a serious gap between the objective circumstance of peace and the Bushido ideals which could be only realized, at least for most of the samurai, under the tension-filled, face-to-face-with-death condition of war. This task of the reconciliation of the samurai's redefinition of their raison d'etre in peace and their traditional identity as warriors came to be assigned to Confucian scholars.

One of the most influential scholars who systematically reflected on the legitimation of the existence of the samurai in the time of peace was Soko Yamaga (1622-1685), whose thought will serve as a paradigm for the Confucian attempt to justify the existence of the samurai. In distinction from the farmers, artisans and merchants who, by their

respective occupations of tilling the soil, devising and manufacturing tools, and producing profit from mutual trade, provide the necessary means for the welfare of people, the samurai do not engage themselves in any of those occupations.⁵⁷ If the samurai had no function to perform in society and lived without working, they should be called rebels against heaven. In fact, however, the business of the samurai consists in reflecting on his own station in life, in discharging loyal service to his master, in deepening his fidelity in association with friends, in devoting himself to duty above all. In addition to these duties to be discharged by them, the samurai are as human beings also involved in the obligations of living as father and child, older and younger brother, and husband and wife. To be sure, Yamaga means, these are the fundamental moral obligations applicable to everyone in the land, but the farmers, artisans, and merchants have no leisure to reflect upon them and therefore cannot constantly fulfill their obligations properly. The samurai, on the other hand, who dispense with such occupations, devote themselves to practicing the Way given to men to follow in their life. It is, then, their occupation to punish anyone in the three classes of the common people who violates the moral principle, thus upholding the Way in the land. Yamaga continues in the same vein:

It would not do for the samurai to know the martial and civil virtues without manifesting them. Since this is the case, outwardly he stands in physical readiness for any call to service and inwardly he strives to fulfill the Way of the lord and subject, friend and friend, father and son, older and younger brother, and husband and wife. Within his heart he keeps to the ways of peace, but without

⁵⁷Ryusaku Tsunoda et al., pp. 389-401 has provided the material for this paragraph.

he keeps his weapons ready for use. The three classes of the common people make him their teacher and respect him.⁵⁸

Since heaven has given the samurai such a function to perform as their specific call in life, they should in no way be negligent of keeping their moral standard high, strengthening the will, cultivating virtues, polishing their martial skills, behaving themselves solemnly and courteously, reflecting deeply on good and evil, and watching over their own conduct. Through constant practice in these things, they are made true samurai, who are always courageous, gentle, solemn, discreet, ready to sacrifice themselves to the will of heaven, unselfish, brave and honest.

This thought of Yamaga is an illustrious case of the attempt to redefine the samurai's raison d'etre, or more precisely their own existential identity, in a new historical context by combining the principle of the sword of their being with the Confucian idea of civil government. This redefinition of the samurai's new identity seems to have solved their problem imposed by the new historical circumstance, at least on a rational level. But this does not exhaust the matter of Bushido in a new context. Being indigenous and tenacious in the minds of the samurai, Bushido was naturally by no means submerged in Confucianism in whatever form. Certainly, as we have seen above, the identity of samurai was no longer defined in terms of the martial "virtues" of fortitude, fearlessness, and boldness alone, but rather in terms of an ideal combination of these warrior qualities and vigorous moral discipline toward a virtuous man. What was, then, the leitmotiv for this "Confucianization" of

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 390-91.

Bushido? As a matter of fact, an austere self-discipline was relentlessly required for the appropriation of both martial and moral virtues, as long as human inclinations, including those of the samurai, tended toward ease and lack of virtue. This requirement, then, provided a substitute for the original, tension-filled context of the ethos of Bus-
hido, imposing on them the ideal of martial and moral precepts in view of the glory of their names and thus furnishing a quasi-war condition, while any sort of serious failure in performing duties or in one's own moral behavior with the resulting disgrace had to be made up by death. With this different dress of Confucianism, then, Bushido still remained essentially, as an inextinguishable passion for the glory of the name, with its latent potential of "transcending" the "Way" for the sake of the name. Put graphically, the essence of Bushido is the mighty stream of man's primeval pathos for self-assertion--now channeled by the thin banks of Confucian moral ideals--which, with the increase of its intensity caused by, say, dishonor brought on one's name, may prove to be a destructive power, breaking the thin banks.

Now, as we in the following shall consider Uchimura's "theological" appraisal of Bushido as "a precious gift from God," it is quite essential for us to keep in mind the constitutional feature of Bushido, for otherwise we would not be in a position to evaluate Uchimura's integration of Christianity into Bushido or vice versa properly. By the same token, it has to be remarked that since, as we have seen in the above, Confucianism was rather absorbed into Bushido--concern for self-assertion--however noble an appearance it may take--, we can safely dispense with an independent section of Confucianism in this connection.

The cardinal conviction of Uchimura about Bushido is that it stands theologically in an unqualified continuity with Christianity, as he understands the former as "a precious gift" which "for twenty centuries" has been perfected by God who has been at work to complete the whole universe. As was cursorily seen in the above, Uchimura finds in Bushido "many precious teachings" "similar to those of Christianity." According to him, Bushido praises highly such virtues as honesty, nobleness, magnanimity, compassion, straight-forwardness, courage, independence, loyalty, and the like. Actually, in Uchimura's view, "there exists no great difference between the commandments of Bushido and the teachings of Christianity with regard to doing justice, treading the path of righteousness, fulfilling one's duty and responsibility, being transparent and exercising compassion toward the weak."⁵⁹ Thus, he is fully convinced that Bushido already in itself possesses the quality of noble morality, independently of, but in harmony with, the teachings of Christianity. "By turning away from Bushido," Uchimura maintains therefore, "the Japanese Christian acts against the clear teachings of the Bible."⁶⁰

It is clear here that Uchimura's thought of the continuity between Bushido and Christianity is conceived of in the category of moral quality which is to be appropriated in one's inner self. In fact, he confesses that if he had not been convinced that Christianity should realize the ideals of the Japanese samurai, he would never have become a Christian.⁶¹ Hence, it is intolerable for Uchimura to observe that

⁵⁹Shinko 23:184.

⁶⁰Chukai 17:166.

⁶¹Shinko 23:216.

Christianity--or perhaps the moral quality of the "actual Christians," --proves to be inferior to Bushido,⁶² for the primary concern of the former is to him nothing but to bring the ideals of the latter into realization. What Uchimura ultimately is concerned with is the actualization of a vigorous masculine morality which will despise effeminacy, loose discipline, dependency, and cowardice which, according to him, the Christian morality of love without "austere morality" would produce.⁶³ As a matter of fact, Uchimura observes that Christianity is in the process of being sorted out as either a Buddhist Christianity or a Confucian one, embraced respectively by merchants and peasants who, in his view, know only of pity but not of the severe demand of morals, and by samurai who can bear up the bitterness and nobleness of righteousness. He must, therefore, as a champion of "Confucian," that is, Bushido Christianity, "endeavor to promote a Christianity of austere morality and pure Puritanism [厳格なる道義的の、純ピュリタン的のキリスト教]." ⁶⁴

This exaltation of Bushido Christianity with its conspicuous emphasis on austere morality involves a serious problem in his interpretation of Christianity. Uchimura seems to assert that high moral consciousness is the prerequisite for the "fruitful" appropriation of the Gospel. "The Gospel," says Uchimura, "has never been prosperous where there has been no preparation of stern justice."⁶⁵ By the "prosperity" of the Gospel Uchimura surely means the full actualization of the potential of the Gospel as the divine means to realize the moral ideals. Without this preparation of firm moral consciousness, "the

⁶²Ibid., 18:116.

⁶³Ibid., 16:202-3.

⁶⁴Nikki 3:381.

⁶⁵Chukai 15:13.

Gospel of love" would be even harmful, "ruining the individual, destroying the home and overthrowing the country, when preached indiscreetly,"⁶⁶ says Uchimura. Where, however, a stern discipline of morality has provided a good soil for the Gospel, "there without exception has been accomplished an austere morality once the Gospel of grace has been brought in."⁶⁷ Making Christianity relative to the moral quality of those by whom its potential of moral transformation is to be actualized, Uchimura logically postulates the various grades of Christianity, that is, one form of it is superior or inferior to another form of it. His talk of a "Buddhist" Christianity of peasants and merchants and a "Confucian," Bushido Christianity is a clear illustration. Despising the former as a Christianity of lesser quality, and boasting of the latter as the noble version of it, Uchimura seems to exalt himself as a samurai who in his eyes lives on a higher morality.⁶⁸ What Uchimura says about peasants and merchants would not be reconciled with either Jesus' acceptance of the prostitutes and publicans or Paul's word of God's call in 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. Here it is discernable that the self-assertion, the main constituent of Bushido, is intact in Uchimura's mind. Be this as it may, it remains as the constant element in Uchimura's thought that Christianity, or the Gospel, is not the message of man's redemption from sin and condemnation primarily but the force of moral transformation of

⁶⁶Shinko 16:203.

⁶⁷Chukai 15:13.

⁶⁸"Also in Japan, the best Christians come from austere samurai-families. So-called merchants and peasants who know only of 'leniency of rulers' and not of the sacredness of the [moral] Way, cannot stand for the severity and nobleness of righteousness, even if they get in touch with the Gospel of Christ. In this sense, pure Confucianism and impartial Shintoism are good preparation for the Gospel of Christ." Ibid., 13-14.

man. True, he seems to be aware of the usus theologicus significance, as it were, of "stern" or "austere" morality, when he says that "the blessing of Christianity can be properly valued only when one realizes the torment of the Law," or "without being consumed by the flame of Mt. Sinai, one cannot be granted to drink the water of Lake Galilee."⁶⁹ However, in view of his passionate concern for noble morality, we may safely say that Uchimura is not so much brought into despair before the holy God as made aware of his impotency to realize the moral ideals by his own power and compelled to seek "assistance" from the Gospel,⁷⁰ when he is confronted by "the torment of the Law" and "the flame of Mt. Sinai." Thus, Uchimura holds that Bushido provides the noble morality which Christianity will take as the material for the historical actualization of its potential of moral transformation and completion. To use Uchimura's own image, Bushido is to be grafted upon the stock of Christianity, by the power of which the noble and masculine morality of Bushido is to put forth its blossoms.

In the above, we have observed that according to Uchimura Bushido and Christianity are virtually coextensive as far as the

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 13.

⁷⁰ One of the diary entries made in his later years illustrates the close connection between his ideals and his struggles for attaining them. "Now and then I come to think that because I embraced too high ideals there have been many troubles. But the blame should not be brought to the Gospel but to my own failure. The Gospel is simple and does not force on us particularly high ideals. One of the main purposes of the Gospel is to let a man forget about himself. If I had had the fortune to believe in the true Gospel from the beginning, I had been spared from many unnecessary troubles. Since I took such a saying: "not failures but the lowliness of aspiration is sin," as gospel, there have been many troubles in my life." Nikki 2:274.

content of morality is concerned. In other words, the continuity of Bushido with Christianity is described in terms of "the catalogue of virtues." However, it will be readily seen that the various virtues of Bushido are to a large extent universal in character and therefore cannot claim to be specific to Bushido. In fact, when he speaks of Bushido as God's gift prepared for the "fruitful" acceptance of Christianity, Uchimura thinks of more than the aggregation of the individual virtues, namely, of the highly zealous frame of mind which will not hesitate to sacrifice anything, even one's own life, for a cause of the ultimate significance in a straightforward manner. This frame of mind with which the samurai is animated has no fear of death for the cause of justice. It will not be afraid of the face of man when doing justice. The Japanese samurai possesses the spirit [精神] of sacrificing his own life for justice and truth. He is a man of principle. Having this frame of mind, Uchimura maintains, the Japanese samurai cannot but be consonant with the self-sacrificing spirit of Christianity. Actually, according to Uchimura, Jesus Himself lived His life in this samurai frame of mind. The very fact that Jesus was of samurai personality seems to Uchimura to explain why many of his contemporaries who were like himself of samurai birth became Christians so spontaneously. They were strongly drawn to this samurai personality of Jesus when they confessed their faith in Him, and not because they were first convinced of "the doctrines and the articles of faith." In fact, Uchimura believes, "if only they face [the impact of] Christianity squarely while putting away all prejudice [against it] and dismissing all the [unfounded] bad names [attributed to it], the Japanese samurai, being naturally drawn to it, cannot but

become faithful servants of Jesus." Fully convinced of the specific character of the samurai's undivided commitment and loyalty and their readiness to sacrifice themselves for the cause entrusted to them, Uchimura has no doubt that "Jesus has never had such straightforward and chivalrous [武俠的士] disciples as the Japanese samurai since He had Paul of Tarsus as His disciple." In Uchimura's view, "the Japanese samurai make the best Christians."⁷¹

This samurai frame of mind, or the soul of the samurai, convinces Uchimura that Bushido is "the best stock upon which the Gospel is to be grafted." There exists no doubt that the scion which is grafted upon this stock is bound to bear good fruits. Bushido is "the quintessence [精華] of Japan and perhaps the best product of the Asian civilization."⁷²

Thus, Uchimura's appraisal of Bushido is overwhelmingly positive. He even holds that "all good things in Japan have occurred through [the instrumentality of] Bushido."⁷³ This almost unqualified affirmation of Bushido, which we have considered in the above, is particularly conspicuous in comparison with his highly ambivalent estimation of Buddhism. In view of this conspicuous affirmation of Uchimura of Bushido as "the best stock" for the "scion" of the Gospel, we must raise the following question for a twofold reason: Is Bushido really so "stainless" that it can be postulated in an unconcerned manner, as by Uchimura, that "what God expects especially from the Japanese are those who have

⁷¹Shinko 23:183.

⁷²Chukai 15:129.

⁷³Shinko 23:192.

received Christ in their samurai souls"? This question we have to raise because, firstly, in the evangelical faith nothing human, however noble and sublimated it may appear, can be so "immune" to sin's all-embracing reality as to be considered as constituting, in an undialectical manner, a positive presupposition for the Gospel, and, secondly, according to what we have seen in the above about the origin and basic feature of Bushido, this specific mode of existence of the samurai involves as its main constituent the primeval pathos for self-assertion which is the very opposite to the self-denial in the evangelical faith. Seeing the intrinsic irreconcilability of Bushido with the evangelical faith, we are now compelled to a closer examination of Uchimura's concept of Bushido as "the stock" for the Gospel.

On one occasion Uchimura defines Bushido as "a sort of pure idealism [純理想主義の一種]."⁷⁴ By "pure idealism" he means first and foremost an existential attitude which aspires after the realization of ideals, and not so much idealism in a philosophical sense, although he reasonably shares with it the view that the ideals are the ultimate reality and therefore normative for man's existence. In other words, Bushido as "pure idealism" denotes primarily the existential attitude of the subject which, in a straightforward manner, devotes itself to the realization of ideals, rather than the content of ideals themselves, which, in Uchimura's view, Bushido shares with other idealistic ethics. This emphasis on the attitude of the subject can be explicable in terms of the intrinsic nature of ideals. As Uchimura himself is

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 236.

aware implicitly and explicitly, ideals remain unrealizable under the empirical reality.⁷⁵ If so, they cannot but be highly precarious, constantly jeopardized and frustrated by the "hard" empirical reality, so that they may provide only feeble ground for meaningful existence. Then, once ideals cease to be tangible by losing their force as providing meaning in the empirical world, there arises a question, even "a great question," "Whether I should believe in facts [事实], or in ideals [理想]."⁷⁶ When, however, ideals are still held as the object of the aspiration of the subject, their meaning for the existence of the subject may logically change from the object of the aspiration into an instrumentality for the generating of an existential meaning in the subject itself.⁷⁷ Put in another way, when ideals, though unrealizable in the empirical reality, function as the guiding star--a "working hypothesis," so to speak, the meaning of existence is transferred from ideals themselves to the volitional determination of the subject which, despite the tenuous reality of ideals, heroically and unhesitatingly devotes itself to ideals. In this heroism, as will be easily seen, the subject may very well experience the heightening of its volitional

⁷⁵ "No ideals can be obtained in this world. Just as there is no ideal Church, there is no ideal man nor ideal Christian. . . ." Ibid., 18:42.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 19:89.

⁷⁷ This change of emphasis from what man obtains through faith to how man is in his faith will be clearly seen in the following words. "Looking backward, I see that it has been a golden age for faith up to this day. It belongs to the sublimity of faith to believe when it is considered as detestable by the world. Now winter is gone and spring has come. A flower [of faith] is not rare, and it is not difficult to blossom. Fortunately, I came to embrace faith in a good time and have kept it in a good age." Ibid., 24:214-15.

energy which autonomously generates its own meaning.⁷⁸ Once, then, ideals are made instrumental as "a working hypothesis" for the generation of autonomous meaning in the subject itself, their instrumentality can be even made more effective when they are more contradicted by the hard empirical reality, providing more room for heroism and determination. The point in question can be aptly illustrated by Uchimura's urging to optimism: "[for the sake of the realization of ideals] our small sorrow, misery and the like do not matter; taken on the whole, God has been realizing His ideals; we must believe this, and in so believing, we must . . . become thorough optimists."⁷⁹ In a word, the meaning of existence, or "salvation," is given in the subject's own endeavor to realize ideals. If one is logically consistent, this position may be able to dispense with the question of the objective validity

⁷⁸This subjectivistic value orientation, as it is observed in Uchimura's thought, makes up a parallel to modern characteristics of spirit, as is found in Lessing's saying that "the search for truth was preferable to the unsought possession of it," here quoted from: Ernst Troeltsch, Protestantism and Progress, trans. W. Montgomery, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p. 198. In the same book Troeltsch aptly characteristic of modern religious feeling that "the new [subjectivistic] way to the old goal [salvation] became more important than the goal itself. . . ." p. 194.

⁷⁹Cf. ch. 2, note 51. How constrained Uchimura's "optimism" is can be seen in comparing it with Harnack's unconcerned optimism as found in: Des Wesen des Christentums (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1902), p. 73:

Es ist ein hohes, herrliches Ideal, welches wir hier von der Grundlegung unserer Religion hier erhalten haben, ein Ideal, welches unserer geschichtlichen Entwicklung als Ziel und Leitstern vorschweben soll. Ob die Menschheit es je erreichen wird, wer kann es sagen? aber wir können und sollen uns ihm nähern, und heute fühlen wir bereits -- anders als noch vor zwei- oder dreihundert Jahren -- eine sittliche Verpflichtung in dieser Richtung, und die zärter und darum prophetisch unter uns Empfindenden blicken auf das Reich der Liebe und des Friedens nicht mehr wie auf eine blosse Utopie."

of the content of ideals, as long as their instrumentality is kept in "function." The ultimately significant issue becomes, then, the spiritual quality of the aspiring subject. In fact, when dealing with Pure Land Buddhism, we took note of Uchimura's appraisal of "Mr. Mori's Buddhism as "far more Christian than much of Christianity, etc.,"⁸⁰ calling attention to the religio-ethical quality of the believing subject as the criterion for being more "Christian." This aspect of his thought must be then explained by Uchimura's characteristic assignment of the ultimate meaning to the quality of subject.

How then can Bushido as "a sort of pure idealism," which is, in our observation, the volitional determination of the subject toward the realization of ideals, be conceived of as "the stock" of Christianity? We must ask this question anew because of the crucial dimension of Bushido's emphasis on the significance of the quality of the subject as found in the above observation. If, namely, in our attempt to answer the question we can make lucid the relationship of Bushido and Christianity, we will see Uchimura's concept of the ultimate issue in the Christian faith. In one connection, Uchimura equates Christianity with Bushido in terms of seishin. "Christianity is," he says, "like Bushido, seishin. Seishin is, however, like a theorem in geometry, not describable by the letters. It is like a perfume which can be identified only by smelling. . . ." Concerning the meaning of seishin, we refer to the previous chapter, where we interpreted seishin as "a vital volitional principle directing the total existence of a person toward the achievement of a goal."⁸¹ We can now clearly observe that seishin in this

⁸⁰Cf. supra, p. 224.

⁸¹Cf. supra, pp. 151-52.

understanding is virtually synonymous with the "pure idealism," making only the decisiveness of the spiritual quality of the subject more directly discernable. That Uchimura grasps Christianity and Bushido as homogeneous in terms of seishin or "pure idealism," unmistakably indicates that his concept of Christianity is ultimately formed by the idea of man's self-realization. In other words, the realization of man's self through the intense discipline of seishin under constrained, tension-filled conditions is what Uchimura means by saying that Christianity and Bushido are seishin. Thus understood, both Christianity and Bushido are the mode of existence which finds its meaning in the realization of the self through self-sublimating devotion to ideals.

In this orbit of "subjectivistic" theologizing, Christianity a priori ceases to be the objective message given unconditionally, that is, absolutely apart from the quality of man's subject, to sinners who know themselves totally lost, not only before God, but also man. Rather, this decisive emphasis on the quality of the subject as the constituent factor of Christianity logically entails the differentiation of Christians into varying degrees of quality, "best Christians," "Bushido Christians," "Buddhist Christians," and so forth. Here, self-assertion and self-glorification on the side of "élite" Christians are inevitable. If we are not completely mistaken, this is the logical consequence for a Christianity which is grafted upon Bushido.

Upon this aspect of self-assertion in Bushido, an illustrating sidelight can be furnished by Uchimura's characterization of St. Paul as "a genuine samurai."⁸² According to him, the apostle is "the very

⁸²CW 3:252.

embodiment of the spirit of Bushido,"⁸³ for he possessed "the fortitude of the Japanese samurai" and "the heart of self-respect [自尊の心]," "for the defence of which he, if necessary, would prefer death to the continuation of his mission." St. Paul was "[like] a Japanese samurai who became an evangelist."⁸⁴ Actually, Uchimura finds in Paul a "combative" spirit and zealous concern for honor. Quoting 1 Corinthians 16:9-10, Uchimura points out the apostle's "assertive will [意地]" by holding that, while "a great door and effectual opened for the apostle" can be understood as a proper reason for the prolongation of his stay at Ephesus, the reason, "for . . . there are many enemies," cannot be explained but as an expression of his "love for a kind of fighting [ある種の戦闘]." In Uchimura's view, Paul, who possessed Roman citizenship, shared with the Romans the spirit of "the Roman samurai [ロ-マの武士]" who said vivere est militare. This fighting spirit of the apostle could be called his shortcoming, but, says Uchimura, "a noble, lovable shortcoming." Thanks to this fighting spirit, holds Uchimura, which enabled the apostle to "believe that he, as a single man, was stronger than the whole Roman empire," "rejoicing over there being many enemies," Paul never became weary of his mission. So much is Uchimura's view on Paul's "combative" spirit.⁸⁵ Although we cannot argue on the "validity" of Uchimura's picture of the apostle here, we may not be completely mistaken when we remark here that Uchimura reads his own self-image into the apostle, speaking of himself. In fact, Uchimura

⁸³ Ibid., p. 122.

⁸⁴ Shinko 18:212.

⁸⁵ Chukai 11:118-19.

has never lost his "rough" fighting spirit throughout his life. "Needless to say," maintains Uchimura, "Christianity is a kind of fighting, which cannot be maintained by those with no fighting spirit."⁸⁶

More often Uchimura speaks of the apostle's life-and-death concern for "honor," particularly in connection with his "independence," than of Paul's fighting spirit as "a Jewish samurai [ユダヤ武士]." ⁸⁷ The "locus classicus" for this view of Uchimura is 1 Corinthians 9:15, where Paul says: "It were good for me rather to die, than that any man should make my glorying void." Uchimura interprets this verse as meaning: "I [Paul] want rather to die than to lose [the honor of] independence."⁸⁸ Uchimura, then, hears in this an echo of the Japanese samurai's "it is better to die than to suffer dishonor [恥をかく]." For this determined will of independence, Uchimura feels strongly urged to say, "Thou sublime and noble Paul, I love thee!"⁸⁹ This zealous concern for honor on the part of the apostle is in Uchimura's view "a noble self-ism, "[高貴なる自己主義]" which he wants to find "among the teachers of the churches,"⁹⁰ who in Uchimura's eyes seem to "eat the mean bread provided by missionaries."⁹¹ "Paul who was the man of love," says Uchimura, "was also the man who knew shame and could lay a weight on name [恥を知り、名を重んじる] He possessed the soul of the Japanese samurai."⁹² To Uchimura, Paul was even "ambitious" more in the sense of "I love honor," which Uchimura finds warranted by

⁸⁶ Ibid., 15:126-27.

⁸⁸ Chukai 11:117.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 11:101.

⁹² Ibid., p. 223.

⁸⁷ Shinko 23:184.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 118.

⁹¹ Ibid., 17:166.

the literal meaning of philotimeomai in Romans 15:20.⁹³ Again, we so clearly notice a tendency characteristic of Uchimura, namely, that he finds his own duplicate in whomsoever he admiringly speaks. As a matter of fact, he conceives of Paul's alleged zealous concern for his honor of independence or of whatever as "the sanctified Bushido," and he himself wants to live in this "sanctified Bushido."⁹⁴ Endorsing, as it were, his own words, Uchimura has never experienced the loss of his "aggressive pride and concern for independence characteristic of the samurai [サムライ的・戦闘的誇り・独立心]." ⁹⁵ In this Paul-picture of Uchimura, we can discern--quite apart from the question of "the real Paul"--how vividly the original ethos of Bushido with its constitutive inclination toward self-assertion is kept alive in Uchimura's thought.

Let us now sum up what we have gained in our detailed analysis of Uchimura's appraisal of Bushido. Of fundamental significance, Uchimura conceives Bushido unreservedly as God's precious gift bestowed upon the Japanese. Observing the noble morality and the sublime spirit in Bushido throughout Japan's history, Uchimura unequivocally and unhesitatingly identifies it with God's blessing given to Japan. In view of this unreserved affirmation of Bushido as God's gift, we have tried to learn the fundamental feature of Bushido ethos against its historical background and found self-assertion as its constitutive core. Uchimura, however, idealizing its morality and seishin as noble and sublime, conceives

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Shinko 23:216.

⁹⁵ So characterizes Kiyoko Takeda Uchimura's samurai spirit, quoted from Yuzo Ota, Uchimura Kanzo: Sono Sekai-shugi to Nihon-shugi o Megutte [Kanzo Uchimura: His Universalism and "Japanism"]. (Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1977), p. 290.

that Bushido as God's gift stands in qualitatively homogeneous continuity with Christianity. This continuity is conceived of by Uchimura as a twofold one. On the one hand, the ideals of Bushido should be perfected by the power of Christianity and, on the other hand, the ideals of Christianity are to be realized by the Bushido frame of mind or seishin. In this understanding of the mutual dependency of Bushido and Christianity--although its structure is far from clear--Uchimura presupposes his basic concept of the essence of Christianity as the realization of ideals in the universe, that is, both in microcosm and in macrocosm. In fact, only with this concept of Christianity, has it been possible for Uchimura to find the continuity between Bushido and Christianity, the continuity which has furnished the "theological" basis for his attempt to Christianize Bushido on the one hand and "Japanize" Christianity in terms of Bushido on the other, both of which then ultimately aim toward the realization of ideals in the universe. On the way, however, particularly in view of Uchimura's placing of the decisive emphasis on the moral and spiritual quality of human subject, we have remarked that the realization of ideals, because of its impossibility in empirical reality, virtually ceases to be the meaning in its own right and turns out to be a medium through which the human subject autonomously generates its own meaning in its devotion to ideals. The "orthodoxy" of Christianity is then measured by the moral and spiritual quality of the human subject. Thus, once the human subjective quality is made the constitutive factor of the Christian faith, the consequence of self-justification, or self-assertion, inevitably entails even if not always in patent manners but in forms possibly hidden to man. We have found, then, that it

is this self-assertion of the subject in the refined (and therefore hidden) form that Bushido, and Christianity understood as the world-transformation power converge as mutually dependent and conditional. Uchimura, however, following his concept of Christianity, has perceived God's hands forming Bushido through the centuries of Japan's history, as he says:

Bushido is the finest product of Japan. But Bushido by itself cannot save Japan. Christianity grafted upon Bushido will be the finest product of the world. It will save, not only Japan, but the whole world. Now that Christianity is dying in Europe, and America and its materialism cannot revive it, God is calling upon Japan to contribute its best to His service. There was a meaning in the history of Japan. For twenty centuries God has been perfecting Bushido with this very moment in view. Christianity grafted upon Bushido will yet save the world.⁹⁶

"Japan is God's" is Uchimura's theological axiom, which is postulated by his passionate patriotism. With this formula, Uchimura makes it clear that Japan has been in God's universal plan for the completion and perfection of all things. Reflecting upon the noble traits of the Japanese spirituality Uchimura perceives that God's molding hands have been upon the soul of Japan. Historically seen, the soul of Japan has blossomed in Pure Land Buddhism's undivided faith, "sola fide," and Bushido's noble morality and sublime seishin. Uchimura is fully convinced of the essential continuity between the Japanese spirituality and Christianity, and believes that it is the latter's "task" to perfect the ideals of the former. Firmly holding, on the other hand, that Christianity alone cannot bear fruits without good soil, Uchimura contends that the Japanese spirituality of Pure Land Buddhism and Bushido provides Christianity with the "best, golden" soil for the actualization of the latter's

⁹⁶CW 3:56.

potential for the completion and perfection of the universe. On this concept of the Japanese spirituality molded by God's hands, Uchimura has found it to be Japan's mission to actualize the potential of Christianity for the completion and perfection--"salvation"--of the world.

Uchimura says:

Is not the soul of Japan [大和魂] which blossomed in such [noble] samurai as Yoshiie and Yasutoki and flourished in such great saints as Shinran, Nichiren and Rennyo, productive of great religionists greater than Luther, Wesley and Beecher? Do not God and mankind wait for a great religious reformation [宗教の大革命] from the Japanese? Is not the history of Japan down through twenty centuries God's preparation to entrust to us this great responsibility? Reflecting on this issue . . . , I feel somehow all the universe placed upon my shoulders.⁹⁷

Christianity Anew in the Land of the Rising Sun

Christianity given Birth to By the Japanese

In his endeavor to delineate Japan's raison d'etre, Uchimura throughout the entire life has remained consistent with the grand scheme of meaning, made in his youth, in which his own existence is integrated, namely: "I for Japan; Japan for the World; the World of Christ; And All for God." Conforming to this scheme, Uchimura conceives of his own mission as not confined to Japan but as expanded to the whole of humanity. But, as the grand scheme already indicates, this "universal mission" of Uchimura's is to be carried out through "Japan," that is, in terms of the actualization of the noble and sublime merits of Japan's indigenous spirituality through the positive interaction with Christianity. As we have seen in the previous section, Uchimura is unreservedly convinced of the "sterling merit" of "our forefathers," who were "true . . . to the

⁹⁷ Shinko 8:220-21.

cause of right and good," "brave" in loving "justice above anything else," "feared nothing except ugly sins, and were willing to die for honour's sake."⁹⁸ Nothing is, then, so clear to Uchimura as the mandate that Japan should bring her "true and upright character"⁹⁹ into the service for God who is "marching on" for the completion of the world.

The idea that Japan should serve God with the spiritual "merits" indigenous to her, is intrinsically antagonistic to any form of "uncritical" importation of a Christianity conditioned by the Western civilization. Upon Uchimura's premise of the reciprocity of "Christianity pure and simple"¹⁰⁰ and the indigenous spiritual heritage, an "uncritical" assimilation of the former with many accretions foreign to its "nature," and a wholesale denial of the values of the latter do only violence to both, forfeiting the potentials of both, for Christianity, as has been seen, can bear fruits only through the positive interaction with the indigenous spirituality. More specifically in terms of his launching of Japanese Christianity, Uchimura has two concrete presuppositions. First, he has consistently held that the Christianity which can save Japan must be "a Christianity which is given birth to by the Japanese."¹⁰¹ Second, according to Uchimura the Christianity practiced in Europe and America is not a Christianity in harmony with the pure and original Christianity, which makes it impossible for Japan to accept European-American Christianity as it is. Let us now examine these two presuppositions in order further to investigate his concept of Japanese Christianity.

⁹⁸ CW 5:205.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 1:187.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 206.

¹⁰¹ Shinko 24:183.

The realization of Japanese Christianity has been one of the most urgent themes in Uchimura's thought. To Uchimura Japanese Christianity is a Christianity independent from that of Europe and America. The dependence of the Japanese on foreign countries in any way and particularly in the spiritual matters which are to Uchimura the backbone of the nation's existence, is an intolerable violation of the dignity and honor of the nation. As "the patriot of the extreme left," Uchimura keenly feels "ashamed" that "the Japanese borrow all things from our neighbours," particularly Christianity. "If she must be dependent on foreigners in the matter of Christianity which should be the spirit [精神] of the nation," says Uchimura, "Japan is not an independent nation in its most profound sense."¹⁰² It is therefore Uchimura's holy ambition "to bring Japan to Christ and this by the hands and means of the Japanese themselves without borrowing the hands of foreigners."¹⁰³ On one occasion Uchimura is convinced of being vouchsafed to see with his own eyes part of the realization of this dream of Japanese Christianity:

God is owning Japan as His own; He is calling her to Himself. . . . The sons and daughters of Japan are awakening to their sense of responsibility; and despising the help of missionaries and churches founded by foreigners, are entering the service of the Gospel. The new days of true religious revival are at hand. Japan is becoming a Christian nation, independently, by her own children. Oh, glorious days!¹⁰⁴

¹⁰²Ibid., 15:166.

¹⁰³Ibid., 24:215.

¹⁰⁴CW 3:106-107.

A Christian nation Japan must become, but in Uchimura's earnest desire Japan must become it "by offering herself to God by her own initiative," thus retaining "the honor [名譽] of self-help and self-acting [自助自働]." ¹⁰⁵

This patriotic concern for the nation's dignity and honor is, however, not the only motive behind Uchimura's insistence on the independent Japanese Christianity. It is Uchimura's firm conviction that "the Christianity which is preached by foreigners can never save Japan," that is, it must be "a Christianity preached by the Japanese." In other words, the "origination" of Japanese Christianity is to Uchimura sine qua non for the salvation of Japan. ¹⁰⁶ What does Uchimura mean by Japanese Christianity then? Does he mean a Christianity doctrinally peculiar to Japanese? Or, is Japanese Christianity different from that believed in in Europe and America? To this question Uchimura answers firmly with "No!" "Even if we become independent from the foreign missionaries," he admonishes, "we must not become independent from the fundamental doctrines of Christianity which they represent. . . . Our Christianity must be through and through evangelical," ¹⁰⁷ for "the principle of deliverance of men from the bondage of sins cannot be different, be it in the East or in the West, in the past or in the present." ¹⁰⁸ If, then, Uchimura's Japanese Christianity is not different in terms of the

¹⁰⁵ Shinko 24:196.

¹⁰⁶ "No man was ever saved by other men's faith, and no nation will ever be saved by other nations' religion. Neither American Christianity, nor Anglican faith, be it the best of the kind, will ever save Japan. Only Japanese Christianity will save Japan and [the] Japanese." CW 3:132.

¹⁰⁷ Shinko 19:169.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 17:38.

doctrinal contents, what is the main point of it? "When a Japanese truly and independently believes in Christ," explains Uchimura, "he is a Japanese Christian, and his Christianity is Japanese Christianity."¹⁰⁹ Put differently, it is "Christianity received by Japanese directly from God without any foreign intermediary; no more, no less."¹¹⁰ In fact, what Uchimura stresses with the utmost emphasis through these statements about Japanese Christianity is the crucial and decisive importance of the primary confrontation with and appropriation of the Gospel. The adverbs such as "truly," "independently," "directly" all point in this direction. What is the idea behind this emphasis of Uchimura's? In his view, a Christianity which is little more than a secondary repetition of what one has learned from missionaries as Christianity cannot save Japan.¹¹¹ The Christianity which is learned through theological literature at seminaries while supported by missionaries financially, Uchimura holds, is a superficial, impotent Christianity which cannot save the souls or stand between God and men to carry out the work of reconciliation. In order for the Gospel to be made the true possession of the Japanese, asserts Uchimura, "we must, first of all, receive the Gospel into our souls and make it our own," or to "make ourselves the beds of the sprouts of the Gospel." To be sure, it is fully legitimate to receive the seeds of the Gospel from without, but it must grow upon Japan's own soil, be "watered by her own streams, nurtured in her bosom, and garbed . . . in her own oriental attire."¹¹²

¹⁰⁹CW 4:31.

¹¹¹Shinko 17:53.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 3:132.

¹¹²Iwanami 20:195.

While it is easy to know about Christianity, one has to sacrifice much to obtain the truth of the Gospel truly to one's own possession. "Christianity," he assures, "can be branded upon my soul only by the fire of suffering; the truth of God comes into our innermost part through the opening of wounds made for the sake of the witness of it."¹¹³ If there is "a cheap Christianity [安価なキリスト教]" which can be obtained with no substantial sacrifices, there is "a precious Christianity [高価なキリスト教]," says Uchimura, which costs very much of suffering, agony, tears, resignation, doubt, cry of "eli, eli, lama sabachthani," and so on. This kind of Christianity is truly capable of saving men, while "filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ (Col. 1:24)."¹¹⁴ Thus, Uchimura is firmly convinced that if salvation does not begin with me truly, there is no hope of the salvation of the nation. When he insists that "no nation will ever be saved by other nations" and consequently "only Japanese Christianity will save Japan and the Japanese," Uchimura means that there must originate a Christianity sincerely believed and lived by the Japanese. What we must take note of here is that Uchimura considers the primary confrontation with the Gospel without any "secondary" interpretation of it in between, as the indispensable issue for true Christian faith. In this confrontation, one has to "search deeply, suffer deeply" so that he may be "deeply saved and rejoice deeply" thus becoming truly instrumental for the salvation of the nation.¹¹⁵

What Uchimura, then, means by Japanese Christianity as something necessary for the salvation of Japan, is a Christianity received

¹¹³ Shinko 17:53.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 15:172.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 17:52-53.

seriously by the Japanese as the message of salvation and lived sincerely without any concession to human frailties or to the reality of this world. As we have seen in the above, Uchimura knows himself as genuinely evangelical in terms of what we believe (fides quae) and he is convinced that he is not launching a new "type" of Christianity. His Japanese Christianity in this sense is essentially one with any other "national" Christianity, as far as it is in the main stream of Protestant Christianity. But even in view of his description of how one should believe and live in faith, it does not seem to be quite different either from any "national" Christianity seriously received and sincerely lived. In fact, any nation is called by God to receive His message of salvation and live in it, so that His grace of salvation may be made available for individual members of the nation. No wonder, then, that Uchimura says: "In this sense [that is, a true "national" Christianity is the fruit of immediate reception of Christianity from God], there is German Christianity, English Christianity, Scotch Christianity, American Christianity, etc." Is not Uchimura's concept of Japanese Christianity quite similar to Puritanism?¹¹⁶ As a matter of fact, a Christianity seriously received and sincerely lived is "universally" inspiring and challenging.

¹¹⁶ A prominent scholar in history of thought, Saburo Ienaga, analyzes Uchimura's concept of Bushido, which makes up one of the bases for his Japanese Christianity, in the following way: "What Uchimura conceived of as 'Bushido' is nothing more than a fictive image of Puritanism --which he learned from the West--painted by projecting it into Japan. Although he, in his own view, gave an appearance that he preserved the traditional 'Bushido,' yet, objectively, did he only attempt to transplant a Western morality of rigoristic kind into Japan where there had never existed something like that before." Saburo Ienaga, Kindai Seishin to Sono Genkai [The Modern spirit and Its Limits] (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1950), p. 149, here quoted from Yuzo Ota, pp. 67-68.

It is not difficult to see that Japanese Christianity as Uchimura conceives of it can be highly instrumental for bringing another nation to Christ, and conversely a Christianity of another nation so conceived of can be quite "effective" for mediating Christianity to the Japanese. Uchimura who himself was under the influence of sincere and outstanding American Christians is an excellent illustration for this "universal" interaction. As far as his foundation of the necessity of Japanese Christianity is concerned, he does not then seem to contend any more than the indispensibility of sincere and undivided discipleship for the effectuation of the impact of the Gospel in Japan. In reality, however, Uchimura does not conceive of Japanese Christianity "merely" as a provincial issue only relevant in Japan. As we have seen in the previous section, the synthesis of Christianity and Japanese spirituality has something unique which will greatly contribute to the enhancement of the universal salvation; and this, in Uchimura's view, against the inadequate representation of Christianity in Europe and America. Prior to the investigation of Uchimura's concept of Japanese Christianity in a more detailed manner, we will examine what his "evaluation" of the form of Christianity practiced in Europe and America is.

Critique of Christianity of the West

One of the major questions which has constantly occupied Uchimura's mind throughout his life is whether or not Christianity practiced in Europe and America today and brought to Japan by the missionaries from the West is truly the original Christianity preached by Jesus Himself and transmitted by His disciples. Early in his formative years Uchimura has come to the recognition of the necessity to distinguish

between "Christianity pure and simple" and "Americanianity and Anglican-ianity,"¹¹⁷ perhaps including "Europeanianity," which is nearly identified with Christianity itself. This recognition ipso facto implies a fundamental criticism of Christianity practiced in the West. "Christianity [as found in the West] is," holds Uchimura, "the name for the paganized or Westernized form of Messianism preached by Jesus and his disciples," and "is not exactly the true Messianism, but an European or an American version of it, worth for what it is and for no more."¹¹⁸ In Uchimura's view, "churches as we find them in Europe and America are Christian doctrine institutionalized," while "institutions are Roman, as doctrines are Greek," but true and original Christianity is "essentially faith, and faith is Hebrew." By contrasting "Greek doctrines" and "Roman institutionalization" with "Hebrew faith," Uchimura clearly indicates the alienatedness of Christianity in Europe and America and his own antagonism to doctrines and institutionalization as contrary to the nature of faith. As a matter of fact, Uchimura fully shares with Edwin Hatch in what the latter spoke of Greek influence upon Christianity, namely that within a century after Christianity found its place in the Western world, it was paganized; the Christianity explicated by Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Irenaeus, Tertullian bears marks totally different from the Christianity of the Apostles, showing more affinity with the thoughts of Greek philophers than with Hebrew prophets and being thus made "the religion of head" rather than that of "heart." The difference can be most clearly seen between Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and the Nicene Creed, affirms Uchimura. "The former is of faith, while the latter is

¹¹⁷ CW 1:204.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 3:252.

theoretical; . . . the former is the words which originate in the intuition of knowing God, while the latter is the expression of the thought which originates in the reflection about God."¹¹⁹

A few words are necessary for the explication of Uchimura's concept of faith in this connection. From his own utterances in the above, it will be readily seen that Uchimura conceives of "faith" as immediate communion with God ("the religion of heart," or "the intuition of knowing God"). "Faith in the true Christian faith," says Uchimura, "is trusting, to be one with God, by dying to self, and living in Him." By saying this, Uchimura is aware that his position may be called "mysticism," while admitting that what he is saying of faith is in reality "undefinable." "But," he continues, "Faith -- 'true Christianity' as put in the Japanese version -- is too deep to be adequately uttered, too mysterious to be formed into a creed, and too sacred to be made a show even from the pulpit."¹²⁰ In view of this characterization of faith, it should be seriously questioned whether Uchimura in his lifting-up of Christianity above man's sprachlichkeit is really congenial with the Gospel which is essentially anchored in the historical events of the cross and resurrection of Christ and is thus bound, as the conceptually definite truth, with human language. But we must leave this question here. What we have still to take note of is Uchimura's insistence on the individual's

¹¹⁹ Shinko 15:28-38, in which Uchimura offers to the reader of Seisho-no-Kenkyu his summary of: Edwin Hatch, The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church, while identifying himself fully with the author's viewpoint.

¹²⁰ CW 3:198.

immediate encounter and communion with God. Although it is not easy to see how Uchimura logically reconciles his "firm clinging to the essentials of the Gospel,"¹²¹ the Apostles' Creed for instance,¹²² with his concept of faith in the manner of "mysticism," his concern in the both cases is clear, namely that the experience of the communion with God must be primary and immediate, not secondarily mediated.

As he find Christianity practiced in the West as "Christian doctrine institutionalized" from its very beginning, Uchimura on one occasion traces back to St. Augustine this form of "alienation" of Christianity, or "the turbidity of theological thought [神學思想混濁]," to use Uchimura's own term. According to his view, it is St. Augustine who introduced the doctrine of original sin and of redemption and who in so doing de facto separated man from God "absolutely [絶对的]," thus necessitating setting up Christ as the mediator for the reconciliation of God and man with the consequence that one mediator upon another had to be instituted for the mediation between Christ and man. This concept of God-man relationship, Uchimura holds, is analogous to the Caesar-subject relationship in the Roman world and therefore alien to the true relationship of God and man. "Man is the son of God, not His subject." Accordingly, there must be no mediator between God and man, be it "a pope," "a bishop," or "a church." "Man should go directly to the knee of God, saying Abba Father," says Uchimura. Thus, in Uchimura's view,

¹²¹Shinko 18:103.

¹²²"My faith again begins to totter; I need to confess my faith, which is nothing but the so-called Apostles' Creed." *Ibid.*, 7:143.

the blame for having made the relationship of God and man mediate and indirect should be brought to the door of St. Augustine.¹²³

Thus, according to Uchimura, "pure faith" originating in "the fresh air of Palestine" was soon alienated in the West through its civilization and culture. What, we will now ask, did the Reformation do in this regard according to Uchimura? For the further examination of his viewpoint, the question will serve as a heuristic aid: Granted that Christianity was alienated as he sees, what is the significance of the Reformation with reference to this alienation of Christianity according to Uchimura? "Reformation," says Uchimura, "always returns to the origin [原 始], and the Reformation of Luther was such a return."¹²⁴ The Reformation launched by Luther was "a great movement caused by the emergence of a great truth of the bible [in history]," a truth which is "truly plain and simple, namely the simple truth that 'a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law' (Romans 3:28)." "In other words . . . ," continues Uchimura, "it is the restoration of the Pauline faith."¹²⁵ Through Luther's personal struggle for "the peace of his heart" for several years, he came to know "the simple, yet profound mystery of salvation by faith."¹²⁶ In Uchimura's view, man is foolish, trying every other means to come to God but by believing in Him. Man makes "churches," "theologies," "regulations," "doctrines," and "rituals," but he will not easily enter the bosom of God immediately by faith, looking for unnecessary detours. God Himself, however, has

¹²³ Ibid., 23:289.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 6:240.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 8:286.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 214.

provided for us "the straight way [直道]" to Him, which Luther discovered for himself and his contemporaries, thus making totally useless "the great church artificially made by men" with its "popes," "bishops," "theologies," and "creeds." "Since God is not a machine, a law or complicated philosophical system but Love," says Uchimura, "He is to be believed in; believing in Him [with simple faith], we understand Him."¹²⁷ Thus, "Luther's Reformation" is, as Uchimura constantly emphasizes, the restoration of "simple, plain" faith as "the straight way" to God.

Interpreting the significance of the Reformation in this way, Uchimura holds that faith in its original simpleness and immediateness was restored in the West by the Reformation. He acknowledges this fully. But, on the other hand, he time and again cries for the necessity of "Re-Reformation." In Uchimura's view, "the Reformation of Luther and Calvin ended as a half Reformation," because "they could not proclaim the Gospel of non-church [教会なしの福音]."¹²⁸ "Protestantism institutionalized," holds Uchimura, "was a return back to the discarded Roman Catholicism."¹²⁹ What Uchimura here points out can be easily seen against the background of what we have just seen, namely, his emphasis on the simpleness and immediateness of faith. In fact, he finds the contention of Protestantism lying in the conviction that "there is a spirit in man," which in his concept makes it possible for every individual to come to God immediately.¹³⁰ Consequently, the reintroduction of institutional churches is tantamount to making the faith mediate and complicated, thus realienating it.

¹²⁷ Ibid., pp. 214-15.

¹²⁹ CW 3:230.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 18:124.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 152.

According to Uchimura, Luther himself is accountable for this realienation in forms of both the institutionalization and the dogmatization of faith. "Wishing to overthrow the mighty power of the Roman Catholic Church," says Uchimura, "Luther relied on two powers; one is the political power, and the other is the Bible," both of which came to be "disasterous to himself and his followers." Because of his dependence upon the former, "Lutheranism [ルーテル教] became the state religion of Germany, Sweden, Norway and Denmark, the doctrine of which came to be legislated by these governments and the pastors of which came to be appointed by these governments, thus becoming nothing different from the old Roman Catholicism as far as the this-worldliness of this religion is concerned."¹³¹ It is therefore, holds Uchimura, not without reason that Kant and Kierkegaard attacked the Lutheran church in their respective countries. "Allowing the royalty and nobility to have a hand in the business of religion, Luther has left a great evil [大いなる悪毒] difficult even today after four centuries to wipe out." No less harmful in Uchimura's eyes "the consequences of Luther's erroneous use of the Bible." True, maintains Uchimura, the Bible is "eternally valuable," for it teaches man about "God's only way of justifying man." But the Bible is also an imperfect book written by imperfect men, bearing all the marks of imperfection; human language, the process of copying the Biblical manuscripts, the transmission from age to age, and even the interpretation of the texts of the Bible are all but imperfect. Luther however, continues Uchimura, regarded the Bible as inerrant and used it as a "weapon," that is, he used "the inerrant Bible" against "the

¹³¹ Shinko 6:245.

inerrant Church." In doing this, Luther came to identify virtually the Bible with the Absolute Truth, that is, God Himself. "Regarding the Bible as the Absolute Truth," says Uchimura, "one cannot but fall into 'Bibliolatry,' a kind of idolatry. And with Luther this idolatry, that is, Bibliolatry began. "The horrible evil" of bibliolatry is to be seen in "furious denominational wars" within Protestantism, each like Luther claiming the authority of the inerrant Bible for his contention that "my church is the true church of Christ standing on the right interpretation of the Bible." Out of this denominational war within Protestantism originated the spirit of "suspicion, jealousy and hatred." Since the Reformers of the sixteenth century fell into bibliolatry, that is, served "the letter of the Bible," which as "letter" kills men (2 Corinthians 3:6), Uchimura holds that this spirit is inevitable. He observes then that "this detestable spirit" has been inherited by Protestantism today from Calvin and Luther. Knowing this harmful trait of Protestantism, Uchimura admonishes that "we should return beyond Luther and Calvin back to Paul and John, yes, directly to Christ Himself," for Christ, unlike Luther, did not depend on political powers for His "reformation," but, being abandoned by the political power and crucified, He saved mankind; with regard to the Bible, Christ valued it high, but was not captured by its letter, thus interpreting the Bible freely with the deep understanding of "the spirit of the Law and the Prophets," and never reproaching any man for the creed. It is therefore "insufficient for us to learn from Luther; rather, we must learn from Christ," says Uchimura.¹³²

¹³²Ibid., 245-52.

Thus, through re-institutionalization and re-dogmatization, the simple, original faith was, in Uchimura's observation, again externalized by the Reformers themselves. Again, faith as the immediate communion with God Himself came to be overshadowed by the concern for external forms such as doctrines and institutions, losing in this way its nature as "a perennial spring of strength."¹³³ Due to this externalization, Christianity in the West suffers from futile activism. "Faith in the West," criticizes Uchimura, "especially in the Anglo-Saxon part of it, is mostly speaking, preaching, putting into print, propoganda," "doing" called "social service," "keeping oneself always busy."¹³⁴ This externalization of faith in the Western Christianity has found its expression in the Westerners' ceaseless attempts to dogmatize and institutionalize Christianity. "Europe, including America, trained in the schools of Greece and Rome," says Uchimura, "cannot rest satisfied with a formless Christianity. A thing [in the West] must be defined and institutionalized in order that it may be comprehended and be secured against dissolution."¹³⁵ In Uchimura's eyes, "pure Christianity" is not in England, nor in Germany, nor in America; to his knowledge Christianity practiced today in the West is mostly "ritualistic, routine, literalistic," "critical, destructive [and] coldly rationalistic."¹³⁶ Christianity as faith vividly alive in the living communion with God is dying in the West.

¹³³ CW 3:198.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 4:80.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Shinko 8:220.

Observing the state of Christianity in the West in this way, Uchimura is, as we have touched upon in the above, fully convinced of the urgent necessity of "Re-Reformation." Important for us, then, to take note of in connection with this conviction of Uchimura's is his "holy ambition" that the honorable task of carrying out a new Reformation is given to Japan, or more specifically to Japanese Christianity (most probably in his mind) with himself as Lutherus redivivus, as it were. Relatively early in his life, Uchimura came to wonder privately in his mind whether "Japan which has been called this last hour does not stand in a special position to provide the world with the purest possible Christianity,"¹³⁷ Japan which has so undeniably shown its possession of a noble and sublime spirit in Bushido and of a pure and deep faith in Pure Land Buddhism.

Thus, according to Uchimura, pure faith or true Christianity in the West has been from the very beginning alienated by the Occidentals' inclination to externalize the pure, spiritual faith. True faith has been taken captive in the institutional churches, dogmas and theologies. Uchimura regards it most urgent in view of the crisis of the world that true faith must be restored to original purity. Now in the following, we will consider how Uchimura conceives of the positive instrumentality of Japanese spirituality for the restoration of pure faith or true Christianity, and will then examine his idea of "Non-Church Christianity" or, to use Uchimura's own words, "Christianity of no-church principle," which is the "formless form of Christianity"¹³⁸ given birth to by Japanese spirituality.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ CW 4:81.

In Uchimura's concept, the nature of Christianity is spiritual and therefore formless. "Christianity of the Bible . . .," he maintains, "is essentially spiritual, and only very little formal." "Its God is spirit and truth, and they that worship Him are commanded to worship in spirit and truth,--ie., without forms, or with minimum of forms." Calling the Pauline word of the knowing of God through the Spirit for support (1 Cor. 2:10-12), he holds that "God [is to be] known through the spirit by the spirit, without forms, without rites, without dogmas, without instituted churches." "Here," assures Uchimura, "spirit, spirit, spirit, none of forms." Since Christianity is essentially spiritual, one must have in possession a special spiritual quality to grasp the true nature of Christianity. As a matter of fact, Uchimura maintains that Orientals, differing from "Europeans and Americans" who in his view cannot comprehend spirit apart from external forms, have "an ability to grasp spirit as spirit."¹³⁹ In other words, "Orientals can comprehend faith as such and in this respect are akin to Hebrew prophets and Christian apostles."¹⁴⁰

What captures our attention in his speaking of "an ability to grasp spirit as spirit," is his assertion that Orientals are by nature better equipped to grasp the true nature of Christianity as faith which in his concept requires no form. In fact, this "akinness" to the prophets and apostles is more clearly articulated when Uchimura speaks of the Japanese in this regard, namely that "we [Japanese] are Asians who possesses in common with Christ the same continent of birth and share with Christ the same [spiritual] nature [天性]." Hence, he can say

¹³⁹ Ibid., pp. 78-82.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 3:110.

that "the Japanese are [well] qualified to grasp Christ better and deeper than Europeans, particularly Anglo-Saxons." Uchimura, then, observes further that "there are many points of Christianity which Occidentals do not understand, and it is the mission of Japanese to explicate them." More characteristically, he believes that "Christianity is to be brought to the sphere of perfection by the Japanese."¹⁴¹ Upon this concept of the nature of Christianity as formless, spiritual faith and the observation of Japanese as naturally akin to Hebrew spirit, Uchimura is thus convinced that the restoration of original, pure faith is the task given particularly to the Japanese.

Now, for Uchimura, the restoration of true faith is identical with the carrying-out of "Re-Reformation," and this is, as we have seen, nothing but the realization of the ideal of "Non-Church Christianity." With this result of our consideration of Uchimura's concept of the "essence" of Christianity, we will in the following examine his idea of "Non-Church Christianity" in detail. In doing this examination, we will first take up Uchimura's criticism or repudiation of the institutional churches as the detailed background for "Non-Church Christianity," the positive statement of which we will then take up to consideration thereafter.

In his cry for the restoration of original Christianity or "Re-Reformation," Uchimura time and again underscores strongly the immediate, direct life-union with God as the essential. As we have seen, the meaning of pure faith in his thought is nothing but this direct communion with God. In his eyes, such "external" things as institutional

¹⁴¹Shinko 24:220-21.

churches, dogmas, rituals, are mostly detracting from "the one thing needful" and even positively detrimental for the emergence of true, potent faith. He repudiates, therefore, the "external" things and claims the abolishment of them. In a sense, it is highly suggestive that his life-long endeavor for the restoration of pure faith has been carried out under the name of "Non-Church Christianity," suggestive because this peculiar term "Non-Church" points out the institutional church as the main target of his criticism or "attack." As a matter of fact, rituals, dogmas, creeds, theologies, and other "externals" are nothing but the different aspects of the institutional churches. Thus seen, it is quite understandable that Uchimura finds in the institutional churches the root of all the evils concerning the alienation of pure faith, that is, the direct life-fellowship with God. For this reason, the institutional church becomes for Uchimura the main problem for Christian faith.

Since the institutional church became one of the main problems in his theology, Uchimura understandably considers the origin of the church. In view of the scarcity of the verba ipsissima about the church in the Gospels, Uchimura maintains it is very difficult to find the trace of the origin of the church in the thought of Christ Himself. Granted that the locus classicus for the church as instituted by Christ Himself, namely, Matthew 16:18, is authentic, one should still, maintains Uchimura, pay attention to the term oikodomeso which is used there, for in Uchimura's view this term should not be interpreted as "to institute," but rather as "to build a house," more properly "a home." To wit, what Christ intended to build was not an institutional church

similar to a government as Uchimura sees it is with "popes, bishops, regulations and creeds," but a brotherhood similar to a home. This brotherly fellowship is "a spiritual congregation uniquely characteristic of Christ [キリスト獨特の聖的会衆]," which is constituted by those who come to "the faith of love [愛の信仰]," acknowledging, of their own initiative, Jesus as the Christ. "To build an ecclesia similar to a home in which warmth prevails, that is the purpose of Christ," says Uchimura.¹⁴²

This free, spontaneous ecclesia of Christ, however, soon was turned into institutional churches by His disciples. According to Uchimura, the disciples were unmindful of the example of the Master who did not build any institutional church, and spoke too much of churches, thus inviting rapid fall and corruption. "When the ecclesia which is to be spiritual is externalized as a church," sighs Uchimura, "this tragic consequence is inevitable." In his view, it was actually Paul the apostle who was particularly accountable for this process of making the free, spontaneous ecclesia into institutional churches. "He [Paul] is the very man who left the bad example [備] of the churches today; by Paul the apostle, the twins of church and theology came into being." Because of this unmindfulness of the disciples' concerning the clear teaching of the Master (Matthew 23:8-9), "the Church's tragic history down through nineteen centuries was initiated," judges Uchimura.¹⁴³ On this point he explains:

¹⁴²Ibid., 18:15-16.

¹⁴³Ibid., pp. 18-19.

The history of the whole Church has been an un-Christian history. The evil things of the churches began already in the days of the Apostles. When the believers began to seek the evidence of their belonging to Christ in other things than faith made active by love, the so-called churches arose. When they made doctrines out of the Gospel, ritualized it, codified it, and institutionalized it, the so-called churches which we see in Europe and America today came to exist.¹⁴⁴

It is, therefore, of decisive importance to "go away from the Apostles in this regard and return to the spirit of Christ."¹⁴⁵

When Uchimura comes to speak of Protestant churches in this matter, his criticism is considerably intensified. "I hate Protestant churches," says Uchimura, "because they are not Protestant enough." In his view, the Reformation of the sixteenth century is only "a half-reformation." What does Uchimura mean by this? As we have seen, Uchimura regards as the most essential the immediate, direct communion with God, namely, "faith," while he finds in Job 32:8 and John 4:24 the Biblical support for this viewpoint. If by the Reformation "the straight way" to God is truly rediscovered and made available, there is no need indeed of any intermediary which only attenuates the immediate life-fellowship with God. "Once Luther advocates the freedom of faith," declares Uchimura, "the earthly [institutional] churches become discarded things,"¹⁴⁶ for Protestantism asserts, as "sanctified individualism," to connect the individual directly with God. The logical consequence of Protestantism, "faith alone," thus understood, must be a "formless Christianity," that is, a "churchless Christianity." Understanding the principle of "faith alone" of Protestantism in this way,

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 42.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., 8:222-23.

it is only logical for Uchimura to make the accusation that "Protestant churches are self-contradiction," for, as we have seen, "Protestantism is an assertion of spirit in man," which places him in a position of the direct communion with God, and therefore "as such it ought to have no visible organized churches to express itself."¹⁴⁷ The very existence of Protestant churches is nothing but the sheer proof of self-contradiction. In this regard, both Luther and Calvin, says Uchimura, committed a serious fault by building their own churches, despite their protesting against the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁴⁸

Thus, Uchimura consistently protests against the churches instituted either "by the Apostles" or "by the Reformers." He means that faith as a living reality must be left alone in its direct connection with God, while no heteronomous regulations, be it by churches, dogmas or rituals, are allowed to impinge upon its freedom, for it cannot be institutionalized without being choked to death. Speaking of "spirit and institution," Uchimura clearly articulates his viewpoint:

¹⁴⁷CW 3:152.

¹⁴⁸Shinko 18:124. Concerning Uchimura's criticism of Luther's Reformation as "a half-reformation," it is to be noted here that it proves a striking parallel with the similar criticism of such radical reformers as Karlstadt and Müntzer in their common emphasis on the immediacy of man's communion with God, on the rejection of the historical church, and on theocratic aspiration. In general, Uchimura is not quite foreign to a theological outlook of the spiritualistic type of Christianity. "Uchimura's Non-churchism is, in this sense [that is, 'he had, differing from Luther, a strong sectarian spirit'], going along the line of the radical side-stream rather than that of the main stream of the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Uchimura, however, believed it [Non-churchism] as superceding the Reformation," says Akio Doi, Uchimura Kanzo [On Kanzo Uchimura], (Tokyo: Nihon Kirisuto Kyodan Shuppankyoku, 1962), p. 216.

Spirit [精神] dies, when it becomes institutionalized. This is the law of history. The spirit of Moses died when it became Judaism; the spirit of Christ died when it became the church; the spirit of Luther died when it became the Lutheran church; the spirit of Wesley died when it became the Methodist church, and so on. . . . Institution is the corpse of the spirit. Those who look upon Christ as the head of the church are truly those who crucified Him.¹⁴⁹

In Uchimura's thought, "institution" and faith are mutually exclusive and irreconcilable, that is, the visible, organized church and living, true faith cannot stand side by side.

As a whole, it is characteristic of Uchimura that he radically separates the original reality of the Gospel and its empirical concretization in history, "the Gospel of Christ" from "Christianity" formed concretely in history, from "the churches" and "theology," when he holds that the Gospel which was as transparent as crystal was changed into a religion called Christianity, into churches when it was institutionalized, and into theology when it was made the object of scholarship. To Uchimura, "the churches and theology" are intricate and troublesome, and he means this is due to the fact that "the Gospel of Christ" and "the churches and theology" are falsely amalgamated although they in reality are mutually unharmonizable. Once the Gospel is restored to its proper simplicity," he maintains, "there will disappear the need of the churches and theology."¹⁵⁰

From the presentation of Uchimura's criticism of the institutional churches, we have gained the insight that he rejects the institutional churches for the sake of faith as man's immediate life-
 communion with God, and "dogma, doctrine and theology" for the sake of

¹⁴⁹ Shinko 8:264.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 252.

the simplicity of the Gospel. In view of this sharp separation between the Gospel and faith on the one hand and the "external" things on the other, we are urged to ask a question before we proceed with the examination of his positive statement of "Non-Church Christianity," namely: what is the deeper theological reason which explains the inner motivation of Uchimura's passionate insistence upon the simplicity of the Gospel and the immediateness of faith? For, to us it seems rather that both the institutional churches, and "dogma, doctrine and theology" as the Gospel explicated in the positive sense, came into being necessitated by the risen Christ Himself to preach to the world the Gospel as the message of man's salvation with its conceptually definite contents. Historically seen, we should ask ourselves, is it not nearer to the fact to say that "the institutional churches" and the huge amount of theological endeavor invested upon the doctrinal clarification of the Gospel have been essentially indispensable for the continuing proclamation of the Gospel as well as the defence of it against the distortion of its salvific content, than to say that they have been detrimental and perverting to the Gospel, although admittedly they in history time and again have proved to be against their raison d'être particularly seen from the viewpoint of ecclesia gloriae instead of ecclesia crucis? Further, is the real alienation of the Gospel not caused rather by man's incurable self-assertion, whether overt or covert, which is so often inclined to distort the message of the crucified Christ into a philosophical, moralistic, or religious principle of self-redemption, than it is caused by the visible, institutional churches or other "external" things? What is, then, the reason for

Uchimura's position concerning the relationship of the Gospel and the "external" things?

To the answer of this question, we must recall what we have seen in the previous chapters about his concept of the Gospel, namely the Gospel as the message of man's moralistically understood sanctification. "The Gospel is simple and clear," says Uchimura, "the most part of which is things to be done by the orders [of the Lord]."¹⁵¹ This short statement is, in fact, a pin-pointed characterization of one of the constitutive aspects of Uchimura's understanding of the Gospel. Actually, on one occasion, Uchimura criticizes those who give the priority to "doctrine" while paying little attention to "the [moral] teaching [教訓]" of the Scriptures. "They do not endeavor to become like Christ," complains Uchimura, "but only want the others to believe about Him as they believe." According to him, the moral teachings are "the clear truth of God," "eternally unchangeable" and therefore the "basic," "main," and "primary" element of the Gospel, while "the doctrines" are "man's interpretation attached to the truth of God" "changeable with the flux of time," and therefore only the "derivative," "subordinate," and "secondary" aspect of it.¹⁵²

In Uchimura's view, it is quite inadequate to "convey the Gospel to the others by making the doctrines the primary element of faith," for this way of conveying the Gospel causes constant "disputes, fraction-making, envies," thus rendering it impossible for the others to "be benefited by the rich Gospel."

¹⁵¹Chukai 15:128.

¹⁵²Shinko 15:88.

When Uchimura understands, thus, the issue of the Gospel in terms of morality as the primary matter, it can be readily seen why Uchimura should repudiate the "complicated" doctrines, for the doctrines are all the fruits of the theological endeavors made through the centuries to explicate and defend the truth of the Gospel as the message of salvation from "sin, death and devil" in the need of its proclamation as well as in the face of heresies. As long as soteriological concern in the sense of the Reformation theology, "forgiveness of sin," is not looked upon as the primary issue of the Gospel, and man's salvation is conceived of in moralistic terms, the doctrines can be very well dispensed with, or totally put aside, for the sake of moral teachings. In our view, the complicatedness of the doctrines is, thus, due to the decisive question of how we can obtain "forgiveness of sin," the salvation, or how we can find a merciful God, to use the question Luther asked for himself. Luther's struggle for the defence of the Gospel, "forgiveness of sin," as sheer gift of God against synergistic moralism will illustrate this point.¹⁵³

Starting with this concept of the Gospel, Uchimura understands the nature of the church, or "ecclesia" as he prefers to use the term, accordingly. He holds that "the church of Christ" is the gathering of

¹⁵³Luther's doctrinal concern is exclusively for the sake of the purity of the Gospel. When he insisted on est in the discussion of the bodily presence of Christ in the element with Zwingli, which let him draw on the concept of communicatio idiomatum as a conceptual aid, or when he asserted the bondage of will which perennially causes difficulty for intellectual comprehension, Luther endeavored to make the Gospel speak against its rationalization and moralization, even if it seemed to those who were not concerned with the question of the truth of the Gospel, as mere speculation.

His disciples, who, "making His heart their own, wish to follow His footsteps, or to put it simply, those who make the Sermon on the Mount the rule of their daily life."¹⁵⁴ It is quite characteristic of Uchimura that his concept of "ecclesia" is clearly moralistic. On one occasion Uchimura declares that "my Christianity is not a religion." "The teaching of Jesus was by no means a religion . . . ," he continues, "it was [rather] the teaching of man's becoming perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect."¹⁵⁵ The true church of Christ is consequently, in his view, the gathering of those who will sincerely follow this way of perfection moralistically understood, that is, the church is the congregation of those in whom the high standard of morality is made realized. In Uchimura's own words, "the church is the gathering of the children of God in which unselfishness, impartiality, love and sympathy are condensed." But this kind of church can only come into being by the spontaneous coming-together of "true believers" who have really got in touch with God and obtained the Truth immediately from God, and they "naturally make their church."¹⁵⁶ Uchimura holds, thus, that "true believers" who sincerely wish to do "His holy will"¹⁵⁷ must be first there, and then the church comes into being, not vice versa. The church thus originated is the "representative" of Christ here on earth, which follows the teaching and example of Christ.

What we must take note of in Uchimura's ecclesiology is the fact that he regards the moral ideals of Christ actualized in "true believers" as the sine qua non for the existence of "the church of Christ." In

¹⁵⁴ Shinko 18:38.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 1:32.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 128.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 18:20.

other words, to him the constitutive factor of the church is the moral quality of "true believers." This view of Uchimura's makes an obvious contrast to the definition of the church in Article VII of Augsburg Confession, where it is stated: "The church is the assembly of saints in which the Gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly." In this definition, the esse of the church consists in the word of sin's forgiveness preached acoustically and administered visibly, that is, in the mediation to the sinner of what God in Christ has done and is doing here and now. The church, "the assembly of saints," is the visible, concrete place in which the sinner can obtain the promise of mercy and love to consolation and strengthening. The ecclesiological difference between Uchimura and Augsburg Confession is again due to the difference of soteriology between them. For the former the problem of sin is passé and, therefore, essentially non-existent, enabling man to march on in the way of sanctification, while for the latter man still remains as a sinner, whose sanctification must be constantly "justified" by the word of sin's forgiveness, for it understands implicitly that there is no ontic sanctification of man which is "holy" in itself, but only forensic sanctification, as it were, in which a sinner lives a "holy" life by virtue of God's declaration of sin's forgiveness for the sake of Christ. In Uchimura's ecclesiology, we clearly see the consequence of his soteriology. It is of essential importance for us to note that in his soteriological horizon there is no clear insight of the cardinal feature of Christian existence here and now, namely, simul justus et peccator. Rather, Uchimura consistently conceives of man's salvation in terms of morality, and the Gospel accordingly as the power

to make man morally perfect. It is, then, against the background of this soteriological concept that we should understand his moralistic ecclesiology. No wonder, then, that he, observing the actual moral state of the churches, holds that "there is no misnomer in the world so great as the Christian church, for it is [in reality] not the church of Christ at all."¹⁵⁸

"Non-Church Christianity" as the Restoration
of Original Christianity

Having thus finished our investigation of Uchimura's critique of Christianity practiced in the West, we are now ready to proceed with the positive statement of Uchimura on his "Non-Church Christianity." As we have seen, he is almost relentless in his critique of the institutional churches with their dogma, theology, rituals and so on, but he himself wants to be "positive." "Refutation of evil is important," he says, "but more important still is the affirmation and establishment of good."¹⁵⁹ This should hold true also with "the problem of the churches." If we, then, should express in a few words what Uchimura wants to affirm in his advocacy of "Non-Church Christianity" against the empirical, institutional churches, it would be the purity and ideality of the original Christianity as he understands it. In view of his painful discovery that the whole history of the Christian churches, which in his conviction should have been the worthy representative of Christ here on earth,¹⁶⁰ is nothing but the record of their betrayal of the purity and ideality of the original Christianity, Uchimura comes to embrace the

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 40.

¹⁵⁹ CW 4:33.

¹⁶⁰ Shinko 18:40.

idea of Christianity without churches and wants to restore the original feature of Christianity as a whole; the Gospel of God's love and man's pure, spontaneous faith in Him, the holy commandments of God and man's unconditional obedience toward them, sincere discipleship and genuine fellowship of love among true believers, God's righteous rule in the world and man's unwavering assurance and hope on the perfection of all. It is this ideality of Christianity Uchimura wants passionately to affirm and to work for its maximal realization.

As already touched upon in the above, Uchimura calls this endeavor the carrying-out of "Re-Reformation." In so doing, he conceives of the "Re-Reformation" in a twofold way; on the one hand as going back to "Jesus Himself," ad fontes, as it were, and on the other hand as the completion of the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

In religious matters, holds Uchimura, reformation is "going back to the origin."¹⁶¹ It means, then, that Uchimura tries to find the prototype of Christianity in Christ Himself. Before the emergence of the institutional churches, Christ was literally all and alone for the believers. In his attempts to restore the original Christianity, Uchimura desires to actualize radically this idea of "Christ alone." As we have already stated in the above, he separates "Christ" from every other thing in keeping with his way of seeing things in terms of a sharp, exclusive either-or. "Not a principle, but character; not doctrines, but life; not Christianity, but Christ;" he puts in antithesis, "however high a principle may be or however deep doctrines may be, they are after all formulae and the yoke. Going directly to the living Christ, we

¹⁶¹Ibid., 8:276.

shall receive His life and enter the sphere of freedom."¹⁶² Actually, Uchimura is consistent in his conviction that "neither the Church nor the Bible can make us free, but the Son can."¹⁶³

For Uchimura, it goes, then, without saying that Christ and the churches as he sees them are by no means identical; rather, because of the churches' "unchristian character" (as he might put it), Christ is removed far away from them. As far as he can see, "Christ is still taken captive in the churches," that is, "the churches, imagining to have monopoly on Christ within themselves, have been preventing Christ from being received by all the men as their Savior." It is, therefore, vital to remove the serious obstacles called churches in order that "the light of Christ" for salvation may shine again unhindered for the benefit of all humanity. Thus, the rationale for the endeavor to realize "churchless Christianity" is, positively speaking, to show that no churches are needed at all for man to obtain Christ and salvation; rather, especially in view of the "unchristian character" of the churches, it is truly and essentially adequate to receive Him into one's heart directly. "It is the churches," says Uchimura, "that shut off the light of Christ, but, moving away from the churches and looking up to Christ [directly], man is saved directly by Christ without the intermediary of the churches."¹⁶⁴ As a matter of fact, becoming a disciple of Christ in this way, the churches turn out to be totally superfluous, holds Uchimura, and "if

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 235.

¹⁶³ CW 3:232.

¹⁶⁴ Shinko 18:94.

there should be still a church, it is Christ Himself as my church."¹⁶⁵ Dissatisfactions are many in this world, he maintains, not the least in the churches, "but the moment we look up to Christ we enter into a state where cups of joy run over," which is nothing but "true Christianity."¹⁶⁶ Thus, the advocacy of "Non-Church Christianity" is the determined affirmation of the ideal of "Christ alone."

To understand properly what Uchimura implies by this sharp separation of Christ from the visible churches, it is essential to note that when he speaks of Christ liberated from the yoke of the churches, he in reality thinks of Christ the example of justice and morality. Speaking of P. B. Shelley as one of the many who, dissatisfied with the churches, discarded Christianity and became atheists, Uchimura advocates that he was in truth not an atheist, by saying: "Although he publicly declared that he was an atheist, no one among his contemporaries in England at that time loved justice so much and no one was so faithful toward morality [人道] as he. What he made his ideals are completely identical with those of Christ." Uchimura continues to say that Christ, seeing this man who understood His heart "most deeply" declare and be declared to be an atheist, "must have cried, shedding hot tears."¹⁶⁷ The Christ to whom Uchimura thinks one must penetrate through all the accretions is in reality Christus exemplum, and not Christus sacramentum.

¹⁶⁵Shinko 7:79. "I have no Christianity," says Uchimura on another occasion, "but I have Jesus of Nazareth who was called Christ. I have no church, but I have a brotherly body of the disciples of Jesus. I have no doctrine to subscribe, but I have the teachings and examples of Jesus. Jesus is my religion, my church and my doctrine. I do not seek anything but Him." Ibid., 7:83.

¹⁶⁶CW 4:101.

¹⁶⁷Shinko 18:95.

In fact, Uchimura ridicules that "there is a sort of faith which cannot be maintained apart from the church, namely churchly faith [教會的信仰]"¹⁶⁸ But is not this faith which lives by the word of sins' forgiveness given accoustically and visibly in the assembly of saints, an evangelical faith which first and foremost acknowledges: Hoc est Christum cognoscere beneficia eius cognoscere?

Firmly believing that Christum exemplum is the true Christ liberated from the captivity of the churches, Uchimura thus insists on going back to Christ Himself, and this even beyond the apostles. In other words, he insists on "Christ alone" with its corresponding "faith alone." As with all the pat formulae, "Christ alone" and "faith alone" can be used in different theological contexts with different meanings. We refer to our interpretation of these formulae with Uchimura given in chapter III. For our present purpose, we may say that while "solus Christus" and "sola fide" in the Reformation theology have their primary reference to remissio peccatorum and justificatio propter Christum, with Uchimura they are conceived of as the inevitable conditions for sanctification, which are, as we have repeatedly seen, the ultimate issue of the Gospel for him. He understands, namely, that "Christ alone" and "faith alone," in the antithesis to all the externals which make God-man relationship mediate, must be there for man to become really perfect. Uchimura, then, conceives of the essence of Protestantism as "Christ alone" and "faith" alone in this sense, namely in the anti-thesis to all the externals, be it churches, creeds, "rituals,"

¹⁶⁸Ibid., 8:243

theologies. Thus, "going back to Christ Himself" becomes identical with the "radicalization" of the essence of Protestantism as he understands it.

In this sense, Protestantism aims at nothing but "a formless, churchless Christianity." But as we have seen in the above, Uchimura blames the Reformers that their attempt to reform Christianity resulted in "a half-Reformation" because of their inconsistency in reintroducing the churches. In view of this, Uchimura is consistent in his assertion that "we need another Reformation to bring Protestantism to its logical consequences." "The new Protestantism" which will arise through this "other Reformation" "must be perfectly free without a trace of ecclesiasticism in it,--a fellowship, not an institution,--free communion of souls, not a system or an organization," which will be "practically" "churchless Christianity, calling no man bishop or pastor, save Jesus Christ, the Son of God."¹⁶⁹

Obviously, what this attempt at "Re-Reformation" or "the new Protestantism" aims is the ideal of Christianity, the realization of which is expected in the future. "Protestantism," says Uchimura, "which began four hundreds years ago, is yet in the process of its completion."¹⁷⁰ As a matter of fact, he sees the realization of this ideal Christianity, "Non-Church Christianity," from different points of view, all of which follow the evolutionistic pattern of development. We will now consider some of the viewpoints.

¹⁶⁹ CW 3:230-31.

¹⁷⁰ Shinko 8:254.

According to Uchimura, the reason for the emergence of the Roman Catholic Church is that man sought the inerrant authority of doctrine in the church. In the same way, the Protestant churches came into being when they sought the authority of doctrine in the inerrant Bible. The first Reformation arose, holds Uchimura, to destroy the inerrant church. "The second Reformation is," he says, "now in the process of destroying the inerrant Bible," for the greater glory of God.¹⁷¹ What Uchimura means by "the second Reformation" as abolishing the inerrancy of the Bible is the freedom of faith from the letter of the Bible. In Uchimura's view, even the Bible is not allowed to impinge upon the freedom of man in the matter of faith, at least, in principle. He suggests by this that it will come to such a stage that one needs the Bible no longer but is free from all the externals including the Bible.¹⁷²

Secondly, he conceives of a development in the scheme of work - faith in doctrine - faith in the living Savior. "Protestantism is above Catholicism," states Uchimura, "as faith is above works." But Protestantism is "mostly" faith in doctrinal formulae. "The new Protestantism must be faith in the Living Savior, and so be raised above the Old Protestantism," holds Uchimura. "New Protestantism is nothing more or nothing less than faith in Jesus Christ, the resurrected, living Son of God."¹⁷³ We find here a strong emphasis on "Christ alone" and "faith alone," which will transcend all the doctrines which are fully substituted by "faith in," that is, a personal, inner communion

¹⁷¹Ibid., p. 250.

¹⁷²Ibid., 20:106.

¹⁷³CW 3:232.

with "the Living Savior." The future Christianity with its "faith in the Living Savior" is thus at the same time the restoration of the original Christianity.

Thirdly, he traces the origin of the development further back to Judaism. First, there was "the Jewish church [ユダヤ教会]," which was followed by "the Roman church." This in turn was followed by "the Protestant churches." Finally, there will arise "Non-Church church [無教会], with which Christianity will eventually shake itself free from all the external forms [外形的]."¹⁷⁴ He maintains, thus, that Christianity will eventually become purely "spiritual faith," without knowing any need of the churches. Truly, for Uchimura, "Christianity minus churches is the Way, the Truth, and the Life."¹⁷⁵

Fourthly, St. James, St. Paul and St. John stand to Uchimura as the "originators" respectively of the Roman Catholic Church, the Protestant churches, and churchless Christianity in terms of their teachings, of the way of salvation; St. James taught the way of salvation by good works, St. Paul by faith, and St. John by love for brothers.¹⁷⁶ Speaking in this way, Uchimura indicates that he conceives of good works, faith, and love as the steps toward a higher form of Christian existence, in which good works are replaced by faith, which in its own turn will be replaced by love. In fact, "Non-Church Christianity" relies solely upon love for its existence, according to Uchimura's conviction.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Shinko 8:231-32

¹⁷⁵ CW 3:244.

¹⁷⁶ Shinko 8:231.

¹⁷⁷ "There is one church over another. There were such denominational churches as Lutheran, Calvinist and Wesleyan ones over the Roman Catholic. There must be Non-Church over the denominational

Fifthly, in a different manner, Uchimura elaborates "the Johannine Christianity," as it were, as the prototype of the ideal Christianity. He says:

The Roman Catholic Church arose by the Gospel of Matthew and was maintained by the Gospel of Mark, which is the gospel of Peter. The Protestant churches arose by the Gospel of Luke, which is the gospel of Paul. Now at present, "Non-Church" or "Super Church" [超教会] is arising by the Gospel of John. Truly, the Gospel of John is the Gospel after the twentieth century. When the ideal of this Gospel is realized, there will be neither the Roman Church nor the Protestant churches. Then, God will not be conveyed to man by doctrines but shown by love, and those who show no love will be judged as knowing no God and declared unbelievers, while those who love God will be taught the love for brothers and will be judged as believers as they practice the love.¹⁷⁸

Reading this passage in the light of the developmental scheme described above, it becomes still more conspicuous that Uchimura conceives of "Non-Church Christianity" as the ultimate, ideal stage of the realization of the truth of the Gospel, namely in which love, "the greatest thing in God,"¹⁷⁹ will become the sole reality. And what Uchimura means by "love," is further explicated by his own words as follows:

Love is of God; God is love. Love manifested in good works is righteousness; its opposite is sin. Love intellectually viewed is light; its opposite is darkness. Love viewed as a moral quality is truth (truthfulness); its opposite is falsehood (lie). Jesus is the Son of God's love; he is the light of the world; he is the truth itself. Christians as God's children must love; i.e. must do good works, must shine, and must be always and forever true.¹⁸⁰

churches. Non-Church is a church which knows no laws except that of love. And it is evident that such a church is the best and most beautiful one. God is marching on. I must endeavor to bring forth, in this new century and in this new nation, a new church which poets and prophets embraced as their ideal." Shinko 7:179.

¹⁷⁸ Shinko 7:116.

¹⁷⁹ CW 3:26.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 80-81.

According to the Japanese version of this passage, this is "the essence [精髓] of Johannine thoughts," and the love thus understood is also "all the law."¹⁸¹ Again, we unmistakably notice a moralistic overtone characteristic of Uchimura's concept of the Gospel as a whole.

Even though we might count, in Uchimura's viewpoints above, several aspects of logical inconsistencies and conceptual unclarities which seem a priori to defy clear delineation of his concept of "Non-Church Christianity" after all, we can still capture the main points of emphasis in it and sum them up as follows. "Non-Church Christianity" aims at the restoration of the original Christian faith which is, in Uchimura's concept, a plain, immediate, personal, living communion with God/Christ. This original, spontaneous faith has been taken captive in the man-made institutional churches through the ages. The Reformation, although it claimed to restore the original faith with its principle of "faith alone," was not successful by the Reformers' own attempt to reinstitutionalize it, thus ending as "a half-Reformation. "Non-Church Christianity" endeavors, then, to bring the essence of the "first" Reformation to its logical consequences. In this sense, it is an attempt at the completion of the half-done Reformation. "Non-Church Christianity" which is nothing but the ideal Christianity will be totally free from all the "external" things and realize the true, unjeopardized Christian existence which lives only by the immediate, living communion with God/Christ and the sincere obedience toward God's commandment of love. Christians, then, who have come to the faith in God freely, spontaneously and immediately,

¹⁸¹Ibid.

constitute the ecclesia of Christ in which He is truly their Lord and in which all His disciples enjoy the fellowship among themselves where genuine love prevails. The original faith, or "true Christianity," thus restored will prove to be the real power to save the whole mankind.

To be noted in this connection is the fact that, although he rejects the church with the whole of its history, Uchimura does not deny the existence of the true Church. In fact, he affirms its existence in his own way. As surely as he finds in Church history many prominent Christians and even in the "visible" churches sincere believers who truly lived and live in the ideals of Christian faith, he affirms the invisible fellowship of these believers as the true Church. To be sure, these true believers tend to become "Non-Church" Christians like Uchimura himself because of their sincerity which makes it intolerable for them to stay within the walls of a corrupted, "secularized," unchristian church. Conversely, the true believers are mostly detested by such a church and expelled, even killed, for their sincerity of faith. In fact, Uchimura fully subscribes to what Arnold of Brescia, "a Reformer of the twelfth century," said, namely: "In every age, the true church exists among them who are expelled by the church of their contemporaries."¹⁸² Be this as it may, there still exists, in Uchimura's conviction, "the great Church" the members of which are such men as "St. Augustine, Dante, Luther, Cromwell,"¹⁸³ "the Pilgrim Fathers,"¹⁸⁴ "Kierkegaard,"¹⁸⁵ and so on. "This is truly 'the communion of saints,'

¹⁸² Shinko 8:274.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 15:162.

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 198.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 71.

and the only Church of Christ." "My true brothers and sisters," says Uchimura, "know my voice, and I know theirs; we can love one another in Christ in the sanctuary of our spirits, without being bound by any creed or any regulation but by Christ's law of love." There is truly salvation in this "invisible," true Church, which runs 'no risk of being corrupted."¹⁸⁶

Trying to gain a proper insight into Uchimura's theological idea of "Japanese Christianity," we, in the above, have observed both its negative presupposition and its positive formulation. The former is his critical evaluation of Western Christianity, and the latter is "Non-Church Christianity" which is to replace the "degenerated" Western Christianity. The theological basis for both is his cardinal concept of the Gospel as the power for "sanctification," that is, the transformation of man's moral quality on individual, social, national and universal levels. Viewing Western Christianity with this concept of the Gospel, or "the essence of Christianity," Uchimura sees in it nothing but the alienation of the original Christianity through Greco-Roman spiritual influences. Due to this alienation, Western Christianity has been impotent through the ages. Therefore, there is no reason, Uchimura thinks, for receiving the original Christianity through the intermediary of the Western countries. Logically and without further ado, one must go back to Christ directly and find there the original authentic Christianity. Uchimura himself finds "Non-Church Christianity" with its insistence on the simple, undogmatized

¹⁸⁶Ibid., 8:198.

Gospel and the immediate, personal, living fellowship with God/Christ, as the true feature of the original Christianity.

This firm conviction of Uchimura's about the necessity and possibility of the renewal of Christianity is, very essentially, based upon his unwavering assurance of the specific Japanese spirituality as the "golden vessel," as it were, for the Gospel, as we have seen in the previous section. This assurance is the more intensified and strengthened when he has observed the many kinds of enemies of Christianity which not only ruin the faith from within in the West but also exercise poisonous influences on the other parts of the world. Uchimura mentions such enemies by names: "American Hedonism, English Commercialism, French Indifferentism, Russian Nihilism, German Nietzscheism and Treitschkeism, and other hateful and horrible isms of the Western origin." Actually, due to these "deadly poisons in her bosom," the Western world--with it, the whole world as well--is now facing the danger of total destruction. If, however, thinks Uchimura, there should be a promiseful future for the world, there must arise a new, "spiritual civilization" which lives solely "by God," that is, in total dependence on and obedience to God's will. In a word, a civilization which lives in "pure faith" which, though acknowledged as the ideal of faith, has never been tried in history as the really "practicable" principle of the existence of mankind.¹⁸⁷

According to Uchimura, the Westerners themselves have now realized that their own civilization is totally incapable of rescuing the

¹⁸⁷Ibid., 15:303.

decline of the world, and now look for the restoration of "pure faith."¹⁸⁸ Viewing the situation in this manner and seeing the possibility of the salvation of the world only in "pure faith," Uchimura thinks of the peculiar spirituality of the Japanese, especially of its religious aspect found in Pure Land Buddhism. Uchimura holds that it is not only the prominent Buddhist saints but also the Japanese people as a whole who have proved their deep religiosity. It is, in Uchimura's eyes, something unusual that the common Japanese through the centuries lived and died with the "pure faith" of Pure Land Buddhism. This deep religiosity seems to Uchimura to place the Japanese in a position to "discover a new life in the Evangelical Christianity of Paul, Augustine and Luther."¹⁸⁹ As a matter of fact, Uchimura observes that in the new era of Japan "reliable and honest Japanese are seeking pure Christianity,"¹⁹⁰ yes, "honest, patriotic commoners of Japan are calling on the name of the Lord of freedom. . . . Pure and undefiled Japanese commoners are seeking the Lord of sanctification [聖潔の主]."¹⁹¹

Finding in the "true" Japanese people a deep spirituality and high moral quality, Uchimura is firmly convinced that they--the "pure" Japanese who remain true to the ideals of the Japanese and endeavor to live up to them--become "the best Christians" in the world when they sincerely receive Christ in their heart.¹⁹² Uchimura has no further doubts that they will believe in Him with absolute fidelity and obey His commandments unconditionally. In his view, the pure Christianity and

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 24:52.

¹⁹⁰ Shinko 15:299.

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 225.

¹⁸⁹ Nikki 3:84.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 24:40.

the genuine Japanese people will make the best spiritual synthesis for the realization of man's ideals. When Uchimura thus thinks of the "happy fusion" of the pure Christianity and the Japanese spirituality, he does not do so from mere wishfulness. Between the lines, we clearly notice that Uchimura regards himself as one of the examples of the best synthesis of the both. Beginning with himself, Uchimura also has in mind those who follow his ideal of "Non-Church Christianity," by reading his periodical Biblical Studies fervently and studying the Bible for themselves by the help of the periodical, while making groups, each in its own place. "They are all independent Christian," says Uchimura somewhat proudly, "and, indeed, the most sturdy Christians in Japan are these independent Christians. . . . There are several thousands of such Christians in Japan now. I firmly believe that they will become the suppliers of life in the future Japan. . . . They are all those who aspire to realize in this Japan the pure faith of Christianity [found in] its pristine days.¹⁹³ Thus, in Uchimura's vision, the restoration of "pure faith," or "true Christianity," is already now in the process of becoming reality in himself and his followers.

In view of the deadlock of the history of the world, Uchimura hears a voice asking: "Who will provide the world with pure faith, [which alone can save the world from destruction]?" Uchimura answers in a form of wondering:

Is it not the Japanese? Will not the Japanese, who preserved Buddhism after it had perished in India, and explicated Confucianism after it had withered in China, now also this time in Japan preserve, explicate and restore Christianity which is discarded in Europe and America, and give it back to the world in a new form

¹⁹³Ibid., p. 212.

given by the Japanese? It is not a self-glorification to say that Japan is God's nation [神國] and the Japanese are a spiritual nation [精神的民族]. The Japanese are number one in the world in "knowing shame" and "attaching weight to name." We must not overlook this [precious] gift from God, even if we recognize many of our shortcomings in us. Does not the fact that the Japanese are sensitive to truthfulness indicate that we should serve God and mankind [with this gift] in the spiritual world?¹⁹⁴

As clearly seen in this quotation, Uchimura sees the mission of Japan in the renewal of Christianity for the salvation of the world, and his own vision of "Non-Church Christianity" as a distinctively Japanese form of Christianity in this grand context of the salvation of the world. "According to my own view. . .," says Uchimura, "when they are heartily converted, Japan will become the greatest Christian nation of the world and will lead the whole world. . . . If the Japanese accept the Gospel from God, they will become the best Christians and they will be in a position to influence the whole human race. With this thought in my mind I rejoice in my work as a preacher."¹⁹⁵

Now, we will sum up what we have found in this section. In his advocacy for "Japanese Christianity" in the form of "Non-Church Christianity," Uchimura has carried out the implication of his concept of the Gospel as the power of sanctification to its logical consequences. In this regard, he remains consistent. When he maintains that only "Japanese Christianity" can save the Japanese, in which he means that "the lived Christianity by the Japanese" alone can save the Japanese, he clearly indicates that the sanctified life is of decisive importance for the nation's salvation. Likewise, when he criticizes Christianity in the West, its starting-point is the empirical, "defective" reality of

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁹⁵ CW 7:164-65.

the churches in this world. In view of the all too clear gap between the ideals of Christianity and the "sinfulness" of the visible churches, Uchimura endeavors to find a new form of Christianity in which Christianity can unfold its sanctifying potentials as much as possible. "Non-Church Christianity" as a new form of Christianity engendered by the Japanese is his proposal. Recognizing that Christianity in the West in its form is only perishing, Uchimura believes that "the world is ripe . . . for such a faith [faith in the Living Savior without churches and doctrinal formulae, that is "churchless Christianity"], and the movement for its acceptance will begin in the land [Japan] where Christianity is free and untrammelled as in its pristine days, nineteen centuries ago." "And who can say," challenges Uchimura, "that God doth not intend Japan to be the country where such [churchless] Christianity is to appear, the new experiment to be tried in the spiritual history of mankind, to begin Christianity anew in the Land of the Rising Sun."¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 3:232.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Summary

This study has been occupied with the analysis and interpretation of Uchimura's concept of Christianity primarily in view of his attempt, made with this concept as the theological basis, at indigenization of Christianity into the spiritual soil of Japan. The chief theological concern which has governed throughout this study is the question whether Uchimura's concept of Christianity which lies on the basis for his attempt at indigenization is evangelical, evangelical primarily not in the sense of the term advocated by the so-called "conservative-evangelicals" in the recent ecumenical movement, but in its original sense, namely as being in essential consonance with the Gospel conceived of as remissio peccatorum propter Christum or justificatio sola gratia et sola fide. Therefore, when this study is attempted with the question in mind whether Uchimura's concept of Christianity is evangelical, it is on the side of this author, not so much out of a narrow fundamentalistic concern as out of the concern for the clarification of the salvific truth of the Gospel upon which the Church stands and falls, and with which man as a sinner in this existence can live and die with thankful confidence in the faithfulness of God's mercy and love.

What specifically has occasioned this study is the fact that, in his attempt to formulate as well as his endeavor to put into practice "Japanese Christianity" as a renewal of Christianity which is alledgedly dying in the West, Uchimura understands himself as being evangelical and orthodox, underscoring the centrality of "Christ alone," "grace alone," and "faith alone." In addition to this theological "self-image" of Uchimura, he is generally looked upon as one of the pronounced advocates of evangelical and orthodox Christianity in Japan. However, in view of his passionate emphasis on man's factual sanctification--in the sense of moral perfection--as the ultimate content of salvation, an emphasis made in such a way that it seems to overshadow the significance of remissio and justificatio and reduce it to a partial and preliminary aspect of the Gospel, a thorough analysis of his theological viewpoints has been called for in order to gain insight into the theological structure of his "Japanese Christianity" and to grasp the significance of his theological endeavor for the continuing attempt to mediate the Gospel of the crucified Christ to the nation still called "non-Christian."

What does Uchimura conceive of as the ultimate content of salvation offered in the Christian faith? Our analysis of Uchimura's theological conception began with this question, while recognizing that the ultimate issue in practicing theology is constituted by soteriological concern. The question immediately led to the investigation of Uchimura's concept of man's existential predicament from which he is to be saved, namely of the problem of man's sin. Through the investigation we found that in Uchimura's concept the problem of sin is grasped

essentially in terms of moral deficiency, that is, falling short of moral ideals. Indeed, Uchimura felt the torment of sin's problem present within himself, as he repeatedly expressed in his writings. Our analysis of his experience of sin's problem however showed that Uchimura stayed with the moralistic concept of sin throughout his theological reflection. In other words, sin in the "theological" sense, that is, sin in the sense of man's abysmal personal rebellion against God, is virtually non-existence in Uchimura's theological thought. Consequently, his anthropology is in principle optimistic, optimistic in the sense that man's nature is not so totally corrupted as has been claimed in the concept of corruptio totius naturae.

Corresponding to this optimistic anthropology, Uchimura's concept of God is undialectic and monistic, knowing no tension of Deus revelatus and Deus absconditus. In Uchimura's view, God is favorably disposed toward man, if only he remains sincere and truthful in his inner and outward conducts. Hence, there exists no enmity between God and man from the start.

When sin's problem is conceived essentially in moralistic terms in such a way that one, while falling short of moral ideals, experiences an inner torment caused by the discrepancy between the ideal self--noble, sublime, great, sincere, true, and so forth--and the actual self, it is easily discernable that salvation in this conceptual framework should be sanctification or perfection of the self toward the ideal. Our examination of Uchimura's concept of salvation showed that this is substantially the case. Salvation is, namely, nothing but the transformation of man's morally deficient and imperfect self into the ideal one

through the Divine power. In the last analysis, it is this power of God for man's perfection that constitutes the specific raison d'etre of Christianity in Uchimura's concept.

On this recognition of Uchimura's soteriological characteristics, we examined his "Christology," or his view on the significance of Christ for salvation, and found that it is essentially in accord with the moralistic concept of salvation. Uchimura conceives of Christ primarily not as Christus sacramentum, that is, as God's sacrificial gift to us for remisio and justificatio, but far more as Christus exemplum, namely as both the ideal toward which man is to be sanctified and perfected, and the power to its realization in man.

It is, then, against this specific background that Uchimura's almost exclusive concentration on Christ in his theological thought is to be understood. That is, when Uchimura repeatedly emphasizes "Christ alone," it is not in the sense of the exclusiveness of Christ as the basis for remissio and justificatio, but rather in the sense of His being the supreme manifestation of the ideal with no one comparable at His side and the only power to realize the ideal in man. In fact, our inquiry into the concrete meaning of Uchimura's emphasis on "Christ alone" made clear that his deep longing for and passionate devotion to Christ was motivated not so much by the need for beneficia eius in the sense of remissio et justificatio propter eum, as by the appreciation of Christ as the noblest and sublimest actualization of the ideal personality or, put more pointedly, by the idea of "hero-worship."

Inseparably related to this concept of Christ, Uchimura's idea of "faith alone" more corresponds to the idea of gratia infusa than to

that of favor Dei or gratia remissionis. To Uchimura, faith is the only way in which man obtains the power of God which transforms man's self and his morality to the ideal and perfect. Thus seen, Uchimura's "Christ alone," "faith alone," and "grace alone" constitute a conceptually understandable unity in terms of his concept of salvation as the sanctification and perfection of man's morality. In fact, this whole conception seems to run contrary to the fundamental insight of the Reformation brought to expression by solus Christus, sola gratia et sola fides, the ultimacy of the message of remissio et justificatio. In view of the result of our investigation concerning the soteriological framework of Uchimura, it may be said that Uchimura mutatis mutandis essentially would agree with the idea of Thomas Aquinas that gratia does not destroy nature but perfects it.

This insight into Uchimura's soteriological characteristics necessitated, for further elucidation of the overall context of his theology, that we should inquire into the type of theological epistemology with which he operated in his articulation of the concept of Christianity. To him, "Nature, History and the Bible" constituted an epistemological tripod. And, in his view, the will of God can be learned not merely through the Bible but--in some cases--more directly and clearly from the observation of nature and the study in history, for the epistemological tripod essentially mediates one and the same knowledge of God and His will in the manner of one "foot" complementing the others toward the fuller salvific knowledge. The material content, then, of what this tripod is supposed to mediate as salvation is the

completion and perfection of mankind and the universe after the manner of progress and evolution.

This harmonious coordination of nature and history on the one hand and the Bible on the other as the sources of God's speaking to man led us to consider theological implications of this epistemological feature upon his concept of Christianity. First, it entails a monistic concept of the revelation of God's will toward man. We observed that Uchimura views that the will of God toward man--not only the Law but also the Gospel, to use a doctrinal formula of distinction (in fact, Uchimura knows no distinction of Law and Gospel nor dialectic relationship of the two entities)--can be directly obtained from the "visible things," namely from nature and history. The Bible seems to be absorbed in the general categories of revelation which nature and history represent. To use another doctrinal formula of distinction, revelatio specialis seems to be subordinated to revelatio generalis. Second, in accord with this type of epistemology, faith in this regard is conceived of as believing what is in harmony with the result of man's honest observation of nature and history, or what is rational and reasonable. The optimistic view on reality of man and the world is the constitutive presupposition of this concept of faith. It is then evident that this concept of faith in Uchimura's thought is of a quite different orientation from that of the Reformation, especially of Luther, in which faith is conceived as man's trustful clinging to the word of God's promise of mercy and love, and this against all the gain-say of experience of the "visible things," such as man's own sinfulness, the painful perception of the meaninglessness of history, tragedy in

various forms in the world. In the theology of the Reformation, namely, faith in the crucified Lord--faith given in theologia crucis!--overcomes all the empirical contradictions which constantly threaten to deny God's mercy and love revealed in Christ, for faith is made into faith sub specie contraria.

Against this background of Uchimura's soteriology and epistemology, we then proceeded to examine the characteristic features of his concept of the possibility and necessity of indigenizing Christianity in Japan. In keeping with his monistic and positivistic epistemology, Uchimura looks upon Japan's spiritual and moral heritage undialectically as God's gifts. In Bushido he finds the quintessence of nobleness and sublimity of the Japanese way of existence, and in Pure Land Buddhism the profundity of the nation's religiosity. Acknowledging the nation's cultural and spiritual heritage as given by God, Uchimura takes this as the "golden vessel"--as it were--for the Gospel which to him is, in its ultimate meaning, the power of the realization of the perfection of man's self and his morality, and the power of the completion of the nation's mission in the process of the fulfilment of the original purpose of the universe. Thus, it has become Uchimura's own mission ("I for Japan"!) to bring Japan's noble moral ideals and her deep religiosity into a fruitful synthesis with Christianity.

Back of this concept of indigenization of Christianity there are two conspicuous ideas which are organically tied up with his soteriological and epistemological concept. The first is his burning devotion and love to the nation which, from the very start of his Christian existence, has been driving him to continual reflection upon the meaning of Japan's

existence in history and the universe. This fervent patriotism, supported by his monistic and positivistic epistemology, finds its theological legitimation in the thought that down through the centuries Japan has been under God's providential care and guidance qualitatively in like manner as the nation Israel had been in the Old Testament days, and this specifically in view of the role which should be ordained for Japan to play at the appointed time in the process of fulfilment of the universe.

The second is his rigorous criticism of Christianity practiced in the West as impenitently betraying the high call of Christianity for the realization of the ideal reality in man and in the world. This state of affairs is deeply dissatisfying and even intolerable to Uchimura who finds the rationale of Christianity essentially in its powers of transformation and renewal of the individual and the world. Conceiving the root of the impotentialization of Christianity in the West as lying in the institutionalization of the church and the dogmatization of faith, Uchimura has come to envisage a new form of Christianity in Japan, namely, "Non-Church Christianity," which is to strive for being free from any elements of institutionalizing the Christian fellowship and also from any coercive dogmas and doctrines. As the alternative to this betraying Christianity in the West, Uchimura conceives the synthesis of the original Christianity with its pristine vigor, and the authentic Japanese spirituality, the synthesis which in his view should revitalize Christianity for the salvation of the world, while liberating its sanctifying powers from institutional and doctrinal suppressions. This synthesis he looks upon as the restoration of the original Christianity

and also the completion of the Reformation, which should be sine qua non for the continuing process toward the fulfilment of the universe.

Thus, "Jesus"--the very embodiment of the ideals and the power to realize them in man and in the world--and "Japan"--as the best, "golden" vessel for "Jesus"--has been determinative for Uchimura's Christian existence and his theological endeavor in the direction of the realization of the ideals.

Evaluation

With the concluding summary given above, we have gained the insight into the essential aspects of Uchimura's concept of Christianity and its synthesis with the spirituality of Japan. Now in the following, we shall evaluate Uchimura's theology as we have found it in this study. Being aware of the risk of oversimplification, we can still characterize Uchimura's concept of Christianity by three basic ideas: sanctification as the perfection of man's self, rationality of revelation, and the continuous progress of history and the world toward completion. In fact, these ideas unmistakably indicate the basic tones of the Zeitgeist of the formative years of Uchimura's thoughts as well as the Sitz im Leben of his theological endeavor.

Through the biographical sketch given prior to the theological analysis, we have learned that Uchimura together with his nation lived in a situation highly turbulent and precarious spiritually, culturally, politically, economically, a situation which was unusually critical caused by an abrupt confrontation with a far superior civilization of the West, which appeared to the minds of the most to make obsolete well-nigh all the traditional spiritual and cultural values. The first

impression Christianity made upon the mind of the boy Uchimura indelibly was its masculine spirituality and noble morality represented by outstanding Christian personalities of Puritan leanings. Christianity was then conceived of by Uchimura primarily as a new, superior spiritual power with which the new-born Japan could not dispense in her struggles for securing an honorable place of citizenship in the civilized world community. Thus, the primary motive for committing oneself to the New Faith in the minds of the most including Uchimura was marked by painful awareness of the need for a new spiritual backbone more in general terms than specifically in religious and deeply existential terms.

Conceiving of Christianity as a new spiritual foundation for his existence and the nation's future, Uchimura voraciously absorbed into his reflective mind ideas of inspirative and enlightening significance from his reading of the literature of the Western origins available at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of this century, be it of religion, of theology, of philosophy, of literature, of natural science, or of anything else. He was not without sympathy with the Deistic concept of natural religion. To a great extent was he in agreement with the Rationalistic optimism in its outlook on man and history. He felt himself strongly drawn to a pantheistic religiosity of Spinoza and Schleiermacher. Kant's rationalistic-moralistic concept of Christianity played an essential part in Uchimura's exposition of Christianity. Hegel's dialectic way of viewing the dynamics of the total reality--including Christianity and its history--found its expression in Uchimura's thought directly and indirectly. Thomas Carlyle, with is

emphasis on the significance of the heros in the formation of history, influenced Uchimura profoundly in his formative years. From the very outset of his reflection on reality, Uchimura subscribed to the validity of the Darwinian theory of evolutionism as equally applicable to history and nature. Ritschl's moralistic and masculine interpretation of Christianity was in deep consonance with Uchimura's own view.

In view of these diverse connections found as traceable in Uchimura's writings, it may be safely said that his theological thinking has been carried out mainly along the line of the essentially inclusive concept of Christianity predominant in the spiritual climate in the modern era since the Enlightenment to World War I, in which the significance and impact of Christianity was interpreted more in terms of continuity with general categories such as nature and history accessible to the natural capacity of reason, than in terms of discontinuity. Pantheistic orientation in religious feeling and in deciphering the mystery of reality both within and without man happened to be in accord with the general pantheistic sentiments of the Orientals with whom Uchimura undoubtedly belonged. The strongly moralistic concept of Christianity inspired by Kant with its ramification into various directions appeared to Uchimura to be what he himself and his nation needed as the new spiritual resource. The scheme of progress and evolution of world history provided Uchimura with the framework of meaning of existence, while making it possible for him to find his own existential place and the nation's in history which was heading toward its completion. This inclusive orientation in his reflection upon the meaning of Christianity which was still in force during his formative years offered to his

thinking many points of contact with the indigenous spiritual and cultural heritage, thus enabling for him to assimilate Christianity as the religion for the future of the nation.

It is in the light of this coincidence in Uchimura's thought of the Zeitgeist and his existential Sitz im Leben that his contributions to the establishment and promotion of Christianity in Japan and the weakness in his concept of the ultimate issue of the Gospel are to be recognized.

The main concern in this study has been if Uchimura in his formulation of "Japanese Christianity" can really be considered, in its doctrinal substance, as evangelical in the sense of being in accord with the Reformation concept of solus Christus, sola gratia and sola fides. In this concern, an awareness of the necessity of clarification concerning the specific content of the truth of Gospel is involved. Through our inquiry made in this study, we have learned that in his theological endeavor Uchimura essentially operated with the concept of salvation as sanctification in a moralistic, "habitual" sense and with the monistic and positivistic epistemology, which has been conditioning each other and thus determining the basic profile of his theology. This combination of the moralistic soteriology and the immanentistic epistemology a priori cannot properly account for the cardinal problem of man's existence, that is, his radical sinfulness in the sight of God. And it has been shown in this study that this soteriological and epistemological impossibility of the proper recognition of sin's reality and problem is the case with the basic structure of Uchimura's theology.

The most weighty criticism made in this study against Uchimura's theology is thus focused on his misconception--so we must call it from the Lutheran point of view--of man's real situation in the sight of God, namely as a sinner coram Deo in the radical sense which involves his total person and existence. In the theology of the Lutheran Reformation, sin is recognized on the deepest level of man's existence as his personal rebellion against God's person and his persistent defiance of God's sovereignty, sine metu Dei sine fiducia erga Deum, et cum concupiscentia to use the phrase of the Augsburg Confession. The essential thing in this concept of man's deepest reality is that it is the recognition of man's situation in the light of faith in the Gospel of remissio et justificatio. Upon this concept of sin, we recognize in our own person, when we hear the message of sin's forgiveness and justification by faith, that we are the righteous for the sake of Christ and sinners in our own right. However perfect we might be able to become in terms of morality, we remain, while here on earth, sinners coram Deo in terms of what we are of ourselves. Truly, we are righteous, and remain so, solely in terms of what God out of his "favor" has done extra nos in Christ. In such an existential situation, sin's forgiveness or justification for the sake of Christ exhausts the content of salvation in the deepest and most comprehensive way. Thus, from beginning to end, salvation is God's justification of us sinners for Christ's sake. If, in view of such an existential abyss of man, God's mercy of remissio et justificatio is not the salvation for sinners, salvation is deprived of its most constitutive substance.

Due to his moralistic concept of sin, on the other hand, with its entailing optimistic assessment of man's situation, Uchimura was not able to capture the full dimension of the significance of remissio et justificatio. For Uchimura they are in substance a partial aspect of the Gospel which is of only preliminary and preparatory significance for man's sanctification. According to him the Gospel consists not merely of remissio et justificatio but ultimately of the perfection and exaltation of man's nature as a moral being. A serious soteriological problem which is bound to follow is that the existential concern of man is inevitably transposed from what God proclaims to him in His word on the basis of the event which occurred in Christ and extra me, onto what God will do through grace--understood as gratia infusa--in him now to perfect his sanctification. But if it is a true existential recognition that man in his own right and even after receiving the grace of rebirth is and remains et peccator on this side of eternity, the concept of the Gospel as sanctification as is the case with Uchimura's thought logically turns out to become nova lex, for man cannot but constantly become aware of his falling short of what God wills in His holiness, thus incessantly compelled to live up to what the gospel of sanctification postulates.

The Gospel understood as the power of sanctification comes to function as the Law, which drives man into hybris when he feels himself measuring up to the standard of the Law, or into despair in case he recognizes that he constantly fails to do so, now forced to seek even in failure some justification, for example, in his earnestness and sincerity. For this concept of the Gospel presupposes an optimistic

"estimation" of sin's reality as conquerable by way of the help of gratia infusa and man's own moral will, thus making salvation contingent on man's cooperation.

A highly questionable consequence of this in practice is that it entails the gradations of Christians into different "qualities," from the "best" ones to those who are alledged to be "unworthy" even of the name Christian. We have observed this in Uchimura's thought at various junctions. A feature in Uchimura's utterances which endorses this observation is the fact that he was, as he grew older, very little able to share the frailties and weaknesses of the churches; in his life-long critique of--or even attack upon--the churches it is not quite easy to find the sympathetic tone of solidarity with the churches which were struggling in the fulfilment of their mission in this world. Rather, it seems nearer to the truth that instead of solidarity, he stood aloof and outside of the churches when criticizing their "corruptions," and endeavored to establish a "pure" Christian fellowship after his ideals. All this should then be considered as one consequential aspect of Uchimura's concept of the Gospel as ultimately aiming at sanctification, that is, the perfection of man's moral nature.

Now, in viewing critically Uchimura's attempt to formulate "Japanese Christianity" or to indigenize Christianity in Japan, it is necessary on the basis of our study, to point out a characteristic feature found in his attempt, that is, that he primarily sought "the point of contact" in the "best" spiritual and moral qualities found specifically in Bushido ethos and Pure Land Buddhism with the emphases on the subjective qualities of man as the essential. This is, in fact,

fully in keeping with his basic concept of salvation as sanctification. Consequently, Uchimura made the Gospel conditional and contingent on man's spiritual and moral qualities in terms of its "efficacy." In this view, the Gospel ceases to be the absolute and unconditional message of salvation for a sinner who has found nothing "worthy" in himself, either inherited or acquired. Uchimura's concept of the indigenous spiritual heritage as the best presupposition for the actualization and effectuation of the potentials of the Gospel seems to be intrinsically at variance with the evangelical understanding of the Gospel, namely, that the Gospel is the absolute and unconditional gift of God's mercy and love, which is able to raise "the children of Abraham" even "out of stones." We must then say that Uchimura's concept of the harmonious coordination of the Gospel and the "best" indigenous spirituality involves a theological problem which seems to bar a proper and deeper understanding of the Gospel.

While Uchimura conceived of the carrying-out of the indigenization of the Gospel in the category of sanctification and sought the "point of contact" in the "best" things found in the nation's spiritual heritage, we--from the evangelical point of view--should approach, as the alternative to Uchimura's attempt, the task of indigenization in the category of justification or God's forgiving mercy upon helpless sinners, and seek the "point of contact" rather in tragedies, miseries, cries, groans, in short, De profundis, which the nation has experienced and is now facing as the consequence of her sinfulness before God. In this way alone, the Gospel can reach the very bottom of the nation's existence, embracing the total--not only the "best"--reality of her

existence. In other words, we should seek the "point of contact" in the very cause, namely "man's coming short of glory of God," which in turn drives man to the various forms of attempt to come to terms with the contradictory existential situation by way of the "visible things," that is, theologia gloriae. A nation whose bearers are the individuals can be saved and remain in salvation by gratia remissionis given for the sake of Christ the crucified. In our view, therefore, there is no true salvation available for a nation, as is the case with the individuals, as long as sin is conceived of mainly in moralistic terms.

Viewing in this way, it is more required, in the attempt at indigenization, to gaze at the De profundis which the nation experienced in the time past and is now experiencing as God's judgment in which is to be heard the voice of His calling to repentance and to receive gratia remissionis propter Christum for the new, forgiven, justified life. Only in and through the grace of forgiveness, are the "best" things to be drawn into the service of the Gospel after being properly put in their places in life here on earth. In our view, therefore, the way Uchimura followed in his attempt at indigenization cannot be traversed by us without penetrating through sanctification to justification as the ultimate message of man's salvation.

This criticism raised against Uchimura has been based upon the fundamental theological insight that the Gospel--which is, in its ultimate meaning, nothing but God's unconditional mercy and love in forgiveness of sin--presupposes, as its conditio sine qua non, the basic concept that man, in his own right, is a sinner totally lost in the sight of God, that he, while here on earth is and remains et peccator

as is seen in the very fact that he is righteous ultimately only in God's imputation, and, therefore, that forgiveness of sin alone is the foundation for God-man communion in Christian existence here and now. For, we understand, that through the Cross of Christ God has revealed to man the real depth, dimension and intensity of his sine metu Dei, and so forth, and at the same time, His holy, consuming wrath as the wages of our sinfulness. In view of the Cross of Christ as God's act of judgment upon the rebellious, defiant man, it is recognized that man has absolutely nothing in himself to boast of in the sight of God but only the deep meaninglessness of his existence as eternal damnation.

But, through the very same Cross of Christ, God has revealed to man His unconditional love and mercy, remissio peccatorum propter Christum. In this message of sin's forgiveness, man recognizes the unfathomable depth of God's grace which brings him into the bosom of God and justifies his existence though soiled with his sinfulness. Since the grace of God's forgiveness of sin has its cause exclusively in His own love and completely irrespective of man's habitual worthiness, man can now live a joyful life as a forgiven sinner even though he, while here on earth, still remains et peccator and therefore oftentimes has to suffer from his own sinfulness. Thus, evangelical faith which lives by the message of gratia remissionis is the "never-betraying," inexhaustible spring for a sinner of a new life in God's mercy and love in Christ.

Further, the essential truth of the Gospel as the forgiveness of sin is that God's love shown on this side of eternity as the forgiveness of sin for the sake of Christ is nothing but the manifestation in time of His eternal, unconditional love on account of which alone He,

under all circumstances, either before the Fall, at present, or in the world to come, receives man in His blissful fellowship completely irrespective of man's inherent worthiness and solely for his sovereign love in Christ. This is the essence of the joyful message for an otherwise hopeless sinner.

In view of these considerations, we are compelled by the result of this study to conclude that Uchimura in terms of the ultimate motive in his theological endeavor did not penetrate to the very bottom of man's existence and, consequently, to the essential core of the Gospel as remissio et justificatio. It may be even said that he was of--theologically speaking--pre-Reformation orientation with its harmonious coordination between faith and reason, and grace and nature, in a radical confrontation with which the decisive insight into the evangelical truth of the Gospel had been rediscovered in the Reformation. Further, it may also be claimed as a valid observation that what Uchimura meant to have restored as the original Christianity is considered to be a reflection of the general sentiment of anthropocentric moralism and even aestheticism predominant in the modern ages from Enlightenment to Liberalism, rather than a restoration of the original Gospel witnessed particularly by the Pauline literature in the New Testament. An evangelical attempt to indigenize, or actualize, the message of the Gospel in a "non-Christian" nation is to overcome the limitations of Uchimura's theological Ansatz, penetrating deeper to the core of the Gospel with man's sinfulness as its presupposition.

After having thus pointed out the limitations of Uchimura's thought in terms of the basic issue of the concept of the Gospel, it

certainly would not be justifiable to leave unmentioned the main points of the positive contribution he has rendered in his endeavor for indigenization to the continuing existence of Christianity in Japan. We shall therefore take them up in the following.

First, Uchimura's emphasis on sanctification or moral perfection and his struggle for its realization in this life is motivated, apart from the question of the validity of his interpretation of the Gospel, by his sincere wish to obey God's holy will. His cry for sanctification in the concrete life challenges one, in an indirect way, to examine whether one is truly aware of the true meaning and impact, in his concrete existence, of the Gospel of remissio et justificatio. In fact, the grace of sin's forgiveness is by no means immune to distortion and misinterpretation. On the contrary, one may often fail to grasp it properly as the gift of a personal and sovereign God provided by His own painful involvement in the Son, and even tend to make it into an alibi for his self-sufficient and complacent existence. To live in the faith of sin's forgiveness is, namely, a life obedient to God's will, struggling against the dominion of sin in man's self and in the world, although one may not lose sight of the ultimacy of sin's forgiveness. By constantly emphasizing that Christian existence here on earth should be an incessant struggle for the realization of God's will in one's self and in the world, Uchimura indirectly reminds the believer of the indispensibility of staying in the grace of sin's forgiveness, so that one's existence in faith may not die in self-made security. Uchimura's "prophetic" significance lies in this fact.

Second, when he cried for an indigenous Christianity, claiming that only "Japanese Christianity" which was given birth by the Japanese themselves could save the Japanese, Uchimura contended that Christian faith could not be merely "imported," as it were, as a ready-made article. He made it clear that the issue of the Gospel could not be learned through the mere intellectual study of theology in an existentially detached manner. He insisted that man had to "experience" Christianity, that is, there must be a true, committed confrontation of man with the living, personal God. In so doing, Uchimura specifically warned of the danger in taking as sufficient in theological endeavor mere repetition of various theologies from the West. In view of Uchimura himself who benefited extensively from both theological and "secular" literature of Western origin, one may surmise that he meant a fruitful theologizing which is to be made possible only when man takes his existential confrontation with God in full seriousness. Since man's existence in its total aspect is necessarily conditioned by the cultural and spiritual background, any attempt at the actualization of the Gospel necessitates taking the background seriously and "assessing it properly in view of the message of the Gospel. In the history of Christianity in Japan, an unhealthy tendency has been pointed out, that is, that indigenous theological endeavor has been exhausted merely in digesting the incoming Western theologies. In view of this, Uchimura's sincere cry for a truly indigenous Christianity which is expected to arise from a serious existential confrontation with the Gospel is no doubt one of the most important contributions Uchimura has made to the continuous efforts to actualize the impact of the Gospel in Japan.

Third, by his committed reflection upon the relevance of the Christian message of salvation not only for himself as an individual but for the nation and the world, and his vigorous attempt to interpret it in concrete terms, Uchimura represented a position of a broad and open theological horizon concerning the mission of Christianity in the history of the world. As a matter of fact, even when the Christians numbered only several thousands in the early era of modern Japan, he conceived of his mission as having in view the transformation not only of Japan but even of the world for the better conformity with God's eternal law. He thought that if Christianity was the sole message of salvation for the world in the ages to come, it certainly had to be concerned with the salvation not only of individuals but also of the nation and the world. In so doing, Uchimura brought to full articulation the claim of the Christian faith to God's sovereign, absolute and all-embracing dominion over the world and the total reality. Fully conforming to his firm conviction of God's universal rule and providence, he underscored particularly the concept of "mission," given by God to each individual and each nation, as constitutive for the meaning and rationale of their being, and he admonished them to "identify" their respective God-given missions and to fulfill them for the glory of God and the salvation of the world. Although it is difficult to agree with Uchimura's forced optimism and idealism from the viewpoint of the evangelical concept of the Gospel as remissio et justificatio with its anthropological presupposition simul justus et peccator, it is certainly necessary to follow his urge to find one's own calling in this world, in which one--forgiven his sins and liberated fully for the service toward

his fellow human beings--embodies and mediates the love of God which he himself has received. It cannot be left unnoticed, then, that when Uchimura asserted the necessity of launching "Japanese Christianity," he was motivated to a great extent by an urgent concern for the mission of Christianity, now renewed in "Japanese Christianity," effective for the salvation of the world. Uchimura's contribution in this, keeping steadily in view the broad and open horizon for the mandate of Christianity in and for the world, is of perennial significance for Christianity in Japan, where it--as a tiny minority--may easily tend to isolate itself from the world and form its own closed community.

Throughout this study we have been confronted with Uchimura's thought and "spirit." We have learned the limitations of Uchimura's indigenization theology at the cardinal point of the doctrine of salvation. He has, however, helped us to reconsider and clarify the real depth and dimension of the Gospel as remissio et justificatio, in an antithetical way and therefore more compellingly, through his convinced exposition of the Gospel as sanctification or the perfection of the moral self. We have also recognized his positive contribution to the sharpening of our existential confrontation with the living God, to the actualization of our faith in obedience to God's will, and to the broadening of the horizon of our mission and calling in and for the world. Urged by his love for "Jesus and Japan," Uchimura offered his life in endeavoring to actualize Christianity in his existence as a samurai of Christ for his nation and for the world, and this according to his theological convictions won in his concrete existence. Through his "spirit," which found an eloquent expression in his uncompromising

commitment to the ideals of Christian existence, Uchimura urges us to a life filled with the tension between the "already-now" and the "not-yet." Our own theological task in the future will be, then, to find out the way in which the message of Christianity is to be explicated in concreto in the nation's existence conditioned by the past and the present, and to be made truly the message of salvation for the nation, by taking the starting-point for this endeavor not in sanctification as was the case with Uchimura but in justification, the message of remissio et justification, which alone ultimately bears up man's existence from its very foundation.

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