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UCHIMURA KANZO ON JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH IN HIS *A STUDY OF ROMANS* : A PROSPECT OF SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF *ROMANS*

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Abstract: In this introductory paper on Uchimura Kanzo's *A Study of Romans*, I focus on Uchimura's understanding of faith and justification by faith, within the context of a general application of his methods and doctrines. I also point out a germ of the Second-Reformation in his interpretation of faith, which he was keen to develop throughout his life. Since Paul himself, as I understand him, reached out a hand of reconciliation to Catholicism and Protestantism well before the Reformation in sixteenth century, I demonstrate that Uchimura was compelled by the text itself to this kind of encompassing interpretation. In parallel with introducing Uchimura's thoughts, I carry out a semantic analysis of the text of Romans at a more basic level than his theological interpretations so that Uchimura's thought can be made more clear being accompanied by some constraints at the linguistic level. I claim through a semantic analysis that there are two senses of 'pistis (faith (fullness))' in Romans. Romans 3.21-26 is in the language of "before God", through which God's understanding, judgment, and action concerning human beings are all reported. In other words, God is the agent of this paragraph and the grammar in this dimension is not same as in the dimension which Paul used in his understanding of man as an agent because of the weakness of his flesh (6.19). Paul distinguished the (f1) "faith (fullness) of Jesus Christ (3.21)," which I will term (f1), from "faith" (f2), which is the mental disposition or state of all human beings, with exception of Jesus of Nazareth. When Paul gazed at our flesh and uttered 'faith' according to "the manner of man" by conceding to "the weakness of flesh" (6.19) it refers to a mental state emerged in our soul. This (f2) -type of our own flesh varies from person to person, and it also varies from time to time within one person. On this human centric basis, Aristotelian Catholic doctrines are developed by taking "faith" as (f2) alone i.e. a mental state of free and responsible man.

When Paul observed the different states of human beings, and addressed the people of Rome in the imperative mood, this dimension of his language is different from the language of the revelation "before God". For if Paul did not presuppose the possible disobedience of the Romans, he would not have delivered his statement in the imperative mood. The persons whom Paul addressed in the imperative mood were capable of being of either righteous or sinful (6.11). The possibility is that the resulting being is one who lives, not in front of God, but in front of man. It is not clearly revealed to each person, who is righteous and who is not. That is why

having faith on one's part is always essential for every man. Thus, Paul orders to the people of Romans, "The faith which you have according to yourself (*kata seauton*), have you before God (14.22)." This order is addressed to the person in group "before Man" so as not to sever (f2) his faith which is held according to his own free responsibility *from* (f1) the faith revealed in Jesus Christ as constituting the faith of people in group "before God". This is the gist of Protestantism.

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1. INTRODUCTION

From January 1920 to October 1921, in the center of Tokyo, Uchimura Kanzo gave a sixty-part Sunday lecture series on the Apostle Paul's Epistle to the Romans. His lectures were held in a German-style building called Otemachi Eiseikai Hall, which was located east of the Imperial Palace.¹ This regular meeting was organized as the "Tokyo Bible Study Meeting," and was described as the "Central Lecture Meeting" in Uchimura's journal. Attendees were required to read Uchimura's monthly journal, *Seisho no Kenkyu (Biblical Studies)*, for at least a year; to pay a regular fee (the amount was left to the individual's discretion); and to dress appropriately. The average number of people in the audience, half of whom were students, was between 600 and 700. The largest number that attended one of these lectures was about 800 people. Before Uchimura's lectures, assistants such as Kurosaki Koukichi, Fujii Takeshi, and Azegami Kenzou gave lectures on different passages from the Scripture. These men together with other assistants like Tsukamoto Toraji and Yanaihara Tadao later became independent preachers and trained their own disciples. They were said to be "the second generation" of *Mukyokai* (the Non-Church Movement).

At each of the Sunday programs in this series, Uchimura's lecture lasted for over an hour. One anecdote has it that it was so quiet that a small pin falling on the floor made an echo in the hall. One day, Uchimura wrote in his journal, "It looks like the audience was also impressed so strongly that the silence overwhelmed the hall for a while. Sobbing was heard here and there. All of the audience felt thankfulness for the Cross. The hall was filled by the atmosphere of evangelism. It was indeed a joyous holy day (1921.12.11)." However, Uchimura sometimes reflected that he could not satisfactorily deliver the lecture. For example, he wrote on one occasion, "My lecture was not one that satisfied the ardent audience. My effort to explain the central truth of Romans 8.1-8 was partly a failure. I have realized that Paul's thick words cannot but be tasted by harmonizing each drop with water. However, when my lecture was unsatisfactory, my prayer for God's assistance and blessing became more eager. Sometimes, it may be best to transmit God's truth by supplementing the lack of preaching with prayer. Anyway, there sometimes occurred the undeniable fact that my cry 'God, have mercy on this useless servant!' was uttered from the bottom of my heart (1922.1.15)."

Uchimura dictated each lecture to his assistant, Azegami, who edited the text. The lectures were then serialized in *Seisho no Kenkyu (Biblical Studies)*, volumes 247 (1921.2) to 268 (1922.11). At that time, the number of readers who subscribed to the journal was greater than 3,000,

throughout Japan and overseas. Later these lectures were published as a book called *A Study of Romans* (1924.9). In his introduction to this book, Uchimura reflected:

The audiences [for the lectures] comprised all classes, among which there were believers of various sects of Christianity, believers who did not belong to a church, people who did not regard themselves to be believers, and even Buddhist monks. Indeed, ever since Christianity spread to Japan, it seemed that this country never saw such [large] audiences [for this type of lecture]. The keen enthusiasm of the audience was evident from the fact that each time some [of the audience] traveled from Utsunomiya or even Nagoya [260 km away]. And as for me, it was the culmination of my own life between the ages of fifty-nine and sixty-three. I cannot be more thankful that I engaged in this enjoyable enterprise.... The Epistle to the Romans that was dictated through the Apostle Paul is the one that summarizes the essence of Christianity. Without an understanding of this epistle, one cannot understand Christianity. For forty-seven years, over the course of my life of faith, this epistle is the one I have studied with the most care. In lecturing on Romans, I have been speaking of my own faith. Therefore, giving sixty lectures on the Epistle to the Romans was a continuing pleasure for me. I would not have gotten tired of this lecture, even if I delivered it 100 times or 200 times. This [epistle] tells us of the Gospel of God's grace. This is information about the Love of the Heavenly Father. There cannot be any more enjoyable thing than this. I could not help but weep a little when I finished the sixtieth and final lecture (*Complete Works*, vol.27: page 356 (Tokyo: Iwanami Publishing Company 1981)) [Hereafter only the volume number and the page number from Iwanami Complete Works will be indicated as 27: 356].

This book is the most consistent and comprehensive of all of Uchimura's works which are composed mostly of collections of short essays. His works amount to forty volumes in the most recent edition of Uchimura's complete works. One of Uchimura's disciples, the philosopher Mitani Takamasa, wrote an article called "Truth and the Short Essay," in which he discussed Uchimura's characteristic style of writing.² According to Mitani, there are two types of talents: the "frontier" type; and the "systematic" type. These are exemplified, respectively, by Heraclitus and Plato; Augustine and Aquinas; and Lessing and Goethe. Mitani describes Uchimura's talent as follows:

Our sensei [teacher], Uchimura Kanzo, does not belong to the same type as Thomas, but rather to the type of Augustine. His Mukyokaiism is, in other words, non-systematism. I do not mean that a lack of system itself should be respected. Truth, however, often springs up while neglecting a system. Life cannot be enclosed within a closed system. It is like a big net drawn up to the seashore. Innumerable fishes, small and large, jump up flashing their scales. Fishermen grab them randomly, throw them down, and grab them again. There is not such a thing as a closed system. Fish are lively, and man is lively too. There is not anything but liveliness. Fishers of men are also like this. "The word of the Lord is in mine heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones and I am weary with forbearing and I cannot contain [it within me] (Jeremiah 20.9)." There is no leisure time for such a man to consider a system. Thus, it was a necessary part of Sensei Uchimura's being that forced him to choose the short essay form.

I have quoted Mitani's impressive remarks on Uchimura to remind readers of the liveliness

of his writings. His study of Romans, though more than 400 pages long altogether, is no exception to this. In this paper, I shall focus on Uchimura's understanding of faith and justification by faith as a central doctrine of Paul, within the context of a general application of his methods and thoughts. Although this paper is an introduction to his thoughts in Romans, I shall also point out the germ of the Second-Reformation (Re-Reformation) in his interpretation of faith, which he was keen to develop throughout his life. Since Paul himself, as I understand him, reached out a hand of reconciliation to Catholicism and Protestantism well before the Reformation in sixteenth century, I shall demonstrate that Uchimura was compelled by the text itself to this kind of encompassing interpretation. In parallel with introducing Uchimura's thoughts, I shall carry out a semantic analysis of the text of Romans at a more basic level than his theological interpretations so that Uchimura's thought can be made more clear with some constraints.

2. UCHIMURA'S LECTURES

2.1 Lively descriptions of Paul's character and thought

One characteristic, which anyone who reads these lectures of Uchimura's cannot fail to notice, is his joy in Jesus Christ's atonement, as well as his joy in talking about Paul and his mission. Uchimura expressed his strong affinity with Paul and his work, describing Paul's character as follows:

He [Paul] was a man who held his own against everyone. This was proved by his whole life and by his letters. He was extremely powerful against anyone who tried to hold him back. This unyielding temperament poured out in whatever he said and whatever he did anytime, anywhere. However, this man, Paul, had chosen the way of absolute obedience to Christ alone. Indeed, for Paul the greatest shame was to be the slave of man, a shame that could not be mitigated even by death. It was Paul's usual wish that "it were good for me rather to die, than that any man should make my boast void (Cor. I. 9.15)." But being a slave of Christ was the greatest glory for him, one that Paul would not exchange for anything. He did not take the road of shame but [rather] the road of glory. We should follow him. We should not become a slave of man in any situation, even if we are threatened by death, but we should stand in the place of a servant towards God's only son, the savior of mankind, our lord Jesus Christ. This must be the resolution at the time of our repentance and of our whole life (26: 34).

Uchimura always found joy in speaking of Paul and understood Paul's dedication to Christ as somewhat similar to his own. Only Christ can make proud men such as Paul and Uchimura become obedient slaves. Just as Paul was persecuted by his fellow Jews and his fellow Christians, Uchimura was also persecuted by his fellow Japanese and his fellow Christians; and he was driven from the established church. Just as Paul was sent to the Greeks as a pioneer missionary to the heathens, Uchimura was sent to preach to people who were outside the established churches. This led to Uchimura's founding of Mukyokai (Non-Church Movement) —a movement which pays no attention to ritual ceremonies or to formal organization. Rather, Mukyokai avoided sacramental activity and concentrated on living a life in Jesus Christ, through bible studies and the practice of the central message of the Bible, that is, love through faith. Just as Paul claimed

the dynamism of faith against traditional moral laws (the Jewish Torah), Uchimura emphasized faith as *the easy path* in contrast to *the difficult path* of self-salvation (depending on one's own good deed for salvation). This terminology was transferred from eleventh-century Buddhist tradition, as first expressed by Honen.³

If I must select one single characteristic of Uchimura's lectures on Paul's Epistle to the Romans, I would choose Uchimura's effort to contrast *faith* with *work* as the central core of Pauline doctrine. Uchimura came back to this issue many times in the course of his lectures, discussing it in different contexts and from different perspectives.

There is no doubt that Paul rationally argued for the Gospel on the basis of what had happened through Jesus Christ (the Christ-event), nor any doubt that Paul simultaneously refuted his opponents (primarily the Judaists, who emphasized the law of works that is, Mosaic Law as also being God's true revelation of His will). Paul said "I am debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish" (1.14). In reference to Romans 1.15, Uchimura described Paul's situation as he informed the Romans of his readiness to preach the gospel as follows:

It should be noted that when he [Paul] wrote this epistle, that more than twenty years had passed since he came to this [Christian] faith. He had spent most of this period in missionary work. Thus, Paul's controversies with his opponents were great in number. When we ponder his solitude and his struggles, while surrounded by inflexible Jews and intellectual Greeks, we can imagine the intensity of these controversies. Many of his epistles were written amid the clouds of smoke from battlefields. Therefore, the smell and the sound of gunfire naturally remained in the documents. When Paul wrote to his allies, too, he appeared to argue as if he were about to face enemies who might appear suddenly; and he developed cautious arguments to prevent his enemies from being able to take advantage of his unguarded side. Since his epistles were written under this sort of tension, they contain inexhaustible truth (26: 77).

Uchimura's biblical study of Romans was a rational process in which, alongside the Apostle Paul, he discovered peace and joy in Jesus Christ. In fact, Uchimura denied that his lectures on Romans were biblical commentaries: "Leaving the detailed verse-by-verse explanation of Romans to the commentators, let us be satisfied with an explanation of the overall spirit, the main area, the marrow of the thoughts: unfortunately for us, that is all that time will allow (26: 28).⁴ In other words, Uchimura's rational scrutiny of the relevant passages ceased when he understood the vividness and liveliness of the Scripture, and its connection with events around him in the secular world. Uchimura's lectures contained something solid that struck a chord in the heart of his audience, because he could not deliver his message without himself being moved by his thoughts on the relevant passages themselves and by his awareness of the relevant contemporary issues. Just as living things cannot live without nourishment, Uchimura never tired of studying the Bible as the source of life. In what follows, through an analysis of Uchimura's lectures, I shall try to make clear the solid basis for his thought.

2.2 Uchimura's central concept: finding salvation through the Epistle to the Romans

In his first lecture, Uchimura described how this Epistle brought him his own salvation, by

explaining the relevant events of his predecessors, such as Augustine, Luther, and John Wesley, all of whom found salvation in this Epistle:

I myself am also a person saved by this epistle. We, who are born and brought up in a Confucian country, are inclined to think of Christianity as a way of becoming a saint and a gentleman of noble character, and [we might think] that reaching perfect moral status is the goal of the Christian faith. Under such a presumption, the fact that our real state does not match our ideal status causes agony and distress. In my case, weeping and struggling with this sin, I could not find the solution in Japan, so I went to America to drive away this anguish. A kind teacher [J. H. Seelye, the president of Amherst College] at one time instructed me saying “You do not have to make efforts to be righteous by yourself, as if a child were examining whether a potted plant was rooted and growing by pulling it up every day. There is no chance [to be righteous] in this way. You should not try to be sanctified, but should gaze up at Jesus on the Cross and then peace will fall upon you.” I have been convinced by this teaching, and I finally achieved peace through a careful reading of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans. Gaze up and be saved: this is the way of gaining peace that is shown in Romans. It is the opposite way and against evangelism, to try to be a righteous person so as to reach peace in this way. The gospel is only one thing, that is, being made righteous by God based on one’s faith so as to reach peace. Romans, which is the objective of our study, is the book which teaches this way [that is, gaze up and be saved] (26: 24).

This is a reason why Uchimura wrote in the preface quoted above of *A Study of Romans*: “By lecturing on Romans, I spoke of my own faith.” He experienced his conversion to Christianity on the basis of a new understanding of faith, which he experienced as a young man at Amherst College, under the guidance of J. H. Seelye. Uchimura’s careful study of Romans confirms that Paul’s work was important to his spiritual development, through his analysis of the power of faith. As explained by J. F. Howes, “The Epistle to the Romans is perhaps his [Uchimura’s] favorite or rather most influential book among the sixty-six books of the Bible in the thirty-seven years of his career as a biblical scholar.”⁵⁵ Apart from this series of sixty lectures, Uchimura also wrote on such issues as Paul’s soteriology, atonement, and resurrection in more than twenty articles in his monthly journals of over twenty-five years.

In the *Supplement* to the last lecture of Romans, Uchimura said:

Therefore, in reading Romans, although Paul’s figure appears prominently [in this epistle], what appears far more (more than seventy times) are the figures of God and Christ. Indeed, God’s love and Christ’s salvation stand out prominently in this epistle, pushing aside the individual writer, Paul. Yes, God and Christ clearly stand out, for they receive brilliance from the whole of heaven... Man becomes keenly interested in the study of what this God is, what this Christ is; the love and salvation which Paul tried to reveal [in his epistle], hiding himself as much as possible [in the writing]. In this sense, Romans is an epistle of a great missionary. We do not need to look beyond Romans to find the greatest work in the world. There are not few books that are called great works or masterpieces. Although Goethe’s *Faust* is sometimes called “the bible of modern man,” it cannot be compared with Romans. Other books, such as Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, or Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* cannot possibly compete with Romans. Who can be consoled on his death bed by the so-called great works

of this world? However, in any situation of life or death, the greatest companion is always Romans. There is no book in the world superior to this epistle (27: 574).

2.3 Adherence to Romans 3.21–31

As he was dying in early spring, 1930, Uchimura said, “The problem of life has been already solved by Romans, chapter 3.21–31,” and he asked for this passage to be read at his funeral. Earlier, in 1914, he had written, “The key to the Bible is the following: One should understand the Old Testament through the New Testament and understand the New Testament through Romans and also understand Romans through chapter 3 verses 21 to 31. I believe that a person who could understand verses 21 to 31 under God’s aegis is the person who is bestowed with the precious key which enables him or her to understand the whole Bible (21: 113).” In the first lecture on Romans, Uchimura claimed that chapter 3.21–26 was “the heart” of this epistle (26: 22). Throughout his life, he remained attached to Romans, especially chapter 3 verses 21 to 31. In the last of his sixty consecutive lectures on Romans, Uchimura’s concluding words were as follows:

Modern men would say, “We do not worry about this sort of thing [the agony of sin and conscience experienced by John Bunyan]. We are worried about money matters, passionate love, and about life [in general]. But there aren’t such difficulties for us as wounded conscience, yearning for a living God, or how to deal with this dead body [of ours]. Therefore, even if we do not deny that we are moved a bit by reading this epistle and the author’s ardent sincerity in his lectures, it does not create in us such an ardent faith as the faith which gripped Luther and Wesley. Then don’t we gain any benefit through standing in the row of the study of this epistle?” Indeed, aren’t these things that modern men lack the most, [such things] as yearning for the love of God and the anguish of sin? Thus, modern men do not study Romans and Galatians as the people of former times did with irresistible enthusiasm. But modern men are also men. Insofar as they are men, they will somewhere, sometime experience such things as the agony of conscience. It may happen that, when they fail in their businesses and their reputations are destroyed, they eventually sense that they have nothing to rely on. Or when they face death or are judged in the next world for all the things which they have done, although they do not feel any need of reconciliation with God in this world, their dormant conscience may suddenly awake and be unable to bear their own filth. Yes, I believe that insofar as a man is a man, such an awakening takes place at least one time [in each life]. On such an occasion, Romans will become useful. Indeed, it is useful in an emergency. On such an occasion, the title of Doctor or a huge fortune and knowledge of this world do not help. Paul’s old Romans, however, becomes a reliable guide for our salvation. Then chapter 3 verses 23–28 surround me as the rock of a thousand years and enable me to avoid the burning fire of judgment. On that occasion, our year-and-a-half study of Romans will bring actual profit. A proverb says that it is worthwhile to spend one’s whole life to be prepared for the last three minutes. Likewise, it is worthwhile to study Romans with one’s whole effort to prepare for the judgment day. For all have sinned, and all fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by his blood, to show his righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done formerly, in the

forbearance of God; for the showing of his righteousness at this present season, that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus. Where then is the glory? It is excluded. By what manner of Law? Of works [the law of works]? Nay, but by a law of faith. We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law (27: 111).

2.4 Epistle to the Romans and the Gospels (“The Road of Galilee”)

After his sixty-lecture series, Uchimura wrote an impressive short essay entitled “the Epistle to the Romans and the Gospels.” In this essay about the life of Jesus in the Gospels (“The Road of Galilee”), Uchimura commented:

Leaving Romans, and entering the Gospels, I feel as if I am leaving a great artificial public garden and entering into a great natural forest. Although Paul is a great [man], he is a man of strenuous endeavor. Jesus is the son of God and is a saint in nature. I feel I am drinking distilled water when reading Romans; but I feel I am ladling water from a spring that splashes among rocks when studying the Gospel. There is no argument in Jesus; there is only a fragrance. There is no theology, but [only] irresistible inspiration. I do not know why, but I am aware that I am naturally unified to Jesus by studying his words and deeds in the Gospels. He is a wonderful man and it is a wonderful book. I cannot describe it as anything but inspiration. First of all, it would be futile to examine the articles of faith. Why is it so? It is so because it is so. I shall become like Jesus by touching him in the Gospels. Arriving at this point, church, ritual, theology, and articles of faith are useless, but I am aware that just as eagles mount up with stretched wings towards heaven, I am drawn to pure heaven through forgetting earth and self (27–252).

This short essay conveys Uchimura’s relief after such hard work on Romans that we can even, as it were, detect his sigh of relief. It is necessary for me to quote this passage, in order to make his soul’s character known and to produce a balance or complementariness between Uchimura’s attitude to Romans and his attitude to the Gospels, between his intellectual hard work and his infant-like devotion to Jesus. This should lead us to treat his lectures on Romans as initially appealing to our intelligence, rather than as inspiration, although nothing hinders us from ladling the water of the spring of life through hard intellectual analysis of the Epistle to the Romans.

3. SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF ROMANS 3.19–31

3.1 Uchimura’s understanding of the relation between the righteousness of God and man’s faith

The relevant passages in Paul’s Epistle to the Romans that we will examine closely are: first, 1.16–17 and second, 3.21–26. The English translation of the text that Uchimura used (King James Authorized [Revised] Version, 1881) is as follows:

(I)¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jews first, and also to the Greeks.¹⁷ For therein is revealed a righteousness of God by faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith. (II)²¹ But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being

witnessed by the law and the prophets;²²even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe; for there is no distinction;²³for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:²⁴whom God set forth to be propitiation, through faith, by his blood, to shew his righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God;²⁵for the shewing, *I say*, of his righteousness at this present season:²⁶that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.

Uchimura paid attention to the two occurrences of the word “faith,” in the passage (I) 1.17 (“by faith unto faith”), and he offers several scholarly interpretations of the phrase. He justifiably rejected the ordinary understanding of this phrase as the “mere progress of faith,” because this reading would separate its close connection with “the righteousness of God,” by focusing merely on man’s mental state as having faith to a degree. Instead, Uchimura introduced the following interpretation of the phrase as a plausible one: “from God’s faith in man towards man’s faith in God (26: 94)”. That is, the flow of faith is not confined in man’s mental state but is derived from God’s faith in man towards man’s faith in God. Uchimura understood the fact that the word “faith,” appeared twice in connection with God’s righteousness, as showing a close connection between God’s righteousness and God’s faithfulness. “God’s faithfulness (*pistin theou*)” (3.4) towards man must be understood as the main theme of the epistle in relation to God’s righteousness, although he did not explicitly state this. It is unfortunate that Uchimura did not explicitly pursue this interpretation of the passage as “based on God’s faithfulness to man’s faith.” This phrase corresponds to the passage in (II) 3.22: “through the faithfulness of [in] Jesus Christ unto all them that believe.” God’s faithful act is distinct from and also basic for man’s faith towards God. If Uchimura had gone further this line of thought in his analysis, this thought would have constituted a dimension in which God’s character such as righteousness and faithfulness is revealed as independent of man’s act towards God. This would have opened the possibility of a semantic analysis of these passages as a preliminary step to and a pre-stage of any theological interpretation. Without referring to God’s faithfulness, what Uchimura really meant to convey cannot be properly understood.

Uchimura commented:

It is evident in the text that the phrase “by [based on] faith unto faith” is closely linked to the manifestation of “the righteousness of God.” Also from the context, it is inappropriate to take the view of “the progress of faith.” I do think that Paul meant by this phrase that the righteousness of God is something to be received based on faith, to be retained in faith, and being complete based on faith. As I have said before, God’s righteousness is the righteousness which God gives and reveals to man and is not based on the product of man’s effort. Man is justified only on the basis of faith, not by his own deeds and merits. That is, man receives God’s righteousness based on faith. This is a great grace that is bestowed to man and the privileges which man embraces. No matter who he is, if he returns and believes in his Father, God and in Jesus Christ, he is forgiven by faith alone and justified and he basks in grace (26: 95).

The concept of “[God’s righteousness] something being complete based on faith” as well as the idea of faith as a “great grace” in this passage is comprehensible only by considering God’s

faithful act through Jesus Christ, regardless of the mental act of faith in humankind which is inevitably varied in degree and depth. There are some unique characteristics of faith in this argument. First, one's faith does not depend in any degree on one's mental state, but is complete in itself. Anyone which receives God's righteousness must be regarded to be itself complete with respect to his faith. Second, faith is simply a passive act of receiving God's righteousness. Third, this passive act itself is a grace. These characteristics come from Uchimura's understanding of human faith as not being severed from God's faithful act. Uchimura expressed his unqualified faith in man's part in this process. This is because Uchimura did not want to sever the faith that man holds from God's faithful act and from His righteousness. This is the gist of Protestantism. Martin Luther simply cleaved it to *fides Christi* (Faith of Christ).

Along the same interpretive vein, Uchimura who took the passage (II) 3.22 as the one in which "necessary and explanatory verbs are omitted" and thus supplied them as follows: "The righteousness of God [the righteousness being revealed]/through faith in Jesus Christ [the righteousness being received]/unto all people [the righteousness being issued]/all them that believe [the righteousness being retained]/for there is no distinction (26: 171)." That is, God's righteousness is the one which is being revealed, issued and received and furthermore retained to all people who believe. As for the phrase "through faith in Jesus Christ" (although I read "of" which is adopted in the marginal note of KJV instead of "in" (as I shall discuss in due course)), we may wonder why man's mental state can become a medium of God's revelation. This is because, as was generally understood by figures like Martin Luther, man's faith is itself God's initiative and is an act of grace through which God causes man to believe in Jesus Christ. One is supposed to understand God's initiative in man's having faith in Jesus Christ. This is a pious or theological reading of the text.

God's initiative act is emphasized in receiving, retaining, and being complete by one's faith. *Faith* should be understood as not severing one's mental state as having faith *from* God's faithfulness towards man. The characteristics of faith as receiving, retaining, and being complete is something that can and should be carried out *in front of God* without paying attention to the degrees and varieties of faith. In other words, these characteristics of faith must be factual about human faith in front of God, i.e. God's cognition of man's faith on the basis of the revelation of faith of Jesus Christ, regardless of how we think of our own faith. What is revealed through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ is that anyone who is regarded by God as being "the person based on the faith of Jesus (*ton ek pisteōs Iēsu*)" is justified (3.26, cf. "the person based on the faith of Abraham (*tōi ek pisteōs Abraam*)" (4.16)).

This language belongs to a different grammar from the language of our own flesh, in which there is progress and variation among people who have faith. In the sight of God, faith is understood as something that is received, is retained, and is complete with respect to God's righteousness through the faith of Jesus Christ.

3.2 Uchimura's distinction between "before God" and "before man"

Uchimura distinguished between "before God" (in the sight of God) and "before man" (in the sight of man) as follows:

What Paul dealt with is not "before man" but "before God." He [Paul] did not care how

he appeared to be before man. Some may be saints or men of noble character. Further, some may be sanctified or may be men of great faith. There may be found in them nobility of character and depth of intellect. But each of these [qualities] is something “before man” and thus is reflected through the eye of man, but is not [a quality that exists] “before God.” It is looking at earthly phenomena from the same point of view as that same earth rather than looking down from the viewpoint of heaven. When “the Lord looks down from heaven, all man are sinners (Ps. 14.2).” In front of God, all men are sinners (26: 157).

Although Uchimura did not distinguish these two perspectives according to a semantic analysis of the text nor did not always keep this clear distinction in his interpretations of Romans, I believe that the distinction was essential for him, when he thought of Christ as a new revelation of a righteous man before God. In this view, insofar as one is confined to one’s own kind, that is, insofar as one lives only in front of other fellow human beings, one is led astray and remains in darkness. I construe this as based on Uchimura’s theological soundness of judgment in not severing our mental states from God’s initiative acts.

In Uchimura’s way of thinking, it is not enough for one merely to rid any matter before man, but of any matter thought under the law of works. Thus he can concentrate on the Christ-event—an event that represents the overcoming of the bondage of the Mosaic law of works. “But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets (3.21),” Uchimura said:

The sudden change of the situation is indicated by “but now.” The fact that there is an entirely different world is suddenly revealed to a man who hitherto had been kept roaming in the darkness under the bondage of the law [of works]. The border of change from the world of darkness to the world of lightness is marked by the short but important phrase “but now.” While the previous stage is one of a disordered world, the censure of sin, and destruction by the law, the latter [stage] is one of the forgiveness of sin, the manifestation of righteousness, and salvation by the Gospel... The “but now” indeed is the ringing bell that announces the dawn of the new world. The emergence of the new world is based on the advent of Christ. Due to this advent, the bondage of the old law disappeared and the salvation of freedom became reality among us (26: 166).

Although he did not make a semantic analysis of the text, Uchimura intuitively knew that 3.21–26 is a language of revelation of righteous man. It is the language before God in which God’s faithful act and understanding of man through Jesus Christ is dictated and reported by Paul. Uchimura said:

In the last part of the twenty-second verse, there occurs a phrase, “for there is no distinction.” Because of this concise expression, it is not certain what kind of distinction is denied in this sentence... Since the verse says that there is no distinction in the degree of God’s righteousness bestowed to people who believe, it must mean that there is no distinction among people. This is what everyone can immediately agree upon. That is, Paul claimed that anyone, whoever he is, is justified by his faith... [that is] there is no distinction in nationality. Man, however good or bad he may be as an individual, is justified by his faith alone. There is also no distinction between old and young, man and woman, wise and stupid, rich and poor, righteous and unrighteous, or good and bad men. It is the ordinary view that only righteous

and good men are saved, and sinners and bad men perish. However, the Gospel does not draw the distinction between a good and a bad man, a righteous and an unrighteous man. A man is justified only if he believes. On this vital point, any man *who comes to belong to God* and *who is obedient to Christ* through his own repentance, is given God's righteousness (26: 173).

In his explanation of justification by faith alone, Uchimura stated, as an objective fact, that the person who is justified is "any man who belongs to God and is obedient to Christ." This is a fact *before God*, in the sense that God's understanding of man's belonging to Himself is the reality of the human being before God. Uchimura developed the language of "before God," by describing the objective fact of man's situation without its clear conceptual grasp.

Uchimura commented on this phrase as follows: "The phrase "there is no distinction" is indeed great. In an era [when men were] seeking for distinction in anything, how great Paul was, standing his ground thorough conviction! Anyone, whoever he is, is justified by faith. Therefore, on this one point of salvation, any difference that exists among human beings ceases to be any difference at all. Therefore, even a sinful man is saved if he believes. By this reasoning, we are at peace for the first time (26: 174)." Before man, there are many distinctions among people. But before God, through the redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ, any distinction has disappeared. Uchimura grasped the difference of situations between what is present before man and what is present before God.

Uchimura's own commitment to this paragraph comes from its clear statement of redemption through Jesus Christ. He said:

The last phrase of verse 3.24 is "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." The question is why a man is justified freely only by grace. This extreme grace is beyond our comprehension because it is so good, and it is hard to believe why this extreme privilege has been bestowed on man. This phrase [3.24] answers the question of what is the foundation for this grace. Paul says "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." This is the explanation of the fact that a man who is not righteous is [nevertheless] made righteous. That is, man is continuously made righteous by faith alone because of the redemption of Christ. To see Christ's cross as the redemption of all humanity's sin is the indispensable basis of evangelism. Although new theology today excludes this [concept] as an old thought, the precious nature of the redemption itself represents a spiritual medicine that cures the wounds of the soul. The precious blood of God's only son is shed for all people, and thus Christ's death is the death of redemption in which Christ himself bears the sin of all people. Thus, we who are sinful and unrighteous are regarded as not sinful and as righteous. Therefore, the redemption of Christ is indeed the foundation of the Gospel... As heaven is high and the earth is wide, this one thing is very sure (26: 185).

The foundation of the Gospel is thus laid down in the faithful act of Jesus of Nazareth, whose life is seen by God as the medium for conveying His own faithfulness and righteousness. Uchimura reports, through Paul, God's cognition of Christ's death as "the death of redemption in which Christ himself bears the sin of all people." This is what is revealed in the life of Jesus of Nazareth in front of God.

3.3 Paul's argument for the Reality before God (3.21–31): A Semantic Analysis

The above passage explains the marrow of the Gospel as Uchimura understood it through the study of Romans. In this section, I shall look further into what Uchimura intended to say from the perspective of a semantic analysis of the relevant text. I shall endorse the direction and intention of Uchimura's interpretation so as to confirm that he intuitively grasped the argument in 3.21–26 as the language before God. When we make a semantic analysis of the epistle to the Romans, we find that Paul distinguished and articulated at least three types of human beings. There are three dimensions of reality toward which Paul gazed up and accordingly spun the words by looking at the reality such that his arguments resulted in three mutually independent language networks. Three types of man are distinguished according to these three dimensions. Each of the three types has its own coherent language network, so that each is basically independent of each other. Or rather these dimensions are created by these three types of man according to God's revelations and Paul's concession to the human infirmity. The first two groups are (A) human beings who are righteous in the sight of God; and (B) human beings who are sinful in the sight of God. The third group (C) comprises autonomous beings who live in responsible freedom. Paul describes this third type by saying, "I speak after the manner of man (*kata anthropinon*) because of the weakness of your flesh (6.19)." This phrase, "the manner of man" suggests that the autonomous being (type C) understands man from a human-centric standpoint, in which, for instance, the word "slave" is applied in the neutral way either to "the slave of sin" or to "the slave of righteousness" (6.17–20). Paul understands such a man to be one who could become either a righteous being (type A) or a sinful being (type B). Groups A and B constitute the languages of "before God"; and group C constitutes the language of "before man." Paul spared no pains to articulate these dimensions because of his love for weak people.

Continuing my analysis from this perspective, my translation of the relevant passage (3.19–31) in which we find these three language networks ((B) (A) (C) in order) as follows:

[(B)]¹⁹ Now we know that whatever things the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God. ²⁰Because on the basis of the law of works, no flesh will be justified before God. For there is [God's] knowledge of sin through the law.

[(A)]²¹ But now apart from the law, a righteousness of God has been revealed, being shown by the law and testified by the prophets; ²²the righteousness of God has been revealed through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ to all those who believe. For there is no distinction. ²³For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ but are men being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; ²⁵whom God set forth to be an atoning sacrifice, through the faithfulness in his blood, for a demonstration of his righteousness through the passing over of prior sins, through God's forbearance; ²⁶to demonstrate his righteousness at this opportunity; that he might himself be just, and the justifier of man who is on the basis of Jesus' faith.

[(C)]²⁷ Where then is the boasting? It is excluded. By what manner of law? Of works [Mosaic law]? No, but by a law of faith. ²⁸We recognize therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the law of works. ²⁹Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,³⁰ since indeed there is one God who will justify the

circumcised on the basis of faith, and the uncircumcised through the same faith [that is, being apart from the law of works]. ³¹Do we then nullify the law through faith [being apart from the law of works]? May it never be! No, we confirm the law [of works].

The first two types of human beings are based on God's revelation respectively in (A) Jesus Christ and (B) Mosaic law. In these perspectives, the mental state of individual members is not considered. Paul only considered the mental state of type C (free and responsible man). From these two perspectives, Paul reports God's revelation such that while anyone who is regarded by God to be in Jesus Christ is righteous, anyone who is regarded by God to be under Mosaic law is sinful. A basic characteristic of the language before God consists in that insofar as the agent of revelation is God, the relevant words and sentences which report God's cognition and act must be understood, first of all, by God Himself as they are. Thus, what Paul does in the language before God is, as it were, translating into Greek what God has understood and revealed about Jesus of Nazareth and its related matters. Thus the phrase "all people who believe" (3.22), first of all, signifies those people who are regarded by God to be the people who believe.

God's new revelation is that the righteousness of God, which is revealed through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, makes all men who are regarded by God as "all people who believe" righteous. In this perspective, "faith," in "all people who believe" (group A) is not describing anyone's mental state. Instead, it is required at the formal level of this analysis to grasp the meaning of such words as "righteousness," "faith," and "reveal." As the object of God's revelation, it is necessary to write "all who believe" due to a formal constraint at the level of language and epistemology which are basic ingredients of any theological language so as to know God's righteousness. Insofar as the theological language can be understood at all, it must presuppose a current use of language and a cognitive structure. These are the most basic elements, so that any theological interpretation must be constrained by these analyses ultimately based on the principle of non-contradiction. It is evident according to the meaning of contrary terms that no one can see that someone is "faithful," as he is "doubtful" about the opponent. Just as one cannot swim without presupposing water and thus one cannot grasp the meaning of "swimming" without grasping the meaning of "water" it is necessary for anyone who "knows" God's righteousness to have "faith" on his part. On this point, Paul does not consider how much faith one must have in order to be regarded by God as a man having faith. God's cognition of righteous man is dictated and delivered by Paul in such a general way that anyone who knows Greek grammar and the current language can understand what God conceived and revealed about these matters. More basically and formally, in order to know any statement to be true, one is required to believe the relevant statement to be true. The meaning of the word "knowledge" is in general preceded by the meaning of the word "belief" or "faith". That is why it is indispensable to add "all those who believe" as the object of God's revelation. At least there is a formal dimension in which these utterances can be understood. In other words, the quantified term "all" is required to state at the formal level in the sense that anyone cannot know anything without having faith or at least a belief at the cognitive level towards the relevant issue.

On the other hand, Uchimura explains this phrase at the theological level by saying, "God is always prepared to bestow his unfathomable grace to man. But man who is supposed to receive this grace does not come to think of only one qualification so as for it to be received either

by being unprepared or by rejecting it with his obstinate heart or by wondering around in a dark valley of vacuous endeavor. When one does not hold faith, which is the only qualification of receiving grace, there is eventually no way of bestowing grace for the Heavenly Father who is waiting and willing to bestow it (26: 96).” Uchimura, who did not semantically distinguish the dimensions of man’s reality between before God and before man, is here obliged to put one’s mental state of having faith as “the only qualification” of justification and thus as an exception of “no distinction.”

In his attractive short commentary of Romans, W. Barclay also says the similar thing: “God gave man free-will, and God respects that free-will. In the last analysis not even God can interfere with that free-will... Before man there stands an open choice. It has to be so. Without choice there can be no goodness, and without choice there can be no love... If men deliberately choose to turn their backs on God, then, after God has sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world, not even He can do anything about it. When Paul speaks of God *abandoning* men to uncleanness, that word *abandon* has no angry irritation in it. Indeed, its main note is not even condemnation and judgment. Its main note is a wistful, sorrowful regret, as of a lover who has done all that he can do and can do no more. It describes exactly the feeling of the father when he say his son turn his back on his home and go out to the far country. There is far more of sorrow than of anger in a man’s heart when he sees a thing like that.”⁶ Barclay delivers a theological language on the basis of C language. Barclay here guesses God’s mental state by the analogy of the father whose son turned his back within the comprehensible language network of “free-will”. Anyone who tries to be “in Jesus Christ” understands free will in terms of Leibnizian liberty of spontaneity (*libertas spontaneitatis*) in which the external necessity and his spontaneous mind to follow the necessity are compatible. On the other hand, the liberty of indifference (*libertas indifferentiae*) to which Barclay seems to be committed is nothing but a delusion for him who tries to utter an inspired language (which will be later called D language). For instance, a person who knows his bodily condition suffering from a diabetes will not ponder to choose between meat and soba, but rather willingly and spontaneously follows doctor’s order to eat soba.

If our having faith as a mental state is the qualification for and the condition of being justified, it is contradicted by the statement that “there is no distinction, for all have sinned (3.22)” between a person who believes and a person who does not believe. Doesn’t God justify “the ungodly” “freely by God’s grace” alone? (3.24, 4.5). God’s free grace rejects any involvement of human condition, insofar as we stick to the meaning of the term. We should not call having faith on our part as “a qualification” of receiving grace. This is merely a formal constraint of the linguistic and epistemological level in order to understand God’s revelation of justification, insofar as God’s revelation can be understood by us at all and we stick to the perspective A in which any human condition is not considered.

From this perspective A, man’s mental state (such as how much faith is required to be justified) is not considered. God will make “a man based on the faith of Jesus” righteous (3.26). God revealed that a person who is regarded by God to have such a faith as the one based on the faith of Jesus is justified. By “faith of Jesus,” Paul understands this language of revelation as meaning the faith which Jesus of Nazareth held during his life. Anyone who is regarded by God

as having faith being based on the faith of Jesus is made righteous by God. This is what is revealed through the faith of Jesus Christ. Given that God's revelation is generally stated, we are not revealed in particular as the people being regarded by God to be on the basis of Jesus' faith. Paul himself says, "I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected (I Cor. 9.27)." This implies that there remains to be unrecognizable thing in one's cognitive level with respect to his salvation, although nothing hinders him from experiencing "peace of God, which is beyond our utmost understanding" at his spiritual level (Phil. 4.7).

In passage (C), Paul deduces some of the consequences of this revelation. On this basis, Paul deduces in 3.27 that any boast on one's own part (such as regarding oneself as righteous and virtuous) is excluded. Through the faith of Jesus, which is a historical fact, no boast is permitted; that is, God is well pleased with the faith of a person who is like a child or a repentant sinner. Paul deduces in 3.28 which later became the locus for "justification by faith": "*We recognize*, therefore, that a man is justified by faith apart from the law of works." Paul, as a representative of humanity indicated by the subject "we", understands the significance of God's revelation in the faith of Jesus Christ as the justification by faith on our part from the perspective C.

This is different from the revelation in Mosaic law, which confined all men to a status of sinners before God. In passage (B), Paul claimed that "we know" (3.19) on the basis of the revelation by Mosaic law that any man who is under the law of works will not be justified. This is a claim made in the language of group B.

When Uchimura said, "Christians are not under the law," he was aware of the contrast in terms of reality before God between groups A and B. He wrote:

Paul says, "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace (6.14)." One thing that should be noted is that Christians are not under the law. It is required for us to be insulated from the law [of works] either by abolishing the law completely, or by ourselves being sanctified to such a degree that we do not violate any law. In a word, morality is unnecessary. Therefore, this is very revolutionary. Indeed, it is quite dangerous if we misunderstand it. However, we cannot keep away this important truth by being frightened of misunderstanding. Unless man reaches the mental state in which morality is unnecessary, one cannot know the delight and preciousness of faith. Indeed, sanctification is the border which shows the needlessness of morality. Thus, abolishing morality is a necessary element which leads a man to authentic faith and sanctification. When one is [living] under morality, one only realizes one's own sin and [one] is never able to reach the delight of faith, and of being blessed of sanctification (26: 259).

When we carry out a semantic analysis of the text, which results in at least three perspectives on the reality of human beings, we no longer find any alleged contradiction in Paul himself. However, commentators are puzzled by the following apparently contradictory (or at least conflicting) sentences between types A and B. While Paul says in one passage about group B: "God will recompense every man according to his works (2.6)," in another passage, he says about group A: "Now if a man does have works to his credit, his wages are not reckoned as a matter of grace but as a debt; but to the man who has no work to his credit but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness (4.4)." Some commentators take the

B claim as “a warning.”⁷ These two passages are not contradictory, however, because passage 1.18–3.20 points to the language network of B, that is, to the Mosaic law of work (not to “the work of the law,” as is usually understood). Anyone who lives under the law must fulfill the law of works in every respect, because on the final day God will deliver judgment on the person who lives under the law according to his works. The person who lives under the law of works must satisfy all applicable laws or precepts. Paul said, “as many as have sinned under law shall be judged by law; for not the hearers of a law are righteous before God, but the doers of a law shall be justified” (2.12–13, cf. Gal. 5.3). It has been revealed in B passage, however, that such a man would be condemned by God through His cognition of sin according to the law of works (*dia gar nomû epignôsis hamartias*) (3.20).

Although these are two types of man before God, Paul conceded that there could possibly be men who are autonomous (group C) who could live either in Jesus Christ or under the law of works. This kind of man, and the corresponding language network that describes him, is the result of Paul’s concession to the weakness of flesh (6.19). Paul regards this man as possibly being a “slave of righteousness” or a “slave of sin”. This possible being is the man who lives before mankind, not before God. In front of God, any man must be either righteous or sinful, although God may patiently wait for the sinner to repent. “Flesh” means the principle of life for a natural entity having a body made of earth. The weakness of the flesh consists of its propensity or tendency to consider the limit of body as the limit of self.

When Paul observed the different states of human beings, and addressed the people of Rome in the imperative mood, this dimension of his language is different from the language of the revelation “before God” for groups A or B. When Paul spoke to the Romans, he ordered, “Even so reckon you also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus (6.11)”, and he presupposed that the people of Rome might or might not obey the order. For if Paul did not presuppose the possible disobedience of the Romans, he would not have delivered his statement in the imperative mood. The persons whom Paul addressed in the imperative mood were capable of being of either righteous or sinful. The conditional clause “if Christ dwells in you (8.10)” presupposes a similar situation. In this clause, Paul considers the possibility of Christ’s not dwelling in believers. The possibility is that the resulting being is one who lives, not in front of God, but in front of man. It is not clearly revealed to each person, who is righteous and who is not. That is why having faith on one’s part is always essential for every man. Thus, Paul orders, “The faith which you have according to yourself (*kata seauton*), have you before God (14.22).” This order is addressed to the person in group C so as not to sever his faith which is held according to his own free responsibility *from* the faith revealed in Jesus Christ as constituting the faith of people in group A.

Jesus of Nazareth, through his life in the flesh, revealed the reality of a righteous man in front of God by faith alone (group A). By his faith, Jesus overcame the weakness of the flesh. Jesus’ faith, while he was in the flesh, was thought well of by God, as something which corresponds to “God’s faithfulness (3.4).” God’s recognition of righteous man is revealed to all people who believe in Him through the faith of Jesus Christ.

Each of these realities (A, B, and C) has its own consistent or coherent language network. Besides these language networks (or rather, as the basis for these articulations) Paul captured the

reality of Jesus Christ who is both the son of God and a man. In this, Paul offered a language network that is not concessive but authentic. This language is based on the connection between the groups A and C through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the glue (+) which makes the realities (A) and (C) as the reality (D), that is ((A)+(C)). I shall call this reality the “theological entity” (or (D)). In this analysis, (D) which integrates (A) and (C) through the Holy Spirit as (D=A+C), and the corresponding language network (that is, the “theological language,” or the “language of Jesus Christ” (D)) contains reference to the Holy Spirit. According to Paul’s consequentialism, it will be judged and known through the fruit of utterance and deed of a relevant person, whether his utterance is indeed a spirited D language or not. Jesus says “A good tree always yields good fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit or a poor tree good fruit. (Mat. 7.17)”.

With respect to the theological entity Jesus Christ and corresponding theological language, there is one extremely important linguistic fact (which has been hitherto escaped from the notice of commentators). The proper name “Jesus Christ” was never used in Romans to designate an agent of an action. While “Jesus” was viewed as an agent, as a responsible human being (see 3.26, 4.24, 8.11, 10.9, 14.14), “Christ” was viewed as a heavenly agent who makes intercession for man at the right hand of God (e.g., 8.34, 15.7, 15.18). God’s intention of delivering his own son to the world in the flesh is fulfilled by the life of Jesus of Nazareth. In other words, Jesus carried out God’s intention, which was bestowed on him in his own flesh, through his own responsible freedom in the C perspective. Jesus was also punished by God in his own flesh in the C perspective. “Concerning sin, God has punished the sin in the flesh [of Jesus] (8.3).” That is why Jesus was “appointed the Son of God in power, according to the spirit of holiness, based on the resurrection of the dead (1.5).” While we can ascribe action to Jesus of Nazareth, we cannot ascribe action to Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ is the entity who has incorporated both the being, Jesus (wholly a man), and the being, Son of the God (thus opening a new reality for human beings in the D perspective). Paul could not ascribe any action to such person who is constitutive of two types of agents *both* man *and* God. Since Jesus Christ is such unique entity, Paul employed locutions such as the prepositions “in,” and “through” before the proper name “Jesus Christ”, so that the being, Jesus Christ, could be understood as the medium *in* whom and *through* whom God reveals His judgment and His intention towards human beings (see 2.16, 3.24, 5.1, 6.3, and 8.1).

If Paul had not conceded that the flesh is weak, he would have only used the language of D, in other words, the one of Jesus Christ as a theological entity. Talking about Jesus Christ would be the same linguistic act as talking about each of us. Paul would have claimed that everything is clear in front of God, because God created all creatures in front of Him. The human being is a relatively autonomous creature of God, insofar as he is a free and responsible. Uchimura, as well as Luther, is committed to the theological language of D, for Uchimura did not sever the concept “before God” (A) from the concept “before man” (C) in his consideration of Jesus Christ, the being who lived in both dimensions in full. Calvin claimed that “this would be, as it were, to rend Christ asunder.”⁸ This adherence to the language of D is the gist of Protestantism. Uchimura’s remark (that “any man who belongs to God and is obedient to Christ is righteous”) was delivered as D language, although in my view this is actually A-type language. We can

understand the meaning of this sentence at the formal level at least by articulating three realities without appealing to the Holy Spirit. Although the language of group A can be understood without appealing to the Holy Spirit, the language channel which was opened up by Jesus of Nazareth was D-type language. Insofar as we are obedient to Christ (in front of God), we may be able to claim that our own language belongs to the D category.

4. CONCLUSION

Romans 3.21–26 is in the language of the A group, that is, the “before God” language, through which God’s understanding, judgment, and action concerning human beings are all reported. In other words, God is the agent of this paragraph and the grammar in dimension A is not same as in the dimension which Paul used in his understanding of man as an agent because of the weakness of his flesh. Paul distinguished the (f1) “faith (fullness) of Jesus Christ (3.21),” which I will term (f1), from “faith” (f2), which is the mental disposition or state of all human beings, with exception of Jesus of Nazareth. When Paul gazed at our flesh and uttered “faith,” it refers to a mental state emerged in our soul. This (f2) -type of our own flesh varies from person to person, and it also varies from time to time within one person. Paul described this type of faith by associating this faith, as well as the believer, with the ideas of “weak,” “progress,” “lack,” and “growth” (See 14.1, Phil. 1.25, I Th. 3.10, II Cor. 10.15.). This pronouncement came from Paul’s human manner of speaking, due to the infirmity of flesh. The criteria, by means of which Paul distinguishes a person’s varied faith, belong to his understanding of the phenomena that can be observed in the human dimension. That is, this worldly dimension is man’s responsibility, although this dimension itself is ultimately under the control of God, existing with His permission (cf. II Cor. 10.13).

Paul described (f1) “the faith (fullness) of Jesus Christ” as the language of revelation from God’s side (that is, he used A-type language and concepts). Paul stated that “the faith (fullness) of Jesus Christ” is the medium for the revelation of God’s righteousness. When Paul talked about “the faith (fullness) of Jesus Christ,” he meant *the faith* that is constituted by the two agents (God and Jesus of Nazareth). “God’s faithfulness” (3.4) and Jesus’ faith together constitute the faith (fullness) of Jesus Christ, and are the result of the acts of both beings. In general, for any entity to become *a medium* of two entities of different genera, this entity must embody (at least potentially and preferably actually) characteristics of both original genera.

Since this entity referred by “Jesus Christ” is *the medium* of God’s revelation, God’s attributes, such as righteousness and faithfulness, must be present in this entity. The use of the genitive “of” grammatically signifies the one of belonging. This genitive form was employed to explain that the faithfulness of God, which was realized in Jesus of Nazareth, also belonged to Jesus Christ (who is the actual mediator between God and man). In this sense, the “faith” and “faithfulness” in this passage are attributed both to Jesus of Nazareth, and to God who sent Jesus to the world. But insofar as faith is used as a medium of revelation, it must be understood as belonging to God. Thus, God’s righteousness is revealed through his faithfulness to all men who believe.

Catholicism developed its theological view on the basis of Paul’s concession that the flesh is

weak, and by employing Aristotelian language (that is, the C-type language). When Thomas Aquinas said that “Christ did not have faith, because he had a clear vision (*visionem apartem*) of God,”⁹ Aquinas understood “faith” only in the C dimension, and mainly as a cognitive mental state (that is, as (f2)). Aquinas did not consider the existence of *Fides Christi* based on 3.22, the passage to which Luther cleaved. Paul already offered a means of reconciliation between Catholicism and Protestantism by distinguishing three dimensions of mutually independent languages—that is, by ascribing the “faith (fullness) of Jesus Christ” to language of A group, and by ascribing our mental state of having faith to the language of group C. If Uchimura had been clear on this point, he would have shown more fully the persuasiveness of the Christ-event to which he dedicated his whole life.

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Note

- (1) J. Howes describes Uchimura at that time as follows: “Uchimura considered his four years there [Otemachi] between the ages of fifty-nine and sixty-three the “high tide” of his career. [Having previously lectured on the Book of Daniel and Job, he] began an even bigger project [lecturing on Romans], the one that many would consider his greatest work.” J. F. Howes, *Japan's Modern Prophet: Uchimura Kanzo 1861-1930*, pp.280-288 (UBC Press 2005).
- (2) Mitani Takamasa, *Complete Works* Vol.4., p.158 (1934) (Iwanami 1965)
- (3) J. F. Howes, p.231.
- (4) Cf. M. La Fay, “Love” and “Righteousness” in Uchimura Kanzo’s A Study of Romans, p.100, *Journal of the Graduate School of Letters*, Hokkaido University. URL, <http://hdl.handle.net/2115/42868>
- (5) J. F. Howes wrote, “Uchimura had conceived of Bible study as a vocation while a student in the United States and started it with his comments on Ruth in his first six months as a writer. During the succeeding thirty-seven years, he analyzed almost all sixty-six books of the Bible. The exceptions were all in the Old Testament: Nehemiah, Song of Solomon, Lamentations and five of the minor prophets, Joel, Micah, Nahum, Haggai and Malachi. Uchimura’s studies of the Bible still form the largest single corpus of commentaries on the Bible in the Japanese language.” p.283.
- (6) W. Barclay,, *The Letter to The Romans*, p.21 (Edinburgh 1963).
- (7) E. Jünger, *Paulus und Jesus*, p.70 (Tübingen 1962). Similarly E. Käsemann construed such that the doctrine of justification is superior to the doctrine of judgment according to the work by presupposing both doctrines as being comparable at the same level. In his commentary on Romans 2.11, Käsemann wrote: “One cannot simply establish the contradiction and demand that it be upheld. Otherwise Paul becomes schizophrenic. Christ as the fulfillment of the law is not yet treated in this passage, so that the problem also cannot be blunted in this way. The decisive thing is that the doctrine of judgment according to works not be ranked above justification but conversely be understood in the light of it, although this perspective is not yet apparent here.” E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, p.58, tr. G. W. Bromiley (Eerdmans Pub. Co 1980). Besides, I read “*telos nomû*,” (10. 4) as not “(Christ as) the fulfillment of the law,” but “(Christ as) the goal of law [of works].”.
- (8) J. Calvin, *In Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos Commentarii*, ch. 8., v. 9.
- (9) T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-1. Q65ad (3).