

WILSON, BISHOP A.W.

Wilson, Bishop Alpheus W.

Some of A. W. W.'s papers
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TWU Oct. '63

Sakatsu, Japan
July 19, 1907
My dear Bishop Standley,
Yours of March 15 came
daily to hand with clippings
inclosed. I had read the
articles before and was pre-
pared for any position that
the N. E. Commissioners
might assume. You have,
I doubt not, seen the result
before this. By the action of
the N. E. brethren the cause of
the Mission was thrown
upon Staines. He was just to
the choice of becoming back
of of Japanese Church and
leaving his connection with
the Church at home, or con-
tinuing in his Episcopacy as
of the N. E. Church without any
official relation to the Japa-
nese Church. He chose the lat-
ter. That question was, thereby,

practically settled without
interference on one part and
without friction.

But the whole matter of the
relations of the missionaries
to the Japanese Church is
in a very unsatisfactory
condition - very mixed.

We were not careful enough
in defining the situation
at our meetings in the
United States and so left
some unguarded points of
which our U. S. brethren
took advantage. My own
position was distinct and
distinctly stated; but I
took for granted too readily
that it was assented to by
all parties. I found out
my mistakes soon after
making Tokio and thence
back, had a continuous
struggle to the end. I

would not agree that the missionaries should hold any official relations to the Japanese Church; only that they should cooperate, help and advise when needed and do such work - school, evangelistic, etc. - as could not be done by the Japanese Church in its present condition.

Rev. Cranston took the missionaries into consultation and brought all their influences to bear upon the Commission; and they were insistent upon retaining their places in the Japanese Church - its Annual and General Conferences as well as they had to be as missionaries and still retain their membership in the

5. home church. I refused to give assent to it, first upon constitutional grounds and secondly that the body of missionaries having the balance of power, would virtually decide all questions of importance with a view to the sentiment of the church at home and thirdly, that as the M. E. missionaries were combined with the M. E. S. and Canadian together, the Japanese church would be but an appanage of the M. E. Church. After days of discussion it was finally agreed to refer the question to the next Conference of the churches respectively at their respective sessions. That was the union we gave to a petition sent to us by some of the

Delegates to the Genl. Conf.,
and upon that the Com-
mission adjourned some
days. I was compelled to
leave for China before
the Genl. Conf. adjourned,
but as the work was well
intended and for purposes com-
pleted, I anticipated no
further action on that
~~matter~~ matter.

Two, or three weeks later I re-
ceived a letter from W. A. Davis,
(our missionary at Kyoto) inclosing
copy of resolution passed by Japa-
nese General Conference, which
I appended to this. Davis says,
"From what I have heard I
think Bishop Traverser
would not be the resolution."

If our missionaries should
object to serve in this relation
they would be under the com-

of the M. E. Church, as the dom-
inant power in Japan Church
Our name and place would
be taken away. A few very
few of our men are ready
to accept this situation. I
am not. While the refusal
to fall into line may put
us at some disadvantage,
I am confident that we
can do better service by
maintaining the integrity
and independence of our
Mission and will not be
scattered at the mercy of
the ~~manipulation~~ Japanese
and M. E. members out-
side of the land to the other
I shall refuse to give con-
fession of transfer to the Com-
missioners at home to any
who elect to go into the
presbyterian Church and refer

The question for final decision
to our next General Conference
I shall also insist upon and
insist to the Basis of Union
and final action of the Com-
missioners. Many matters
of detail remain to be set-
tled at the meeting of the mis-
sion Sept. 5. But the most
difficult problems will con-
front us when the Japanese
General Conference meet
in April of next year. If it
is possible one of our Bishops
ought to be on the ground.
If that cannot be, I will
appoint one or two of our
missionaries with as definite
instructions as I can give
and with full power to act.
The Japanese Church (Anti-Conf.)
crowded its work by electing
Kubo Harris, Honorary Bp. of Liao-
ning

Church of Japan
I am thankful to say that
the great body of our own men
in India as well as mission-
aries in agreement with
me. Only two or three of each
class are of another opinion,
and they are not leaders.

Apart from this one
question, the whole
business was conducted in
excellent spirit. The temper of
the Japanese is admirable
and there was no friction. They ac-
cepted every decision of the
commission without dis-
pute. I was rejoiced to
see that the delegates from
our mission were equal to
the task of any other party,
and it was evident and
admitted - that the train-
ing and discipline of our

1915
Church were more thorough
and satisfactory than any
of the others.

I am not yet satisfied
of the wisdom of the move-
ment and am entirely un-
willing to commit myself
to any published state-
ment concerning it.

To my colleagues I shall
speak with entire freedom
they are entitled to know
all my thoughts. Beyond
that circle I shall speak
with caution. It may all
turn out better than I had
thought full faith in the
power and guidance of the
Holy Spirit. If the in-
sincerity, carelessness and un-
willingness of men do not pre-
vent this plan will be

(10) Be well; But I am sure that
this movement did not originate
with the Japanese. They were stirred up to it
by others. Our best men were
asked to enter into it. In de-
spite of all this it may prove
fruit in the end. In the mean
time this church will have
to move through its difficult
places and face dangers
which will require wisdom
and firmness in its steps.
I will do my best and trust
God for the result.

One aspect of all these
calls for national churches
in India and Japan. I
insist distinctly do not take
They are not after the pat-
tern of the relations of the
churches of Jerusalem

and Antioch. There is no recognition of the unity and mutual dependence of the churches of God throughout the world. We are sufficient for our selves. We do not want you. Give us your money and let us alone. That was the spirit of the Constantinian Conference of 325. It is cultivated most unwisely by the missionaries. I hope that Sunday School will be called to take part in another such movement. My experience and study of the situation incline me not to strengthen the bonds that hold these outlying bodies to the central churches of Christendom, but to try to that may necessitate their continuance in separate

denominational relations.
Denominational out here
are not - except in two or three
well understood instances
as sharply defined as
they are at home. They do
not mean antagonism;
travelling differences of opinion
and ability. Differences of
household training, which
is a good thing for all to
experience.

I wish that I could use
my pen more freely. I would
like to write more fully of
work in Korea and China.
But my hand fails me.
China is seething. The whole
country is restless, anxious,
protesting - not knowing
what it wants but clearly
determined to have some-
thing else, if not something.

① But what the end will be
only God knows. Korea is in
useless, helpless conditions
This trouble must, I think,
for a time check the progress
of Christian ^{work}, which has gone
on with wonderful rapidity
during the last few years.
But the Gospel is the only
hope of the land.
I have had a tedious
trip since I came out. I
went, China, back to Japan,
to China again, to Korea,
to Peking - an unavailing
long, trying journey in awful
heat, to Japan again
and in a few days to Korea
again to Peking. Most of the
time has been spent in sweat,
inconfortable arrangements
and much of it in turbulent
heat. Through God's goodness

(14)
My both my wife and myself
were ^{healthy} and had
suffered nothing from wear
and tear of travel. I have no ante-
cipation of rest for more than
two or three days until I take
one of the P. & O. steamers for
Europe after the Chinese Con-
ference. I want to go that
way if I can manage the
money part of it. I hope the
Board of Missions will not
judge me harshly if my travel-
ing expenses account shall
be somewhat larger than
might be expected. My wife's
business use up all my own
resources.

If I was able I would write to
each of the Bishops. I must con-
tinue myself with this as answers to
yours and as you write to them
I continue to them you can tell

them as much of it as you may
think needful.

With sincere affection for
yourself and all my colleagues

Yours very truly
A. W. Wilson



It was Bishop Abraham Wilson who
led J.C.C. Newton to go to Japan in 1888.
They met in Baltimore, where Newton was
doing post-graduate study at Johns Hopkins.
Bishop Wilson saw the need for an educated
native ministry in Japan. Newton was sent as its
representative of the Southern Church on a joint
faculty of W. E. C. Convention & Southern Mission
schools - spent one year at Weymouth College in
Tokyo. Owing to cold climate - students from
the South suffered from colds & coughs &
very expensive care - so an arrangement for a
joint theological school was made up of the
Southern Missionary Society & the
their own preachers. Three young men in
theological study in Baltimore - home,
in 1888 - were the first - later they were
from among the students of the
Baltimore Theological Seminary was the
content of the first volume.

By 1893 the first volume of the
in 1888 - a handbook with the names of the
Luther, Wesley, Newton & other preachers.

Photographs from this
file have not been
included but are
available upon request.
For more information
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