

# Fisk University News

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## EDITORIAL.

### AMERICAN LEGISLATION AND DIVINE LAW.

#### ONE FRUIT OF THE FEAR OF TOO MUCH RELIGION

#### IN STATE AFFAIRS.

A Washington correspondent sent out the following news dispatch very recently. The names quoted have been omitted by the Editor:

#### BIBLE NOT SO WELL KNOWN IN OUR CONGRESS.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Jan. 20.—The Bible is not as well known a Book as it was some years ago. This was shown during a hearing before the House Military Affairs Committee recently.

Somebody quoted from the Bible: "He who liveth by the sword shall die by the sword."

Representative (——) of (——) expressed the opinion that this was not an accurate quotation.

"He who useth the sword shall die by the sword," was what (——) thought was the passage; so they sent for a Bible.

(——) went at it. He turned to the front and to the back and to the middle; then he went at the front, asking his neighbor: "Hasn't this got an index?"

He handed it to a woman next him and suggested that probably she could find it better.

"Look for it yourself," she replied. "It will do you good. If you don't find what you want, you might find something else in the Bible that will do you good."

When (——) finally found the passage he discovered that it read: "He who taketh the sword shall perish by the sword."

"We were both wrong," he announced.

FISK WOMAN WORKING WITH GOD ON THE  
"DARK CONTINENT."

A LETTER FROM MISS ALTHEA BROWN EDMISTON, '01.

Temporary Address: 1566 Range St., Selma, Ala.  
January, 1921.*My dear brethren and friends:*

In my last letter I promised to tell you about the agricultural conditions of the native people of our Congo Mission and of how we are trying to help them.

The manner in which the natives of the Congo cultivate the soil is very primitive indeed. Their farm implements, all of native manufacture, are very crude. They consist of a little hoe with a handle about two feet long; a small adze; and an axe, the blade of which, about two inches wide and six inches long, is set in a very heavy handle. With these three implements the native farmers do some wonderful things! They fell trees of all sizes, cut down the underbrush, dig up the soil and cultivate their crops.

The farms vary in size from one to fifteen acres. Their principal products are Indian corn, peas, pumpkins, peanuts, sugar cane, tobacco, millet, sweet potatoes, rice, kaffir corn, bananas, plantains and cassava. In many places, the men having cleared the land, the women alone work the fields, while in other places men, women and children are seen cultivating the soil.

In planting their fields they seldom or never plant in rows, but sow the seed broadcast—that is, the seed is dropped and covered here and there about one or two feet apart. Frequently from twelve to twenty stalks of corn are allowed to grow in a single hill. However, in spite of their primitive implements and their crude method of planting their seed, some of the farmers, being very thrifty, raise an abundance of the products mentioned above, supplying not only their own need, but that of the local market. Of course there are others who do not raise enough for their own use.

If by these crude methods these native farmers accomplish so much, what might not be the results if these people were given instruction in modern ways of cultivating the soil? They have no beast of burden, no means of digging deep into the ground, no knowledge of the great value of the soil.

In many parts of the Congo there are thousands and thousands of acres of magnificent virgin land on which a tree has never been cut. In these beautiful forests are untold possibilities along agricultural lines.

Our Congo Mission has put forth some effort to give practical instruction in modern methods of cultivating the soil to some of the young men and boys of our schools. We are trying to teach them how to fertilize the soil, rotate the crops and to plant in rows. The results have been most gratifying. They take to these new ideas readily. We have helped them to improve their crops in many ways, taught them to raise cotton, Irish potatoes, to make modern gardens in which they have raised successfully most of the various kinds of vegetables that grow in this country. However, all that we have accomplished along agricultural lines has been done with the same primitive implements mentioned above. As yet we have no horses, no mules or donkeys, no modern farm implements!

The aim of our mission is to establish, at the earliest possible date, a central agricultural school, with all the various modern equipments needed for such a school, in order that we may be able to give scientific agricultural instruction to the boys and girls coming to us from all parts of our mission field. In order to establish a school of this kind we should have horses, mules, cattle, wagons, plows, hoes, spades, and other modern farm implements. With a well equipped agricultural school we shall not only be able to teach the natives how to improve the products they already have, but also introduce many other products that they do not have.

We are all anxiously longing for a strong self-supporting native church, but we need not expect a church of this kind until we teach the natives how to earn something to give. Their giving power will be just in proportion to their earning power. No other occupation along industrial lines will more speedily bring about the glad realization of a self-supporting native church than that of agriculture.

Many years ago missions the world over paid very little attention to agriculture, because it was considered more of a secular phase of mission work than that of direct preaching the gospel, but today its evangelistic value is being greatly recognized. If this phase of the educational work of our mission is put on a solid religious basis it will prove to be one of the most effectual methods of preaching the gospel. Certainly we do not emphasize the teaching of agriculture for the sake of agriculture itself, but for the purpose of raising the natives to a higher level of Christian character and Christian living.

The Mohammedan religion is fast spreading all over the continent of Africa, and the propagators of this religion are a thrifty and hustling set of men who know the art of tilling the soil and the raising of cattle. If such an evil as Mohammedanism can pass through these channels, surely God will permit the doctor of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as we teach it, to pass in like manner.

India is receiving the gospel as she has never done before through the agency of agriculture. The same thing is true of the natives in other parts of Africa where the art of scientific farming is done. Our mission realizes that it is time for us to be up and doing. We must hustle while we can. The natives are growing intelligent. The revelation of a new world is being opened up to them, and they are seeking and longing for a larger and broader life.

In these days of reconstruction since the close of the great world war nations are studying the new world's outlook and are adjusting the affairs of their government accordingly. Many individual companies and firms are making plans to meet the changed conditions of the business and commercial world. The same thing is necessary for Christian missions working in Africa. They must be prepared to meet the changed conditions and needs of the native people. One of the best ways to meet these changed conditions is to give the natives scientific education along agricultural lines.

Praying that God's richest blessings may rest upon each one of you during the present new year, I am,

Yours in the Master's cause,

A. L. EDMISTON.

Nashville, Tennessee, January, 1921.

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