

ehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel (while he was zealous for my sake among them) that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold I give unto him my covenant of peace: And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel." Numb. xxv. 6-13.

These references show, first, how great a man Moses, though a polygamist and a polygamous lawgiver, was before the Lord, far greater than Aaron, or any ordinary prophet; second, that while plurality of wives was not condemned in Israel, but established and provided for as an honorable estate by divinely given statutes and ordinances, adultery and whoredom were severely condemned and punished, sometimes calling out special judgments and plagues of great mortality from the Lord; third, that a man who voluntarily slew an adulterous man and woman, was specially commended and blessed of the Lord, while, on the other hand Miriam, though a prophetess, when, perhaps in a womanish wayward pet, or fit of feminine jealousy, she spoke against the taking of another wife by Moses, was smitten of the Lord with leprosy, she remaining in that abject condition outside the camp seven days, and that as a punishment mitigated, a sore affliction lightened, through the special intercession of Moses.

Here, then, on the one hand, are the chosen people of the Lord, led, instructed, and blessed of him above any other people under heaven, with Moses for their prophet and presiding authority, a man who talked with God face to face and received constant instruction from him. Yet the laws of this highly favored people and their record do not condemn plurality of wives, but recognize, provide for, and manifestly approve it. On the other hand we have a body of Presbyterian ministers assembled in council at Saratoga, who have never been led by the Lord with mighty signs and wonders and unprecedented manifestations of his presence and his power, as the children of Israel were; who have not for their presiding officer a Moses, who talks with the Lord face to face, and receives instructions from him, as the children of Israel had; who do not receive their statutes and judgments from the Lord direct through their prophet leader, as the children of Israel did through Moses; yet who denounce plural marriage as criminal and unchristian, as an affront to society, and as an abomination in the sight of God, which thing neither God, Moses, nor the children of Israel, in the height of their stiff-neckedness, perversity, and rebelliousness, ever did, so far as the Bible record shows.

After all, perhaps this is not more than might have been expected of such a people as the Saratoga assembly of Presbyterian preachers. For what do they know of God, whom they have never seen nor spoken with? What do they know of a prophet like unto Moses, to converse with the Lord face to face, and ask him whether or not he approved of plural marriage, when they have never seen a prophet and do not believe in prophets? What do they know about being visited by angels and instructed of them as to the mind and will of God, when they have never seen an angel, and do not believe in angels' visits? How do they know in what light the Lord looks upon plural marriage, when they have no angel, no prophet, no seer, no vision, no voice of the Lord, no dream, no inspiration of God, nothing but their own dim perceptions, their own unaided wisdom, their own unenlightened views of the will of the Lord as communicated to men, many of them polygamists, thousands of years ago, and are obliged to misconstrue and mystify even the records of God's dealings with men in those remote ages, to sustain their own views? Shall such men as these Presbyterian preachers be accepted as the mouthpieces of God, when they themselves will acknowledge that he never spoke to them nor authorized them to represent him or to act in his name in any way or manner? The words of such men can have no weight whatever, their denunciations can have no weight whatever with intelligent men and women, when those words and those denunciations

come in direct opposition to the word of God, and to the laws and statutes and judgments which he gave to his own peculiar and chosen people by the mouth of one of the greatest prophets and divine lawgivers that ever lived on the earth and spoke in his name.

I have shown that plural marriage was not only customary with men approved of God in the days of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, but was adopted by two of those distinguished worthies; that it was not condemned and abolished, but was provided for and honorably continued under the Mosaic economy; that it was practised by Moses himself, that the custom was recognized, established and perpetuated in Israel by divine law. In my next communication I may refer to a few more examples of that family arrangement as recorded in the Old Testament, and then see what the New Testament has to say on this interesting and important subject.

JACOB.

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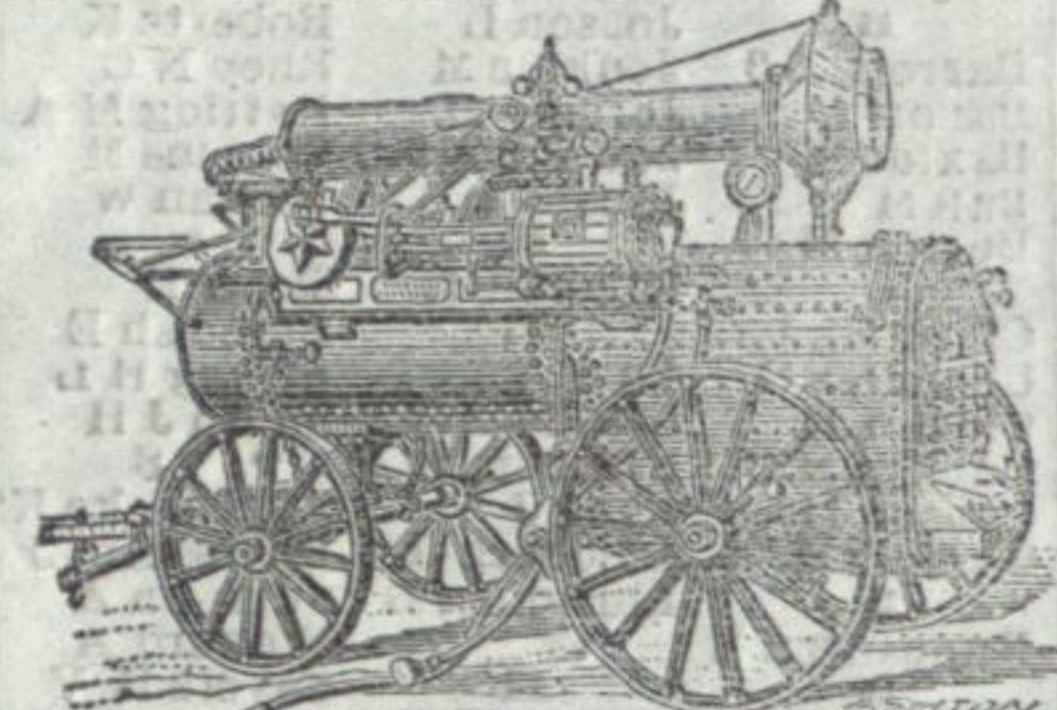
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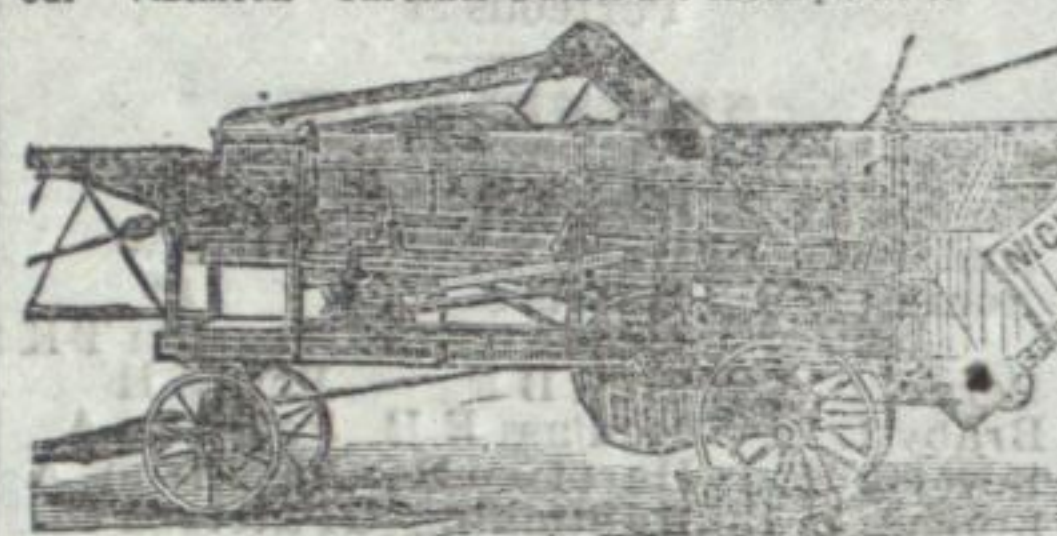
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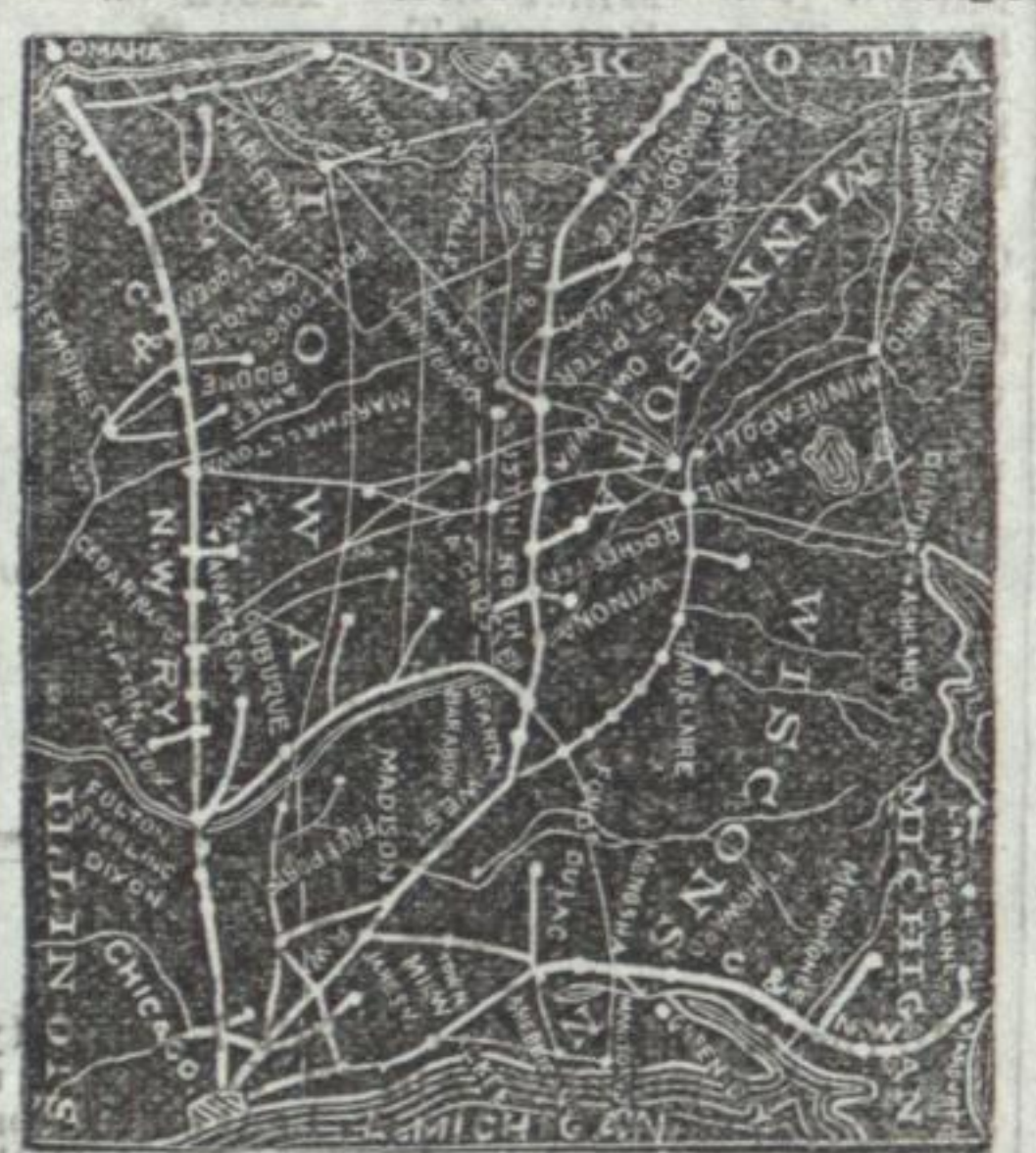
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