CELESTIAL MARRIAGE AND ACTS OF CONGRESS.

In July, 1862, Congress, under the pressure of a popular religious sentiment, enacted a law against the marriage system of the Latter-day Saints. It is true the law is made to punish "bigamy and polygamy in the territories, and other places over which the United States have exclusive jurisdiction;" but doubtless making the law applicable in all the territories was only an effort to make it appear that these enactments against polygamy and bigamy were not special legislation. The effect to disguise the intent of the legislator, however, was in vain; the people of Utah understand that it was meant for them in the beginning. President John Taylor in 1869 wrote as follows:

"Now who does not know that the law of 1862 in relation to polygamy was passed on purpose to interfere with our religious faith? This was as plainly and distinctly its object as the declaration of Herod to kill the young children under two years old, was meant to destroy Jesus; or the law passed by Pharaoh, in regards to destruction of the Hebrew children, was meant to destroy the Israelites. This law (of 1862) in its inception, progress, and passage, was intended to bring us into collision with the United States, that a pretext might be found for our ruin. These are facts that no honest man will controvert. It could not have been more plain, although more honest, if it had said, "Mormons' shall have no more wives than we. It was a direct attack upon religious laws." (Discusion with Vice-President Collas, p. 101.)

Subsequent events, together with recent enactments on the same subject have proven the correctness of President Taylor's views. The Saints in every possible manner have sought to convince the nation that plural marriage with them was a part of their religion; the practice being based on a revelation from God, and sustained by Holy Writ. As an evidence of their sincerity they point to the extra care involved in rearing two, three, or four families as compared with rearing one; they can also refer to the risks they have run of fines and imprisonment in obeying what they esteemed to be one of God's commands to them.

In April, 1862, in view of the bill pending before Congress, which the people of Utah regard as threatening their liberties, petitions were sent to Congress by the men, women, and youth of both sexes, of our Territory, praying for a commission of honorable gentlemen to be appointed by Congress to investigate the laws of Utah before the passage of the unfriendly legislation, as in the estimation of the petitioners such enactments as were proposed could only be passed by men ignorant of the true situation of affairs in the Territory. These petitions set forth that Congress was deceived by the malicious and libelous charges made against the Saints by their unscrupulous enemies. Besides denying the infamous charges made against the inhabitants of Utah, each petition contained a clause respecting the subject of polygamy.

The men said:

"Whatever of polygamy exists among the "Mormons' rests solely upon their religious convictions."

The women said:

"And moreover, we, your petitioners, hereby testify that we are happy in our homes, and satisfied with our marriage relations, and desire no change. * * * And we most solemnly are before God and man, that our marital relations are most sacred, that they are divine, entailing obligations and ties that pertain to time and reach into eternity. Were it not for the sacred and religious character of the institution of plural marriage, we should never have entered upon a principle which is contrary to our early teachings, and in consequence of which our names are cast out as evil by the Christian world."

The following is from the petition sent by the young men:

"We deny that the religious institution of plural marriage as practiced by our parents, and to which many of us owe our existence, debases pollutes, or in any way degrades those who enter into it. On the contrary, we solemnly affirm, and challenge successful contradiction, that plural marriage is a sacred, religious ordinance; and that its practice has given thousands honorable names and peaceful homes, where Christian precepts and virtuous practices have been uniformly inculcated, and the spirit of human liberty and religious freedom fostered, from the cradle to maturity."

This is what the young ladies said:

"The passage of such bills (then pending before Congress—Edmund's bill and others) would deprive our fathers, mothers and brothers (and ourselves when properly qualified) of the rights of franchise, and in fact, of all the rights of American citizens, unsuering us of the free exercise of our holy religion, which is dearer to us than life itself; * * * for we have been taught, and conscientiously believe that plural marriage is as much a part of our religion as are faith, repentance, and baptism."

To these petitions were appended more than fifty thousand names.

Congress, however, refused to grant the very just demands of the petitioners, and in the face of all the evidence before them, that with this large body of citizens of Utah plural marriage was a part of their religion, they passed the Edmunds Bill, which increased the severity of the punishment of those who should dare to practice that principle, which fifty thousand people of the Territory of Utah had, in the most solemn manner, declared to be a part of their religion. For one I can only account for this strange conduct of Congress on the score of human weakness, I do not use irony. I know that in January, 1882 the various religious sects of Utah issued a public call for meetings to be held in every State and Territory of the Union, to make speeches, pass resolutions, and petition Congress to enact laws against the "Mormons." Religious mass meetings were held in nearly all the large cities of the land, and men who knew nothing of the "Mormons," except what they had heard through the vague and untruthful reports of their enemies, spoke learnedly and with misguided zeal upon a question of which they were profoundly ignorant; and while standing in the very midst of the floods of
corruption which threaten to overwhelm
the land, and morally bankrupt the na-
tion, they displayed their skill in rhet-
oric, and exhausted their powers of
oratory in denouncing supposed evils
that existed in Utah. These unhal-
lowed efforts were not unfruitful. Re-
figious zeal was aroused. Popular pre-
judices were awakened. A flood of
petitions reached Congress, demanding
legislation against the "Mormons."1 and
congressmen, anxious to win the ap-
proval of their constituents, were sub-
servient enough to yield without inves-
tigation to the demands of popular clamo-

It was in vain that men, women
and the youth of both sexes of Utah
denied the truth of the charges
made against them. It was in vain that
they asked for a commission of upright
men to be appointed to investigate the
charges made against them by their ac-
cusers; even that poor boon was denied
them. Was Congress determined not
to hear the defense of the accused? Sena-
tors and representatives, and, in fact,
nearly all officials in this nation are
placed in their respective positions by
the votes of the people, and, for the
most part, men occupying positions of
honor, trust and profit are disposed to
pander to the wishes of the populace
upon whom they depend for a continu-
ance in office. To keep in popular
favor they frequently sacrifice principle
to interest. Utah has no representation
in the Senate; no power in the House;
no voice in the Presidential Election;
possesses no political influence in the
nation; and is altogether powerless
to resist the evils forced upon her.
Under these circumstances, politicians
and demagogues jeopardize no personal
interests, when in answer to popular
clamor they invade the liberties of the
people of Utah. The religious bigots
among their constituents cried against
the Mormons—"Crucify them, crucify
them," and the liberties of the people
of Utah were sacrificed to satisfy the
unjust demands of their relentless
persecutors.

Had religious mass meetings been
called in Utah to petition our local leg-
siture to adopt some measures deemed
necessary for the public weal—had the
legislature yielded to the demands of
this portion of their constituency, and
St pious howl would go up to the
Church dominating the State. "The
gravest apprehensions would be aroused
for the safety of our nation. The stuper-
dulous fabric of our government, erect-
ed by the unthinking zeal of patriots, ni-
sanctified by their blood and ten,
would be esteemed in danger; the pro-
test wall built between church and state
would be considered as broken down,
and evils innumerable to threaten the
liberties of mankind; but as this reli-
gious crusade is against the popular "Mo-
rmons" there was not one who moved
a wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped"

This last clause should be modified.
There were a few of our statesmen who
possessed the moral courage to pro-
test against the unjust course of Congress.
Senator Vest, of Missouri, said, in the
course of the debates on the Edmunds
Bill: "I am prepared for the abuse of
malum ny that will follow any man who
dares to oppose any bill laying
against polygamy; and yet, so help me God, if
my official life should terminate to-\nnow, I would not give my vote for the
principles contained in this measure.

Senator Brown said: "No matter what
the popular applause may be on the one
hand, or the popular condemnation on
the other, I will join in no hue and cry
against any sect that requires me to vot
for measures in open violation of the
fundamental law of the land."

Senator Morgan said: "I am not will-
ing to persecute a "Mormon" at the ex-
 pense of the Constitution of the United
States."

Senator Call, of Florida, opposed
the measure.

Senator Pendleton, of Ohio, pro-
claimed against the unjust meas-
ures proposed in the Edmunds Bill.

Senator Lamar, of Mississippi, thou-
ght feeble in health, and unable to take
part in the debates on the bill, yet put
himself upon record as opposed to what
he considered a "cruel measure."

There were also some members of the
House who opposed the passage of the
bill, but their voices were lost in the tu-
inuous clamor for its passage, and it passed.
Congress lacked the courage to
stand out against the zealous demands
of their constituents. Therefore, we said
we accounted for the hasty action of that
Congress on the score of human weak-
ness.

The passage of the Edmunds Bill was
regarded as a great victory by the ene-
 mies of the Latter-day Saints; still it has
not been altogether unproductive of
good to the Saints. The introduction of
the bill in Congress produced consider-
able discussion on the "Mormon" ques-
tion throughout the land, and although
this discussion was, as a general thing,
unfriendly to the "Mormons," still it gave
an opportunity for fair-minded public
men to express their sentiments upon a
so important a subject; and by their utter-
ances much has been done to present
the "Mormon" people in a more favora-
ble light before the masses. "Mormoni-
sim" courts discussion. Agitation only
brings it into prominence, and causes
investigation; investigation reveals its
sublime truths, displays its native
strength, and produces conviction in the
honest seeker for truth, while per-
suasion for conscience sake only unites
its devotees, and will intensify their
real.

The nation can afford to pause long
enough at least to ask: What shall we
achieve by the passage of this spe-
cial legislation? Will it result in the
suppression of "Mormonism?" Or even in
the extinction of that objectionable
feature of it called polygamy?

No instance occurs to my mind from
history where heretics were converted
from the error of their ways by op-
pressive enactments of councils, or the
pro-
cessions of tyrants. All history sup-
ports this statement of Gibbons:

"The reluctant victim may be dragged to
the foot of the altar, but the heart still
shakes and sidelines the sacrilegious act of
the hand. Religious obstinacy is hardened
and exasperated by oppression; as soon as the
persecution subsides, those who have yielded are restored
as penitents, and those who resist are hon-
cored as saints and martyrs."

With this historical truth staring them
in the face, Congress can scarcely hope
to abolish any part of the religion of the
Saints in Utah by oppressive legislation.
Although the nation has determinedly
closed its eyes to the fact that with the
large majority of the people of Utah
plurality marriage is a part of their religion,
testimony which neither Congress nor
the nation can ignore is now laid before
them—we refer to the report of the Com-
misioners appointed to execute certain
provisions of the Edmunds law. The
report was made to the Secretary of the
Interior, December, 1884; and speak-
ing of polygamy, said:

"Three fourths or more of the Mormon
adults, male and female, have never entered into poly-
gamic relations, yet every orthodox Mormon,
every member of good standing in the Church,
believes in polygamy as a divine revelation.
This article of faith is as much an essential and
substantial part of their creed as their belief in
baptism, repentance for the forgiveness of sins,
and the like."

Referring to the trial of Rudger Claw-
son, and the impaneling of the jury to
try him, they say:

"Each juror was asked: 'Do you believe it
right for a man to have more than one
living and undivorced wife at the same time?'
Each and every Mormon in the box—a few with
hesitation, but nearly all with promptness
answered, 'Yes Sir.' All such men were success-
fully challenged for cause. * * * * this
part of the proceedings afforded strong confirm-
ation of the opinion we have expressed, that
all orthodox 'Mormons' believe polygamy to be
right, and that it is an essential part of their
creed."

Certainly from this time forth neither
the national legislature nor any one else
will say that plurality marriage is not a part
of the religion of the Saints in Utah;
for it is an established fact, that Congress
has any right to make laws respecting it, or to prohibit the exercise
thereof?

The temerity which questions the actions
of the Congress of this great nation may be regarded as presumption.
More especially may this be the case
since the Supreme Court of the United
States has declared the law of 1862 enacted against polygamy in the territories, Constitutional. Still, while I have a great respect for Congress—knowing as all do, that it is composed of men of ability and learning; and having a profound regard for the learning, experience, wisdom and patriotism of the Supreme Court—still I cannot help but remember that the men composing these very honorable bodies, legislative and judicial are but men, and are subject to the influences which act upon the minds of men. It is natural for man to love the approval of his fellow man; and—

"Oh, popular applause, what heart of man
Is proof against thy sweet seducing charm?"

Some eighteen centuries and one half ago, the Son of God was arraigned before the judicial tribunal of Pontius Pilate; and although Pilate "found no fault in him," and "would have let him go," the popular voice cried "crucify him, crucify him," and Pilate, unable to withstand the influence and demands of the multitude, delivered Jesus into their cruel, murderous hands. Human nature has not changed much since then; and perhaps I shall be pardoned for suggesting that it is just possible that Congress and the Supreme Court, to satisfy popular clamor, sacrificed the liberties of the people of Utah.

At any rate my reading would teach me not to regard Congress and judicial tribunals with any superstitious reverence. I know that such institutions have been guilty of the most flagrant acts of injustice in the past. "It was a judicial tribunal," says Charles Sumner, "which condemned Socrates to drink the fatal hemlock, and which pushed the Savor barefooted over the pavements of Jerusalem, bending beneath his cross.

It was a judicial tribunal which, against the testimony and entreaties of his father, surrendered the fair Virginia as a slave; which arrested the teachings of the great apostle of the Gentiles, and sent him in bonds from Judea to Rome; which, in the name of the old religion, adjudged the Saints and fathers of the Christian Church to death, in all its most dreadful forms; and which, afterwards, in the name of the new religion, enforced the tortures of the Inquisition, amidst the shrieks and agonies of the victims while it compelled Galileo to declare, in solemn denial of the great truth he had disclosed, that the earth did not move round the sun."

It was a judicial tribunal, the Supreme Court of the United States, which, in 1837, Chief Justice Taney speaking for the court, decided that negroes, whether free or slaves, "were not citizens of the United States, nor could they become such by any process known to the Constitution;"

From the whole tenor of the decision it is plain to be seen that in the estimation of the court, "a negro had no rights which a white man was bound to respect."

With these historical evidences of the frailty of judicial tribunals before us, we are encouraged to proceed with inquiries respecting the enactments of Congress against the religion of the Latter-day Saints. B. H. Roberts.

The man who tells me an indecent story does me an injury.—Fields.

DAVID W. PATTEN.

DAVID W. PATTEN, the first martyred Apostle of this dispensation, was born in the State of New York about the year 1800. But little is known of his early life, except what is contained in his journal, which is very brief. He says:

"In the early part of my life, I was often called upon to repent of my sins, and the Spirit of the Lord did often reprove me. In the twenty-first year of my life the Lord visited me by His Holy Spirit, and called upon me again to repent. I rejected the call at first, but, upon mature reflection, considered it was reasonable the Lord should require obedience and I turned to the Lord and found His favor. I lived in the enjoyment of His Spirit for three years, during which time, by dreams and visions, many things were made known to me which were to come; and from the teachings I received of the Holy Spirit, I was looking for the Church of Christ to arise in its purity, according to the promise of Christ, and that I should live to see it. From this happy state I fell away, and lived in a measure, in darkness, until the year 1838, when I became again aroused by the Spirit of God to a sense of my situation, and I began to pray nightly to God that He would pardon my sins and grant me His Holy Spirit.

About this time Brother Patten heard of the Book of Mormon, and the same summer saw a copy of it, but had no opportunity to read it further than the preface and testimony of the witnesses; but a leaf came upon him, for he felt that he dare not say anything against it, and from that time he began to cry to God for a saving faith. In May, 1832, he received a letter from his brother in Indiana, informing him of the existence of the Church which had then been organized; also told him that he had joined the same, and received the gift of the Holy Ghost at the hands of the Elders. These tidings caused Brother Patten to rejoice, and he resolved to go at once to Indiana and see for himself. He soon became satisfied that the work was true, and was baptized on the 25th of June, 1832, in Greene County, Indiana, by his brother, John Patten, and was ordained an Elder on the 17th by Eliza H. Growces.

He was appointed, shortly after his ordination, to preach in the Territory of Michigan, in company with a Brother Wood, and was instrumental in preaching the Gospel to a great many, in healing the sick, and baptizing sixteen persons near the Manuel River. After preaching a short time (October 16th), he started to return home to Kirtland, preaching by the way, and on the 8th took steamer from Detroit to Fairport. During this journey he got into conversation (upon religion) with a number of persons. Among them was a sectarian priest, who tempted God and asked for a sign, and pretended that he would believe if a suitable one could be obtained, and because he could not have a sign he mocked and scoffed at all that was said, but would not attempt an argument to maintain his position. Elder Patten was then attacked by one of the numerous skeptical individuals on board, who declared that he was not again aroused by the Spirit of God to a sense of my situation, and I began to pray nightly to God that He would pardon my sins and grant me His Holy Spirit.

Elder Patten asked him if he considered himself bound by that rule; he answered with an air of triumph, "Yes." He was then asked if he had a backbone; if he knew it, and when he had seen it; for according to his own words, if he hadn't seen it, he was not under any obligation to believe he had one. At this the company shouted and laughed, and the skeptic sneered away.

Elder Patten arrived at Kirtland in October, and remained two or three weeks, assisting the brethren to harvest their corn and dig potatoes. Nov. 9th, 1832, he started, in company with Brothers John Murdock and Reynolds Cahoon, to perform a mission in the East; and on November 25th held a council with Brothers John P. Boynton and Zebulon Coltrin, relative to the mission. They retired to a grove to inquire of the Lord, and agreed that Brother Coltrin should be the person through whom the Lord should make His will known unto them; and the answer was that they should pursue their journey eastward, not in haste nor by flight. When they arrived at the Springfield branch of the Saints, they met Brothers Hyrum and William Smith and held a meeting together, at the close of which six persons were baptized by Brother Hyrum, and two more on the following day. Elder Patten continued his labors and administered much unto the sick, and in one instance healed instantly a woman who had been afflicted for nearly twenty years. He arrived home in Kirtland, February 25, 1833.

On March 25th, the Elders were sent to preach the Gospel and counsel the