

THE MARRIAGE QUESTION.

Marriage according to the scriptures was the first institution that God gave the world, and although its requirements are minutely pointed out, yet still there exists a considerable difference of opinion as to how some of its laws are to be understood. The part we propose to make some remarks upon is this: Are members of the church bound by the law to marry only members of the church?

There are many who contend that it is a sin for a member to marry out of the church, and that the person so offending must be cut off from the body; others think it venial, and that a reproof before all is sufficient. There are others who think that the whole of Adam's posterity have the liberty of choice as to who they may be married to. In some churches when a case of this nature occurs, it is agitated until all parties are willing to let it drop. There it remains until another comes up. It is again agitated, and with the same results. There are others who think that the nature of this argument is such that it cannot be decided by the scriptures. As it is very desirable that unanimity in all things should prevail amongst us, in order to obtain this the following remarks are made upon some of the proofs brought forward by those who contend that to marry out of the church is a sin.

The first proof that is generally quoted is from Gen. vi: 2. "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and took them wives of all which they choose." Now according to my mind, this quotation is decidedly against the theory of those who quote it, but as there is considerable stress put on it, we will offer a few remarks.

The first remark is, Who were the sons of God alluded to? Adam was a son by creation, and all his posterity in a temporal point of view are sons of God. The apostle says "we are also his offspring." The men in the first verse and the sons of God in the second, there can be no doubt as to there being the posterity of Adam, and the scriptures do not inform us that the descendants of Cain inherited their fathers' mark; but the scriptures do inform us that "the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father" so that the descendants of Cain and the descendants of Seth were upon equal standing in the sight of God, and we have it also mentioned in this quotation that the institution of marriage had taken effect, and the result was that men began to multiply on the face of the earth, not by creation as was Adam and Eve, but by the natural means that God has appointed. There is also another important fact mentioned in this portion of scripture, and that is, that the antediluvians enjoyed the liberty of marrying "all which they chose."

The next quotation is the law that prevailed amongst the Jews where intermarriage is prohibited with the nations around them; but as they are a distinct people from all other nations, and had laws peculiar to themselves, we will not at present offer any remarks on this.

It appears that those who agitate this question under review, base their whole argument upon the last clause of 1 Cor. vii: 39; but as