

BIBLE DIFFICULTIES

“A Sin unto Death” 1 John 5. 16.

ALL sin is spiritually unto death (Rom. 6. 23, Jas. 1. 15). There is no thought here of excusing some acts of disobedience. GOD'S law has nothing less than a death sentence, for nothing is trivial which sets aside *His* authority. This “supreme” grandeur becomes ruinous if any *sinner*, if any *creature*, takes it upon himself. Hence the failure of MAN often becomes more manifest when MAN has more power. That which belongs to GOD is improperly displayed by *man*.

The preceding paragraph will suggest that “death” in an absolute, legal sense is *not* primarily meant. Hence the thought—“Is *physical* death, *one* of its manifestations or symbols, here signified?” 1 Cor: 5. 5, 11. 30 may imply the answer “Yes.” Jas: 5. 14, 15 would suggest the power of prayer in hindering such a case.

What then does the HOLY SPIRIT mean by the last sentence of 1 John 5. 16? The word “ask” is quite distinct from the term just used for prayer (14, 15), and denotes a “request” or “question.”* The aspect seems to be—“not concerning *that* do I say that he might question,” or almost be “inquisitive.” That is, the apostle did not speak that *unappointed* scruples might hinder prayer—“Can I pray for this one?”—and so forth. *Till* the LORD forbids, as with Jeremiah, let us go on praying, with the general proviso of Jas: 4. 15 heartily realized, but with godly fear of all “judgment” as to how far a brother has sinned. Leave that with GOD.

* Never used for the prayers of *God's children* unto Him, but used for the prayers of Christ.