vi. 1, and vii. 1.

The blind man was  
sitting begging (ver. 8), possibly proclaiming   
the fact of his having been so  
born; for otherwise the disciples could  
hardly have asked the following question.  
The incident may have been in the neighbourhood   
of the temple (Acts iii. 2): but  
doubtless there were other places where  
beggars sat, besides the temple entrances.

**2.**] According to Jewish ideas, every  
infirmity was the punishment of sin (see  
ver. 34). From Exod. xx. 5, and the prevailing   
views on the subject, the disciples  
may have believed that the man was  
visited for the sins of his parents: but how  
could *he himself have sinned* before his  
birth? Beza and Grotius refer the question   
to the doctrine of the transmigration  
of souls, that he may have sinned in a  
former state of existence; this however is  
disproved by the consideration adduced  
by Lightfoot, that the Pharisees believed  
that the *good souls only* passed into other  
bodies, which would exclude this case.  
Lightfoot, Lücke, and Meyer refer it to  
the possibility of sin *in the womb*; Tholuck  
to *predestinated sin*, punished by anticipation:   
De Wette to the general doctrine   
of the pre-existence of souls, which  
prevailed both among the Rabbis and  
Alexandrians: see Wisd. viii, 19, 20.

The question may have been asked  
vaguely, without any strict application of  
it to the circumstances, merely taking for  
granted that *some sin* must have led to the  
blindness, and hardly thinking of the non-applicability   
of one of the suppositions to  
this case. Or perhaps, as Stier inclines to  
suppose, the question may mean, ‘this  
man, or, *for that is out of the question,*  
his parents?”

**8.**] Our Lord does not  
of course assert the absolute sinlessness of  
the man, or of his parents, but answers  
the question with reference to the reason  
why it was asked. Supply therefore after  
**his parents**, “*that he should be born blind.*”  
Also after **but** supply “*he was born blind.*”  
In the economy of God’s Providence, his  
suffering had its place and aim, and this  
was to bring out the **works of God** in his  
being healed by the Redeemer. De Wette  
denies this interpretation, and refers the  
saying merely to the view of our Lord to  
bring out his own practical design, to  
make use of this man to prove His divine  
power. But sce ch. xi. 4, which is strictly  
parallel.

**4.**] Connected by the words,  
**work the works,** to the former verse.  
There certainly seems to be some reference  
to its being the sabbath; see the similar  
expressions in ch. v. 17. From ver. 5, it  
seems evident that the **day** is the appointed  
course of the working of Jesus on earth,  
and the **night** the close of it (see the  
parallel, ch. xi. 9, 10). It is true, that,  
according to St. John’s universal diction,  
the death of Jesus is *His* glorification ;  
but the similitude *here* regards the *effect*  
*on the world*, see ver. 5; and the language  
of Rom. xiii. 12 is in accordance with it,  
as also Luke xxii. 53: John xiv. 30.

**5.**] This partly explains the *day* and *night*  
of the former verse, partly alludes to the  
nature of the healing about to take place.  
As before the raising of Lazarus (ch. xi.  
25), He states that He is *the Resurrection  
and the Life;* so now, He sets forth Himself   
as the source of the archetypal spiritual  
light, of which the natural, now about to  
be conferred, is only a derivation and symbol.

**6.**] See Mark vii. 33; viii. 23.  
The virtue especially of the *fasting* saliva,  
in cases of disorders of the eyes, was well  
known to antiquity. In the accounts of  
the restoring of a blind man to sight attributed   
to Vespasian, the use of this  
remedy occurs. The use of *clay* also for  
healing the eyes was not unknown.