

Gaza, for instance, it is said that one-third of the population have lost one or both eyes. The general unsanitariness of Oriental dwellings and cities, as well as the sudden changes in temperature, with the intense brightness of the sun and the fine dust in the air in these sandy countries are the chief causes." "*Blind from his birth.*" In this lay the peculiarity of the case. To be born blind is a rare occurrence either in the East or in the West. This is the only instance of the sort amongst the miracles on the blind performed by the Lord Jesus.

V. 2 "*Master, who did sin?*" To the disciples thy pitiful case of this man is a mere matter of curious speculation. They recognize that their Master has knowledge and insight beyond the common, and hope that He may be able to give them a key to the puzzling problem which is in their minds. They have not yet fully learned the diviner power which He possesses of healing and helping men. "*This man?*" If the man's own sin caused his blindness, then evidently it must have been a sin before he came into the world. The Rabbis appear to have thought it possible that one might sin even before birth. There was a dim belief also in the pre-existence of souls. "*Or his parents?*" The disciples were, so far, true to the teachings of their Scriptures in regard to the inexorable law of moral and physical heredity. In the first of the two tables of stone put into the hand of Moses on Sinai were written, with the very finger of God Himself, these words: "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." The blunder of the disciples was in the conclusion to which they had evidently come that suffering in every case is a judgment upon sin, and that special misfortune implies special transgression. Such is undoubtedly sometimes the case, as Jesus Himself recognized in the palsied man who was let down through the roof into His presence for healing (Mark 2: 2-5), and in the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5: 14). But it is not safe for any man less wise than Jesus to declare in any specific instance that because one suffers, therefore, he has been guilty of unusual sin. It was here that Job's friends erred, and it is with this question that the story of that wonderful Book of Job largely deals.

V. 3. "*Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents.*" Jesus exposes the falsity of the supposition of the disciples, as on another occasion (see Luke 13: 15). "*But.*" The spectacle which had merely aroused idle speculation on the part of the disciples is, to their Master, an urgent call for help. "*That the works of God should be made manifest in him.*" When the sisters of Lazarus sent the message to Jesus: "Behold, he whom thou lovest is sick," Jesus replied: "This sickness is not unto death but for the glory of God that the Son of God might be glorified thereby" (ch. 11: 4). So, here, the man's blindness will magnify God's power and grace in his own eyes and before all the world. Such is Christ's explanation of this particular instance of apparent misfortune, and the explanation is widely applicable.

V. 4. "*I must work.*" In the Revised Version, "We must work": a blessed co-partnership (1 Cor 3: 9)—"the works of him that sent me." Of what sort are these? The works of the heavenly Father for the welfare of men may be judged by the great central and typical work of the sending of His only begotten Son into the world "that the world through him might be saved" (John 3: 17). "*While it is day.*" Christ's all too brief ministry was rapidly drawing to a close. His soul was the more sorely pressed, therefore, by the urgency of His work. It is a wholesome, practical thought for our everyday life that the night of death closes the door of opportunity.

V. 5. "*I am the light of the world.*" Note the return to the first person singular. It is no longer, "we," as in verse 4, but "I." "Ye are the light of the world." Christ had said to His disciples early in His ministry (Matt. 5: 14). But the followers of Christ are the light of the world only as they reflect Him. They are the stars. He is the Sun. There is evident reference here to c. 8: 12. Jesus is now to justify in the most practical way the claim there made. It is hardly necessary to remark that the form of words "*As long as I am in the world*" is not to be taken as indicating that it is only during His earthly ministry that Christ is the Light of the world. The Revised Version gives the more accurate rendering—"when" or "since"; that is, "Seeing that I have come into the world I am the world's light; am, and always shall be the world's light, to the end of the ages."