

**THE BRUISED REED
AND
SMOKING FLAX**

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The Bruised Reed and Smoking Flax by Richard Sibbes

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RICHARD SIBBES

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"They know the Almighty's love,
Who, when the whirlwinds rock the topmost grove,
Stand in the shade and hear the tumult,—
Curb'd by some power unseen, fast die away."

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THE BRUISED REED AND SMOKING FLAX.

"A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory."—MATT. XII. 20.

CHAP. I.—*The Text opened and divided. What the Reed is, and what the bruising.*

THE prophet Isaiah being lifted up, and carried with the wing of prophetic spirit, passeth over all the time between him and the appearing of Jesus Christ in the flesh, and seeth with the eye of prophecy, and with the eye of faith, Christ as present, and presenteth him, in the name of God, to the spiritual eye of others, in these words: "Behold my servant whom I have chosen," etc., Isa. xliii. 10. Which place is alleged by St. Matthew as fulfilled now in Christ, Matt. xii. 18. Wherein is propounded—

First, the calling of Christ to his office.

Secondly, the execution of it.

I. For his calling: God styleth him here his righteous servant, etc. Christ was God's servant in the greatest piece of service that ever was; a chosen, and a choice servant: he did and suffered all by commission from the Father: wherein we may see the sweet love of God to us, that counts the work of our salvation by Christ his greatest service; and that he will put his only beloved Son to that service. He might well prefix *Behold*, to raise up our thoughts to the highest pitch of attention and admiration. In time of temptation, misgiving consciences look so much to the present trouble they are in, that they need be roused up to behold him in whom they may find rest for their distressed souls. In temptations it is safest to behold nothing but Christ the true brazen Serpent, the true *Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world*, John i. 29. This saving object hath a special influence of comfort into the soul, especially if we look not only on Christ, but upon the Father's authority and love in him. For in all that Christ did and suffered as Mediator, we must see *God in him reconciling the world unto himself*, 2 Cor. v. 19.

What a support to our faith is this, that God the Father, the party offended by our sins, is so

well pleased with the work of redemption! And what a comfort is this, that seeing God's love resteth on Christ, as well pleased in him, we may gather that he is as well pleased with us, if we be in Christ! For his love resteth in whole Christ, in Christ mystical as well as Christ natural, because he loveth him and us with one love. Let us, therefore, embrace Christ, and in him God's love, and build our faith safely on such a Saviour, that is furnished with so high a commission.

See here, for our comfort, a sweet agreement of all three persons: the Father giveth a commission to Christ; the Spirit furnisheth and sanctifieth to it; Christ himself executeth the office of a Mediator. Our redemption is founded upon the joint agreement of all three persons of the Trinity.

II. For the execution of this his calling, it is set down here to be modest, without making a noise, or raising dust by any pompous coming, as princes use to do. "*His voice shall not be heard.*" His voice indeed was heard, but what voice? "*Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden,*" Matt. xi. 28. He cried, but how? "*Ho, every one that thirsteth, come,*" etc., Isa. lv. 1. And as his coming was modest, so it was mild,