

Research: Isaiah 42:1, 3

An article that helps explain this verse:

“The prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled in the works of the Messiah, who brought healing to the contrite heart because he knew the truth. His consciousness was filled with spiritual ideas. He broke not the bruised reed; but, rather, gave some tender, loving, spiritual truth about God and man to lighten the burden of him who came seeking the healing touch of the Christ.

. . . He whose thought has been touched with the true knowledge of God would not allow criticism or blame to make heavier the burden of one who, perhaps, through struggles unseen and unknown to others, has been longing for the kingdom of heaven.

Fault-finding, condemnation, scorn, and pity are mortal elements, which bend low” A bruised reed” August 19, 1922 CSS

Flax: linen clothing made from flax, linen

“Tenderness of Might” Mary I. Mesechre, November 28, 1914

Tenderness of Might”-- <https://sentinel.christianscience.com/shared/view/1d3siow1s52?s=e>

Matthew’s Gospel cites verses 1–4 of this chapter as Messianic prophecy (see Matthew 12:18–20). The bruised reed and smoking flax—images thought to represent people weak in faith or hope—are seen by some to portray Jesus’ tenderness toward those needing the most encouragement and comfort.

Smoking flax (Isa. 42:3)

The early Hebrews used flax to form the wicks needed for their lamps and candles. The light might flicker but would not be put out. Moffatt suggests, "a wick that dimly burns."

Isa 42:1

Behold my servant, whom I uphold;

“ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SERVANT OF THE LORD, AND THE WORK WHICH HE WILL PERFORM. There are comparatively few who deny that, in this place at any rate, the "Servant of the Lord" is the Messiah” (Pulpit Commentary).

Isa 42:3

3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

From some Commentaries:

v. Jesus sees the value in a **bruised reed**, even when no one else can. He can make beautiful music come from a **bruised reed**, as He puts His strength in it! Though a **smoking flax** - used for a wick on an oil lamp - is good for nothing, Jesus knows it is valuable for what it can be when it is refreshed with oil. Many of us are like the **bruised reed**, and we need to *be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man* (Ephesians 3:16). Others are like the **smoking flax**, and can only burn brightly for the LORD again when we are drenched in oil, with a constant supply coming, as we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

“*A bruised reed shall he not break,*” in other words, Christ will lift, heal and help the bruised reed and “*The smoking flax shall he not quench*” to emphasize that our Lord will raise, trim and use again the flax that has diminished.

In the chapter, Broken Reeds, he provided the best explanation I have read thus far. Boreham explained that he had been on a visit to the mid-east and while on this holiday, he was enjoying a day under the Syrian sky above him with the rich foliage beneath him and a beautiful body of water just beyond him. While enjoying the mere leisure with a prayerful and praiseful spirit, he heard a sound coming from the hills behind him. It was a flock of sheep. Soon he saw the shepherd, pre-occupied with the reeds in the shallow, marsh waters. The shepherd quickly approached the reeds finding a bruised one, one that was doubled in the middle. He roughly

snatched it up in his hands, broke it in half and cast it into the waters. As the broken reed floated downstream, Boreham noticed the shepherd had found a tall straight reed that was undamaged. The shepherd carefully cut the reed, carved finger holes and whittled ever so precisely. Then he took the reed and the most beautiful music began to come forth. "Such harmony!" Boreham exclaimed in his writing. The sheep began to gather around the shepherd. I read in another writing that shepherds in the east would either call their sheep by their voice or by a specially prepared flute, carved from a reed.

"The bruised reed! The bruised reed represents the things that have never been of any use; the things that are marred in the making. From the bruised reed he gets the choicest harmony!

"The word 'reed' means the cane or calamus which grows up in marshy or wet places. The word, therefore, literally denotes that which is fragile, weak, easily waved by the wind, or broken down; and stands in contrast with a lofty and firm tree" (Barnes Notes).

The smoking lamp! The smoking lamp represents the things that have been useful, but have lost the usefulness they had. Once luminous, they have become loathsome; once shining they now smoke. From the smoking lamp he gets the clearest light!"

(smoldering either means it was poorly trimmed or low on oil)

"The word used here denotes flax, and then a wick that is made of it. The word rendered 'smoking' (קֶהָה kēhâh) means that which is weak, small, thin, feeble; then that which is just ready to go out, or to be extinguished; and the phrase refers literally to the expiring wick of a lamp, when the oil is almost consumed, and when it shines with a feeble and dying luster. It may denote here the condition of one who is feeble and disheartened, and whose love to God seems almost ready to expire. And the promise that he will not extinguish or quench that, means that he would cherish, feed, and cultivate it; he would supply it with grace, as with oil to cherish the dying flame, and cause it to be enkindled, and to rise with a high and steady brilliancy" (Barnes' Notes).

"The believer is the lamp (so the Greek, Mt 5:15; Joh 5:35): his conscience enlightened by the Holy Ghost is the wick. "Smoking" means "dimly burning," "smouldering," the flame not quite extinct. This expresses the positive side of the penitent's religion; as "bruised reed," the negative. Broken-hearted in himself, but not without some spark of flame: literally, "from above." Christ will supply such a one with grace as with oil" (Jamieson-Faussett-Brown).

