

# Applied Integration of a Sibbesian View of Assurance

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Richard Sibbes (c. 1577-1635) was born in Tostock, England, in 1577 and grew up in the nearby town of Thurston. He was the oldest of six children and studied locally until he was elected to a fellowship at Cambridge. His education at Cambridge took place during the Late Elizabethan period, which was a time of great theological controversy for the university and for England. It was during his time at Cambridge that Sibbes was drawn into a saving relationship with Christ. He was ordained a deacon and priest at age 30 and had a lectureship at Holy Trinity (1610) and later obtained an appointment to a parish in London, where he was to earn a reputation as a theologian and preacher, one who had a meek personality. "Rarely polemical (with the exception of occasional attacks on Roman Pelagianism), his preaching was distinguished by its pacific tone, more concerned with comfort than controversy."<sup>1</sup>

It has been said that Sibbes lost his lectureship and fellowship at Cambridge due to his theology, but Dever challenges this as popular legend among nonconformists rather than historical fact.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, with respect to controversy, while some in the church were nonconformists, Sibbes expressed formal conformity to the Three Articles of Canon 36 which upheld the King of England, the *Book of Common Prayer*, and the existing structure of the Church of England.<sup>3</sup> Yet he was known to question specific practices, such as kneeling for communion, and he clearly preached Reformed theology with a Calvinist understanding of election and predestination. So he was a

"conforming Reformer, dissatisfied with the existing situation, even wanting to change it, yet ultimately submitting to and even defending the discipline of the Church."<sup>4</sup> Sibbes would be noted for his moderation, his ability to rise above the fray and focus on the pastoral implications of his theology.<sup>5</sup> His concern for comfort over controversy, then, was expressed in his writings on assurance. Among the best of these is *The Bruised Reed*.

## Foundational Considerations

Before considering *The Bruised Reed*, let me offer a preliminary discussion of Sibbes's view of predestination and election, as they are theologically foundational for the assurance offered in his well-known treatise. Covenant theology laid the foundation for assurance for Puritans in general and Sibbes in particular. Puritan writing emphasized the assurance of God's covenant of grace, in contrast to the covenant of works where rewards were given to those who fulfilled God's law.<sup>6</sup> Puritan theology affords us two elements of assurance: understanding of God's covenant of grace and encouragement to those in anguish over their participation in the covenant.<sup>7</sup> Because of who God is, Christians can have confidence that he will fulfill his promises. But what of one's standing in the covenant? Puritans tended to focus on evidences of such standing, most typically recognized via experience.<sup>8</sup> Typically this was meant to be consistent with the "unshakable conviction that a loving God chose those who have felt it to salvation in

Christ, a conviction Calvin calls the ‘very sweet fruit’ of predestination.”<sup>9</sup> According to von Rohr, “when one is convinced that he is within the Covenant he can be certain of the ultimate fulfillment of the Covenant promise which God has given.”<sup>10</sup>

Covenant and election go hand-in-hand. Von Rohr observes that

God’s unbound righteousness [is] given to unfaithfulness, or better, the sovereign righteousness of God . . . creates faithfulness and . . . is bestowed freely to those who are his elect. . . This, too, is God’s action by covenant. . . the covenant which promises the new heart to those who have no claim upon it except they be chosen for it by God himself.<sup>11</sup>

So the covenant itself is made accessible by the gracious gift of God, that is, faith. Indeed, as von Rohr observes, Sibbes, in his work, *The Bride’s Longing for the Bridegroom’s Second Coming*, would tell people to “plead with God to fulfill his absolute promises, those declarations by which God offers to create the very conditions in our hearts by which we may be led to take him for our God and consent to covenant relation with him.”<sup>12</sup>

With these foundational considerations in mind, we move to *The Bruised Reed*, a work of great importance, to gain an understanding of a Sibbesian view of assurance.

## **The Bruised Reed** *The Bruising*

Sibbes develops the image of “the bruised reed” as found in Isaiah 42:3: “A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.” As Sibbes points out, we are “not trees, but reeds; and not whole, but bruised reeds.”<sup>13</sup> To be a bruised reed is to be in distress, particularly in response to one’s own sin,

to live in fear and in doubt with respect to one’s sin. Contemporary mental health professionals may presume that to be bruised—thinking about “sin” or anything else—is the real concern. But there is a purpose to the bruising that supercedes the priority health professionals may place on “negative” emotions, such as guilt or depression. For example, not only does bruising bring about humility, it is a necessary experience prior to conversion, according to Sibbes. After conversion we need bruising “so that reeds may know themselves to be reeds, and not oaks.”<sup>14</sup>

Sibbes reminds us that Christ loves the bruised reed. In *Glorious Freedom*, Sibbes notes that Christ “was so full of sweetness to weak Christians” and “where there was any beginning of goodness he encouraged it.”<sup>15</sup> So, not only will Christ not break the reed, but “he will cherish those with whom he so deals.”<sup>16</sup> He continues:

Physicians, though they put their patients to much pain, will not destroy nature, but raise it up by degrees. Surgeons will lance and cut, but not dismember. A mother who has a sick and self-willed child will not therefore cast it away. And shall there be more mercy in the stream than in the spring? Shall we think there is more mercy in ourselves than in God, who plants the affection of mercy in us?<sup>17</sup>

It is Sibbes’s understanding of the incarnation and of Christ’s merciful, compassionate presence in the life of the believer that reflects his pastoral concern: “Why was he tempted, but that he might ‘succour those that are tempted’ (Heb. 2:18)?”<sup>18</sup> Indeed, Christ is the “physician good at all diseases, especially at the binding of a broken heart.”<sup>19</sup> It is precisely because God became flesh that we can go to God “in our flesh; he is flesh of our flesh, and bone of

our bone for this reason, that we might go boldly to him."<sup>20</sup>

But such compassion and mercy is not poured out automatically. It is not our right. Rather, we come into bruising by either God's doing or by our intention. When it is God's doing, the challenge Christians face is to stand in faith and trust a loving God that he is ultimately working to fulfill his will in our lives. Concerning our participation in the bruising, "we must join with God in bruising ourselves" and thus experience God's abundant mercy and by personal experience know the foundation upon which we stand.<sup>21</sup>

### *The Smoking Flax*

The related image from Isaiah is that of a "smoking flax" or a "dimly burning wick," and Sibbes believes that not only will Christ not put out the wick, but that he will "blow it up till it flames."<sup>22</sup> To facilitate a proper understanding of this truth during times when we are discouraged, Sibbes encourages us to think of ourselves as Christ does: "Christ values us by what we shall be, and by what we are elected unto. We call a little plant a tree, because it is growing up to be so."<sup>23</sup> Sibbes wants us to rest on justification rather than sanctification, and to avoid the extremes of "serenity" (an expression of spiritual laziness or apathy) and "pride" (the assumption that you have merited what is yours by grace).<sup>24</sup>

In this context Sibbes sees genuine doubts as helpful to the degree that they lead us to greater assurance. As he says, "Nothing is so certain as that which is certain after doubts. Shaking settles the roots."<sup>25</sup> And so there is a place for doubt in the Christian life. Not a longstanding agnosticism, but a genuine questioning of our standing because of our struggles with

sin. But these struggles lead us somewhere: they bring us to a place of greater clarity, in part because they are suggestive of the work of God in our lives.

When we struggle with seeing blazing fires in others, Sibbes reminds us not to presume that we have no spark, but to remember—switching metaphors—that "life in the winter is hid in the root."<sup>26</sup> Moreover, what fire we do have is not of our own doing but is from God. We can trust that this fire in us will become a purer flame with more kindling, and this gentle reassuring can lead to a softening of our hearts toward ourselves and toward others.

Concerning temptations, Sibbes says that even the best actions on our part will still smell of smoke and thus display aspects of our old selves. Yet God shows us mercy in our weakness and calls us to continue in obedience as we are able: "There is never a holy sigh, never a tear we shed, which is lost. Pray as we are able, hear as we are able, strive as we are able, do as we are able, according to the measure of grace received. God in Christ will cast a gracious eye upon that which is his own."<sup>27</sup>

"As we are able" is a key to understanding Sibbes. God accepts our obedience even with our mixed motives. We undoubtedly do a disservice to ourselves and our relationship with God when we act as though we have pure motives when we do not, and God shows us mercy even in this.

With a truly compassionate tone Sibbes notes that "weaknesses do not break covenant with God."<sup>28</sup> Recalling the metaphor of the church and Christ as the bride and groom, as well as the history of Israel's relationship to God throughout the Old Testament, Sibbes is able to assert in all sincerity that, "Mercy is part of the church's marriage inheritance."<sup>29</sup>

To the extent that we give way to our will in sinning, to that extent we set ourselves at a distance from comfort. Sin against conscience is as a thief [a flaw in the wick of a candle] in the candle, which spoils our joy, and thereby weakens our strength. We must know, therefore, that willful breaches in sanctification will much hinder the sense of our justification.<sup>30</sup>

To regain a sense of peace and comfort, we are instructed to condemn ourselves and throw ourselves on Christ's mercy: If Christ is not merciful, he will not have anyone to serve him.

Yet many continue to struggle with doubts, and Sibbes would have us believe God rather than Satan, as the latter frames Christ as a "severe judge" while God would have us see Christ as merciful. It is within the Christian's purview to ask God to show us more of who he is, to know more fully who Christ is with respect to his character and intentions in our lives.

Guilt is another matter, of course, and God wants us to recognize through our guilt the wrong we have done and that which Christ has taken on through crucifixion: "God sees fit that we should taste of that cup of which His son drank so deep, that we might feel a little what sin is, and what His Son's love was. But our comfort is that Christ drank the dregs of the cup for us, and will succour us."<sup>31</sup>

During these times Christians may work against Christ's mercy in many ways. We can throw water on the sparks, to use Sibbes's language, by presuming on Christ's mercy or taking liberty with our sin. We can also seek after other sources of mercy and in this sense reject the gospel presentation of mercy. We may want mercy from friends or from family or others in our lives; we may also abide by "rules" we have in our own minds, that if we do such and such we will merit God's mercy. But

this *quid pro quo* approach to assurance is not a Christian view of assurance as founded upon Christ's mercy.

Although Sibbes would have Christians find their assurance in justification, he does not neglect sanctification. He argues that Christ will continue his work in the life of the believer and make gradual progress until "judgment unto victory."<sup>32</sup> Sanctification involves being made more and more in the likeness of Christ. For Sibbes this likeness includes Christ's judgment in us as established by God; the inward ruling of our hearts. In *Glorious Freedom*, Sibbes is quite clear that this "is not mere persuasion and entreaty, but a powerful work of the Spirit entering into the soul and changing it, and altering the inclination of the will heavenward."<sup>33</sup> Later Sibbes refers to Christ as "a powerful root that changes all his branches into his own nature."<sup>34</sup> This internalized judgment includes "government of mind, will, and affection."<sup>35</sup> "The gracious frame of holiness set up in our hearts by the Spirit of Christ shall go forward until all contrary power is subdued."<sup>36</sup> Likewise, "In spiritual life, it is most necessary that the Spirit should alter the taste of the soul so that it might savour the things of the Spirit so deeply that all other things should be out of relish."<sup>37</sup>

One of the gradual dispositional changes in the life of the Christian is the desire for mercy, not as a pardon for our missing the mark, but as a gift for healing out of which we follow Christ in obedience and in gratitude for his sacrifice. In *Glorious Freedom*, Sibbes recognizes the need to remove both "inward and outward hindrances," which would include such changes in the Christian's disposition over time.<sup>38</sup>

Sibbes reminds Christians that we can have full confidence that Christ's kingdom

in us will prevail. Christ first conquered sin, death, Satan, hell, and the world, and so too can he conquer and rule in our hearts: "Heaven is ours already, only we strive till we have full possession."<sup>39</sup> Although we continue to struggle, we can know that the struggles fail to win out over Christ's victory:

When chaff strives against the wind,  
or stubble against the fire, when the  
heel kicks against the pricks, when  
the potsherd strives with the potter,  
when man strives against God, it is  
easy to know on which side the victory  
will be. The winds may toss the  
ship wherein Christ is, but not over-  
turn it. The waves may dash against  
the rock, but they only break them-  
selves against it.<sup>40</sup>

When Satan seems victorious and we struggle with doubts, we are told to recall that Christians have long overcome their difficulties through suffering and that sometimes—in God's economy—victory may come through strivings against specific sins: "When he is conquered by some sins, he gets victory over others more dangerous, such as spiritual pride and security."<sup>41</sup> In this sense we might grow less concerned about our specific sins but more concerned about our posture in relation to them: "It matters not so much what ill is in us, as what good; not what corruptions, but how we regard them; not what our particular failings are so much as what the thread and tenor of our lives are, for Christ's dislike of that which is amiss in us turns not to the hatred of our persons but to the victorious subduing of all our infirmities."<sup>42</sup>

In this sense the victory is complete (justification) yet we are being trained in the fight (sanctification): Christ has "undertaken the victory, yet he accomplishes it by training us up to fight his battles."<sup>43</sup> Of

course there will be conflict because the government or rule of Christ in us will be opposed. Opposition comes not only from an opposing structure but from a *spiritual* government in constant tension with the flesh. In this sense it is judgment, which no one cares to experience.

We turn now to the clinical application of a Sibbesian view of assurance. How does such a view work itself into the clinical work of contemporary Christian mental health professionals?

### Clinical Application

My clinical work is grounded in contemporary systems theory. In one particular model, clinicians seek to identify and remove constraints that keep a person from living and relating to others as they are capable of living and relating.<sup>44</sup> This is a secular model that begs the question of how people are intended to live and relate, and Christians can bring to such a model a Christian view of the person and God's intention for human relationships.<sup>45</sup> One approach to this is to consider the Old Testament concept of shalom. As Nicholas Wolterstorff develops this in *Until Justice and Peace Embrace*, God's intention is for people to take delight in various relationships.<sup>46</sup> These relationships include our relationship with ourselves, with our fellows, and with God. And when we attempt to bring a Christian understanding to contemporary systems theory, we see the importance of identifying and removing the constraints that keep people from taking delight in these important relationships. What keeps a person from delighting in a proper view of himself and herself? What gets in the way of a person taking delight in her relationship with others? What keeps a person from delighting further in his relationship with God? These

are the kinds of questions that might help guide a Christian clinician working from a contemporary systems perspective.

The following case example explores the clinical application of these concepts while taking into consideration a Sibbesian view of assurance. The client was seen in an outpatient group practice that is in a secular setting, while the clinician is identified as a Christian and a psychologist through written informed consent to treatment.

### *Case Example*

“Lenny” (age 32) first entered therapy following an emotionally overwhelming experience with a local church that has since folded. Lenny rose to leadership in the church, where he was required to be ascetic in his spiritual life for several years, particularly with respect to self-control around behaviors deemed by the church to be of critical importance. Lenny reported mixed feelings about the experience. On the one hand, he appreciated much of what he learned from that church community; he believes that the leadership was well-intentioned, and he felt generally “very close to God” during that time. On the other hand, Lenny holds the leadership accountable for humiliating experiences, such as public confessions and rebuking, which were very difficult to tolerate, especially as they would be around what Lenny thought were reasonable behaviors, such as occasional experiences of lust or dating of women. The latter was strictly regulated, and Lenny ended up leaving the church in great disagreement with others in leadership and feeling emotionally and spiritually eviscerated, having invested several years of his life in working toward what he thought was a calling to the pastorate. He has since struggled to move on with his life.

Lenny reported that following his departure from the church he completely cut himself off from any Christian community. He married and began a family and has only recently revisited a local church community. He is not satisfied with his spiritual life, and he feels he harbors anger and resentment toward that particular church and especially the leadership, as well as God for allowing him to experience such great distress when he had been seeking God’s will all along.

Lenny entered therapy in part because of the promise of meeting with a Christian who is also a psychologist. He stated that he wants healing and that he wants to “move on” and “get past” his feelings toward the church’s leadership. Also, he wanted to meet with a Christian, but part of him was leery of being judged by yet another Christian in authority. His interpersonal style of relating was noted. He related in a way that suggested he wanted to be told what to do; in fact there were several times in therapy when he would bluntly ask, “What should I do next?” At the same time he struggled with visceral reactions to criticism in his marriage relationship and was wary of being criticized by his therapist. This could create a bind for a clinician, and I was feeling compelled to give him various directives, but was able to resist this urge upon reflection. Instead, I chose to comment on the experience and let him know that I would be more focused on processing his experiences for the time-being, rather than directing him with specific homework assignments relating to his spouse or children or the local community of Christians.

Aside from these exchanges, I recall my first impression when relating Lenny’s circumstances to the writing of Richard Sibbes: If, as Sibbes puts it, “shaking settles

the roots,"<sup>47</sup> then Lenny's roots should have settled in a pretty secure place. And yet the shaking and the settling can be separated by years as God works out the redemption of our lives and the healing of our wounds.

So in the course of time we discussed Lenny's view of assurance insofar as it was related to God's role in the midst of suffering. Lenny felt he had been doing "all the things Christians are supposed to do" and "much more than most Christians do" in their personal spiritual lives. He read scriptures daily, prayed several times a day, made confession to leaders in the church, changed his behaviors in response to church discipline, and so on, until the time when he left the church. His way of thinking about Christianity was very much *quid pro quo*. He does one thing and God owes him another. These tradeoffs could be traced to his own family-of-origin where his parents expected nothing but the best for Lenny and rewarded his behavior and in some ways communicated to him that there are rules for living: *If you follow those rules, you get what you are owed. If you do not, you get what you deserve (punishment)*. As we see in Sibbes's writing, *quid pro quo* approaches to assurance fall short of a Christian view founded upon Christ's mercy.

But Lenny simply applied his line of reasoning to his spiritual life. His attributions simply reflected what he knew to be true growing up in his home. He aggressively sought approval from the local Christian community and showed himself to be zealous among other Christians. But what was his reward? He did not receive what he expected God to give him in return. If God did not relate by the "rules" Lenny had lived by for so many years, what was he to make of God, and did he want anything more to do with him?

A related concern was Lenny's attempt to answer the question, "Where is God when it hurts?" Was God the author of Lenny's abuse? Was God unable to intervene? If not, what accounts for God not intervening? If God allows abuses how might Lenny come to trust God with his healing and the redemption of these wounds? These are age-old questions, the answers to which were rather complicated to sort out in the clinical setting. At an experiential (rather than strictly theological) level, Lenny seemed drawn back to God in a way that was not always easy for him to understand. He felt he had no other options. Quite frankly, he believed in God and knew with great certainty that "there is no other game in town." Yet he harbored such anger and resentment toward God for the abuses he experienced, and he wondered sometimes if he was as bad as those in church leadership had claimed.

Many of the struggles Lenny faced reached a point of crisis that coincided with a spiritual awakening for him and his wife. Lenny lost his job, which was an experience that in the past precipitated great stress and conflict in their marriage. The present job loss, however, led to a coming together in their marriage as each partner pursued a better understanding of their circumstances through their personal relationship with God.

As his therapist I predicted that this loss might lead to his revisiting old feelings of anger and resentment toward the abusive church, ministerial staff, God, and others. Lenny acknowledged several negative emotions, but he was also able to think through the abuse he experienced in an objective way; he felt more compelled to focus on what God wanted to guide him toward in a future vocation and in his present life circumstances.

It was at this time that we considered a recently published model on the relationship between meaning making and coping with a stressful condition.<sup>48</sup> In this model people respond to specific life stressors and make a connection between global meaning and situational meaning. *Global* meaning refers to a client's fundamental beliefs and basic assumptions about the world, including their sense of purpose and a sense for what is just and fair. *Situational* meaning refers to how a person's global beliefs interact around their own specific circumstances.

Lenny was then making meaning of his specific life circumstances, i.e., having a long-standing relationship with an abusive church. This is situational meaning. He was also looking for connections between this situational meaning and his global meaning, or his sense of life's purpose and of what is right or wrong.

It was in this context that we considered whether Lenny's experiences in the church were God's doing, or at least whether God allowed Lenny to remain in the church despite Lenny's report that he sought God's direction in the matter. He repeatedly went back to the "just world phenomenon," where people "tend to justify their perceptions by blaming victims on the basis of the assumption that good is rewarded and evil is punished."<sup>49</sup> Because Lenny believed in God's existence, he struggled with whether (a) he did things wrong that warranted his experiences of abuse as punishment from God, or (b) God did not in fact exist, since he had not done wrong and God did not protect him from harm.

Recall that Sibbes would have Lenny respond in faith, trusting that God loves him and is working out his purposes in Lenny's life. Again to return to the mean-

ing-making model, Lenny is looking for connections between his situational meanings and his global meanings. In this model it matters that Lenny is able to tie meanings surrounding his exposure to an abusive church to global meanings about God's purposes in his life. We also considered the consequences of sinful choices, and whether he was not a casualty of the sin by individuals in the church and in the structures of the church. This still left open the question of why God did not protect him from harm, but it also opened a door to God's desire to redeem the hurts experienced by those he loves.

In the course of therapy we naturally discussed issues related to the theological concept of assurance. We pursued selected bibliotherapy resources, reading sections from *The Bruised Reed*, and relating these to Lenny's present circumstances. We discussed the analogy of reeds being bent and bruised but not broken. This language fit our prior discussion of how Lenny was moving from a *victim* to a *survivor* in terms of the scripts from which he read in his interpersonal relationships.

Although Lenny continued to work in therapy on other issues in his marriage, as well as how his image of God was shaped by his experience of his parents, he reported an improved relationship with God and a greater understanding of God's desire and ability to redeem the circumstances Christians find themselves facing. These circumstances are redeemed for God's purposes, yet God's purposes are sometimes beyond our understanding. But he began to understand that there is a relationship between a Christian's assurance with respect to his salvation and a Christian's experience of peace with respect to difficult life circumstances (see Rom 5:1-5). In this Lenny's faith was

strengthened, as he was drawn into a more settled conviction about who God is and how God's love for him can be experienced in the aftermath of abuse.

### Conclusion

*The Bruised Reed* continues to offer Christians important insights into what it means to experience assurance with respect to one's standing in Christ. Sibbes offers Christians the gift of this understanding while demonstrating practical pastoral care to those troubled by their experiences this side of heaven. In this Sibbes provides the contemporary Christian mental health professional a resource for applied clinical integration of a Reformed understanding of assurance.

### ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Mark E. Dever, *Richard Sibbes: Puritanism and Calvinism in Late Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000) 1.
- <sup>2</sup>Mark E. Dever, "Moderation and Deprivation: A Reappraisal of Richard Sibbes," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 43 (1993) 396-413.
- <sup>3</sup>Dever, *Richard Sibbes*.
- <sup>4</sup>Dever, "Moderation and Deprivation," 410.
- <sup>5</sup>Dever, *Richard Sibbes*.
- <sup>6</sup>J. von Rohr, "Covenant and Assurance in Early English Puritanism," *Church History* 34 (1965) 195-203.
- <sup>7</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup>J. C. Hunter, "George Herbert and Puritan Piety," *Journal of Religion* 68 no. 2 (1988) 229.
- <sup>10</sup>Von Rohr, 199.
- <sup>11</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>12</sup>Ibid., 202.
- <sup>13</sup>R. Sibbes, *The Bruised Reed* (1630; reprint,

Edinburgh, England: Banner of Truth, 1998) 3.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>15</sup>R. Sibbes, *Glorious Freedom* (1639; reprint, Edinburgh, England: Banner of Truth, 2000) 111.

<sup>16</sup>Sibbes, *The Bruised Reed*, 7.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 16.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 19.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 28.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 51.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 58.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 60-61.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 66.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 77.

<sup>33</sup>Sibbes, *Glorious Freedom*, 106.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 109.

<sup>35</sup>Sibbes, *The Bruised Reed*, 78.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Sibbes, *Glorious Freedom*, 93.

<sup>39</sup>Sibbes, *The Bruised Reed*, 92.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 94.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 95.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 96.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 101.

<sup>44</sup>D. C. Breunlin, R. C. Schwartz, and B. M. Kune-Karrer, *Metaframeworks: Transcending the Models of Family Therapy*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997).

<sup>45</sup>M. A. Yarhouse, "Expanding Alternatives for Young Adults Who Experience Same-Sex Attraction: A Systems Perspective," *Marriage and Family: A Christian Journal* 3 no. 2 (2000) 133-151.

<sup>46</sup>Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Until Justice and*

*Peace Embrace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983).

<sup>47</sup>Sibbes, *The Bruised Reed*, 28.

<sup>48</sup>Crystal L. Park and Susan Folkman, "Meaning in the Context of Stress and Coping," *Review of General Psychology* 1 no. 2 (1997) 115-144.

<sup>49</sup>M. A. Yarhouse, "Social Cognition Research on the Formation and Maintenance of Stereotypes: Application to Marriage and Family Therapists Working with Homosexual Clients," *American Journal of Family Therapy* 27 no. 2 (1999) 155.