The Deceitfulness of Sin.

Literally: fraudulent to heart; beyond all, and incruenable who can fully know it?

There is no statement of scripture which is practically contradicted by the prevailing unbelief of our day more persistently than this. Men do not believe themselves to be desperately wicked, and it is because the heart is so deceitful!

How rare is the confession of sin! In a general way men confess themselves sinners, but the confession is often but a cloak for self-righteousness and self-satisfaction. How often do we hear a confession which evidences to express a sincere sorrow for sin. The terms which de
write such a state of mind seem to have become almost obsolete: conversion, contrition, penitence, repentance—contrast the publican, not so much as lifting his eyes into heaven: God be merciful to me a sinner.

Peter: falling at Jesus' knees: depart from me for I am a sinful man O Lord!

Psalmist, in the profoundly pathetic strains of the fifty-first Psalm, David.

Daniel's Chapter 10. Prostrating himself before his Lord with fasting and prayer to bewail his sin and that of his people.
The confession is not more rare than the consciousness of sin; and it is rare because the consciousness is. Men do not feel themselves to be great sinners. They are in this respect more like the Pharisees than like the Publicans. Their confessions of sin is hollow and heartless, because it is a mere empty form, because no deep sense of guilt underlies it. And here lies the main obstacle to the progress of the gospel. Men do not feel their guilt and danger and need. Hence also comes the necessity of the Holy Spirit. He shall convince and reprove the world of sin.
In the text, the deceitfulness and desperation of the human heart are unyieldingly put before us. While the heart is declared desperately wicked, it is also on the same authority declared to be deceitful above all things. Who can know it? Is an interrogative form of indirect affirmation: it is impossible for a man fully to know his own heart. And I can not but think these two things conjoined because they coexist. Desperate wickedness and deceitfulness. Desperate deceitfulness go together: because the heart is desperately wicked it is desperately deceitful and because deceitful, wicked. The deceit is part of the desperate incurable malady, and the malady or in part of the deceit. "Calentura"
Now I propose to illustrate the deceitfulness of this despised wickedness by showing how we deceive ourselves into the persuasion that we are not desperate sinners. Why is it that we so seldom come into this state of conviction and contrition for sin, which is the necessary preparation for salvation. John 16:8 If we say that we have not sinned we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Also 1 John 3:10 we say that we have not sinned we make him a liar and his Word is not in us.
1. Lack of Receiving Divine Word

Any man who will examine will be surprised to find how unequivocal as to fact and universal as to comprehensive God's testimony of this subject is. Men of all ages - classes are pronounced sinners in unmistakable terms. Hence John in 1 Epistle, 1:8. If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us; also 10 verses If we say that we have not sinned we make him a liar and his word is not in us.

3. All through Jewish history...
Examples:
1. The Antediluvian world: Genesis VI: 5
   And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the Earth—every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
   Necessity—angeam Stables

2. The Post-diluvian World: Babel and monstrous revolutions scheme: Sodom and Gomorrah—not ten righteous men. Same necessity as in time of floods not salt enough to keep from corruption. As we remove a putrid carcass from the streets that it may not breed plague and pestilence. So God now brought a flood of fire as before of wars, describing the natural heart of man and all.

3. All through Jewish history:

   Ezra 9: 6. wicked
Psalm 14:2. The Lord looked down from heaven to earth. Hard doth good and sinneth not of God. Everyone. 4. Testimony of John Baptist and Jesus.

Oft have I said


Psalm XXXVI:1. Describing the natural heart of man and all that proceedeth from him, as desperately and awfully wicked.
Now we boldly say that the heart knows at once the desperate and deceitful character of its wickedness in refusing to believe and receive the witness of God. Every man who denies or doubts that he is a desperate sinner boldly makes God a liar.

The natural man perceiveth not.

He that believeth on the word of God receiveth it in his heart, that the word might be fulfilled, saying, I believed, and therefore I spake.

For the natural man is blinded to the truth of God's grace.

Open thou mine eyes.

Lift up to the chains of holiness.

Lift up to the real guilt of sin.
This desperate deceitfulness of human wickedness is apparent in a lack of perception of the fact of sin. Men cannot be conscious of great guilt. This is partly the result of nature and partly a fruit of culture.

Nature. The natural man perceives not the things of the spirit of God; neither can he know them! Sin is one of those things which the natural man does not perceive in any comprehensive sense. The natural man is blind to the truth of God; hence Ps. Open thou mine eyes. Blind to the charms of Holiness. Blind to the real guilt of sin.
Blindness does not express itself for a man may and does recognize blindness; but sinners are both blind and blindly blind - blind to their blindness.

We find the natural condition of man therefor expressed by madness, Eccles. Those off the top.

For it is one characteristic of insanity, lunacy, idiocy that you cannot control the insane of his insanity. The persuasion that he is sane is a part of his disease. Its very desperation.

So deception is a part of depravity and the very desperation of wickedness lies in its deceitful ness. Men are great sinners and will not be lies or perceive it until God shows them.
2. Culture. By this I mean that this apathy and indifference grows by familiarity with sin. We observe that our most sensitive organs—nerves grow irresponsible under certain influences. The nerves of the eye become dead—lose sensitivity that is blindness. Those of the ear similarly lose power—and this is deafness. The superficial nerves of the hand or foot or other part of body lose power—we say the skin becomes callous. So that a man takes hold of a hot iron and feels no sensation of burning.

Just so by constant contact with a world of sin and sin in our hearts we become blunted and dulled in moral and spiritual sensibility.
Vice is a monster of so frightful mien." Pope.

If a person could without any previous hardening influences be ushered at once into the midst of the world's wickedness— he would shun it back as he eyes before the glare of noonday sun or the ear before the glare of the cannon.

But contact with vice hardens, and nothing saves the man from this inevitable result except a holy purpose in approaching vice.

In the outward life and pleasures of the world in the imperial person of Christ, he learns to conquer vice: morality shines above the glint of lust, murder, to the feeling of hate.
III. Lack of a true conception of the nature of Sin is another evidenced and example of the deceitful ness and desperateness of wickedness.

1. We estimate Sin by external manifestations. Here was the great mistake of Pharisaism: It made clean the outside of cup + platter, made men as graves which appeareth not as whitewashed sepulchres.

Here is the great mistake of MORMALISM: It emphasizes the outward life and passes by the inward state. In that imperial remnant of Christ, hate away the disguise of Pharisaic morality + traces all character + conduct + motives. adultery to the look of lust; murder to the feeling of hate.
Now just as deadliest diseases may be attended by no surface symptoms and fatal injuries show no external sign of confusion, so the worst forms of sin against God may not exhibit themselves in any outward showing inequalities.

Hence the Bible does not say the conduct of men is all immoral and corrupt. But the heart is deceitful above all things and springs to regard the laws and treat them as enjoined conscience. Only does a man plead that he has not engaged in any positive act of rebellion or treason; he has only failed to obey the law of the land. That is rebellious treason.

The administration of God is that of a perfect Government, &c. Archbishop Usher &c. &c.
Again men estimate sin by its positive manifestations. Sin they say is wrong doing. But the Westminster Catechism teaches us that sin is any want of conformity into the law of God, as well as any transgression of it. Sin has its negative as well as positive aspects. To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not is him it is sin. Governments have long since been conducted on the principle that for a citizen to neglect the laws and the duties they enjoin is crime. Vainly does a man plead that he has not engaged in any positive act of rebellion or treason; he has only failed to obey the law of the land—that is rebellious—reasonable. So the administration of God is that of a perfect Government. C. Archbishops, Sin of Omission.
He that knew His Lord's work and did it not to
Last Judgment: much as ye did it not.

Holy Ghost: Convince the world of sin, because they be-
lieve not of me. He is so like a crowd man, that only
of any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ,

3: Never fail to conceive of sin as acting independent of
any outward manifestation. Aside from all
positive transgressions or negative lack of conformity
sin is a sting of the inner life. It marks a state of
minds and heart and will, before and independent
of any outward act. When you see a leprous man
you observe an abnormal condition of the skin; it
is more or less overspread with white or allicic spots.
or tunneling sorts. But that is not the disease; it is only
its manifestations. The disease is in the blood and
has a thousand forms and grades of manifestation.
A leper may be so like a sound man, that only
one spot can be found and that, only by closest
scrutiny. But the blood is tainted with the fatal
infection. Sin is a disease of the mind, heart, dis
position; wild, it is hostility toward God, his rule
lack of sympathy with God and holiness.
Every man is a leper, though his outward life be
blameless, who has a heart not in sympathy with
God and holiness. There is no escaping perdition for
such a soul, for none can dwell with God without
such spiritual sympathy.
There is one other reason for the absence of consciousness of guilt. One other way in which the deeper, extroverted wickedness of the human heart deceives and deceives us, viz.: Men lack a true standard of measurement. More, there is the famous force.

We observe in every art, from the humblest to the most imposing and grand, that a standard is necessary in order to promote progress. A mason builds a wall; he does not guide himself by some other wall which leans from the perpendicular or lines from the horizontal, or even by his eye, which however correct is not infallible. He uses the plummet line and level, for as long as gravitation is the law of nature the operation of these instruments is invariable.
You go into a carpenter's shop. You observe he uses the compass and square and rule. Guiding himself by perfect standards. You enter the studio of the artist. You see models. And it is astonishing how an artist can make them. Here is the famous torso of the Belvedere. Nothing but a headless armless trunk. Here is an arm, the cast of a single remnant of some great statue. These are standards valued beyond price we believe conceived to be perfect models, and for thousands of years every form fashioned by sculptor or preserved forth by painter has followed these models.

God has but one standard: Perfection. As a holy being can have but one. An artist or artisan...
Now in the art of constructing character what we preeminently need is a Perfect model. Men manifest their folly as Paul says in measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves among themselves.

In other words, they take, at best, imperfect standards by which to measure and with which to compare themselves; and so they can do no better than perpetuate imperfections. Alexander became Caesar's model, and Caesar, Napoleon: all were men of unprincipled ambition, etc.

Whitest fable in comparison with snow. To God has but one standard: Perfection; as a holy being can have but one. An artist or artisan
shows his comparative excellence by the severity of his standards. The unpracticed unskilful eye may pronounce a work perfect in which he detects fundamental defects, and so God's perfection is shown in the perfection of his character and demands. It would indeed be hopeless for us to attempt to meet these high requirements. But if we believe in Christ as our Saviour, His righteousness becomes ours and God accepts us within as though we had none.