

THEY WON'T KNOW IT.

There was a wicked purpose in a wicked heart. There were forebodings of evil results, especially of exposure. But they were silenced by the thought, "They won't know it." But they will know it. Great numbers will know it.

God will know it. His eye is as a flame of fire. Naked and open are all hearts before him. He knows that wicked purpose already. Think of this, that that purpose is an object now distinctly visible to the most exalted, glorious, and holy being in the universe.

Satan will know it. He knows it now, and glories that a rational soul, infinitely indebted to God, can so willingly dishonor its noble nature by sinning against him.—If that baneful enemy of the soul did not first excite the spark, he will not fail to put all the fuel he can upon the flame, and it will be no fault of his if there be not as fierce a blaze as ever burned in a human bosom.

Conscience will know it—knows it already, and has already begun its whispers of rebuke. And if that sinful purpose goes on ripening, louder and more severe shall be its voice. Conscience is a witness posted in the depths of the soul, beholds sin at its starting-point, is a faithful witness, and will not withhold its testimony.

Fellow-men will know it. They cannot, indeed, see the heart, but that wicked purpose is a fire whose tendency is to burn out, whose tendency is to urge the soul on to acts which shall reveal themselves to men, and by which men shall know what wicked purposes there were in the soul. The secrets of many a wicked heart have been laid open to the public eye by the development which has been made of them by these open acts which they have instigated. But, if men will not know here, they certainly will hereafter. It is the purpose of the Infinite Judge that "the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed," and men shall thus know what sinful beings men have been.

Angels too shall know it. That sinner would not relish well the thought that angel's eye was at this moment keenly fixed upon that secret purpose of sin. He would wish to crush the viper by an instant blow, and make his soul void, as soon as

possible, of such an offender. But that secret sin the angels shall know, for they will all be present at the judgment, and to their withering rebuke will be exposed the hidden wickedness of men's hearts.

The dwellers in perdition are likely to know it. That secret wicked purpose is a token of perdition. It shows which way the current of the soul is setting. It adds another weight to the burden of sin. It helps to sink still deeper the already sinking ship. And landing him, as it is likely to do, in the bottomless abyss, his companions then will know how he came there, and among the causes of ruin will appear that wicked purpose.

"They won't know it." But they will. Who? Unnumbered millions. By the highest Being in the universe, and by the lowest shall it be known. It shall be known in eternity. There is no escaping its being known, widely known, universally known, known for ever. God regards every sin as so important an event in his moral government as to deserve his special notice, and his special censure; and the weight and severity of that censure will be vindicated by making the individual sin known. Who can weave a covering for sin that God cannot tear off? What sin can be buried so deep that God cannot drag it to light?

PRACTICAL RELIGION.

It is a great mistake, which is sometimes made, to suppose that, whilst ordinary duties must be gone through as an appointed task, it is not by means of these, but exclusively through the devotional observances, to which escape is made from them, that the believer attains to a higher spiritual elevation. Whilst devotion is indispensable to draw out of duty its spiritual effect, duty, on the other hand, affords materials for devotion, which give to it substance and reality. The religion of the cell is notoriously imaginative and unreal. It is amidst the rough exercises of active life that devotion acquires health, and vigour, and natural growth. There is not a step in the evangelical course which will not be more wholesomely taken amidst the exercises of ordinary duty, than in the unchecked license of retirement.—*The Circle of Christian Doctrine.*