

THE TRUE GnostICS.

THRICE in three verses the apostle John utters the emphatic words "we know." Of these three utterances that at the beginning of this verse is the central and most comprehensive. A class of men rose in the early days of Christianity calling themselves and delighting in being called Gnostics, that is "knowing ones." They professed to have a deeper insight into the mysteries of being, into the nature and origin of good and evil, than ordinary men. They considered themselves the *elite* of the intellect of their age, the aristocrats of thought. But notwithstanding all their pride and boastfulness, their assumptions were essentially false and inconsistent; their wisdom an elaborated folly; their endless processions a cloak, often ludicrous, of ignorance, and their morality a volatile and variable phantasm. The gospel of St. John, as well as this epistle, has a reference to these vain dreamers, and both unfold truths which were fitted to destroy that strange amalgam of Polytheism, Pantheism, Monotheism, Mysticism, and Demonology, which the philosophers of apostolic and post apostolic days called by the name of gnosticism. The apostle here winds up his instructions by saying, as it were, "We are the true gnostics, we who believe in the Father, Son and