

## Our Contributors.

### THE RUN-TO-EVERYTHING FAMILY.

BY KNOXONIAN.

The Run-to-Everything family may be found in nearly every village and small town in Ontario, but they are found in the largest numbers in places populated by the third or fourth generation of Canadians.

Negatively considered, the Run-to-Everything family are noted for not liking their home. Like Sam Jones, they hate a quiet time. It kills the members of this family to stay long on one spot, especially if that spot is around home. They cannot read. Thinking is an exercise never known in the family. They have nothing to think with. Their conversation consists of a few commonplace about the last thing they were at, or the next place they are going to.

Positively considered, the principal characteristic of the Run-to-Everything family is that they run to something every evening and often during the day. You may always count on seeing them at everything that is free. The Salvation Army supplied a long-felt want to these people. Now they can go to the barracks every night when there is nothing else to go to. Heretofore they were not sure of a place of resort for every evening except when special services were going on in some of the churches.

Old Mr. Run-to-Everything is not a bad old man in the sense of being vicious. In fact he has not energy enough, or brains enough, to do anything brilliant for the devil. His strong points are loafing in public places and talking to little knots of people about affairs. He is always found in court, especially the Police Court. He attends council meetings, and meetings of all kinds regularly. Next day his chief employment consists in addressing other citizens on the points discussed at last night's meeting. Nothing pleases him so much as to gather a little crowd around him and have a discussion about affairs of State. The old man has always had a weakness for taking care of the Empire. Indeed he has been known to devote his whole time to public affairs when his wife was unable to leave her room and the children had the measles. So devoted a public servant is old Mr. Run-to-Everything that he would go to a political meeting or an indignation meeting on the Jesuit question, if his wife were seriously ill and there was not a bite to eat in the house or a stick to put in the stove. Such devotion to public duty deserves a sound-kicking.

Old Mrs. Run-to-Everything is the best member of the family. Had she gotten anything like a square chance she would have made an excellent wife. Married to a moving clod, she soon became discouraged and discouragement sank into despair. The good woman made two serious mistakes, and these mistakes were made at critical points. The first was in marrying a lazy man, and the second in allowing her children to contract the habit of running to everything when they were young. Of course it would not be easy for her to keep her children at home when their father set such an example before them, but she did not try. Like many another mistaken mamma, she thought that the only way for the children to enjoy themselves was to go some place. The possibility of having a good time at home never occurred to her. Her children grew up to think that they could be happy only when they were on the run. They ran. To them life was worth living only when there was some place to go to every night. Their home was a kind of half-way house in which they rested between runs.

Bill Run-to-Everything, the eldest son, was not a bad kind of a fellow in his way. In his boyhood the village was small and there was almost nothing to run to, and he did not contract the habit so badly as the younger members of the family. With a good training, Bill might have become a useful young man, but it is impossible for anything useful to grow up in a Run-to-Everything family. The younger boys put in their time by running from school and to everything that came along, from Barnum's Circus down to the last dog fight. Shows of all kinds, matches of all kinds, races of all kinds. Crowds of all kinds were always and everywhere patronized by the boys of this family. The boys soon became about as useless as their father.

The girls of the Run-to-Everything family were the most useless of all. Their mother thought they could enjoy themselves only when they were going some place, and, mother-like, she worked herself half to death to let them go some place. The result was that they knew nothing and could do nothing. Their characteristics were small talk, an inane giggle, and a weakness in the upper story that would make it rather dangerous for them to come into the vicinity of an idiot asylum anywhere near the time that a female patient had escaped.

One of the worst things about the habit of running to everything is that it makes a family cheap, and cheapness hurts a family as much as anything on this side of downright wickedness. A young man who rates himself cheap need never be surprised if his employer rates him in the same way. A young woman who rates herself cheap need not wonder if her neighbours take her at her own valuation, or perhaps a trifle lower. There is nothing, we repeat, on this side of immorality that will cheapen a family or an individual faster than running to every kind of a meeting, every kind of an entertainment, every kind of a show that can be got up in a country village.

Far be it from us to say that anybody should shut himself up and live the life of a hermit. That is the other extreme. Between running to everything and going to nothing there is a golden mean, as there always is between extremes. At

this season of the year judicious families will, as far as practicable, arrange for giving a certain number of evenings each week to church duties, a certain number to social duties, and as many as possible to home pleasures and mental improvement. Public men will find any arrangement very difficult, but the effort, yes, even the desire, to make such an arrangement will do them good. A course of reading for the winter should be included in every plan. More anon.

### THE Gnostic HERESY.—ITS RISE, PROGRESS AND EFFECTS.

FROM THE POSTHUMOUS PAPERS OF THE LATE MR. T. HENNING.

The light of the glorious Gospel had scarcely begun to illumine and gladden a benighted world, when the corrupt and darkened minds of men, who "loved darkness rather than light" sought to obscure its lustre and to mar its blessed effects. Christianity, as a universal religion, embracing as its great and benevolent end, the complete moral conquest of the world, had to encounter not only the Judaism of its native regions and the Paganism of the western world, but had likewise to contend with the Asiatic religions, which had already penetrated Palestine. Orientalism, in its most extended sense, had made considerable progress towards the west, even previous to the advent of Christ. At this early period, whatever may have been the cause, there existed a marked similarity in the religion of the caste-divided population on the shores of the Ganges, and the same artificial state of society in the valley of the Nile. It is certain that the genuine Indian mysticism first established a permanent western settlement in the deserts of Egypt. Its first combination seems to have been with the Judaism of Alexandria, and to have arisen from the dreamy Platonism, which, in the schools of that city, had been engrafted on the Mosaic Institutes. The form in which Christianity first encountered the widespread Orientalism was, we consider, Gnosticism, whose full growth as a system was doubtless of a later date; but its elements were already floating about in the different western countries of Asia, and succeeded finally in working their way into the very vitals of the religion of Christ.

In a brief review of the rise, progress and effects of this pernicious heresy, we propose to give in the first place a short historical sketch of its early prevalence, and secondly, grouping together the principal tenets of this system, if system it can be called. We shall next attempt to trace up Gnosticism to its source, and lastly, point out some of the baneful effects which it produced on the opinions and practices of the primitive Church.

#### I. HISTORICAL NOTICE OF THE Gnostics.

The Gnostics date their rise from the very origin of Christianity. They can be clearly traced in the times of the apostles, being expressly opposed by the Apostle John; for Cerinthus as well as the Nicolaitans appears to have imbibed their doctrines. Perhaps they may not have been very numerous, nor very influential till a later period, and hence some erroneously place their first appearance in the time of Adrian. Irenæus states that they did not "prevail" till the early part of the second century, and speaking of two of their leaders Basilides and Carpocrates, says their impure followers are not to be numbered, springing up like mushrooms; and Epiphanius asserts that they burst out of the earth together, at one time, like mushrooms, the lurking places of many scorpions.

Hegesippus, who lived during the reign of Adrian, says that when the sacred company of the apostles was departed, and the generation that heard their divine preaching was gone, then the conspiracy of impious deceit had its open beginning; then to the preaching of the truth did they dare to oppose their knowledge falsely so called. The original documents belonging to those times, mostly perished in the Dioclesian persecution, but there is sufficient proof of the general eruption of Gnostic principles about the year 120, when they came forth from their obscurity into open day. They continued extensively to prevail for about a century and a half. The principles of Gnosticism were revived in the fourth century, and as a sentiment or feeling, if not as a heretical system, Gnosticism survived in the Church for many ages, entailing upon it effects which, after the lapse of eighteen hundred years are still discernible.

Prior to the existence of the Christian heresies bearing this name, certain professors of the Oriental Philosophy applied to themselves the term Gnostics, to express their more perfect knowledge of the divine nature. "That they assumed this vaunting appellation before their tenets were transferred to the Christians," says Brucker, "may be concluded, from this circumstance that we find it among the Christians not appropriated as a distinct title to any single sect, but made use of as a general denomination of those sects which, after the example of the Pagan philosophy, professed to have arrived at the perfect knowledge of God. The Pagan origin of the word is intimated in 1 Tim. vi. 20; Col. ii. 8. Mosheim thinks that, in the first century, men, infected with Gnostic heresies, began to erect societies distinct from other Christian Ecclesiastical History (Vol. I. p. 110)." Tilmaun thinks nothing was known of Gnosticism until the second century. Brucker (Historical Critical Philosophy) thinks that their tenets existed in the Eastern school, long before the rise of the Gnostic sects in the Christian Church under Basilides, Valentinus and others. The Fathers, as shown by Lardner, seem never to have doubted as to the nature of the references made by

Paul. The learned Buddæus argues that the grand fountain of the Gnostic sects was in the mass of Jewish traditions drawn mostly from the East, and afterwards collected into a written system. Vitringer shows that John referred to those heresies which received a permanent form in the system of Basilides and Valentinus.

While the Oriental philosophy as such, says Bæcher, was the *magna parens* of Gnosticism, it is yet true that this latter system was a compound of influences and features from East, West, North and South, Persians and Chaldeans, Jews, Greeks and Christians. If it had one parent it had many godfathers. Every system of philosophy met at Alexandria, the philosophical arena and show ground of the world, the point of admixture between the doctrines of the eastern and western nations, the scene of the marriage of Platonism with the doctrines of the Jews and the opinions of the East in the writings of Philo. The seeds of what may be called the Christian Gnostic Philosophy were sown in the first century in soil well prepared for their reception; by the spread of Oriental notions they took root and sprung up, but did not become fully ripe until the second century.

#### II. LEADING PRINCIPLES OR DOCTRINES OF THE Gnostics.

This leads us to give some account of the Gnostic doctrines, though we shall attempt to classify only such of these as were acknowledged by nearly all the different sects into which they were divided.

The genius and the very soul of Gnosticism was mystery; its end and object was to purify its followers from the corruptions of matter and to raise them to a higher scale of being, suited only to those who were to become perfect by knowledge. The great elementary principle which pervaded the whole religious systems of the East, and which gives a key to many parts of the Gnostic system, was the inherent purity, the divinity of mind or spirit, the inalienable evil of its antagonist—matter. Hence arose their fundamental tenet.

1. That the Creator of the world, or Demiurgus, was not the same with the supreme God, the Author of good and the Father of Christ—that the visible world, with its material elements, jarring, one upon another, and its organized and animated orders, perishable and corruptible, and its intelligent races, degenerate and wretched, is altogether unworthy of the Supreme and Infinite Power, or, as He was called, the Father Unknown. They held that this material world was, in fact, the work of inferior and imperfect beings (or of one such being), themselves removed by many stages of filiation from the Supreme Deity—that he exercised an ill-fated and precarious empire over this troubled sphere, where man—unhappy man—finds his present lot to be cast.

2. A second principle which they held was that all subordinate intelligences derive existence by efflux or emanation from the first Father, or first principle, or Bythos, as He was sometimes called. This primal Deity, who had dwelt aloof in His unapproachable majesty, the unspeakable, the nameless, the self-existing, by an operation purely mental, or by acting upon himself, produced other beings of different sexes, from whom, by a series of descents, more or less numerous, according to different schemes, several pairs of beings were formed, who were called *æons*, from the periods of their existence before time was, or *emanations*, from the mode of their production. The system of emanations held by some of them seems to have resembled that of concentric circles; the *æons* gradually deteriorating as they approached nearer and nearer to the extremity of the *pleroma*. Beyond this *pleroma* was matter, inert and powerless, though co-eternal with the Supreme God, and like Him, without beginning. At length one of the *æons*, passing the limits of the *pleroma*, and meeting with matter, created the world after the form and model of an ideal world, which existed in the *pleroma*, or mind of the supreme God.

3. Farther, to redeem the souls of men from their entanglement in malign and hostile matter—the source of moral as well as physical evil—Christ, the Logos, Redeemer was sent into the world. He was to emancipate them from the tyranny of this evil principle; and by revealing to them the true God, who was hitherto unknown, to fit them, by a perfection and sublimity of knowledge to enter the divine *pleroma*—to re-ascend to their source and merge for ever in the boundless ocean of light and life.

4. In agreement with the doctrine of the utter malignity of matter—a doctrine which is the very corner-stone of Gnosticism—they either denied that Christ had a real body at all, and held that He was an unsubstantial phantom; or granting that there was a man called Jesus, the son of human parents, they believed that one of the *æons* called Christ descended from the *pleroma* upon Him at His baptism. Before His death He broke off His temporary association with the perishable body of Jesus, and surrendered it to the impotent resentment of Pilate and of the Jews.

5. They denied, too, the resurrection of the body and the final judgment; for as evil resided in matter essentially, the rising of the body would only encumber the spirit. By the resurrection they supposed that either a moral change on the minds of men was intended, or the ascent of the soul to the abodes of celestial glory after its disengagement from the body.

6. Many of them asserted that the books of the Old Testament proceeded from the imperfect being who created the world and superintended the Jewish people; though it was but a "side principle," a principle at first advanced for the opposing the Christian Church, that Jehovah, the God of the Jews, was not the Supreme Deity, but on the contrary His foe and the usurper of his power.