

ourselves orthodox we are proclaiming that we are right, we will, perhaps, be slower in using the word. It is said that Chinese soldiers have painted on their armor an inscription indicating that the wearer is a brave man. We feel that action would be a better test of his prowess, and that the inscription is an absurdity. So with a church that claims orthodoxy. We feel that instead of proclaiming that it has the true doctrine it would be better that it should show, by the purity and Christlikeness of its members, that its doctrine is of God. Children sometimes write "This is a dog" under an awkward combination of lines, and we are moved to a smile with a feeling that only a failure or a caricature needs to be so labelled. So with a church or a creed. Only a caricature of truth needs to be labelled, "This is the truth." Only an unworthy church will proclaim itself orthodox. Outsiders may properly so name it—or might if it were not for the abuse of the word which has well nigh placed it among the words properly called slang; but for a member of a church to call it orthodox, or for anyone to speak of himself as orthodox is as far out of place as to announce himself as "great" or "handsome," or to claim any other quality of which others should be the judges. But you may say, "Is not the word a convenient expression to mean the acceptance of a certain creed—the Trinity, the Miracles, the Resurrection?" It is not a proper word for such use, for it is never used except with an implied condemnation of other views, which are held with equal earnestness. Let me repeat that our opinions should be held with humility. It is a false idea of loyalty to the Spirit that teaches all, to magnify its teachings to ourselves as compared with its teaching to others. We all see through a glass darkly. It is not for us to think of ourselves more highly than of our neighbors. Our

actions must be guided absolutely by the light given us; but always with recollection of the thousands of mistaken judgments of the past, the imperfect vision of many as true as ourselves, the falls due to over-confidence.

It would be well for us to banish entirely from our use these that look back to days of theological strife when harsh words fought the battles of the creeds. Let us substitute purity of life and activity of service for the argument of epithets. Such words can only darken counsel. They never yet helped a good cause and the use of them has been a reproach of Christendom.

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### THE BIRDS.

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Back in the thick woods, dim and drear  
 The little birds chirp and twitter,  
 They feel the coming of the spring  
 After the stormy winter,  
 When robins, and the orioles,  
 Across the shining seas  
 Will wend their way to last year's haunts,  
 To sing in door yard trees,  
 Or nesting in the orchard near,  
 Will rapturous hail the morn,  
 With notes as jubilant and sweet  
 As at Creation's Dawn.

E. AVERILL.

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### SOME THOUGHTS ON THE LESSON.

FOR FOURTH MONTH, 11TH, 1897.

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*"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God."*

The omission of the first of these clauses from the Golden Text, weakens the second, by removing the contrast. I prefer it without the contrast, because, in religion, people are more likely to err on the side of dependence than upon the side of independence. To be perfectly fair we must present both sides, but, personally, I should rather dwell upon the sufficiency of God than upon the insufficiency of ourselves. I think that amongst us those who emphasize the sufficiency of God