

symbols. If only we come back to life—to the life of the New Testament (or of the Bible)—to the Life, we shall have hope” (p. 441).

W. EDWARD CHADWICK.

(*To be continued.*)

ART. VIII.—THE MONTH.

THE mischievous proposal of the Army Guild, on which we commented last month, to hold what would have justly been regarded as an approach, at all events, to a Requiem Mass in St. Paul's Cathedral, has happily been prevented. In consequence of the public protests which were made, including a remonstrance addressed to the Dean of St. Paul's by three Prebendaries of the Cathedral, the proposal was withdrawn by the Army Guild itself; and, with a good feeling which claims recognition, not only was the proposed service abandoned at St. Paul's, but no attempt was made to hold it elsewhere. It is a matter for thankfulness that a proposal which, if persisted in, must have occasioned much strife has thus been successfully resisted; and the widespread public feeling to which this success is due, illustrated by the remarkable support which the *Times* newspaper gave to the resistance, is of good omen for the future. It is but just that a recognition should be expressed of the help rendered by the Ladies' League in the matter. Had not that organization been in readiness to act in such an emergency, a sufficiently influential protest might not have been made in time; and the letter addressed to the press by the President of the League was a good example of the combined firmness and moderation which is to be desired in such a question.

We observe that Canon MacColl, in the *Pilot*, with characteristic incapacity for confining his argument to the real point at issue, has expressed his satisfaction that the profession of allegiance to primitive practice, which is put forward by the leading Churchmen and Churchwomen who opposed the service, has thus been shown to be baseless, since prayers for the dead were undoubtedly a practice of the Early Church. This general question, however, has nothing whatever to do with the present issue. That which was opposed was not the kind of supplications for the holy Dead which are to be found in early Liturgies, but the celebration of the Holy Communion with the avowed intention, on the part of the promoters of the service, to celebrate it as a sacrifice on behalf of the soldiers who had fallen in the war.

It was a celebration of the Holy Communion, in short, of which the object is described and condemned in our Article, "to have remission of pain or guilt." Many of those who joined in this protest would welcome the restoration to our Communion Service, if it were practicable, of such supplications as are found in the ancient Liturgies, while they are resolutely opposed to anything which approximates to the application of the Holy Communion as a sort of sacrifice for the departed. The truth is that the errors and superstitions of the Roman Church have so poisoned the wells and sources of primitive truth and practice that it has become necessary to guard against many a practice which was harmless, and even edifying, in primitive times, because it is still inextricably associated with Roman abuses. Those who desire in any points a closer return to primitive practices should, above all things, take care that their attempts to revive such practices are not marked by a Roman colour. But, on the contrary, the chief advocates of such revivals generally associate them ostentatiously with Roman ceremonial, and with the very language of the Roman Missal. Our reformers, in reasserting primitive truth and practice, went straight back to primitive times. Such associations as the Army Guild seem to think the only way to retrace the path to primitive ground is through Roman territory, and they give us too much reason to believe that they are inclined to stop short at that first stage. Prayers for the dead in the early Church were the natural result of the true Christian spirit, which desires to receive everything—even the most assured of all blessings—through prayer. They were, thus, rather an expression of thankfulness for the blessedness of those who had fallen asleep in Christ, than the means for procuring that blessedness. When prayers for the dead can again be offered in that spirit, and not in a spirit which at least recalls the idea of purgatory, they will be viewed in a very different light by many of those who now oppose their introduction into public worship.

The meetings of the Convocation of Canterbury have been marked by the consideration of three important subjects—the proposed creation of a National Council, representing the two Provinces of Canterbury and York; the relation of the Church of England to the Holy Catholic Church; and the recent discussions respecting the Virgin Birth of our Lord. The debate on the latter subject in the Lower House was held with closed doors, and at the time we are writing its nature and its results are not yet officially known. But the proceedings, both in the Upper and the Lower House, on the question of a National Council were of considerable importance,

if only as illustrating the many and great difficulties which it will present. No one in the Upper House could quite say what a National Council would be, or what would be its relation to the ancient Houses of Convocation. Are these Houses, with all their "undoubted rights and privileges," to be superseded by a newly-created body, the very constitution of which is a matter of keen dispute? Will these two Houses consent to the supersession of their historic authority; and if not, is it proposed to add to the existing six Houses of Convocation and Laymen another House, itself composed of three Houses—Bishops, Priests, and Laymen—by way of simplification? At present the whole scheme would seem to be in the highest degree vague and unpractical; and no due attention seems as yet to have been paid to the constitutional difficulties in the way. There is too much tendency to treat the Church of England in the matter as though it presented the sort of *tabula rasa* of a Colonial Church, and had no ancient and settled constitution. It seems assumed, moreover, that Parliament will agree with the utmost complacency to the new arrangements, and that if the six existing bodies can agree in superseding themselves by some "National Council" which claims to speak in the name of the Church of England, the two Houses of Lords and Commons will gratefully exclaim that here is the voice of the real Church of England to be heard at last, and will at once defer to its utterances. These dreams, however, are to be referred to some joint meeting of the Houses of Convocation and Laymen of the Provinces of York and Canterbury, and to that reference, for the present, we may safely leave them.

ERRATA.

In THE CHURCHMAN of last month—

Page 441, line 20, for Aarat read Ararat.

"	443	"	23	"	"	"	"
"	443	"	26	"	"	"	"
"	444	"	17	"	Erench	"	French.
"	394	"	14	"	the other Sacraments, read the other Sacrament.		