

ception, self-blindness in apparent devotion. We must searchingly question our own hearts, for however we may shrink and be discouraged at the task, we can in no other way draw near our God, and when our own judgment, our own self-knowledge fails us, we must cry with the Psalmist, "Search me,"—"look well if there be any way of wickedness in me," and the great and earnest longing of our soul will find expression in the cry, "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean, wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." Not in vain are such words uttered when they come from the depths of a heart conscious of its own impurity, its own impotence, and the grace and power of God, He who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmity,—our Elder Brother and our Great High Priest,—will endue us with strength to be steadfast and true to our high calling among the changes and chances of this world.

NOTES ON THE OCCASIONAL SERVICES.

I. — BAPTISM.

THESE notes, put together as a comment on the Text, will, we hope, be found useful to those who desire to understand the Prayer Book. We do not pretend to go in'to the lawfulness of Infant Baptism in these papers. And we would suggest that our readers take the Office commented on, and read it in connection with the Notes.

The Heading.—"To be used in the Church." Ever since temples were built, the Church has discouraged Baptism in houses, except in cases of necessity. She encourages

it on Sundays and Holy Days, for two reasons, which you will see in the Rubric,—testimony to the reception, and to put every one in remembrance of his profession.

"The Vulgar Tongue."—"Vulgar" is the old word for common,—the tongue or language of the people.

Godfathers and Godmothers.—So called, because the new birth establishes a new relationship in God. The use of these "sureties" or "sponsors" is derived from the Jewish Church. They were used from the earliest ages, without scruple, till the last two or three centuries. There are guardians in secular affairs for children, who make contracts which the children must fulfil when they come of age. Is it unreasonable to ask that, besides the parents, there should be additional sureties, in case of their neglect, to promise those things in their name, without which they cannot obtain salvation? The children are to be instructed as to their solemn promises, and when they are old enough, they are required to promise for themselves. If it be right to repent, believe, and obey, surely every precaution should be taken to see that the children should be taught to do so. The sureties are only to interfere, if parents neglect their duty; and in these days of shifting residence, they are to do the best they can for their children. Impossibilities are not expected from them. No one should undertake the Office without understanding what it means.

"At the Font."—Baptism was anciently performed, before churches were built, in "fountains" or "rivers." Hence the name. It is usually placed at the entrance of the Church building, because Baptism