

EXTRA SERVICES.

We are in the habit of calling those only Extra Services, that are over and beyond the forenoon, afternoon and evening services of our chapels and churches; and additional to or beyond the week-night lecture or prayer meeting. These Extra Services are of several kinds. There is the "Protracted Meeting," where preaching is had every day, or more commonly every night, for two or three or more weeks. And there is the Out-door Service or Open-air Preaching, where in park or square, at the street corner, or from an empty waggon, or in a cemetery, or under a friendly tree, the preacher discourses of unseen things. "Bethel Services," (which has become the technical phrase for meetings on shipboard,) and "Cottage Meetings" are scarcely now considered extra services at all. Another variety of Extra Service is the Camp-Meeting; lasting generally six days, and including a Sabbath. And there is the Daily Prayer-Meeting. No doubt the years to come will show Extra Services of new kinds, services and means not now in vogue. We have, perhaps, no duty with regard to these; but we have a duty with regard to the others. They are before us—they are on trial. If the means are pure, and the results are good, then we should adopt them as far as our circumstances render expedient or possible. If we find that the means, either in themselves or in their results, are not good, then we must lay them by: nay, we must oppose them. But the best way, in all such cases, is to counteract an objectionable activity, by adopting a pure and good form.

We approach, then, the subject of *Protracted Meetings*, so called; preaching from night to night, for many nights in succession. God's word is "like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces;" and to this end it may be used in the same way—with repeated blows on the same spot, till the resisting object gives way. This is one half of the philosophy of such meetings. Impressions are deepened night by night: the conscience gets no rest; and the resolution of the repentant Prodigal is reached, "I will arise, and go to my father!" The other half of the philosophy is that the workers in such meetings obtain a holy boldness which enables them to approach unbelievers, and self-deceived professors, in such a way as they had never been able to do before; and as the seed of the Kingdom is better planted and watched, more of it grows. These Special, or Revival, meetings have outgrown objections that were once in vogue respecting them; and may be said, as far as *theory* is concerned, to be now a part of our recognized system. My impulse is to write, "Every church should hold a series of Revival meetings every year at each of its preaching stations," and then pass on. But an objection is often urged—"It is no use trying to hold such meetings unless there are some indications of more than usual interest." I am not sure that we ought to use that objection, for there is a tendency in it to make us sit down and do nothing, hoping for something to come in some manner entirely independent of human instrumentality. The Spirit is always working somewhere; and will work in our hearts if we will but submit to His influences. And while it is certainly true