

The mission hospital has proved itself one of the most powerful evangelistic agencies while schools and colleges have been useful not only in direct evangelistic work, but, in probably what is a more valuable way, because it touches classes unreached by ordinary evangelism, in the indirect influence they have exerted upon the upper classes, and in the nation at large. And after all, for people of non-theistic beliefs, the best way to evangelize is by teaching. Whether in the school, or the preaching hall or on the streets and by the wayside, the best evangelist is the one who understands how to teach, having in view not only the foretelling of his message, but the reception of it by his hearers; and that this latter is more dependent upon the teacher we are sometimes apt to forget.

When we speak of evangelistic work we usually mean the direct work of preaching to the heathen, apart from the other lines of missionary work.

For this there might be Gospel Hall or tent meetings, street preaching by individuals or groups, or the simple talking with individuals by the wayside or wherever opportunity occurs. There are many methods of evangelistic work, but this last method no mission can do without. It was that of Christ Himself as He took the Gospel to the towns and villages,—“Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for thereto came I forth.” There is no blare of trumpets about this method, and it does not bring the missionary much into the lime-light, but it is eminently Christ-like and simple. Some of the best evangelistic missionaries China has had have been those who would take no vehicles in travelling about the country, but preferred to walk and take their time along the country roads, conversing with their fellow travellers, and at the wayside resting places speaking “a word in season to him that is weary.”

Street preaching with groups of evangelists, either with or without a tent, has its uses, though it fails to give the simple heart to heart talks that the above method provides, and also is usually deficient in what is called the “follow-up” work, which can better be conducted where there are permanent quarters with a staff on the spot.