

The most wonderful thing has happened. Last night, Thursday night, I put a notice on the board saying that a prayer meeting would be held in the Sick Bay at 1900. I decided before I left Derry that it was time I did some concrete thing for Christ, something to be a witness and testimony of what I believe. Avey and I have been talking about it since leaving Derry on Tuesday. I have been making a few contacts with chaps whom I thought may be interested. Yet I only contacted five or six, do you know that eighteen turned up at the meeting! Five of them were my own gunners. I had been worried, needless to say, how it would be received. I just put on the notice that a service interdenominational and evangelical in outlook would be held in Sick Bay at 1900. We had Action Stations at 1910 and it is a tribute to the sincerity of those who came, that two of them (my gunners again) came to me and asked that I should not put it off because of Action Stations being exercised. So when Stations were over, we had it piped and mustered in the Sick Bay, in work-a-day clothes. Got started at 1940 with a hymn "Fight the Good Fight". Then I read Acts 26, St. Paul versus King Agrippa. Avey then gave a very nice prayer. I took over again and talked to the boys. I only talked from 1955 to 2015 and they stayed until 2045 asking all sorts of questions and discussing things. I started off by talking about christianity in general and what it means to us as a christian nation. About how after the war they should know what it means in order to pass it on to their children. From there I spoke of the necessity of knowing Christ and believing on Him before christianity would take hold upon our lives. I then went on to talk more of Christ and how we must become "altogether" christians and not remain "almost persuaded" as in the case of King Agrippa. I made other references to St. Paul, and again talked about our Lord. I pointed out that in future meetings we would deal more fully with Christ and tell more of St. Paul. I tried to explain the meaning of conversion. You see it was a difficult situation because of the audience, there was one R.C. there and possibly more, the rest were C. of E., U.C., etc. As a result I had to sort of pick my steps in the first stages, lest I should offend some, but again it was not hard because God seemed to be with me and told me just what to say. When I was talking about conversion and a new life, I got this remark from a signalman who is somewhat of a playboy, and is noted for his hard drinking when in Port. In fact, I saw him myself last week, flaked out in the Sick Bay dead drunk. "Sir, do you mean that if I am converted here, now, then I will go out and never take a drink again", and then he went on with this remark, "It is time some of us changed over to a new life then because if we keep on like this we will be old men in a few years", from excessive drinking in other words. Many other remarks like that indicated that the fellows are looking for some help spiritually and they seem to realize that all the drinking they did in Derry certainly is not conducive to internal peace. I did my best to answer all their questions, and they discussed some among themselves. We kept it strictly interdenominational and touched nobody's toes, not even the R.C. On the whole I feel very happy and if it is God's will, I shall witness again Sunday night.

Got a lot of remarks from the boys today on the meeting last night. They all seemed to enjoy it and want it again, so we will try Sunday night this time. Four more chaps said today that they would be there Sunday evening. Avey and I still have our prayer meetings at 1700 and now have two more fellows. One is a Petty Officer, Ordnance Artificer, the other an Engr. Sub. Lieut. who is travelling over to Newfie with us and is bunking with me.

Saturday I was catching up on some sleep and Sunday I was too busy to write. In the morning I studied and during the evening was busy with our Service. The work is going along wonderfully. I did not realize I would get so much interest from the ratings. Last night the meeting was half as



large again as Wednesday night. The service itself lasted one hour, then we had a half hour of singing hymns. In one particular case I think I was the means of bringing a chap to salvation, I am not sure yet though. He is a signalman. He did not plan to go at first and he was the one who asked so many questions on Wednesday night. I knew he was upset so invited him to my cabin and we had a long chat. He could not make up his mind whether to accept Christ or not. He had planned to have a game of bridge during the evening and when he left my room was still undecided, and said he did not feel like going to the service in that mixed up state. So I told him to carry on and not worry that I would not feel at all hurt if he went to his bridge game. To make a long story short, he came to the service instead, so I think he is well on his way to salvation. I hope so anyway.

Last night, Wednesday, we had our meeting again. The numbers are increasing. There were between thirty and thirty-five there last evening. You remember I told you we had it in the Sick Bay. The Sick Bay is actually quite big, but it was crowded last evening. It is a thrilling thought that I am able to tell some of these fellows here about the gospel. Last evening after exercise Action Stations at 1900, they always turn up afterwards and inquire if we still will have the meeting, we got under way at 1940. There were three R.C.'s present whom I know of and I think others who may be also, one of the R.C.'s took quite a large part in the discussion. Remember, I told you that Tate came Sunday night, also my cabin mate, but tonight they had to go on watch, so I was the only officer there. However the chief stoker and two of the senior E.R.A.'s were there, several Petty Officers and the rest seamen and stokers and miscellaneous, as I said thirty to thirty-five in all. One of the Petty Officers, my Ordnance Artificer led the discussion. I started off with a hymn, "Onward Christian Soldiers", and one of the stokers, who has a violin played, also one fellow played a mouth organ. Then I gave a prayer. In it I thanked God that we of varied faiths should get together, R.C., Baptists, Brethern and what have you and worship in common unity. Then we had another hymn and then P.O. Hoffman led the discussion (as I said above) on Matthew 26, dealing with Christ betrayed and Last Supper and first trial by the High Priest. He did very well actually. I took a major part in the discussion of course, because Hoffman kept referring to me. I am attempting gradually to lead them to salvation. Each time I get an opportunity, I speak of conversion, of the necessity of testifying to live a christian life, the necessity of being saved, etc. But first of all, lead them to Christ so when I do start getting testimonies of faith from them, they will know Christ like a friend. I pointed out to them also that they were making their testimony by being present at the service. They all seem to be interested and I am sure there are christians among them that I have not yet contacted. We closed with a hymn and a prayer by Avey.

By the way our daily meetings for prayer at 1700 has risen to four and I expect two more during the next couple of days, the signalman I spoke of before and also the S.B.A. Please pray for our endeavor and ask God too, to give me more faith and a greater understanding of the Scripture, that I may teach these boys. I feel so inadequate actually, when I realize how little is my own faith and how little I know about Christ, but I find that the fellows need Christ or they would not come.

Friday night, Good Friday, I shall prepare a special talk or sermon and deliver it myself. Our meeting will be more formal then and more in the form of a Church Service. I shall then have a good opportunity when speaking of the Crucifixion to tell the fellows about Salvation.



During our meetings, I'm speaking as if we've been carrying them on for ages, when actually last night was only the third, the fellows sit around on the deck on their life jackets, (we wear large thick life jackets and have to wear them at all times so they make comfortable seats) and if I or whoever is talking, want to address the rest, we go to the front of the Bay and stand at a little table. This table is also the one used for Requestmen and Defaulters. The Captain has named it "The Pulpit". Both he and No. 1 are in favour of the meetings.

Last night we had our Easter service. I talked to the boys again taking as a base the last chapter of Luke. I like that Chapter, I like especially the scene of Christ walking along the road from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus and talking to the two disciples and expounding to them the scriptures. What a lucky pair they were to know Christ like that and be able to get so much teaching from our great Master. What a marvellous understanding one would have of the scriptures after listening to Christ our Saviour for a few hours.

The boys seemed to enjoy it and the attendance was as large as Good Friday, also great news, old Jake was there, he and McLaren turned up. Jake told me all along that he would go to our Easter service, but I never thought he was serious.

If I remember correctly, I never did give you a report on Friday night's service. It was Matthew 27 and a discussion on it. We had it in the Seamen's messdeck Friday night and for me at any rate it was quite a busy evening. Started the service at 1830, it was finished at 1925 and I stayed in the messdeck with a group of 8 - 10 around me until 2130, answering their questions and discussing the bible and Christ with them. It is producing an effect on the ship's company. There is much less swearing going on and more fellowship and friendliness.