

# The Letter

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## The First Letter

**T**HERE are "Houseparties" now in almost every corner of the world. They want to be kept in touch with each other. Personal correspondence goes on but is inadequate. At best only a limited number can know of what the Fellowship, as a whole, is doing. Miracles taking place in Oxford are shared with those of us in New York, but the troops in Simsbury, Conn., Sidney, Australia, or Rangoon, Burma, do not always hear.

Hence the appearance of **THE LETTER** which will probably reappear from time to time. It does not aim to be a weekly, a monthly, or a quarterly. It will come to you very much as a personal letter might, when distance makes conversation impossible but there is something to say. It does not propose to compete with any already existing publication. It is not "another magazine" anymore than the Fellowship is "another organization." It is primarily to help us all to keep in touch. The sending-forth, the contents, and the future of **THE LETTER** will be under guidance.

As a House Party is everyone's party, so we want **THE LETTER** to belong to us all. Write us about yourself (can't you hear a House Party begin—"Tell us all about yourself")—we want to know, and will do our best, through notes and through printing what you write, to help you reach all the troops.

Articles, sermons, and stories of the changes in individual lives will appear from time to time. With all of us co-operating **THE LETTER** may indeed prove to be a present day version of the Acts of the Apostles.



## An Old Hope

FOR years it has been the hope of many of us to hold a House Party for more than three days. That hope was realised when, on the evening of June 27th sixty-one people gathered at Lake Minnewaska, N. Y., for a ten-day House Party. By the next day seventy-seven were present and before the party was over 168 had registered with many coming in for groups and classes. By far the larger number of those in attendance, perhaps 90 or 100 in number, were old troops who stayed the full ten days. Never before have we had such a number together for so long a time. Guidance had been all spring that the gathering would be distinctive and historical, and from the fun of the introductory meeting Monday evening straight through to the marvelous fellowship of the last evening together the Holy Spirit wrought His mighty and satisfying works.

The whole party was planned around the Bible Classes of Miss Mary Angevine of the Biblical Seminary in New York. Convinced as we all are that "Bible Christianity" is the only kind that can transform life, we have long wanted a House Party where thorough Bible study would be possible. Miss Angevine, one of the most gifted Bible teachers of this country, gave two courses—one in Mark and one in Acts. Her handling of both books was matchless. Not only did she teach the truths with great skill but she carried on her classes in the spirit of a house party, again and again bringing out points to show how truly our message is that of the New Testament. We are all greatly indebted to her and regard her as one of the "shock troops." Calvary, Sam Shoemaker's church, and a group in Princeton have already asked her to conduct Bible classes for them next winter. There will be several Bible study groups at 11 W 53 under Miss Angevine's direction.

While there were set times for meetings the whole atmosphere and spirit was that of the house parties you all know. The daily programme was as follows:—

- 9.00 a. m. Quiet Time.
- 9.45 a. m. Bible Class—Mark.
- 11.00 a. m. Bible Class—Acts.
- 12.15 p. m. Platform Meeting.
- 1.30 p. m. Dinner.
- Afternoon free.



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- 6.00 p. m. Informal singing.  
 6.30 p. m. Supper.  
 8.00 p. m. Meeting for personal witness.  
 9.30 p. m. Group meetings.

At the "Platform Meetings" in the morning the main truths of the message were presented as follows:—

Tuesday	"Sin"	W. B. Bryan, Jr.
Wednesday	"Confession"	S. M. Shoemaker, Jr.
Thursday	"Conversion"	C. P. Trowbridge.
Friday	"Guidance"	Garrett Stearly.
Saturday	"Personal Evangelism"	Frank N. D. Buchman.
Sunday	Sermon	S. M. Shoemaker, Jr.
Monday	"The Group"	Ray F. Purdy.
Tuesday	Personal Work Seminar	
Wednesday	"Stewardship"	S. S. Day.
Thursday	"Continuance"	H. K. Twitchell.

The evening meetings were given over to personal witness along the lines of thought brought up at the morning meetings. All this was in turn personalised by the smaller groups that came the last thing in the evening. The whole group grew in fellowship and in power straight through. Miracles took place at every turn and in very truth "there were added to the Church daily such as should be saved."

A psychiatrist who came largely out of curiosity said that as a result of the houseparty he was going back to find power in his church prayer meeting which he had deserted, and to change it if necessary.

A reporter from one of the large New York dailies came incognito but before he went away told the whole group who he was and why he came, adding that he had been greatly impressed with what he had seen and heard. The following Monday his paper, *The New York World*, came out with two columns on its second page very favorably describing the whole party.

H. Alexander Smith, Executive Secretary of Princeton University, came with his two daughters, Helen and Marion, and his new son, Ken Twitchell. President and Mrs. J. Ross Stevenson of the Princeton Theological Seminary were at Minnewaska.

Mr. W. B. Harris, Professor of Civil Engineering at Princeton University, came with his entire family. They came, as Mrs. Harris said, "a series of question marks" but went away saying that the whole



## “The Fellowship”

(“The following statement was made at Minnewaska and is such a clear and exact statement of the basis of our fellowship it has been put here for us all.”)

**F**OR some years I had heard of Houseparties, and I felt fully in sympathy with the group and their message and methods as I understood them. But when at last I found myself at my first Houseparty I began almost at once to have mixed feelings. The message and general atmosphere which I found were so similar to those of the conferences of my student days many years ago, that at once I felt at home. And yet I was conscious that in some sense I did not “belong” to the group. I soon discovered why I did not.

One day someone remarked that the group had no leader except the man who was “spiritually on top”. I saw at once that even so it had no membership except those who were spiritually in accord. As leaders were not elected or appointed so members did not “sign up” or “join”, I saw that one is “in” or “out” according as one holds a certain relationship to God and to other people; to God,—that of complete surrender to His will and guidance; to people, that of loving concern for and active effort to meet their spiritual needs by relating their lives to God. I discovered that I had been “out of action” with people for some years. Theoretically my purpose was that of the group, but actually it was not. During my old student days I had been “in action” in a blundering way, but I had allowed the cares of this world to crowd out people, and my center of interest must be shifted. I saw that attendance at Houseparties and friendly contact with the group would never get me “in”. I also realized that had I been “in action”, I should have felt “in” from the beginning.

I understand now that just in proportion as one is personally in touch with God, and personally in touch with people to be used by Him for their spiritual needs—in just such measure does one “belong” to the Fellowship.