

**Letters: A friend in the country (1)****Andrew Bonar:****MY DEAR SIR,**

Â—I have been too long in replying to your welcome letter. Do you think letters ever passed between the families of Moses and Jethro? Would not Moses or his son Gershom write occasionally to their friends in Midian, and tell of the wilderness journey?

Suppose the following letter from Gershom to his grandfather Jethro : 'Peace be to thee from Jehovah, God of heaven and earth! Wonder not if I am like a heath in the desert such as we see daily here, or like one of the sunburnt and time-worn rocks that occasionally meet our view.'

'Alas, grandfather, I am a stranger in a strange land, and my heart often wanders back to the fields where you taught me to worship Jehovah among the flocks of sheep, at the well at which you used to tell, my father first met my mother. I hope you are not forgetting us, who are often up and often down, sometimes getting a day's rest at such a well as Elim, sometimes moving over arid sand. My father is much tried by the people, but I think every day's provocation makes him meeker than ever, though he does not himself see it, and often sighs for deliverance. Our health is, on the whole, good; we have a good deal to try it, heat by day, frost by night, hot winds, flinty soil, and such other annoyances. But our foot swells not, and, wonderful to tell, our raiment is not exhausted! our shoes not worn out! our manna still at our tent-door every morning, and our guardian Pillar-Cloud above us! Help us to praise, and join us in praying that we may soon see that goodly mountain and Lebanon!'

Jethro replies: 'My son, the messenger who travelled by the way of the Amalekites arrived here and brought us tidings of you all'.

'But, my son, do ye often enough rejoice in the Lord alone, and forget the desert? Do you not remember your father's remarkable words about the sacrifice, how he told us of the glimpse he got of its meaning? He saw Jehovah Himself preparing to die! I have never been able to get this thought for a moment out of my mind. Herein indeed is love! Since then Midian has been to me far less than it was, for from Midian I am now looking to the bosom of Jehovah. Do the same, my son, and the desert will daily be forgotten. And you know how He is very near you in yonder Pillar-Cloud, and His face smiles on you at yonder ark and mercy-seat, from the highest Glory! There was a dark parable too, which your father spoke, about Jehovah gathering us all together at last in some glorious city, when Shiloh shall be there too! I often try to comfort myself with these thoughts. But my heart longs for more light and truth!'

Dear brother, pilgrims have been always pilgrims, and the desert always has been the desert, but Christ is always Christ, 'the same yesterday' when John lay on His bosom, and 'to-day' when you and I may do the same, 'and for ever,' when at His coming we shall know and feel all the bliss of being one with Him!