

TO FRANÇOIS D'ALBERT DURADE, 6 DECEMBER 1859

D'Albert wrote that in some pages of *Adam Bede* he could not recognize her. When she lived with them in Geneva, her ideas about the state of the soul during and after this life had verged on pantheism. [III, 230-321]

Holly Lodge, South Fields | Wandsworth | December 6. 59.

Dear Friend . . .

I can understand that there are many pages in "Adam Bede" in which you do not recognize the "Marian" or "Minie" of old Geneva days. We knew each other too short a time, and I was under too partial and transient a phase of my mental history, for me to pour out to you much of my earlier experience. I think I hardly ever spoke to you of the strong hold Evangelical Christianity had on me from the age of fifteen to two and twenty and of the abundant intercourse I had had with earnest people of various religious sects. When I was at Geneva, I had not yet lost the attitude of antagonism which belongs to the renunciation of *any* belief—also, I was very unhappy, and in a state of discord and rebellion towards my own lot. Ten years of experience have wrought great changes in that inward self: I have no longer any antagonism towards any faith in which human sorrow and human longing for purity have expressed themselves; on the contrary, I have a sympathy with it that predominates over all argumentative tendencies. I have not returned to dogmatic Christianity—to the acceptance of any set of doctrines as a creed, and a superhuman revelation of the Unseen—but I see in it the highest expression of the religious sentiment that has yet found its place in the history of mankind, and I have the profoundest interest in the inward life of sincere Christians in all ages. Many things that I should have argued against ten years ago, I now feel myself too ignorant and too limited in moral sensibility to speak of with confident disapprobation: on many points where I used to delight in expressing intellectual difference, I now delight in feeling an emotional agreement. On that question of our future existence, to which you allude, I have undergone the sort of change I have just indicated, although my most rooted conviction is, that the immediate object and the proper sphere of all our highest emotions are our struggling fellowmen and this earthly existence. So much in reply to your questions on those matters. I hope I shall not have made myself more obscure by my explanation.

We are very anxious to get an accomplished translator for "Adam Bede," and a little while ago Mr. Lewes wrote to Emile Montégut whose answer we are expecting on the subject. Hitherto I have rejected propositions of translation, from the dread of having one's sentences metamorphosed into an expression of somebody else's meaning instead of one's own. I particularly wish my books to be well translated into French, because the French read so little English, and if there is any healthy truth in my art, surely they need it to purify their literary air! . . .

I am writing a new work, which will not be published till next Easter, so that just now my hands and brain are full. At Easter our eldest boy will come home from school, and that will make a new epoch in our domestic life, for hitherto we have lived alone. I hope my heart will be large enough for all the love that is required of me.

Ever, dear Friend,

Yours will lasting regard

Marian Evans Lewes.