

Letter 080  
Isleworth, 10 November 1876

Dear Theo,

I feel that I must enclose a little note for you. You will spend delightful days at home, I almost envy you, my boy.

What beautiful autumn weather we are having. I think you will see the sun rise in the morning. In which room are you sleeping?

If you can get hold of the Imitation of Christ, you must read it; it is a splendid book which gives much light.

It expresses so well – for he who wrote the book put it into practice himself – how good it is to fight the Holy Strife for duty, and the great joy gained by being charitable and by doing one's duty well.

You must read this letter to Father and Mother. I have taken such beautiful walks lately – they were such a relief after the closeness of the first months here.

It is true that every day has its own evil, and its good, too. But how difficult life must be if it is not strengthened and comforted by faith, especially further on when the evil of each day increases as far as worldly things are concerned. And in Christ all worldly things may become better and, as it were, sanctified.

It is a beautiful saying and happy are those who know it, "Nothing pleaseth me but in Christ, and in Him all things please me." But it is not acquired so easily; still, "seek and ye shall find."

Next time when Father and Mother write, send me a word or two also.

Monday evening I hope to go to Richmond again, and to choose for my text the words: "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion." Theo, I shall be unlucky if I cannot preach the Gospel, if my lot is not to preach, if I have not given all my hopes and all my trust to Christ. Well, misery is truly my lot, while what I need now is a little courage in spite of everything.

I should have liked to have you with me last Thursday evening in the little church at Turnham Green. I walked there with the oldest boy in the school, and told him some of Andersen's tales, including "The Story of a Mother."

And now we are slowly approaching winter, and many people dread it. But it is pleasant at Christmastime, which is like moss on the roofs and like the pine trees, the holly and ivy in the snow! How I should like to meet Anna; I shall write to her again today.

Today, one of the servants left; these women hardly have an easy life here, and she couldn't stand it any longer; everyone, rich or poor, strong or weak, has moments in which he can go no further and when "all those things seem against us," when many things that we have built up tumble down. But never despair, Elijah had to pray seven times, and David had ashes on his head many times.

A new assistant has come to the school, for in the future I shall work more at Turnham Green; he has never been away from home before, and it will not be easy for him in the beginning. And now a firm handshake in thought; it is already late, and I am rather tired, best wishes and don't forget

Your most affectionate brother, Vincent.