

Amice Rappard,

The reason it is necessary to put a stop to these bickerings is, first of all, that they begin to bear too close a resemblance to the dispute between a certain pair of devout preachers, who argued with so much ferocity over a difference of opinion concerning the exact geographical location of the road to salvation that at the very same moment and with the very same gesture they threw their respective wigs into each other's face. Indeed, the wigs would be appropriate – and – how, with the best will in the world, could we go on, seeing that we have just arrived at a critical point, and neither you nor I possess the indispensable missile in question? I am therefore at my wits' end, and I deeply regret that we have started something that we are unable to bring to the above-mentioned triumphant end – quite worthy of the cause.

Our dispute has a decidedly ridiculous side, in my opinion, and it is bound to get more and more so, for which reason I won't go into the subject any further. It is too absurd.

Be sensible, and put a stop to it on your part too.

All the thoughts that occur to one's mind don't come straight from one's conscience – whether your conscience dictated your letters to you? – whether it was your duty to write them? – what drivel is this! – laugh it off.

But since you thought it was your duty, since you thought your conscience urged you to do it, I will let the whole business with all its extra adornments go, and so be finished.

The question remains as to whether you are thinking of coming here to do a number of studies, and if so, approximately when. Then I shall see to it that you can stay at my mother's house as usual.

With greetings,

Vincent