

Cairo, Dec. 21th, 1855

Reverend & Dear Sir,

I have received your letter of the 8th inst. this morning, in which I am again invited to come to England. Painful as it is to me to refuse a second time the invitation from the Committee, still I find myself obliged to do so.

You presume that my detention in England may be very short – which implies – as a matter of course – my return to E.A. with the present Monsoon which will end in March. Though calms & contrary winds must be expected already during that month, still the possibility of returning within that time must be admitted, with the proviso, however, that at the end of Febr. or the beginning of March you have set sail from Maralla. But here the difficulty & uncertainty lies: after arriving at Aden you must deliver yourself & your time over into the management of the Arabs. Even after you have procured a vessel at Aden, or if a friend had procured one for you previous to your arrival – you do not know how long you will still be detained there. The passage from Aden to Maralla alone requires – owing to the contrary wind - about 10 days - & having arrived there you again do not know how long they will detain you. Four years ago we left Cairo on the 16th of Jan. but owing to the compulsory detention both at Aden & Maralla it was only at the end of March that we reached our destination. Be therefore my detention in England ever so short, my return to E.A. with the present Monsoon is thereby put to a great risk. In consulting with Mr. Lieder - here it must be observed, that it is impossible for anyone who has not gone through the difficulties in connection with going to & returning from E.A., to give his advice on the subject – whose advice was that I should simply follow on your instructions, he asked me, whether I could not send a message to our Station through the English Consul both via Bombay & via Hamburg, to prepare the men whom we left in charge of the two houses in Mombas & Kisuludini for my absence till next year – but to this it must be replied that there is no knowing whether or when the message would arrive there - & that if our things (especially my manuscripts which I value most) are not looked after for a whole year, the probability is – that they will be eaten by the white ants. – My presence in England therefore – if even after this time it should still be considered necessary by the Committee for coming to a decision about the continuation of the E.A. Mission – cannot be expected before the end of next year. But when returned to my Station, which I intend to do by the next steamer, I shall remain there until I hear from you again. Your next letter must therefore be directed via Bombay & a duplicate should be sent by way of Hamburg.

In conclusion I must candidly say, that the Committee did not seem to have comprehended the real question with regard to the E.A. Mission. The aim of the statements made by Mr. Erhardt & myself is not so much to convince the Committee that the Mission ought to be given up, but rather to ask whether notwithstanding all that can & must be said against it, there are reasons or not to justify its continuation, & if there are what they may be. The question is evidently not answered by Macc. 16, 15, because it only turns on the eligibility of a locality. – As to the similarity of obstacles said to have existed in W.A. & New Sealand (sic), the immense & all-important difference (which I have already stated in some of my former letters) has been entirely overlooked – namely this:

that in W.A. & New Sealand the Christian Church had immediate access to the heathens, while in E.A. an independent Muhamedan power stands between them. This is the great stumbling block. The Christian Church & in her Christ Jesus, the Lord of Glory, who is over all – God – blessed for ever – is made to stoop before the false Prophet of Mecca – before the Missionary can even set a foot on the Continent of Africa. Is there no dignity in the Christian Church to be preserved in her relation with rulers whose religion she must pronounce to be false? Does the "Holy Church" in asking permission from a muhamedan ruler for executing her divine charge really acknowledge throughout all the world the Lord God of Zebaoth? Sixteen Missionaries & in them the whole Christian Church were only last year prohibited from doing their work of love among the heathens. Can it anymore be said that E.A. is open for Missionary Labour? Give me the same access to the heathens in E.A. which the Chr. Church had in W.A. & N. Sealand & I shall never write one word in which the continuation of our mission is called in question. All other difficulties I will gladly encounter & readily will we bear the privations connected with our isolated position – believing that we shall be more than conquerors through Him who has loved us. But there is a great principle involved in the nature of our position in E.A. – a principle which concerns the whole Chr. Church - & I therefore I do wish that the letters I have written since Sept. 54 may be printed & laid before the Christian public.

Trusting that my second refusal of coming to England will not be looked upon as wilful disobedience – but that my conduct will be explained in accordance with circumstances –

I beg to remain

Yours respectfully

J. Rebmann