

Dänisch-Hallesche Mission

Propagation of the Gospel in the East

Being a further Account of the Progress Made by some Missionaries to
Transgebar, Upon the Coast of Coromandel, For the Conversion of the
Malabarians

**Ziegenbalg, Bartholomäus
Plütschau, Heinrich**

London, 1711

III. Letters from Copenhagen, dated June 14th, give an Account, that a Danish East-India Ship was arrived at last in Norway, after a very long and tedious Voyage.

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very good Circumstances. He had read here the *Narrative of the Hospital at Hall*, and the wonderful *Footsteps of Providence* attending it; and being particularly affected with the Account given in the latter Part, of the Contributions gathered in *Germany*, for the Support of the newly-converted Heathens in *Malabar*, he offer'd me the aforesaid Sum to the same Purpose. The Governour here hath entertained me twice at Dinner, and is a Gentleman of an easie and obliging Conversation. Every thing is very dear here, and one can hardly live for less than a *Specie-Dollar* a Day.

III.

Letters from Copenhagen, dated June 14th, give an Account, that a Danish East-India Ship was arrived at last in Norway, after a very long and tedious Voyage.

Letters that came by this Ship, bring an Account, that the Missionaries gain Ground more and more among the Heathens in *Malabar*, and that God had open'd 'em a Door to speak the Mysteries of Christ. They meet with a deal of Opposition, whereby the common Enemy of Souls endeavours to obstruct the

the Work of Reformation in those Parts. However, their Congregation is increased at present to above one *Hundred* Souls, and they have some Hopes, there would be a considerable Addition in a short Time. They tell us, that the *Malabarians* did not only resort from very distant Places, to hear the Word preach'd in their own Language, but had also many private Conferences with the Christian Missionaries, upon the Subject of the Salvation of Souls.

Mr. *Ziegenbalgh*, who is one of these Missionaries, and the greatest Proficient in the *Malabarick* Tongue, has sent over several Treatises compiled by himself in that Language. They bear the following Inscriptions, set down by the Author himself: (1) *Twenty Six* Sermons preach'd at our *Jerusalem-Church*, upon all the Articles of the Christian Religion. (2) A Draught of the Examination of such as are to be baptized: (3) A Book of Psalms usually sung in our Church. As for the outside of these Books, they are of a quite different Dress from those in *Europe*. There is neither Paper, nor Leather, neither Ink nor Pen used by them at all, the Characters being by the Help of Iron Tools impressed on a sort of Leaves of a certain Tree, which is much like a Palm-Tree. At the End of every Leaf a Hole is made, and through the Hole a String drawn, whereby they are kept together; but they must be untied or loosened, whenever the Prints of these Characters are to be read.

They give a further Account, that both *Malabarians* and *Moors* did very much frequent their Sermons, but particularly their catecheti-

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cal Exercises. They had many Visits from the *Poets*, and such as were thought *learned* among the *Malabarians*, which often came from very distant Places, and put abundance of abstruse and intricate Questions, with other disputable Cases to them. Whereby however, the Missionaries took an Opportunity, to intersperse their Answers with good and practical Reflections, in order to fix the Minds of the Heathens on such things wherein the greatest Strefs, and the very Substance of Christian Religion lieth, and to withdraw them from those nice and useless Speculations, they too much run upon.

Some time ago, one of the Missionaries taking a Journey to a large Town, called, *Nagapatanam*, was every where kindly received by the *Malabarians*. In this Place he made a Stay of Six Days, and, after having contracted some Acquaintance with some of the leading Men of the Town, he obtained, that a solemn *Disputation* was set on Foot, and held in the Castle there. Abundance of *Bramanes*, *Pantarcs* and *Poets*, and all the Learned of the Town, with a Multitude of common People, flocked together to be present at that Solemnity. It lasted from the Morning till one a Clock in the Afternoon. The Missionary began the Act with a short Oration in *Malabarick*, and then levelled his Discourse chiefly against the idolatrous Worship so much in vogue among the Heathens there. But there was but one that would venture to give any Answer to what the Missionary delivered to them, and he is generally look'd upon as one of the greatest Saints in that Place.

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After the Disputation was over, the Missionary concluded again with a short *Monitory Oration*, which was answered by one of the eldest *Bramanes*, who returned Thanks in the Name of the whole Company, expressing withal a great Satisfaction at the kind Invitation offer'd 'em by the Missionary. All this caused a great Joy and Commotion in the whole Town. Soon after, when this Gentleman was come home again, he writ a large Letter to all the *Bramanes* and *Pantares* then present, and repeated to them in Writing, what before was declared to them by Word of Mouth, being in good Hopes, to see in time a happy Product of the Seed of the Gospel scattered then among the Heathens in that Place.

Of the *Divinity* and *Philosophy* of the *Malabarians*, he adds the following Particulars to what has been said already on that Subject, in the first *Collection of Letters*. They have a very regular *Language*, which may be reduced to a certain Standard or Rules of *Grammar*. As our learned Men in *Europe* have their *Course of Philosophical Sciences*, so have the *Malabarians* too, and treat them in a regular and methodical Manner, as well as our Scholars in *Europe*. They have a *Written Law*, from whence, as from the Fountain-Head, they fetch all their Theological Deductions and Determinations.

Concerning GOD, they'll tell you, they worship but *One* divine Being, which they set up for the original and productive Cause of all other things; calling it accordingly *Barabara Wastu*, or the supremest Being of all. This

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God, they say, doth not concern himself immediately about things of little Moment, falling out either in this or in other Worlds; but has created some other great Gods as his Vice-gerents, by whom all the Worlds, and the Creatures therein, are moved and influenced. These Gods, say they, have again their subordinate Gods; of whom every one is said to have his particular Station and Government of things assigned to him: By this *Midling* sort of Gods, Men are created according to the Order of the supreme Being; and therefore they think it but reasonable, they should have also *some* kind of Worship allotted to them, not excluding even the very lowest or *Third* Order of Gods, since Men received many Tokens of Kindness from them too. They add, that all these inferior sorts of Worship are resolved at last into the sublimest Worship, due to the *One* supreme Being.

They pretend likewise, that wise and understanding Men among 'em, perform their Worship *without Images*; these being design'd, say they, for Children only, and the duller sort of People, who know not what Idea's or Representations to frame of these heavenly Beings. They tell ye, that after the supreme Being, there are 3300000 Gods, all depending upon the first or primary Substance. They say, there are *Forty Eight Thousand Rishi*, or *great Prophets*, and an infinite Number of Angels, and other inferior Officers.

The *Genealogy* or gradual Production of their Gods, is also remarkable, and is ranked by them in this Series: (1) The Being of all Beings,
or

or the supreme God created Eternity. (2) Eternity brought forth *Tschimen*. (3) By this *Tschimen* the Goddess *Tschaddy* was created. (4) This Goddess *Tschaddy* produced *Putadi*, or the elementary and sensitive World. (5) By *Putadi* the Sound or ringing was framed. (6) The Sound's Offspring was Nature. (7) Nature afterwards begat the great God *Tschatatschimen*, and (8) this again brought forth another great God, call'd *Mageschurn*. (9) From *Mageschurn* sprung up *Ruddiren* or *Ispuren*; and (10) from *Ruddiren* the great God *Wischnum*. (11) This again created *Bruma*, which (12) prov'd the productive Principle of the Soul. (13) The Soul created at last the Heaven, or that vast Expansion betwixt Heaven and Earth, which makes up the fifth Element, according to the *Malabarick* Philosophy, or rather, the Receptacle of the other four Elements. (14) This Heaven begat or created the Air. (15) The Air begat the Fire. (16) The Fire begat the Water, and (17) the Water begat the Earth. As for the rest of their Gods and holy Prophets, they furnish out a large and long-linked Roll or Genealogy, too prolix and tedious to be inserted here.

Concerning the *Nature of their Gods*, they freely confess, they are subject to various Changes and Mutations, as well as the Creatures themselves, and that each of 'em hath his fix'd Term both of Life and Government. After the Expiration of all these set Times, every thing, say they, shall return into the Being of all Beings, and then there shall follow a new Creation. There are great Differences

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ferences among 'em about the *Worship* of their Gods, one Party preferring this, and another Party being more fond of that. They say, that in old Times, their Gods frequently appeared upon Earth; and of these Apparitions, they coin a World of ridiculous Tales and Stories. They say, there are *Fourteen* Worlds, seven superior, and seven inferior Ones, with as many huge Seas moving betwixt them. This Notion furnishes their Poets with Abundance of Fictions and Fancies; and whenever they entertain you with an Account of some strange Accidents and Adventures, they only tell you, that those Things happened in such and such a World, without thinking themselves obliged to alledge any other Proof for it.

As for the *Creation of Man*, they tell us, that *Sixty Thousand* Men were created at first, but that *Thirty Thousand* turned Devils soon after, and *Thirty Thousand* remained Men, both of 'em being multiplied afterwards to infinite Numbers. To the Knowledge of the *Image of God*, after which the first Man was created, and of the deplorable Loss ensuing it, they are utter Strangers. Their Notion about *Sin* is also very lame and imperfect: They say, it comes from the Constitution of the Body, and from *excessive Eating* and *Drinking*. But their *Bramanes* tell you, they are no Sinners at all, but the Offspring of the great God *Bruma*; and so think themselves to be pure and sinless all over.

About the *Soul of Man*, they have a Multitude of strange and confused Notions. Some say, that God himself is the Soul; others affirm

affirm it only to be a Part of God: Others give out, that God, at the Creation of the World, created also all those Souls that were designed to go into the Bodies of Men. Others again will tell ye, the Soul is begotten by the Parents. Others believe it to be the Product of the five Elements. The most Part think, every one hath two Souls; a good One, and a bad One. Touching the *Senses* of Man, they maintain there are five inward, and five outward Senses; whereof they hold the latter to be bad, and the former good and holy. They are generally for the *Transmigration* of the Soul out of one Body into another, in order to her full and perfect Purification. But as for such as have all along liv'd a good and holy Life, they tell you, that they are *immediately* translated to a State of compleat Bliss and Happiness.

Of those that have been defiled by a great many Sins in the World, they hold, that they must wander from one Body into another, and by this means be *born* over and over again, till they gain a perfect Purification at last, and be admitted to the holy Enjoyment and Company of the Gods. From this Principle they farther infer, that those that have indulged themselves in all Manner of Lewdness and Vanity, are often forced into the very wild and venomous Beasts, or else born again into the World in a very poor and mean Condition: Whereas those that have done a great deal of Good, but without being yet arrived to the pitch of Perfection, are born again, some like Kings, some like great

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Scholars, and some like other topping and first-rate Men in the World.

I must needs say, that in this vast Multitude of People, hurried about with so many odd and uncouth Notions, I have never yet met with any one *Atheist*; I mean, such an one that had the Boldness to contradict the Existence of a Sovereign Being, and the Truth of a future Life. On the other Hand, I have seen many that will undergo a deal of Pains and Labour, to fit themselves for a better State in the next World. Many will quit all they have; Wife, Children, and Estate, and retire into some Solitude, to do Penance for their former Life. Some will employ themselves entirely about Acts and Offices of Humanity, erecting up and down Abundance of *Charity-Houses*, wherein both indigent Travellers, and other poor People, may find some Rest and Refreshment. There are likewise some spacious Buildings like Cloysters or Colleges to be seen in some Places, wherein often a Thousand poor People are entertained at once.

In the Year 1708, a certain Queen residing not far from *Tranquebar*, departed this Life. I have been told for certain, that she entertain'd to the Number of Ten Thousand *Bramanes* at free Cost. The same Benefit she conferr'd likewise on Abundance of Pilgrims or Travellers, in a particular Building set up for that End, and which is continued by her Daughter to this very Day. And all this they do, in order to prepare themselves for another World, and to please their Gods, of whom their Books inform 'em, that they often appear

pear in the Shape of Beggars, and unexpectedly steal in upon People, to see, whether they be diligent in relieving the Wants of the Poor and Needy. Some of such charitable and publick-spirited Men, have by their Gods been taken up triumphingly, with Soul and Body, into the Regions of the Blessed, as the *Malabarick* Historians tell us. And this is another Motive that encourages them to such generous Acts of Love and Charity.

Concerning the *State of Happiness after this Life*, our *Malabarians* inform us of *Four Degrees* or *Mansions*, prepared for the better sort of People. The first degree is term'd by them, *Tschalogum*, signifying *Paradise*. The second is, *Tschalmibum*, importing a *very near Access* to the Great God. The third is call'd, *Tscharubum*. Such as arrive to this degree, are made the *very Image* of God. The fourth is, *Tschautschium*, and unites its Inhabitants *entirely* to the Supreme Being. Many, to render themselves worthy of so glorious a State, live a very precise and virtuous Life. Some have so far thrown off all manner of idolatrous Worship, that they don't so much as come near a *Pagode*. All their Endeavours are entirely bent upon the Practice of Virtue and Strictness of Life; nay, all their Discourses favour of nothing, but of Virtue and good Morals. This Sort of Men do not own any religious Party at all, thinking themselves rais'd above the common Set of Religions used among the Heathens. They are ready at any Time, to entertain you with Discourses concerning Virtue and Holiness of Life; but as
soon

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soon as you touch upon the Article of *CHRIST*, and the Difference betwixt theirs, and Christ's Religion, they don't seem to like it so well, as if you barely talk to them of Virtue, and Purity of Life and Manners.

I forgot to tell you, that the abovesaid Notion of the *Transmigration* and various Revolutions of Souls makes one of the strongest *Prejudices* against the Christian Religion among the *Malabar-Heathens*, and is one of the greatest Stratagems of the Devil, whereby he makes many of them think slightly of the most horrid Sins and Pollutions. For whilst they don't believe any other Punishment to be inflicted upon the wicked, but these Revolutions of the Soul, and the being born again and again into the World; they grow at last quite familiar with this Fancy about the Rambles of the Soul. Some of 'em have been convinced of the Sottishness of this Notion, and entirely put to a Non-plus; but it being one of the eldest Articles of their Faith, and handed down to them by a long and uninterrupted Tradition, 'tis hard to remove a Prejudice so deeply rooted, and so commonly received among 'em.

And because I touch here at the *Prejudices* of these Heathens against our most holy Religion, I must mention also another, whereby the Work of their Conversion is made very difficult; and this is the *Prerogative* they have of a purer and stricter Life, than what they commonly observe among Christians, who too much let loose the Reins to Sin and Vanity, and thereby render the Name of that sacred Re-

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Religion they outwardly profess, odious to the poor offended Heathens. For though they see the Christians diligently attend their religious Ordinances and Formalities, and hear them boast of the only true Church and Way of Worship, rejecting at the same time with Disdain, the Religion of the Heathens; yet is it extremely hard, (nay, beyond all humane Skill and Endeavours) to make them believe, the *Christian Religion* to be the safest, and the only true Way to Salvation.

All our Demonstrations about the Excellency and Nobleness of the Christian Constitution, make but a very slight Impression, whilst they find the Christians generally so much debauched in their Manners, and so much given up to Gluttony, Drunkenness, Lewdness, Cursing, Swearing, Cheating, and Cozening, notwithstanding all their fair and specious Pretences to true Virtue and Religion. But more particularly are they offended at that haughty and *Proud Temper*, so obvious in the Conduct of our Christians here. They are too apt indeed, to value themselves upon their own Parts, Wit, and Abilities, and to disdain and despise the poor Heathens; nay, to call 'em *Dogs*, and other Names, and to do 'em all the Spight and Malice they are able to contrive: Yea, some Christians are arriv'd to such an intolerable Pitch of Haughtiness, as to be utterly ashamed of the Heathens, even then when they are brought over to Christianity it self; much less will they be induced to live with them as with *Brethren* in Christ; a
Name

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Name so much used and beloved among the first Christians in the primitive Days.

Many of the Heathens, it is true, are convinced of the Soundness of the Doctrine we all along have proposed to them; but casting their Eyes, upon the profligate Manners of the Christians, they are at a stand, not knowing what to betake themselves to. They suppose, that *true Religion* and a *disorderly Conversation*, are Things utterly inconsistent and incompatible. And because they see the Christians, pursue their wonted Pleasure presently after divine Service; some of the Heathens have from thence taken up a Notion, as if the Christian Preachers, in their ordinary Sermons, did teach their People all those notorious Vices and Debaucheries, and encourage 'em in such a dissolute Course of Life.

Now to remove, as much as in us lies, these fierce and headstrong Obstacles, we have endeavoured to give them more Opportunity, to hear the Word of God from us oftner; that so, perhaps they might be induced to take that rather for a Standard of the Christian Religion, than the corrupt Life, and loose Conversation of the so-called Christians, which hath leavened their Minds with a World of Prejudices against Christianity it self. But finding our *Jerusalem-Church* of too small a Compass, we have Thoughts of enlarging it, as soon as possibly we can.

Besides this, we are resolved, to raise another *Church* in a Town not far from hence. This, if brought about, will enable us to scatter the Word of the Gospel among the Heathens

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thens more abundantly. But for the present, we are chiefly bent upon *Translating the New-Testament* into *Malabarick*; in hopes, that such a Work may prove the Foundation of a plentiful Blessing, if once it may happen to see the Light. A *Malabarick* and *Portuguese* Printing-Prefs, you know, would be highly serviceable for so useful a Work; the transcribing of Books, being attended with almost insuperable Difficulties.

Our *Charity-School* is now branched out into Two, and the Number of Children considerably increased. And here we find, *the Beginning of a real Reformation must be made*; the old *Malabarians* being for the most Part, too fond of their long accustomed idolatrous way of Worship.

IV.

An Abstract of a Letter sent to a Gentleman at London; Dated at Tranquebar, October 19th, 1709.

AS the Lord hath not left our Labour without a Blessing hitherto on one hand, so on the other, the common Enemy of Souls hath not been wanting, to set himself with might and main against it, and to destroy, if possible, the Work of the Gospel at its first ap-