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Tagebuch von Johann Ernst Geister.

Geister, Johann Ernst

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I went on in my ordinary business, though in the first part of the month only at home, because the weather was so rainy and stormy and the rivers and channels so deep, that they could not be passed without difficulty and danger.

4. I began in my Sermons the doctrine of providence.
14. Being desired to christen a Gentleman's daughter, I went to the Fort side and administered holy baptism to the child.
24. As I was desirous to enlarge my acquaintance with the natives I went to a place within the limits, about two miles from Padalove, called commonly Trippaplove, where there is a famous Pagode, which is reckoned amongst the most holy over all the country. Going in, the Bramines and other seemed to be uneasy, as they have always a dislike, when they see Europeans come near them. But when I began to talk with them in their own language they were surprized and came nearer; I look'd about for an inscription, which might give an account of the place, and found characters near the entrance of the Pagode, though they were only names, perhaps of benefactors or the architect. When I began to read these names, they were yet more surprized, that I could read their language. After this I told them, that in the time I had been in the country, the malabar had always told me, that in things of antiquity I could find satisfaction in their renowned holy places, where I should find inscriptions and chronicles, which were kept there. Now as this place was famous amongst them I should be very glad to hear something of the history of it, when, and by whom it was built &c. They answered as usual, talking of thousands and millions of years. I expressed my desire to see the chronicle of the place or to hear part of it. They told me plainly, that there was no such thing, because it came from their hands in time of war, though formerly it had been there. This moved me very much, and I could not help representing to them, how miserably they were deluded, when they boasted and talked so extravagant of the

The antiquity of their religion etc: Scorning other nations as *idiot upstarts*, who were enter'd in the world but yesterday, and knew nothing of history, sciences and the like. I further told them, that I had been several years in the country and having been desirous to find out what reason, proof and certainty the malabars had, I had always upon enquiry been referred to some other place and persons, who would satisfy me, though it had been done so unluckily, that the people at Madras told me, the seat of their religion, sciences etc: was to the South; and now, when I asked here for some thing, I must hear, that every thing being fallen into disorder and confusion, by wars and other troubles, their sciences had sheltered themselves in Madras and other great places to the North. Though I was very earnest to make them sensible of their misery and ignorance, telling them, that every man in duty to God was obliged, to enquire for truth; it seemed to make no impression upon them, which made me retire.

It might be fully enough, for the discouragement of a Missionary to see those people, who are actually miserable and visibly under divine judgment, fully acquiesce in things, which upon the least enquiry they could find to be lyes and delusions. If I was not assured of divine providence, favour and power, I could hardly entertain any hopes of being serviceable to the poor Malabar. However I will endeavour to mind my duty, and if the Malabar in their great negligence will not be awakened to mind theirs, Gods honour will be promoted at least in so far, that the Indians cannot excuse themselves, saying, they had had no opportunity and means to know and serve their creator.

As I was in the way to go to the forementioned place, I found in a Choultry or publick diversory, a gang of people, called Pandarams, who by their Profession are beggars and vagabonds. They had lodged themselves for a while in this Choultry with their families, and I found them gaming. Upon my asking, who they were and what trade they followed, they answered: That by favour and order of their God they were to do no business, but to go from place to place, and live on charity. I replied: if it was so, they might well stay in this or any other Choultry, and expect their maintenance from a God, who had given them such an order,

but it seemed very odd to me, that they would live upon other people's sweat, when they themselves did nothing, that might be usefull or profitable to ~~they~~ their fellowcreatures. And it seemed unreasonable to me, to say, God had ordered them to do so, because God had given us life and limbs, and connected mankind so together, that every one in his capacity and circumstances should contribute something for the benefit of the whole, and then he might in justice expect assistance and help from his fellowcreatures. It was much the same, as if a vessel was in danger at sea, and when every body did his utmost to save the vessel, one or two of the company would repose themselves to rest, pretending an order and blessing of God for it. They seemed not to mind what I proposed, and I left them.

25. In my Sunday afternoons lesson, I finish'd to day Genesis and begun Exodus.

December.

The rain being now over and the weather fair, I went frequently about two or three times a week at Cuddalore as well as in the neighbouring places, taking here and there an opportunity to address myself to people, in order to be known to them.

Likewise, I was visited by several.

As I had prepared part of the draughts of my European Letters, I continued the same, though it went not so fast as I hoped, because I could not set aside my ordinary and daily business, though I took as much time for the letters, as I could spare conveniently.

9. In my Sundays Sermons I begun the doctrine of Christ.
17. I was unexpectedly visited by a young Mahometan of this place, who is the grandson of a man of above 110 years of age. This old man is very much esteemed and revered all over a great part of the country, being in a manner a Highpriest amongst his people.