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Tagebuch von Johann Ernst Geister.

Geister, Johann Ernst

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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.

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.

December.

The young man told me, that he had a Mind to see the house, and I had him carried about every where. I shewed him the Telescope, Microscope, books and other things, with which he seem'd to be much pleas'd, and after he had been with me for an hour, he took his leave in a friendly manner. I was very glad of this opportunity, and resolv'd not to neglect but rather to cultivate this acquaintance, and once to visit the old man. If it should happen some time or other, that the business of the Missionaries should extend itself further than the bounds of Fort St. David, it might be several ways usefull to have on proper occasions a recommendatory Letter from such a Man as this, who is respect'd even by the Governours of the Country. Because travelling into the inland part of this Country is not so as in Europe, but you must either be a great and powerfull Man yourself or go under the Name and Recommendation of a great Man, else you will not only be abus'd, but robb'd too, and there is no way for a Redress. As for Christian Religion there is almost no hope to do any thing with the Makometans, because they are exceedingly selfconceited, proud haughty and insolent, as being the Conquerors & Governours of these Countreys. Though as opportunity offers, I shall not omit turning my Discourse on Religion in my Conversation with them.

Coming now to the End of this Year and recollecting all what has happened, I find reason enough to adore and thank Divine Mercy, for assisting and helping me hitherto, and take at the same time the Confidence, that he will be further with me, and one way or other bless my poor endeavours with the wish'd success. I must confess to be under a Concernment, when I consider, that none of the Natives

has discover'd yet a desire for truth and happiness. But I take it as a good prognosticon, that when they converse with me, they are pleas'd with it, and confess sometimes, that formerly they had quite an other Opinion of the Europeans, and were afraid even to come to me, but finding things otherwise, they would not shun my conversation. To make them more confident, I take all possible care, to express a liking for them, addressing myself in a friendly way to them, enquiring for their ways & Customs, telling them, that I came to this Contry only for their sake, and that the new house was built only for charitable & Religious uses &c: They not only approve all this, and express a Satisfaction, but some times in their usual way begin to compliment and praise me, which however I always decline and begin to talk of another subject. In my objections and Exceptions against their opinions I avoid satyr & Reproach, just telling them, what I have to except, and what proofs they ought to bring, before I can believe them.

For these two or three Months past I have been deliberating if I could not begin a little Malabar School, and try if this would be a means to bring some people to a nearer acquaintance with me. I will endeavour to bring it about, if possible, next February or March.

In the Portuguese School are 8 Children. viz: 6 boys, and two girls, and I thank God to see the good success of my endeavours that way.

As for the publick Sermon on Sundays, there are very few auditors

seldom above 3 or 4 besides the Children. The Circumstances of these people, who call themselves Portuguese, are very miserable, and what compleats their Misery, is, that they think themselves to be very good people, and very good christians too, though they are in a perfect ignorance, and commonly live no regular life. This makes me the more desirous to turn my thoughts upon the Malabars, praying to God, that in his gracious providence he would awaken only one person or one family to come over to Christianity, because I have reason to hope, that if there is but a beginning, more will follow.

Cuddalore
January 9th 1739
40.

John Ernest Geister.