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Tagebuch von Johann Ernst Geister und Johann Zacharias Kiernander.

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January) But though I went through two or three Streets I saw but very few people — and found no opportunity to talk to them, till at last I came to a School, where I began to discourse in general of the insufficiency of the Malabar Books & Sciences in order to come to a true knowledge of things.

y. 9th As I walked up and down in the Hall after dinner, I saw that a poor labourer with his wife rested themselves under the shade of a Tree before the house. I stepped out, & after some general Questions, who, from what Country, & of what Trade they were, I asked the Man if he served God, and whom he served as — God. He answered that he was a poor ignorant Man, & was obliged to work hard for his livelihood from morning till night, and that amongst such poor People and of a low cast or Tribe, it was not in use to concern themselves about God and his Service. I asked him if he knew nothing at all of a Deity, or if he never heard of a God, who was adored by the People of his Tribe. He pleaded his ignorance, but told me at last that some days Journey from hence to the North West, his God resided. Qu: what is that God made of Stone or Wood? Ans: of Stone. Qu: can you believe that a piece of Stone, has given you life and Health, giveth rain and sunshine, that the Earth can produce the Necessities of life &c. — He gave a very pitiful answer and discovered an Extraordinary Stupidity. Upon this I represented unto him, that there was only one God the maker and preserver of us all to whom alone we were obliged &c. I exhorted him, that every morning and Evening he should consider, that his being preserved hitherto did only depend from God Almighty & that he should endeavour to be thankful to his Benefactor and not to Stones and Pieces of Wood. I told him likewise, that if he had a mind to be instructed further of his Duties to God, I would give him opportunities to learn what he wanted: and so I dismissed him. His wife seemed to be more moved than he, yet when he went away, he told, that neither his Father had ever spoke to him about such Things. When I was yet talking with him, the Malabar Schoolmaster happened to come

come and hear part of my Discourse. after I went in with him he gave me to understand, that it was not only in vain but even improper, & in a manner indecent, to talk with such mean & poor People. But I answered him, that as this poor man was my Fellow Creature, I could not think it improper, but rather necessary to help him out of his ignorance and bring him to a knowledge of his Duty to God. I cited a passage out of one of their Poets, who ridicules his own Countrymen, for their making such difference betwixt low and high cast. People and asks them if they had Characters and Marks on their Skin, to prove that they were not of the ordinary Race of Mankind.

th 11. A Portuguese man who is Schoolmaster at Sadras (a Dutch Place, betwixt Madras and Fort St. David) sent his Son Israel Isaac of about nine years of age to be taken into the School. some weeks ago he wrote to me about it, and I promised on some Conditions to take the boy in.

th 15. I christened a new-born Son of a high-German who is in the military Service of the Honble Company.

th 20. As I went out in the Evening to take the air passing by a Grove, I heard that the Priest of the Grove was just about his Idolatrous ceremonies. Therefore I went in, in hopes to discourse with him, But he was so busy about his Ceremonies and seemed withall to be very stupid, so that I could hardly have an answer from him. In the mean time some Taleians, or malabar Souldiers came in and seemed to be surprized to hear me talk in their Language. This made me direct my discourse to them, and I endeavoured to convince them of the absurdity and infulness of Idolatry. They answered in their usual manner that they did not venerate these Idols as Deities, but only as Officers of the Deity and it was just the same as with their worldly calling, where they had their Orders not immediately from the Governor but from their Corporal in the Governor's name. My answer was that as they would not believe every body that pretended to be their Corporal before they knew that he actually was put in that Station, by the Governor, so they ought first of all to be solicitous, if God had sent such and such Idols as his Officers, and that withall the Comparison would not hold, because Princes and Governors must employ Officers and Servants which God in the Administration of his Government did not want, but was powerful enough to govern without the assistance of Officers. They seemed to be well pleased with my discourse, and I find more and more, that the ordinary sort of people are more attentive and seem to be more moved than

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