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Tagebuch von Johann Ernst Geister und Johann Zacharias Kiernander.

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Cuddalore, 01.01.1740-29.12.1740

8. Februar 1740

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urn:nbn:de:hbz:ha33-1-187648

January

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those that pretend for learning, and have the care of their Pagodas & idolatrous Ceremonies, because as they find their livelihood that way they will do any Thing not to loose it.

31st A little Girl who some months ago had been in the School, but was dismissed on account of her being too much a Child and yet incapable to learn was brought again and put to School, though with this condition that it should be only a trial if she was more capable now than before.

In my Sundays Sermons I have continued hitherto to preach on the Doctrine of Christ chiefly on his Offices, Humiliation and Exaltation.

The making up of my Letters and other Papers to Europe have taken up a good deal of my time in this month.

A Piece of Ground with a little Malabar house upon it, joining to the South, with the Ground of the Mission, was bought for 12. Pag: the house being convenient for a Malabar Catechist or Schoolmaster to live in, and the Ground for a Malabar School or other necessary Building to be built upon.

February

With the beginning of this month, I began to go on in the remaining part of the building, because hopes had been made, that I should be supplied with materials. And in order to promote this business, I took again the European who served me the last Year as Accomptant and Surveyor of the Workmen. Though he could attend but every other day, the Circumstances happening to be so, that he was obliged to mount his guard. But I found myself disappointed in a few days the materials coming in so slowly that I resolved to leave off again till one way or other I should gather first a sufficient Provision of Materials. In the mean time I gave the European something to Copy, & dismissed him at the End of the Month.

8th All this while I have endeavoured to the best of my knowledge and capacity to enter into a nearer and more confident acquaintance with the Malabars, in order under God's blessing, to bring one or other to Christianity. I have not only used all possible means to bring some to a Conversation within doors, but have taken the Opportunity of going 3 or 4 times a week in the Evening hours in and about Cuddalore and other places on this side of the River. Yet though I take hold of some opportunity or other to address myself to some I find them always about their Business, and consequently their Thoughts engaged so that they seem in a manner not disposed duly to reflect on what I talk

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with them. But having been now and then at a place within the bounds called Tripoppilore where there is a famous Pagoda I found that place to be one of the most convenient for my Business. Because that place where the Pagoda stands is very quiet & removed from all hurry and noise, & I find always people coming thither in the evening to pay their Devotion (if it may be called so) to their Idols, so that having left their Business their mind seems to be more disposed to an attention. Furthermore this is a place, where those that pretend to be Scholars, Pilgrims, Holy men, and the like, use to come even from distant parts, and now and then will read or sing some of their old histories, verses in praise of their Gods &c. So that this very thing brings together People to hear or to see something new or strange. Therefore I resolved to go more frequently to this place not only for the reasons just mentioned, but likewise, I shall ^{be} know more amongst them, as I find frequently people that are come thither from other parts of the country, and it will cause the Malabars to have a better opinion of me, when they hear me discoursing with a congregation of their Reputed wise and holy men. I consequently went thither this evening, and found amongst others, the headman of the Pagoda (being a Pandaram or Fryar) and a Bramine from the Country. I began my discourse with asking them something about that Pagoda, of its antiquity, History, &c. on which they gave me very unsufficient answers. In the mean time a number of people came together at the unusual sight of a white man's talking to them in their own Language. I replied again that their answers would not satisfy me, & so began to talk in general of the Insufficiency of their knowledge Sciences, and Religion, and that they ought to examine & search a little nearer, if their things were so well grounded as their Poets and Bramines commonly boasted of. I enlarged here on several Particulars naming them a good many of their renowned Books which I had read and discovered the weaknesses of their knowledge & so I went on a good while with the Pandaram who as far as his Arguments and Similes would go, answered me tolerably, heard me calmly, & replied civilly. Those that were our Auditors, expressed a great Satisfaction with my answers. Upon that the Bramine who was a man of a fine appearance & Deportment, began to come into the Discourse which made me direct myself more particularly to him in the following way: Amongst other things; You boast of,

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You pretend to know to a nicety the Shapes and other circumstances of your Gods which seemeth to me very unaccountable as you allow yourself, God to be a Spirit and consequently of no Shape — how then can you be so bold as to affirm that such and such an Idol represents the Shape of God, and don't you think this dishonourable to God Your Creator. He answered: it was true that the Supreme God was a Spirit of no Shape or Form, but that those Images had been brought in by their wise and Religious ancestors, whom they thought themselves obliged to follow. Having spoke something in refutation of this, I proceeded to the Unity of God and his will and that it seemed Contradictory to me, when in their great indifference they held this opinion that every ones Religion was right to him, and that all the Religions, though never so opposite & repugnant one with another were from God. I asked if ever they could conceive, that the Governour would give certain Orders at the Fort, and order just the contrary at Cuddalore, So that perhaps bad people should be encouraged in one place and punished in the other. They could not help confessing that in such a Case the Governour would be repugnant to himself and that nobody could conceive that such a thing should happen. Upon this I made the application that we must entertain the same thoughts of a Deity, and consequently as God was only one, his will could only be one. This brought me further to talk of the many Divisions of Casts and Sects, chiefly of the 6 Sects amongst the Bramines who opposed and hated one another mortally and yet every one of them pretended their opinion to be grounded on their Vedam, or holy Scripture. My opinion was that this could impossibly proceed from God, as it would be the greatest imperfection, if he had so many contrary wills. They were puzzled and seemed to be uneasy, when they heard me speak of Things, which they endeavour to keep Secret, even from their own countrymen, and much more from the Europeans. However as it was their turn to answer, the Bandaram who had time now to recollect himself began in a very sedate and handsome manner to propose the Following Simile: Six blind men had, had a great desire to know the shape of an Elephant, and at one time hearing that an Elephant passed by they took care to come near & take hold of it one of it's Ear another of it's Tail, and so on, judging by

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the single member they took hold of, the whole Shape of the Elephant. By this Simile he would declare^{me} the cause of the different opinions of men & because he did it with a very agreeable utterance, the Auditory seemed much pleased & on his side. I answered: that this Simile did not hit the mark, because I had not spoke of blind ignorant men, but of God, who according to their opinion must have different and contrary wills. To this he could not answer and the Auditory seemed to be on my side again. I proceeded further and asked them why they hid their pretended Historical and Religious knowledge, that nobody even very few of their own Countrymen could be acquainted with it, which seemed wrong to me because true and useful knowledge should be propagated every where. They answered: the Vulgar and lower sort were so stupid and uncultivated — that it was in vain to bring them to some understanding & it was better to keep these things from them. My reply was: you Bramines and Poudarams are according to the constitution of your Country obliged to teach the people, & if they are stupid & uncultivated, the blame falls only upon you. Obj: There is nothing to be done with these Brutish People. Answ: As far as I know You have never tried proper means to bring it about & consequently you cannot say that the People are so incapable & untractable. If one should begin to cultivate a Ground, which had never been cultivated before he must take a good deal of pains and it would not be enough only to put a Bag of Seed on the Ground, and ^{when} the Ground would not receive it of itself to say, there was no hopes that the Ground could produce any thing. I mentioned a particular instance about their historical knowledge viz: that a great many years ago a certain King had ordered the principal Circumstances of their Country to be Engraven on Copper Plates which with a great deal of Expences had been buried very deep under Ground so that it would cost a great deal of money to dig them up again. This seemed to me very imprudent, that a King should spend a great Sum of money on purpose to hide useful knowledge. I illustrated it with the Simile of the Gospel Mt: that Light ought to be put on a candlestick and not hid under a Bushel &c. As it began to be dark & the Lamps were lighted in the Bagode, I asked them what a prudent Business it would be if one would be at the Expence of digging very deep holes & putting all these Lamps under ground. After I had talked for near an hour on these Subjects, I took my leave of them promising to come again some time or other & inviting them to my Lodging.

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After the dispatch of all my Letters to Europe I took care to return to all my Business again which had been interrupted frequently, Chiefly I applied myself to the Malabar language again with all possible

Diligence