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Tagebuch von Johann Ernst Geister und Johann Zacharias Kiernander.

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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

(with)

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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,

You

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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

The

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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

diligence. As for the Portuguese School I designed to take every day an hour to instruct the Boys but finding so much other Business, I resolved to take them four times a week, & go on in teaching them the high-language I finished to day the Gospel of St. Luke.

20. Upon a due consideration I found it necessary to take again the explanation of the Catechism, and Scripture Sentences which the Children had learned by way of Repetition to the eldest of them and as a new instruction to those that might be ranged in the second Class. To day I began the Catechism.

24. In my Sunday's afternoons instruction I ended Exodus, past over Leviticus, (my design being only upon the historical part) and begun Numbers.

My first Sermons this Month were on the Doctrine of the holy Ghost, & the last, on the State of the first Man's Innocence and his unhappy fall from it.

I had the uneasiness to see that a certain Portuguese (who had two Children in the School and as a pretended Protestant came frequently to my Sermons, whom I had obliged several ways and christened a new born child of his on the 8th of this month) abused me in a very impudent manner. He desired leave to have his Children at home for a day which I granted, but the Children not coming again, when I went for them, it was told they were indisposed, and took Physick but should be with me in a day or two: afterwards on a second message the boy was only sent, and the Girl kept under some pretence. I suspected something, and therefore insisted that the Girl should be sent immediately. Upon this the man began to talk high blaming me for my ill management, & hard wage, that the Children were used unmercifully, starved, & naked assuring me withall that he was not only absolutely resolved to take his Children from me but he would cause the Parents of the other children to do the same. The impudence of this man, was so much the greater because it was known that he was an ill Economist & lived extremely poor and that even when he brought his Daughter to School the cloth she had on to cover her nakedness, was borrowed, & went away again as I provided others for her. Though this was a provoking injustice yet I tryed all fair means to bring the man to a reasonable Sentiment. But finding that nothing would do I applyed to the Gentleman his Officer, who was so kind, as to order him, to send the child again, & not to use me any more in so unhandfome a manner. I had very

strong

strong suspicions that the Romish Priest was at the bottom of this affair, — because it was Lent now, and last year I had a dispute about that Season. But as I obtained my End, I saw no Reason to enquire any further.

March.

1th I went in the Evening to the Pagoda at Tripptalore and found an opportunity to talk with a few People, but as I came there pretty late, I was obliged to leave of very soon. In my Journal I have chiefly inserted those Discourses, which in a manner might be called formal, when I talked to them in a publick place before a number of People. But besides these there is hardly a day — without an opportunity to talk something useful to one or other though it should be only as by the way. Because I walk two or three times in a week within and without Suddalore, and find occasion to speak here and there. Besides I am visited now and then by Bramines and other Malabars. But in the most confident and various way I talk with the old man who Teaches me the Language, because in reading with him the Books, that are full of enormous falsehoods, I take hold of these opportunities to discover to him the horrid contradictions of their authors. About this time I read in one of their Chronicles an Enconium of an Idol which all of them worship and represent with an Elephants head. The Author praises amongst other things his God for having now and then — the 3 Sorts of madness, which are incident to Elephants: and this was described in a lively though very nauseous manner, The Author expressing in a lofty — way how an unclean humour run down from both his Ears &c. Being strangely surprized at this I asked the old man how they could ascribe madness to what they call a Deity and how they could worship such a one. He was a little startled, but recollected himself and told me that this must be understood in a mythical sense. I was quite struck with that and could not forbear saying with an Emotion: what a downright miserable & blinded perverted people are You? It is not enough to represent your Gods as committing all manner of Debaucheries, Vices, & Crimes which the worst of men commit but you must bring in the Brutes too, and praise your Gods for being subject to brutish madness. The old man seemed to be moved very much and in a manner disturbed, though I cannot say if he was convicted or if he was angry. Though the reading of these Books is a very tedious Business — yet I find it necessary for two Reasons, 1st because I can learn the Language so much the better. 2^d Because I discover all their Science and knowledge, and therefore when I discourse with them they cannot reply that I am not acquainted with their Learning. This is their common Evasion, whenever

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