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Tagebuch von Johann Ernst Geister und Johann Zacharias Kiernander.

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Cuddalore, 01.01.1740-29.12.1740

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September

1st After a previous deliberation, we held, according to our Instructions, from England to day our first Conference, the minutes of which are wrote down in a book designed for that purpose.

It was thought best that Kiernander should go on in the Portuguese language, because he can attain to some perfection in it shortly which will be a great help and Relief to himself and Gueister. The Missionaries from Tranquebar have already sent the most necessary Portuguese & Malabarian Books for his use.

A Malabarian from Tranquebar who can write pretty well upon paper passing through this place we resolved to keep him here some time to continue the copying of the large Malabar & Latin Dictionary. As he writes only the Malabarian, we will add as soon as we can the Latin to it.

12th Hitherto Gueister had declared in the Portuguese School the literal sense of the Acts, but it was found proper to interrupt this for a while and to take in its place a cursory explanation of the Catechism, which will be a furtherance to Kiern: as it gives him opportunity to hear how the Fundamental doctrines of Religion are expressed in the Country Dialect. Accordingly concluding to day with the 14th Chapter of the Acts I began the Catechism the 13th.

14th This Sunday in the afternoon, the book of Judges was begun.

In the middle of this month Kiern: found himself affected with a slight bodily indisposition which however by divine favour & the taking of proper care soon left him.

17th The Chests books &c designed for us from England came safe to Cuddalore.

To day came a letter from Porto Novo wherein a Dutch Gentleman there desired Gueister to come & Christen his new born son. Upon deliberation it was found proper to comply with his desires, & accordingly on the

18th After dinner Guei: set out from Cuddalore and arrived about six of the clock in Porto Novo. The Gentlemen there expressed much kindness and civility and the next day was appointed for the celebration of Baptism.

19th The Gentleman having desired a sermon the Text was chosen out of the Epistle to Titus, Chap: 3^d Verse 4-7 After a short explanation of the Text, two practical inferences were drawn (viz) 1st that we

must

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must not take our Religion to be only a System of external Rites and Ceremonies different from the ways of those who do not profess Christianity but that its excellency consisted chiefly in this that the happiness of our Soul and even eternal life - was promised to us. ^{Only} that excited by these valuable promises, we ought to take care, that in our lives and actions - we might be found as such who not only believe and profess, but really - endeavour and strive to obtain these blessings, in the way prescribed by our Gracious God. *S*

After the Sermon which was held in the Portuguese language, - holy Baptism was administered to three Children, in the Dutch language, - This being done I set it out again that same day in the afternoon & came home at night. *S*

26 - A Gentleman in this place offered us to take a Bill of Exchange for 200 Pagod: to be paid to his Correspondent at Madras and to be repayed by him here? *S*

In the Sermons of this month, the doctrine of Regeneration was continued and concluded. *S*

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2 - Gueist ended to day the cursory explanation of the Catechism and the 3 began to explain the remaining Scripture Sentences, which the Children have learned by heart. *S*

5 - According to our ~~own~~ Resolution in the last general Conference we had this morning our first special Conference from 10 to 11 of the Clock, designed for our mutual Edification, We began the History of the Gospel in such a method and order as the Harmony of the four Evangelists requires. *S*

8 - Kiern: having with divine assistance made a tolerable Progress in the Portuguese language, begun to day instructing and catechizing the Children. *S*

10 - We received the remainder of our Money from Madras.

12 - This Sunday in the afternoon the first book of Samuel was begun. We are resolved to pick out only the most eminent parts of the History, and such as are proper to the Capacity of the Children.

Gueist:

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17th — Guest: went this Evening to Tripapplore in order to address himself to such as should be in or near the Pagoda there. Some people being at the large Pond near the Pagoda (the water of which is accounted holy though it was very muddy and thick covered with water lentils) they were asked if this water could have the virtue of cleansing not only the Body but even the mind from its Sins, or suppose one wanted to be cleaned if there was no better water in the Rivers and other Ponds adjacent. They endeavoured to say something but as this would not go far they told at last, that Bramines and other wise men had told them that this Water had a Particular virtue. It was answered, that any one who had the use of his Eyes, even a child could see that the water was exceeding unclean and consequently unfit for cleaning one's body & it was strange to depend on other Peoples affirmations when one might easily come to a certainty by applying his own Senses. They might as well doubt what colour the Bricks on the Steps before us were of and vend for a wise man who would tell them they were Green for all that our Eyes plainly found them to be Red. Amongst these discourses I happened to see the Priest of the Pagoda on the other side of the Pond, and therefore went that way though I was a little doubtful to go within the Steps, that go down into the Pond for fear of offending them. The people seeing me backward to step in told me there was no manner of Reason for that, on which I answered that Perhaps their Priest would be angry and I had no mind to give a cause for it. They replied that their Priest was very wise and virtuous & had subdued his Passions. I told them, I should not be much surprized at his turning angry, having read in their Books, to what a degree of anger their Gods, had been transported even so far as to fight and to destroy one another. With these words we came very near to the Place, where the Priest sat, though from behind, which made me stand still a little again, because I could not know how he would take it, if I should come in and defile the pretended holy Place. But he soon turned himself round rose up and in a handsome manner desired me to come in and sit down with him, which I did and saw several people come to hear us. Though I talked with him for near half an hour our discourse was not so regular as at other times, & he seemed to be in a manner perplexed, so that now and then the By-standers —

put

put him in mind that he should speak to the Purpose and answer my objections. I talked of true wisdom and of the way to please God and to serve him. He turned himself several ways laying the whole fault on an absolute Destiny & that our present State depended from what we had committed in our former Births — (according to their notions of a transmigration of Souls) my answer was that I could not but be surprized, to hear the malabarians always refer themselves for proofs to things quite unintelligible, uncertain, and so distant, that it was beyond any man's Capacity to come within the Reach & perception of them. I could assure him that when we were to Consider the cause of our ignorance, unhappiness & evilfulness, it was wrong to go far from home because the Root of Corruption was in us & consequently we ought to begin from within ourselves. He could not deny this but immediately run out again into a great many Proverbs — Similes &c. so that he almost puzzled me. But I went through at once telling him that the Similes proposed by him were only human ones, and that ~~was~~ touching the Ready assistance which God would willingly give us towards our delivery, I would propose him a Simile truly divine, which was Simothine Rain & other innumerable benefits for our Body, which God gave always universally and equally, so that the Sun did rise every day, not only by days appointed by destiny and the like. We came at last upon this point, why their wise Men did hide their pretended knowledge from the people. After some insufficient answers he told me plainly, that it was, because the people could not pay them for their trouble. To which I replied that it was strange to ask pay for things, and to withhold them on Nonpayment when they themselves had received them gratis, & I hoped he would allow that the Gift of wisdom was an undeserved Favour of God. He answered in the Negative saying that the wise men had merited and deserved these Things. But being asked for proofs he fell again to his way of Similes and Verses out of their Books. As it began to be dark. I took my leave of him asking him to come once to Cuddalore and see me which he ~~also~~ Promised. To those that had heard us, I told that any one who had a mind to be better instructed should find me ready to serve him without asking pay or any other Recompence for it. At this very interview it was found out that this Priest had been a Christian before at Tranquebar, and afterwards amongst the Roman Catholics being the same Person of whom some remarkable Circumstances are mentioned in the Propagation of the Gospel in the East Part 2. Page 30. sequ. He was discovered by the Malabar Catechist who was with me, & who some

Years

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Years ago was under this man's Care, when he was yet Schoolmaster at Tranquebar. It gave me a very deep impression but it was not proper to talk with him of these Things before a Company and though he promised to come to Cuddalore yet I believe he will not because I strongly suspect that he knows he is discovered, and I am apt to think that his perplexity in this interview came from thence. Formerly I wondered to see a malabarian behave so handsomely and not to be shy at all to see a European come near him but I do not wonder now because he has been not only in Tranquebar with the Europeans but likewise amongst the Dutch and French, because the Roman Catholics by underhand dealings had enticed him away from Tranquebar.

The copying of the malabar part of the malabarian Dictionary was finished about the middle of this month, afterwards we caused two Copies of a pretty large collection of the best malabar Proverbs to be wrote on Paper. Some months ago under Queist's direction the Old Schoolmaster had begun to collect them promiscuously. Afterwards they were brought in alphabetical Order & wrote out. They are very useful not only for the learning of the language but in conversation with the people they can be applied not only to raise their attention but to refute their common Sentiments, because a great many of these Proverbs contain good doctrines. D

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27- We went partly for exercise & partly to enlarge our acquaintance to a place which lyeth near three miles without the Bounds called Tiruwendipuram, and is reputed amongst the Indians as a holy Place. Coming to the Pagoda, we found a number of Bramines but they were in no disposition at all to be talked with. Because a Rich Merchant some weeks ago, when one of his Family was very sick had made a vow, if the sick Person should recover to give an Entertainment to 1000, Bramines and we found them just receiving this Benefit. There were a number of Bramines within the Pagoda, but as we came near, the doors were shut, because they pretend that if any body should see them ^{it would burn their Stomachs.} eating. However a discourse was begun with some without but as they had filled their Bellies, they did not mind any thing

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else and in a few minutes somebody came to call them in again for the Desert. Therefore we went into one of the streets speaking here and there a few words and enquiring if there was no learned man in the place, we were directed to a house, where we should find Satisfaction but as we began to discourse with two Bramines they ingenuously confessed that they could not satisfy us and that most of the Bramines though they pretended to have learned a great many things, & even what they call their Revelation or Holy Scripture yet they did not so much as know the literal meaning of it. Hereupon it was represented to them that this was an useless and even deceitful thing and that we ought to enquire better after truth. They heard this with a great indifference & directed us to a Bramine in the next Street who would tell us particulars concerning the Pagoda and the History of it. Accordingly we did go in company of some to the mentioned house and saw the Bramine sitting at the Door who as soon as he found us coming near stepped into his house and shut the door. Others went after him, to persuade him to come out but he could hardly be prevailed with & we stood some minutes before we saw him again. At last he came and a discourse was begun concerning the History of their Pagoda. He told several strange & extravagant things which had happened many thousands years ago. It was objected that this Building did not seem old, but in all appearance was built not much above 100 Years ago. He allowed this, but said that in very old times there had been a Pagoda Built by the Gods themselves, but when it fell to decay & ruin, this present Building had been built by men according to the Model of the former. Hereupon it was asked if there were Records or other Proofs of the certainty of this Relation & where or with whom they were. He said they were not in the place but in the hands of their very wise and holy men. Being asked again where these Men lived, & if they could not be spoken with, he answered that nobody knew their abode because they had not only no fixed habitation but even fled human Conversation living in Woods & Mountains. Upon which it was proposed at large, in what miserable Condition they were for all their pretences and confidence. We had been by some people in the other Street directed to him & he

again

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again directed us to he did not know himself whom. Though this Representation was made in such a way that it might have raised their attention, yet they seemed not at all moved & we left them offering our Readiness to converse with them, in order to come to a better knowledge.

In the Portuguese Sermons for this Month the Doctrine of Sanctification & holiness was proposed & afterwards the Doctrine of prayer.

November.

2. To the Joy & Encouragem^t of us both, Kiern: preached to day his first Sermon in the Portuguese language, on the first part of the 15 Chapter of S^t. Luke. We thanked God for his assistance & furtherance.

3. Kiern: begun to day to apply himself to the Malabarian language wherein G: assists him

Two Children of a Malabar Christian from Tranquebar, who lives here were taken into the School & half a Pagoda a month, was promised to the Father towards their Maintenance but this only for some months.

9. According to our joynt resolution R: begun this Sunday afternoon to propose & explain to the Children the most eminent Histories, Related in the New Testament.

10. A Gentleman of the Council of this place having desired G: to marry him it was done accordingly this Evening after the Governor had been acquainted with it, & given his Leave. His worship was likewise present at the Marriage.

Some time this monthly: after having ended the Curvory Explanation of the remaining Scripture Sentences, resumed again the literal Exposition of the Acts. It is absolutely necessary to go on in these Exercises that the Children may be more & more acquainted with the holy Scripture, which chiefly afterwards when they have been dismissed will be a great help & furtherance to their Salvation.

The malabar School is increased by this time to above 20 Children though the People have been told that our design is not to bring together a number of Children and that many cannot so well be taken care of as a few yet they have insisted upon their Children

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