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Tagebuch von Johann Ernst Geister und Johann Zacharias Kiernander.

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Prof. Franck, though the silver, out of the value of which the money was payable, was not yet come to Chadrav. They immediately consented, but we could find no opportunity to have the money by a bill of Exchange, though we enquired with several Gentlemen and black Merchants in the place. We likewise received more than one letter from Tranquerbar, wherein we were desired in pressing terms, that one of us in the middle of next month might visit them, and assist at the ordaining of one of their Catechists to the Ministry. But though it was hard to us, not to comply, chiefly on a repeated invitation, yet we could not resolve to do it at this time, because this country is yet in such a confusion, that nobody knows, who is or will be the Headman, and the rumours of another Maratter Expedition are so strong, that no European dares to go out of the limits of Fort St. David, and all the substantial men from Portonovo, which is in the road to Tranquerbar, are yet here, and do not think of removing to their habitation. Therefore we represented this to Tranquerbar earnestly desiring to be excused, but promised, that if there should be any hopes of secure travelling in January next, one of us would give himself the pleasure to visit them.

Our first Portuguese Sermons in this Month have been upon the Doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and afterwards upon Prophetic Texts of the Old Testament concerning the Doctrine of Christ.

In the malabarian congregation we have joined in Prayer, and reading of Scriptural Texts, because Gu: has been indisposed several days, the season being sickly for want of the usual rains.

December.

2. In the evening Gu: went to a malabar School in this place, the Master of which is a Braman, and has formerly entertained an acquaintance with us. The discourse began about their books, learning, chronologie &c. and some observations were made touching the uncertainty of these. When the discourse was carried further to the points of good and evil, the Braman was soon ready to lay all the blame on the times and the unluckiness of this fourth age of the world, according to their division of time

time. I answered, that according to their own books, in the three preceding ages, the world had been three times destroyed by their Gods, on account of sin and wickedness being so increased, that there was no other way to remedy the evil. Consequently according to their own accounts there had been evil in the world from the beginning, and therefore it was wrong, to charge this age with being the only cause of all evil. He could not remove this objection, only he said, that in comparison to the former ages this present was bad in an extreme degree. On this I endeavoured to make him sensible of the doubtfulness of their opinions, and how every one was obliged to search for truth, so he would find that the cause of evil was within us etc. Some people of the neighbouring houses came to hear us, and the schoolboys kept close to me, at which the Braman seemed to be uneasy, and bid them go and mind their books, but they took no notice of it.

14. I went again in the evening to the same Braman, asking him if he had found an account of some particulars which I had desired him last time to enquire for. He excused himself saying, that he could find no scholar in this place. I answered, that in my conversation with his countrymen I had heard this evasion many times, though I could not but think, that they were much in the wrong to be so careless and to rely on uncertainties. I took notice of some irreconcilable contradictions in their histories, as for instance that once their Progenitor Bramma underwent great austerities & penances on a certain mount to the North, that he might obtain from another of their Gods the Gift of creating the world. Now how could this moment exist and how could Bramma be there, when the world was not yet created? The Braman was confounded, and several people that were present began to murmur, and could not but allow, that these things were inconsistent with one another. One of them a merchant asked the Braman in a strange & almost satyricall way, if he could not overcome me in disputing. I intercepted this, telling him, that disputing would not do the business, and was not my design, but we ought to search for truth wherever we could find it. I carried the Discourse further, mentioning the truth

truth and antiquity of the Bible, and concluded with inviting them to a further conversation. It is to be observed, that the Malabarian Schools are not like in Europe, within the house, but they are in the Street, sometimes in open Choultries, sometimes on a large bench before the house, or quite in the Street, where the children sit down and write with their fingers in the sand. If we can find no other opportunity to address ourselves to the natives, we go to one of the schools, ask the Schoolmaster a question or two concerning their language & books, take perhaps a book and read, which commonly makes some of the by-standers come near, and according to the circumstances we talk something useful to them.

Coming home after the forementioned Interview with the Braman, we were visited by one of the chiefest Merchants in this whole Province, who has his abode in Portonovo, but since the troubles in the country began, lives in Cuddalore, where now and then we have been talking with him at the door of his lodgings, and his brother has been several times at our house. He is a man of good sense and handsome deportment. After few words in general, the discourse was carried to the same points as had been proposed before to the Braman, at which he was not only very attentive, but seemed to be moved. When we had been together with him for about half an hour, an English Gentleman came to visit us, which made the Merchant retire.

27. We read to day in the malabarian congregation the Prayers and some scriptural lessons. We thank God for all his Paternal assistance and furtherance in our business.

About the end of this month we received a bill of Exchange to the value of 100. Pagod. to be drawn upon a Gentleman in this place. Mr. Schultze at Madras had on our desire been so kind, as to procure us the advancement of this sum.

Our sermons in both languages have been upon the first chapters of St. Matthew and Luke, and on Sundays in the afternoon, the historical lessons have been continued with the Portuguese boys.

In the Portuguese School the literal explanation of the Second Epistle of St. Peter has been ended, and the Epistle to the Galatians begun.

Having

Having ended another Year, we find ourselves obliged to acknowledge Divine Goodness on account of the innumerable benefits and assistance received hitherto, and devote ourselves entirely to his service, who is the Benefactor of us all. We are indeed under some concern for not yet being so happy as to bring over some of the natives to christianity, though we have tried all means proper and practicable, as mentioned in our Journal. Yet as all beginning is difficult, and as the enlightening and converting of minds is above human capacity, we rely so much the more on divine power, and wait for that happy day, on which we shall see the fruit of our poor endeavours. It might perhaps be asked, what effects we have seen of our private and publick conferences. But besides what has been mentioned before, we can hardly add any thing. Because in the publick conferences, though a person might be moved, yet he will find reasons perhaps, to keep it to himself, at least he will not think it proper to discover his mind, to a foreigner before company. And in private conversation we have found now and then, that they have been attentive and seemingly moved, but we cannot yet know, how far it has been working on their minds.

We cannot omit mentioning one great Difficulty, the removal of which has cost us much time and pains, and lyeth yet heavy upon us, viz: to avoid all manner of mistakes in qualifying ourselves in the malabarian language. Our predecessors have done very much that way, and we should be in the wrong, to charge them with any thing to their prejudice. But it has been with this as with all other cases, that he that begins never so well leaves something to his Successors to be added, so that after several attempts to go through with the malabarian language, there have been found so many deficiencies yet, that M^r Sartorius (whose name cannot be mentioned by his Successors without a particular regard) proposed a new plan to come to the knowledge of a plain, easy, practical malabarian stile. He has done so much that way, and wrote so many books and collections, that it has in part happened his death. It has been thought fit to

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pursue this scheme, and his manuscripts have been and will be of a very great advantage to us. We have read jointly and separately very many malabarian books, affixing one another, and several things have been wrote, collected and drawn, which are indeed not of a great bulk but have been the product of many a busy hour and serious application of mind. Though we must acknowledge divine Goodness even in this particular, and we flatter ourselves, that our endeavours have not been in vain, but will be of use to us and our Successors.

In the Portuguese School are five boys at the end of the Year, besides two malabarian boys who come to the English lessons. The former go on pretty well in understanding the true Portuguese language, in writing and in Arithmeticks.

Out of the malabarian School the christian boy has been dismissed and sent to his parents, being big enough to use his limbs to work. So one christian Girl is yet in the School. The number of other Children is about 30. Though this School has not yet answered our main Design viz: to draw the parents of the children to a nearer acquaintance, yet we will try further, and endeavour with all possible care, to do every thing fairly and prudently, expecting Gods blessing.

John Ernest Guenster.
John Zach Kiernander.