

# Handschriften / Autographen

## Tagebuch von Johann Ernst Geister.

**Geister, Johann Ernst**

**Cuddalore, 01.01.1739-17.12.1739; 10.01.1740**

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# A Journal

containing the most material Circumstances happening  
in the Year 1739.

with the British Mission at Cuddalore near Fort St. David's  
in East-India.

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January.

1. At the Entrance of this Year I found myself excited to thank the most gracious God for his Protection et Assistance, by which I was carried through several Difficulties, and for his benefices bestowed upon me all this time. I was moved likewise to excite those under my care to this particular duty, and in my instruction to them for that day I explained the 103<sup>th</sup> Psalm. After a short Explanation of the Text, I shewed them, how they should apply this to their own Circumstances putting them in mind first of all of those benefits, which they enjoy in common with all their fellow-creatures, and then particularly of this especial Providence, which has moved several pious and religious persons in Europe, to be beneficial to the people in India, whom they never have seen, and in all probability will never see, of whom they never have received any benefit or service, nor in all probability ever will. The whole was concluded with an Exhortation, to regard and make a right use of this great benefit. The Subject of my instructions on Sundays has been to give them an insight in the most material parts of the history of the christian Religion, where I never forget to inculcate earnestly, that this is the only true Religion, revealed in its substance from the very beginning of the world. This is necessary for them to know against the idle and extravagant notions of the heathens in this Country, who boast of an antiquity of several Millions of years. Together with this I several times represent to them, that the places and Countreys mentioned in the bible are yet existent, and visited by travellers, whereas the Malabars cannot give an Account of any place, mentioned in their pretended old histories, only telling their Readers or hearers, that such a thing has happened several Millions of Leagues to the North or South. Though in my instructions I only interperse the like observations occasionally, keeping always close to the Explanation and application of my text. To attain this my design I began some Months ago to treat of the history of the bible from the Creation to the flood. Afterwards I took some of the most perspicuous and eminent types and prophecies of the Old Testament, proceeding further to the birth of Christ, which I explained out of the Evangelists on Christmas and some Sundays after. In all my Instructions I take the greatest Care to be intelligible to them, that hear me condescending to their Capacity by choosing the plainest words, repeating and taking proper similitudes, never proceeding to a New doctrine, till I find that the first has been understood. And every thing proposed by me is afterwards repeated by the Schoolmaster.

9. I began to build again, though it went on a little slowly, there being a scarcity of materials.

10. Finding myself tolerably well advanced in the Malabar Language, I resolved to go now abroad, and converse with the Natives without doors. Therefore I visited to day all the schools in this place, enquiring after their books, way of learning and the like, telling the Schoolmasters at the same time, that if they had a mind to know the Ways, Customs and Religion of the Europeans, they might give me an opportunity of conversing with them. They gave a civil answer and shewed a Satisfaction about my knowing their Language, yet as they are poor people, and are obliged to attend the whole day at school, they seldom came to me, except I had a book to copy, or when they had a book to sell.

I chose the visiting of the Schools chiefly for that Reason, because I knew the Children would tell their Parents and Relations, what an unusual thing had happened at school and that consequently I would be sooner known amongst them.

On that same Account a few days after I went over the Fort Side, with an Intention to visit the Schools at Dewanapatnam, but found none in the usual places, because it was one of their holy days. However I went to the House of a Bramine, who amongst his Countrymen is accounted to be the greatest Scholar in the place. I discoursed with him for about a Quarter of an hour of Astronomy, Astrologie & the like, and he shewed me some of their Astronomical Draughts and figures, pretending at the same time to prognosticate the Number of my years, and other Accidents of my Life, in which however he made such blunders & downright Contradictions, that I could not help discovering them to him, upon which he put it off, to another day, when he could come to me & give me full satisfaction. I expressed my contentment about some things, he had shewn me, and told him, that I would be glad of his Company, whenever he would come to me, which he promised and visited me several times.

The finishing of all my Letters and Accounts to Europe, has required so much time, that I was in necessity to omit now and then an hour of my daily Catechisation.

30. Though I had taken all proper care of my health, yet I found myself about this time very heavy and some times almost unfit for business even in the Morning hours, for which I consulted the Doctor at Tranquebar, and he knowing my Constitution answered me, that bleeding was the only Remedy for my indisposition. Upon this I followed his Advice, and had a large evacuation today, which had the desired Effect, so that afterwards I found myself revived and capable to keep close to my business.

The building would not go on so fast as I wished, therefore I did all what I could to come only so far, that I might inhabit the house before the hot Weather, & that the Remaining part might be done as soon as the Circumstances would permit.

### February.

The Portuguese Schoolmaster has behaved hitherto to my Satisfaction, only I found now and then, when I came unexpectedly to school, that he was too rigorous. Therefore I admonished and exhorted him, to try all other means, before he disciplined the boys, & to endeavour that they might rather love than fear him. Some boys, who absented themselves, had made a great complaint to their Parents and Relations, as if they had been used most unmercifully by the Schoolmaster, but after a formal enquiry, I found these things to be false. Others had complained, that they run away for want of vituals being half starved. But every body that was in the house, knew that they had their Vituals three times a day and in such quantity and quality, as it was certain their Parents could not allow them. As these objections might have been prejudicial to my Business, I took proper care, to convince those, who any way might be concerned in it, of the contrary. Some of the boys run away with their Cloaths, which had been given them, and their Parents were so unthankfull, that they would not give them again, till upon my application, they were ordered by their Captain to do so.

8. I began to continue to write the Latin Signification to a very large and compleat Malabar Dictionary, which was first begun by the Missionaries at Tranquerbar, then continued and much augmented by M<sup>r</sup>. Sartorius, & afterwards revised & augmented again at Tranquerbar, so that one Copy now requires half a Ream of Paper. One Copy being designed for M<sup>r</sup>. Sartorius, the Malabar words were wrote in Tranquerbar, & M<sup>r</sup>. Sartorius was to write the Latin to it, and make additions. In this he made a good progress, till by his death it was broke of. I resolv'd therefore to continue this as much as I could spare time from other Business, and so went on for a while, till I found that at present it would hinder me not only in my other Business, but would prejudice my health & chiefly my eyes which in this hot Climate are soon affected by much Reading and writing. Therefore I left of again, though with a Resolution, to begin again as soon as possible.
20. I was visit'd more than once about this time by Bramines from Dewanapatnam and we talk'd of sciences & learning. They boasted in the usual way of their great Skill and knowledge, against which I made now and then an exception, and mention'd something of the learning of the Europeans, not forgetting to tell them, that we esteem'd our Ancestors and Predecessors as much as the Indians could theirs, but that notwithstanding all this our modern Scholars not contented with what was found out already, endeavour'd every day to go further, when on the contrary the Indians without any Meditation examination or enquiry adhered superstitiously to what was left them by their forefathers. As I knew that they value themselves chiefly on their pretended knowledge of Astronomy, Moons Age, Eclipses &c. I took an opportunity to tell them, how the European Astronomers had made such a great progress in this kind of knowledge by Telescopes and other excellent Instruments, which the Indians never made use of, nor did so much as the old Chaldeans, Arabians and Greeks, who constantly made Observations; but that they work'd their Almanacks only by Tables, which they had from their forefathers, and that many times their Tables were very insufficient. I ask'd them, if they knew the Eclipses for several years to come, which they answer'd in the Negative. Upon which I told them, that our Astronomers made their Calculations for a great many future Years, and that I had a book with me (Times Telescope) which gave an Account of those things for a number of years. They were mightily puzzled at this, so that they did not talk so high any more, and it happen'd to be divulg'd amongst the Bramines of this place, that I could tell the Moons Age, Eclipses &c. as well as any of them. In my conversation with the Bramines I choose this method to remove one great impediment, viz. their high Opinion, which they have of themselves, and the mean thoughts they have of the Europeans, whom they believe quite ignorant, and almost brutified. When I can convince them first, that the Europeans are Skill'd at least as well as they, and even a good deal better, it may under Gods blessing open me the way, and make them desirous for christian Religion. Before I have removed this Impediment, I cannot have Confidence enough to talk with them on purpose of Religion. Though in conferring with them I always avoid all manner of disputing, not insisting upon Refutations, but only proposing what I can say of our ways and methods, and if I find them not inclin'd to fall in with my opinion, I break of, telling them, that when I have perfected myself more in the Language, I hope to have an opportunity to talk of the same thing again and perhaps to represent it in a stronger light and with more proper Expressions than now.
28. I received four Portuguese New Testaments from M<sup>r</sup>. Schube at Madras, which were given by the Rev<sup>d</sup>. M<sup>r</sup>. Wynch, who was at Fort St. Davids some time ago and was desir'd to spare me a few out of the Church Library at Madras.
- March.
1. I did all what could be done to go on in the building, which went on a little slow for want of Materials & labourers.

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March 15.

As I wanted a Recreation for my body, having had much business all this while, I resolved to go to Porto novo (which is about 5 leagues from hence) to visit and acquaint myself with the Dutch Gentlemen there. The Dutch having a great Power in East-India, and having been particularly kind to the Protestant Mission, the Protestant Missionaries have always taken care to cultivate a friendship with them. I set out from Cuddalore near three of the Clock in the afternoon and arrived there after seven in the Evening. The Chief M<sup>r</sup>. Dornieux and the other Gentlemen received and entertained me very kindly, and I was desired, to christen three children, one of whom was a Grandson of the said M<sup>r</sup>. Dornieux.

16. Being resolved not to stay long from home, I set out from Porto novo the next day and arrived at Cuddalore after 10 at night.

With the End of this Month Salomo, who had assisted me hitherto in the Malabar Language insisted very much upon his being dismissed, pretending several Reasons. Though I promised to comply with his desires, he assented himself at last, before I gave my final Resolution, and I found afterwards, that he had committed several irregularities, in borrowing Money and the like, of which he dreaded the Consequences.

30. To my great Joy and Satisfaction M<sup>r</sup>. Walther came here from Tranquerbar to stay for some days with me. His design was 1.) to acquaint himself with me 2.) to see, if either in Porto novo or here he could discover something of the <sup>1000</sup> Pagodas which were lost some Months ago not far from hence. As I hitherto by letters and otherwise had done all what I could to find out something of it, I was ready again to do any thing, which could be done that way. The Governour M<sup>r</sup>. Hubbard in particular had interposed his authority and done several things to discover the Theft, which however proved ineffectual. Some other Means being proposed upon new suspicions, his worship gave the necessary Orders for a new Examination in this place (because the Man who lost the Money, is an Inhabitant of Fort St. David's) and a handsome Reward was promised to one in this place, who seemed the most likely Man to find the thing out. Yet this last effort had no more effect, than the former. In the Mean time I was very careful to make the best advantage of M<sup>r</sup>. Walther's company, who has been long in the Country and is very well skilled in languages and sciences. I profited so much by his conversation, that I found Reason to thank God for his providence in this particular.

### April.

With the End of the last month I had an opportunity to be acquainted with an Inhabitant of this place, Pothani by name, who has kept for several years a publick School, but finding himself by his Age unfit for such a laborious work has given it up to one of his Relations. Upon enquiry I found, that he was very well skilled in the Language and had a little learning according to the Country way, therefore I resolved to take him into my service, to assist me in the language, in which I was likely to advance now faster, because this Man doth not understand any European Language, so that I am obliged to talk nothing but Malabar with him. But this was not the only design, because I thought, that some time or other, if providence should open the way, this Man might be brought over to christianity. Because he being constantly with me, the innate dislike which these people have against the Europeans, will wear out, & I can watch proper opportunities to talk nearer and more confidently to him, when probably he will disclose himself with greater freedom, and give me an opportunity to acquaint him with the excellency and necessity of the christian Religion.

April.

These Indians are very timorous and reserved, and they must be very well acquainted with a European, before they put so much confidence in him, as to tell him the sentiments of their hearts. Another reason for choosing this man, though a heathen, was this, that amongst his acquaintance he will remove several prejudices, which these people have against the Europeans, taking them to be a sort of vagabonds, irregular unclean and most despicable sort of people; which however they take care enough not to tell a European to his face. Now those inhabitants, whom I should endeavour to bring into my acquaintance, will ask such a man, what my way of living is, and how other circumstances are, whereupon probably he will tell them, that a great many things are not so as they commonly think, which will make a good impression upon them, remove several obstacles and more them, not to shun my conversation.

The malabar Catechist, Stralapper, who had been hitherto in pay and service, not answering the expectation and his promise, that he would endeavour, to qualify himself for his business, but shewing to the contrary a great incapacity, I had told him some months ago, that I could not promise to keep him any long time more, and that I advised him, to look out for some other business, to gain his livelihood. About this time I told him positively, that after two months time ~~he~~<sup>he</sup> must expect his dismissal, and that in the mean time he might resolve and enquire for some other convenient business. Several Malabars and Bramines have visited me hitherto, and our discourses were most the same as the above mentioned.

6. Mr. Walther departed from hence in the afternoon.

11. One of the Schoolboys Francisco de Souza, a Roman Catholic, was brought to me again after a long absence. The case was the following. The Popish Priests in this place being afraid of losing some thing, if one way or other the people of their Congregation should communicate with me, they were much discontented to see, that some Popish Parents gave their children to my care, as they knew very well, that they could not hinder it directly and openly, they stayed till the Lent, when their People are obliged to confess and receive the Sacrament. They told the Parents and relations of the boys, what an unpardonable sin this was, for which they should not be admitted to confession, but should be excommunicated, buried in unconsecrated ground etc. and that it was better to drown their children, than to send them to me. It had happened some weeks ago, that this before mentioned boy, being sickly and scabby, had my permission to go and stay with his mother, till he was recovered. He not coming again, I sent to enquire, and an answer was given, that the boy was not well yet, which happened two or three times more. At last they could not help discovering the true reason, desiring me, to dismiss the boy. I answered, that I had <sup>not</sup> induced nor forced the boy, to come to me, and I did not intend to force him to any thing, as for religion; but that I would not be forced to dismiss him when he had had his maintenance for several months, and if they would not send him again fairly, I would find means, to have him back again. Upon this they gave a scornfull answer, and I heard, that one of <sup>the</sup> Priests had taken public notice of this affair in his church, and threatened the People. As this might have been very prejudicial to my business, I thought proper to acquaint the Governour with it, representing: that the boy with the free consent of his mother had been brought to me; that all the time, he had been with me he might have found every day an opportunity to run away, if he had disliked it; that he had been more than once with his mother, when he was out of order, and always came back freely without being sent for. That the design of this Charity School was not to force any body, to turn Christian or Protestant, if he was not convicted and would accept of it freely; but that in the present

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case I could not help complaining against the Priests, who would cause the Children to be taken away in a forcible manner, though they had cost money for their maintenance.

This worship was very much displeas'd at this great presumption of the Priest, and promis'd me, that the boy should come again, and that he would reprimand the Priest for it. Some days after, the Priest being call'd, thought best, to deny every thing, though at the same time, he complain'd to some Gentlemen in the place, that I us'd violence, against which I answer'd, that I never design'd to force any body in point of Religion, but as I had the favour of living under the protection of an English Government I could not believe, that I did wrong, when I apply'd to the Governour for help against insults of this nature. Though the people saw, that the Governour had taken notice of the affair, yet they us'd delays, till upon a repeated order the boy came back again. An other boy, who, most about the same time was taken away from me, by the same arts, was either brought out of the place or carefully hid, and could not be found. I heard afterwards, that he was here again, but I thought it was better, to let him go, than to have more disputes.

13. After a great many impediments I had at last the joy, to enter into the new built house, and I thank'd God for his providence, which had assist'd and carried me so far, that I could live in a house fit and comodious for my business and for my health and convenience. The whole was not yet done, but the remaining part, was not ~~not~~ very much, and was like to go on the better, when I was present in the house, and had it always under my eyes.

The next following days I took care, as much as the circumstances would permit, to bring every thing in proper order, and to have a publick congregation again, as soon as possible.

22. To day, being Easterday I gave the first publick Sermon again in the Portuguese language, though I had but very few auditors. The day before I sent a messenger about, to give notice of it to all those, who formerly us'd to come now and then. In my Sermon, I first of all, excited those, that were present, to acknowledge Gods favour in having given us after some interruption, a convenient place for a Congregation, and admonish'd them not to neglect this opportunity, intended for the benefit of their Souls but to make a right use of it. Then I proceeded to my Text, Declaring them the history of the resurrection of our Saviour. Divine Service is begun with the Litany out of the Portuguese Common prayer book, after this follows the Sermon, and the conclusion is with a prayer. The appointed time is from 8 to 9. in the morning, and the hall of the house is the meeting place. At 10 of the Clock the schoolmaster repeats this Sermon with the Children by way of catechizing.

May.

Though this ~~this~~ is the beginning of the hottest time of the year, yet I find the new house so convenient, that I hardly perceive the heat. This together with the satisfaction of my mind on account of several successes in my business, has contributed so much to my health and vigour, that now in the hot season I can do more, then formerly I could in the cool weather. My main business has been and is yet, to perfect myself <sup>in the</sup> country Language, for which I have spared no pains, and (thanks to God)

find myself now advancing pretty fast. Since Mr. Sartorius's decease I have been careful to bring together a good number of books, that <sup>are</sup> valuable amongst the Malabars, most of whom I have read, and some of them two or three times. At that I might do something beforehand, for the benefit of my Successors I have wrote the most difficult words out of several books in Malabar with the Signification in Latin. In Mr. Sartorius's lifetime I made with his assistance a very large vocabulary on a new Edition of the Gospel of St. Matthew printed at Fran<sup>9</sup>kenbar, which doth not only contain the words wrote in Malabar, with their pronunciation and Signification in Latin, but has likewise for the benefit of a beginner a great many grammatical and Etymological annotations and explanations.

I have been moved to do this, because in learning this language, and chiefly in the beginning I found the vocabularies and other manuscripts of Mr. Sartorius to be a very great help and advantage to me. As I take this to be my chief business at present, I have sometimes, when business came too much upon me, rather left out an hour's instruction in the Portuguese School, that I might lose no time for the advancing in the language.

I have been careful to cultivate my acquaintance with the natives, though in my conversation I find more and more the great and to mens Eyes insurmountable impediments, which must be removed, before those people can embrace Christianity with a Sincerity of their heart.

My conversation with them has been hitherto chiefly within the house, because I cannot yet talk so fluently, as there is necessary for an interlocation in publick places and before a company. Yet I have taken hold of a silent opportunity for enlarging my acquaintance with them, when I heard that a learned Bramine was singing every evening in the market place, some of the old Malabar histories, where he had a good number of auditors. I went there several times hearing him for a quarter of an hour, which surpris'd those, that were present, as an unusual appearance. My old Schoolmaster being with me, several of the company after I was gone, asked him the meaning and reason of my coming, where upon he told them, what my business was, and that I had an intention to be acquainted with the natives, for which purpose, I had bought a good number of their best books, which I was reading every day, and endeavoured to perfect myself not only in their language, but in their history and learning. Upon this they expressed a satisfaction and approbation. When I read with this old man the Malabar Books, which are stuffed not only with the most extravagant absurdities and downright contradictions, but even with the greatest obscenities, (though these blind people pretend these things to be the revelations and acts of their Gods) I cannot help talking earnestly with him, discovering to him the inconsistency and consequently the falsity of these things, together with the heinous Sin of ascribing such monstrous crimes to a Deity, and of adoring and reverencing Gods, who according to their own renowned books have committed more villainies and debaucheries, than any criminal on earth. In his answers he sometimes endeavours to evade the strenght of my objections, but if he cannot do that, he

May

he turns about quite the opposite way confessing, that what I say, is true, and that all what their authors say is false. Then I ask him, why he will not endeavour to find and to embrace the truth. He answers in the usual way of these people: You are a wise and a holy man, a favourite of the true God, and it is for your great merits and virtues, that God hath blessed you with the true light, but as for us poor people, our case is desperate. we are in an Ocean of delusions, we are tossed about by worldly lusts and desires, and we are like a ship, which drives about without compass, rudder and sails, and how can we help that, since it is our destiny, and how should we reject the ways and customs delivered unto us from our ancestors, whom we take to have been very wise men, Friends of the Gods, men of great merits &c. I asked him, how he could reconcile these downright contradictions, and if by applying his reason he could not discover the falsity of those things. He answered: that they must believe and follow their ancestors, and it was enough, that these great men had spoke and done so, which they ought to accept and reverence. I replied: if any pretended wise man would persuade him, that white was black, if he would not rather trust his own eyes, and believe, that white was white. I further told him, that it was our duty, to apply the reason, which God has given us for the discovery of what is false or true, and that one time or other, God would call every one of us to an account where no body would assist us, but every body must answer for himself, and there certainly it would be to no purpose, if one should excuse himself, saying, he could not find out, that white was white, because his wise ancestors had told him, that it was black: Standing once with him in the back part of the house, where there is a free prospect to the Sea and the mouth of the River, I proposed to him, these simile: Suppose in a strong inundation and violent current of the river, he had the ill luck to be carried away, with all his relations, friends and people of his cast, and after he had been hurried away, he happened to touch ground, and erecting himself should see all his relations already in the mouth of the river, when at the same time he saw next by him an eminence, to which he might retire and save himself; if he would rather choose to bear his relations company, or if he would separate himself and live. He seemed to be struck with this, and after a little pause could not help confessing, that in such a case he would rather separate and save himself. Upon this I admonished him seriously to take care, that he might come to know the only true God, and that if he was serious, God would give him an opportunity and show him the way to it. Though now and then these people confess a truth proposed to them, yet I can hardly remember an instance, that truth made an impression upon them, and that they seemed to be convinced. This may partly proceed from thence that they are not used to cultivate their judgment and reasoning faculty, but only their memory, because their learning is not by way of examination and consideration, but merely by stuffing their memory with what they

they find in their books, let it be never so absurd and contradictory. Some times they will make a plain and open confession, that the interlocution may come to an end, and that they may get rid of him, who talks to them, and I remember an instance, when on one of their solemn days a malabar man at the door of a Pagode spoke in a scornfull way of the idols to a Missionary, and that very moment entered the Pagode to make his adorations. If in such a case they are asked, why they do not embrace the truth, which they pretend to allow as truth; they will say, that every body must go his own way, and that God has revealed himself several ways to several nations and Tribes. I have asked them sometimes how they can have such an opinion of the Deity, as being partial, and willingly keeping some nations or Tribes in wrong way. If by Gods beneficence of nature they could not conclude, that he was ready to impart his favours to all without distinction, seeing that the Sun did not shine and the rain did not fall upon such a town, street or house only, but that without distinction these benefits were given to all.

31. The above mentioned Roman Catholic boy, Francisco de Souza, was dismissed because he shewed a great dislike to learn, was always sickly and scabby infecting the others, and his mother continually desired to have him home again.

## June

I had resolved to discharge the malabar Catechist, Arulappen, but finding that he had not yet an other employ, I promised him half a Pagoda a month for some while, and that he should be with me on Sundays, and attend on other days only when I should call him, but that he should look out for his livelihood somewhere else.

10. From Easter to Whitsunday I have declared in my Sermons the history of Christs manifesting himself after his resurrection and of his ascension. To day I treated of the effusion of the holy Ghost according to the 2<sup>d</sup> chapter of the Acts.
17. For two or three days I had pains and inflammation of the eyes, which increased so to day, that I was obliged to keep myself in a dark room, and could not preach a sermon. upon the application of proper remedies I was better in few days afterwards.
24. Having formerly in Mr. Sartorius's life time begun to preach on the main articles of christian religion, I reassumed this, and preached to day upon the doctrine of God and his glorious attributes. At the end of this month I dismissed the European, whom I had employed as an Accomptant and Surveyor of the building, because there was no more business for him.

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July.

8. A Serjeant of the military, Will: Brandling, desired me to christen his newborn child which was very weak and in imminent danger of Life. This being an extraordinary case, and the Child being in the neighbour-  
hood, I gratified him in his desires. The Child dyed in few days.
20. To day I came to an end with the Gospel of St. Matthew in Portuguese, which was begun with the school boys in September last, on purpose to teach them so much of the Portuguese language, as is necessary to understand the Bible and religious books. This has required so many months because the boys were quite ignorant, and I was obliged to explain not only every word, but the variations of them too. Though I find now, that the boys have made a good progress, so that I can go on faster now, chiefly because the Schoolmaster comprehends my method more and more, for which reason he is more capable to assist me.
21. I began the Gospel of St. Mark with the boys.
24. I received to day all my European letters from England and Germany, which for several particular reasons were very joyfull unto me, and moved me to thank God for his favorable assistance and undeserved benefits bestowed upon me hitherto.

August.

14. The Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr. Howard, who had been at Fort St. Davids for some days, went ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> day on board, to go by Sea to Tranquerbar and Nagapatnam. In the time of his staying here, I took the opportunity of acquainting him particularly with the circumstances of my business, and when he came to visit me, I shewed him the house, school etc.
21. To day an end was made of building for this year, and all the workmen were dismissed.
- I received the chests, books etc. which came from England this year.
- Of Malabar books wrote by Malabar authors I have bought and collected now above 50. The main design is to learn the language out of them, and I had a secondary design, to see if perhaps something of antiquity, chiefly of the history of the Jews and Greeks might be found in them. As for the first, I saw there were now ~~and then~~ <sup>enough</sup> books for one, that would learn the language, and as for the second, I found nothing at all of true antiquity, but only extravagant, inconsistent and fabulous accounts and obscenities, so that, if it were not for perfecting myself in the

language, I should not read one of them. For these reasons I resolved not to buy any more, except it should be an extraordinary one.

23. A very curious and skilfull Bramine of my acquaintance at Madras, who knows the English language to a great perfection and is very inquisitive after the learning and religion of the Europeans, had wrote an English Letter to me. I answered him upon what he desired and added the following admonition: I cannot omit, recommending to you, that in the way, you have begun, you would go on, endeavoring to find out Truth; not taking a thing for granted, because it is pretended to be old, <sup>nor</sup> not accepting of it merely, because it is new, but applying the reason, God has given you, to see and distinguish with your own eyes, what is true or false. If you are sincere in this, you cannot fail under Gods blessing to find out the way for true knowledge and happiness.

26. Having till now in my Sermons proposed the doctrine of God, I begun to day the history of the creation out of Gen. 1. Taking proper care to convince my auditory of the necessity and obligation, we are under, of considering and regarding Gods works and benefits, which we are always surrounded with.

September.

The Steward Tiagappen not being so diligent and careful, as he ought, but showing to the contrary an obstinacy and forwardness, was dismissed, and one Linguen, who formerly served us, was taken in his place, with the beginning of this Month.

5. I ended to day the explanation of the language of these scriptural sentences, which the boys had learned, and finding, that the Schoolmaster qualified himselfe more and more, I resolved for some months to instruct the boys only three times <sup>a</sup> week, that I might have the more time for my malabar work, and for the drawing and writing of my letters accounts and Journal for Europe.

9. A newborn Son of the malabar ~~Catechist~~ Catechist Avilappen was christened.

16. Before the hot season, I gave the boys every Sunday in the afternoon a Lesson on some historical part of religion, but being invited every Sunday to dine with his Worship, who lives  
in

1739.

September.

in the Company's Garden near 4 miles from Cuddalore, the going and coming such a way in the hottest time of the day made me so unfit, that it was impossible, as long as the Landwind held, to teach the Children immediately after it. But the season being now cooler, I begun to day again from 4 till 5 in the afternoon to read the Old Testament with them, commencing with the history of Joseph Gen. 37. and intending to go through the main parts of the history of the Jews, described in the Old Testament. My main design is, that the boys may be better acquainted and capable to understand the scriptures, and as the historical part is very agreeable, I hope, that with Gods blessing this will excite in them a greater desire to read the Bible.

19. I received 200. Pag. being part of the money sent out by the honorable Society and designed for Cuddalore. As I was not in immediate want, and the carrying of the money in natura being hazardous, I resolved to stay for opportunities, to have the money by bills of exchange, and a Gentleman in this place having occasion to send 200 Pag. to Madras, I gave some days ago a bill to be drawn upon Mr. Schultze, who upon my desire paid the said sum to the Gentleman's Correspondent, and I had the money paid here.

October.

4. I finished the grammatical explanation of the Gospel of St. ~~Mark~~ Mark with the boys, and begun that of St. Luke
5. The garden belonging to the first bought ground had been let out to a Malabar man for 7. Pag. a year, which money should be payed in three terms. But according to the way of this nation, who take deceitfulness to be an extraordinary qualification, he refused payment, so that the Gentleman who is Justice at Cuddalore thought proper to imprison him twice for some days, and it was difficult yet to get the money. This was very tedious to me, and as it might have been interpreted to my prejudice by illwilling People, I annulled the contract, and resolved to let the Coconuts grow, and sell them afterwards at once. But one way or other I found after some months

Months, that there was no produce of the ~~the~~ trees, and therefore I offered the ground and garden to sale, after I had taken away all the brickwork and several trees, which I transplanted into the new ground. After some while I came to an agreement with a Malabar man for 30 Pag. which sum was added to the cash.

16. I received 100 Pag. more by bill of exchange, of the money designed for the use of the Cuddalore Mission.

25. Several weeks since I had considered earnestly the circumstances of my business, and it gave me a very deep impression to find that there were so few of the inhabitants, who entertained an acquaintance with me, though I had endeavoured several ways to be known to them, and had invited many. I therefore resolved, that as soon as the rain ceased a little, I would go two or three times a week in the evening through the streets and public places of Cuddalore and the adjacent places within the limits of Fort St. Davids, taking an opportunity to address myself in a proper way to people, whom I should meet, wishing heartily to God, that he would bless my endeavours and designs. Amongst other things I was encouraged to do so, because I found myself advancing more and more in the language, so that I could venture out and talk even to a Company of people. Accordingly I took this afternoon the old man, who instructs me in the language, with me, and as formerly I went to all the schools, I visited now their Pagodes. Coming to one, that was a building now, and enquiring for several things, which they were a doing, I asked them at last, if it was not more reasonable, and more truly charitable to spend money for the benefit of the poor, than for such buildings which were really of no necessity or use. They answered in the usual way; that in this they followed the example and precepts of their ancestors, who had ~~taught~~ taught them, that those things were agreeable to their Gods, and that they, who bestowed money on such purposes would be blessed and rewarded. I expressed calmly and in a few words my disapprobation and left them.

In my Sunday Sermons I have this month I have treated of the doctrine of the Angels.

I went on in my ordinary business, though in the first part of the month only at home, because the weather was so rainy and stormy and the rivers and channels so deep, that they could not be passed without difficulty and danger.

4. I began in my Sermons the doctrine of providence.
14. Being desired to christen a Gentleman's daughter, I went to the Fort side and administered holy baptism to the child.
24. As I was desirous to enlarge my acquaintance with the natives I went to a place within the limits, about two miles from Padalove, called commonly Trippaplove, where there is a famous Pagode, which is reckoned amongst the most holy over all the country. Going in, the Bramines and other seemed to be uneasy, as they have always a dislike, when they see Europeans come near them. But when I began to talk with them in their own language they were surprized and came nearer; I look'd about for an inscription, which might give an account of the place, and found characters near the entrance of the Pagode, though they were only names, perhaps of benefactors or the architect. When I began to read these names, they were yet more surprized, that I could read their language. After this I told them, that in the time I had been in the country, the Malabar had always told me, that in things of antiquity I could find satisfaction in their renowned holy places, where I should find inscriptions and chronicles, which were kept there. Now as this place was famous amongst them I should be very glad to hear something of the history of it, when, and by whom it was built &c. They answered as usual, talking of thousands and millions of years. I expressed my desire to see the chronicle of the place or to hear part of it. They told me plainly, that there was no such thing, because it came from their hands in time of war, though formerly it had been there. This moved me very much, and I could not help representing to them, how miserably they were deluded, when they boasted and talked so extravagant of the

The antiquity of their religion etc: Scorning other nations as *idiot upstarts*, who were enter'd in the world but yesterday, and knew nothing of history, sciences and the like. I further told them, that I had been several years in the country and having been desirous to find out what reason, proof and certainty the malabars had, I had always upon enquiry been referred to some other place and persons, who would satisfy me, though it had been done so unluckily, that the people at Madras told me, the seat of their religion, sciences etc: was to the South; and now, when I asked here for some thing, I must hear, that every thing being fallen into disorder and confusion, by wars and other troubles, their sciences had sheltered themselves in Madras and other great places to the North. Though I was very earnest to make them sensible of their misery and ignorance, telling them, that every man in duty to God was obliged, to enquire for truth; it seemed to make no impression upon them, which made me retire.

It might be fully enough, for the discouragement of a Missionary to see those people, who are actually miserable and visibly under divine judgment, fully acquiesce in things, which upon the least enquiry they could find to be lyes and delusions. If I was not assured of divine providence, favour and power, I could hardly entertain any hopes of being serviceable to the poor Malabar. However I will endeavour to mind my duty, and if the Malabar in their great negligence will not be awakened to mind theirs, Gods honour will be promoted at least in so far, that the Indians cannot excuse themselves, saying, they had had no opportunity and means to know and serve their creator.

As I was in the way to go to the forementioned place, I found in a Choultry or publick diversory, a gang of people, called Pandarams, who by their Profession are beggars and vagabonds. They had lodged themselves for a while in this Choultry with their families, and I found them gaming. Upon my asking, who they were and what trade they followed, they answered: That by favour and order of their God they were to do no business, but to go from place to place, and live on charity. I replied: if it was so, they might well stay in this or any other Choultry, and expect their maintenance from a God, who had given them such an order,

but it seemed very odd to me, that they would live upon other people's sweat, when they themselves did nothing, that might be usefull or profitable to ~~they~~ their fellowcreatures. And it seemed unreasonable to me, to say, God had ordered them to do so, because God had given us life and limbs, and connected mankind so together, that every one in his capacity and circumstances should contribute something for the benefit of the whole, and then he might in justice expect assistance and help from his fellowcreatures. It was much the same, as if a vessel was in danger at sea, and when every body did his utmost to save the vessel, one or two of the company would repose themselves to rest, pretending an order and blessing of God for it. They seemed not to mind what I proposed, and I left them.

25. In my Sunday afternoons lesson, I finished to day Genesis and begun Exodus.

The rain being now over and the weather fair, I went frequently about two or three times a week at Cuddalore as well as in the neighbouring places, taking here and there an opportunity to address myself to people, in order to be known to them.

Likewise, I was visited by several.

As I had prepared part of the draughts of my European Letters, I continued the same, though it went not so fast as I hoped, because I could not set aside my ordinary and daily business, though I took as much time for the letters, as I could spare conveniently.

9. In my Sundays Sermons I begun the doctrine of Christ.
17. I was unexpectedly visited by a young Mahometan of this place, who is the grandson of a man of above 110 years of age. This old man is very much esteemed and revered all over a great part of the country, being in a manner a Highpriest amongst his people.

December.

The young man told me, that he had a Mind to see the house, and I had him carried about every where. I shewed him the Telescope, Microscope, books and other things, with which he seem'd to be much pleas'd, and after he had been with me for an hour, he took his leave in a friendly manner. I was very glad of this opportunity, and resolv'd not to neglect but rather to cultivate this acquaintance, and once to visit the old man. If it should happen some time or other, that the business of the Missionaries should extend itself further than the bounds of Fort St. David, it might be several ways usefull to have on proper occasions a recommendatory Letter from such a Man as this, who is respect'd even by the Governours of the Country. Because travelling into the inland part of this Country is not so as in Europe, but you must either be a great and powerfull Man yourself or go under the Name and Recommendation of a great Man, else you will not only be abus'd, but robb'd too, and there is no way for a Redress. As for Christian Religion there is almost no hope to do any thing with the Makometans, because they are exceedingly selfconceited, proud haughty and insolent, as being the Conquerors & Governours of these Countreys. Though as opportunity offers, I shall not omit turning my Discourse on Religion in my Conversation with them.

Coming now to the End of this Year and recollecting all what has happened, I find reason enough to adore and thank Divine Mercy, for assisting and helping me hitherto, and take at the same time the Confidence, that he will be further with me, and one way or other bless my poor endeavours with the wish'd success. I must confess to be under a Concernment, when I consider, that none of the Natives

has discover'd yet a desire for truth and happiness. But I take it as a good prognosticon, that when they converse with me, they are pleas'd with it, and confess sometimes, that formerly they had quite an other Opinion of the Europeans, and were afraid even to come to me, but finding things otherwise, they would not shun my conversation. To make them more confident, I take all possible care, to express a liking for them, addressing myself in a friendly way to them, enquiring for their ways & Customs, telling them, that I came to this Contry only for their sake, and that the new house was built only for charitable & Religious uses &c: They not only approve all this, and express a Satisfaction, but some times in their usual way begin to compliment and praise me, which however I always decline and begin to talk of another subject. In my objections and Exceptions against their opinions I avoid satyr & Reproach, just telling them, what I have to except, and what proofs they ought to bring, before I can believe them.

For these two or three Months past I have been deliberating if I could not begin a little Malabar School, and try if this would be a means to bring some people to a nearer acquaintance with me. I will endeavour to bring it about, if possible, next February or March.

In the Portuguese School are 8 Children. viz: 6 boys, and two girls, and I thank God to see the good success of my endeavours that way.

As for the publick Sermon on Sundays, there are very few auditors

seldom above 3 or 4 besides the Children. The Circumstances of these people, who call themselves Portuguese, are very miserable, and what compleats their Misery, is, that they think themselves to be very good people, and very good christians too, though they are in a perfect ignorance, and commonly live no regular life. This makes me the more desirous to turn my thoughts upon the Malabars, praying to God, that in his gracious providence he would awaker only one person or one family to come over to Christianity, because I have reason to hope, that if there is but a beginning, more will follow.

Cuddalore  
January 9<sup>th</sup> 1739  
40.

John Ernest Geister.