

Could Chinese Vegetarians be Baptized? The Canton Conference and Adrien Grelon SJ's Report of 1668

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Fasting has traditionally played an important role in Catholic practice and continues to be a part of Catholic religious life at prescribed times. However, historically, the Church's attitude towards vegetarianism was largely negative. The vegetarianism of the Gnostics and Manichaeans was condemned in the sixth century and that of the Cathars in the Middle Ages. Also, in the sixteenth century, those in Catholic regions who did not fast were suspected of being heretics because the Reformation greatly de-emphasised fasting.

When missionaries came to Asia, they encountered a very different kind of fasting that was rooted in the teaching of Buddhism and had spread to all segments of society. This fasting consisted in abstinence from specific foods, such as meat, garlic, onion, leeks, as well as from wine. Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) argued for the superiority of the Catholic fast because the Buddhist prohibition of killing life was founded on the belief in reincarnation.¹ In many writings, Jesuit missionaries and Chinese converts attacked Buddhist fasting respectively as superstitious and in opposition to the ancient Chinese practice of offering meat to ancestors. Buddhists in turn accused Catholics of being insensitive to the suffering caused by meat consumption.

Yet, some Chinese were only willing to be baptized if they could keep their vegetarian diet. Without any set rule, missionaries dealt with this issue on a case by case basis, sometimes allowing those who were called fasters (*jeiunantes*) to be baptized.

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1 Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, 217–219.

Canton conference and reports on the question of the fasters

Following a nationwide prohibition of the Catholic Church, more than twenty missionaries were sent to Canton in 1667 where they were kept under house arrest in the Jesuit residence until 1670. From 18 December 1667 to 26 January 1668, the missionaries met together in what has become known as the “Canton Conference” in order to establish a common framework for their pastoral activities. The conference included heated discussion on whether to admit fasters to baptism. The controversy intensified and the matter was finally brought to Rome. The two opposing stances are detailed in the manuscript reports in ARSI that were drawn up by Prospero Intorcetta and Adrien Grelon.²

The question of the fasters was quite high in the agenda, being the sixth topic among the forty-two discussed by among the twenty-three fathers of the Canton Conference. Article Six reads as:

Chinese fasters who have not broken their fast are not to be admitted to baptism, except in extraordinary circumstances in which there is no scandal and the right intention for fasting can be proven. Christians are strongly advised not to deter the fasters from listening to catechism by carelessly reproving them for their fast, but should gently take them to the priest to be taught about their obligations.³

In practice, this resolution gave great flexibility to each missionary in interpreting what constituted an “extraordinary circumstance”. The resolution was first adopted by a majority vote among the twenty-three fathers, but very soon Grelon questioned the ambiguity of the formulation, because in his mind, admitting a faster to baptism would always cause scandal to the Chinese Christians, and there could never be any good reason for a faster to refuse breaking his fast.

Grelon wrote a twenty-page report (ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 158, fols. 51–61v) arguing that fasters should never be admitted to baptism without

2 Prospero Intorcetta, * 28.XII.1625 Piazza Armerina, SJ 31.XII.1642 Messina, † 3.X.1692 Hangzhou, *DHCJ* III, 2059–60. Adrien Grelon, * 29.IV.1618 Aubeterre, SJ 1.VI.1643, † 3.III.1696 Jiangxi, *DHCJ* II, 1812.

3 ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 162, f. 253: “Non admittantur Sinae jejunantes ad Baptismum, non fracto jejunio, nisi in aliquo extraordinario casu in quo non sit scandalum, & alioqui constet de jejunandi recta intentione. Moneantur tamen seriò Christiani, ne tales jejunates terreant ab audiendo Catechismo, imprudenter illis ipsorum jejunium exprobando; sed suaviter eos ad Patrem perducant, ab ipso Patre utique blandiusculè de sua obligatione perdocentus.”

first breaking their fast. His report must have been finished after 26 January 1668 because it mentions Saint Joseph, who was chosen on the last day of the Conference as protector of the China mission by the twenty-three fathers. Grelon was not alone in his conservative interpretation of Article Six. The Spanish Franciscan Antonio Santa Maria Caballero (1602–1669) strongly opposed admitting fasters, and even wrote to the Superior General of the Jesuits on 14 November 1668 to denounce the laxity of the Jesuits in China (ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 162, ff. 231–234). Later, the Spanish Dominican Domingo Navarrete (1618–1686) in his *Controversias* mentioned that six Jesuits, including Grelon and Jean Valat (c.1614–1696), were in favor of banning the fasters from baptism in every circumstance without exception, while their fellow-Jesuits, Vice-Provincial Feliciano Pacheco (1622–1687) and Jacques Le Faure (1613–1675) supported baptizing the fasters.⁴

While Grelon was writing his report, Intorcetta managed to complete, even before the end of the Canton Conference, a twenty-four-page report (ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 150, ff. 71–77) arguing that the fasters need only to declare publicly that they are fasting not to worship an idol, but for God as penance for their sins. Le Faure added a five-page appendix to Intorcetta's report, offering supplementary arguments for admitting fasters to baptism (ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 150, ff. 77–79).

In their reports, both Grelon and Intorcetta followed the same style of argumentation. They first outlined the opposing position, then refuted it, and finally defended their own position. To support their argumentation, they both took advantage of the small library in the Jesuit house, quoting Aquinas, Suarez, Biblical scholars, and even archival documents brought from Macao.

The controversy developed further because Intorcetta managed to read Grelon's report and wrote a four-page *additamentum* (ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 150, f. 70rv), to which Grelon in turn replied with another document of ten pages (ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 158, ff. 63–68). All those documents were then sent to Macao where, on 10 December 1668, Luis da Gama (1609–1671), Visitor for Japan and China (1664–1670), authenticated and forwarded them to Rome.

The matter was resolved definitively when, in 1704, Pope Clement XI (r. 1700–1721) issued his condemnation of the Chinese rites offered to the ancestors, to Confucius and to the emperor. Thus, the policy of accommodation which had been promoted by Ricci, Intorcetta and Pacheco was finally abandoned, and the more conservative stance

4 Navarrete, *Controversias*, 199–202. In this section, Navarrete makes multiple references to Grelon's report.

promoted by Grelon, Santa-Maria, and Navarrete prevailed. The most important elements of the controversy on the Chinese fast are presented and analysed below.

Authority of the first missionaries

Grelon accused Intorcetta of introducing a new policy that contradicted the practice of the first generations of missionaries. As Grelon had only spent twelve years in China, and Intorcetta only eight, both needed to rely on the oral and written testimonies of older missionaries. In his report, Grelon claimed that early Jesuit missionaries were opposed to the admission of fasters to baptism, listing eight names, including Giulio Aleni (1582–1649), founder of the mission in Fujian province, and Alfonso Vagnone (1566–1640), founder of the mission in Shanxi province. However, thanks to the help of Christian Herdtrich (1625–84), Intorcetta found support for his position in the *Promoção da Christandade*, a manuscript work by Vagnone now lost: “As Buddhists have been previously devoted to fasting, they can easily continue, provided that they change their intention to something better.”⁵ In his response, Grelon argued that although Vagnone allowed Christians to keep fasting after baptism, he would have required them to eat a piece of meat before baptism. Concerning Aleni’s practice, if Intorcetta had known about it, he would have surely mentioned that in 1647 Aleni had baptized an entire village of fasters at Wuyishan, in Fujian, without asking them to break their fast before baptism.⁶ However, as the fragmentary evidence of the past was inconclusive, the question of the Chinese fasters needed to be evaluated through the lens of moral theology.

Formal act of fasting

In moral theology, an act is analysed from two points of view: its form, that is, the intention of the agent, and the material act itself. In the case of fasting, the two questions concern whether the intention is good and whether the act itself is good. Let us first see where Intorcetta and Grelon stand on the formal act of fasting.

For Intorcetta, fasting is morally neutral, and only the intention qualifies it morally. Hence fasting is evil if the intention is to worship an idol, or good if the intention is to fast for God. A person who used to fast for Buddha and to accumulate merits for his next reincarnation

5 ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 150, f. 70: “Como dantes alguns Pagodentos sejam dados ao jejum, fácil hé serem acostumados a continuar, ao menos mudar a intenção em melhor.”

6 Thomas Ignatius Dunyn-Szpot, *Historia sinarum 1641–1687*; ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 103, f. 65v.

could still keep the same practice of fasting provided that he shifts the intention from Buddha to God. As we said above, Intorcetta proposed that the faster could make a formal and public promise in front of the Christian community, and this promise was designed to show his shift of intention.

For Grelon, a shift of intention is theoretically possible, but psychologically almost impossible to realize. This impossibility is illustrated with two vivid examples. Suppose there is someone who has a few concubines and wants to keep them at home, promising the priest that he would not touch them anymore, or there is someone who keeps a collection of fine statues of Buddha, declaring that he keeps them only for their beauty. For Grelon, refusing to break the fast is akin to refusing to separate oneself from concubines or to discard Buddhist statues: it indicates that the convert has a flawed intention and is still attached to his previous life. This can only be regarded as immoral or superstitious according to moral theology (ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 158, ff. 52rv).

Grelon analyses further what he sees as the dishonest strategies of the fasters who refuse to break their fast, such as claiming that they simply dislike meat or that they may be ostracised if they break the fast. This leads Grelon to develop a “stronger argument” (*efficacissimum argumentum*). Those who fasted for their idol used to sin, but were unaware of it. Now that they have been told by the priest about the evil nature of their fast, their refusal to break it aggravates their sin (ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 158, f. 59), and thus makes them even more unfit to receive baptism. Morally speaking, Grelon’s position is extreme because it suggests that the authority of the Church through the figure of the priest can substitute personal conscience in the judgement of a formal act. Traditionally, however, theology has affirmed the capacity of free will to determine itself.

Material act of fasting

The morality of an act does not entirely rest on the intention of the agent, but also must consider its material dimension. In the case at hand, a faster may practise his fast purely and entirely for Christ, but the act of fasting itself has an objective dimension that is socially determined. It is not enough for the act of worship to be entirely directed towards God, because the material act of worship has to be adequate to its end. Grelon outlines that, according to moral theology, someone who wishes to worship God with pagan rituals commits a mortal sin because he worships God not as he ought, but with a pernicious worship (ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 158, f. 57).

In concrete terms, the Chinese Christian community, Chinese society and the Chinese government, all ascribed an evil connotation to the material act of fasting. First, according to Grelon, Chinese Christians, being more conservative than the missionaries, were unanimous in their opposition to admitting fasters. For a priest to baptize them would result in great scandal. Article Six opened the possibility for baptism on the condition that scandal is avoided, but for Grelon, the baptism of any faster would always be a scandal, and thus, should never be allowed. Grelon was probably quite correct in claiming the general opposition of Chinese Christians, but, for Intorcetta, the priest had the task of explaining to the Christian community the reasons for admitting fasters (*ARSI, Jap. Sin.* 150, f. 75).

From a societal perspective, Grelon claimed that fasting had negative connotations, especially among the elites, because it was associated with popular religious groups. However, Intorcetta came to an opposing view: since Chinese society especially values ascetic practices such as fasting, Christianity could become more acceptable by promoting a vegetarian diet, which was practised very widely outside Buddhist circles. Grelon suspected that Intorcetta, far from discouraging the Chinese fast, wanted in fact to promote vegetarianism among Christians (*ARSI, Jap. Sin.* 158, f. 59).

Finally, from the perspective of the Chinese government, Grelon worried that accepting fasters within Christian communities would reinforce the suspicion of the authorities against Christianity. Grelon mentioned that some members of heterodox groups that had been suppressed by the police joined Christian communities to escape. Those cases may have been limited to a few provinces, but given that the missionaries were under house arrest in Canton, Grelon was promoting a safe policy that ensured a strict delimitation between Christianity and popular religion. Nonetheless, Intorcetta rejected this stigmatisation of fasting, since it was practised by many literati and even members of the imperial family, and thus, if some Christians are vegetarian, there should be no fear of persecution (*ARSI, Jap. Sin.* 150, f. 70v).

Conclusion

The question of the fasters reveals the complex interactions between Christianity, Buddhism and popular religions in Chinese society. Grelon and Intorcetta envisioned two different modes of introducing Christianity, with the former more focused on preserving the authenticity of Christianity, and the latter more open to the possibility of adopting local practices like vegetarianism. Their detailed analysis of the form and matter of fasting was somehow inconclusive. On the

level of form, it is difficult to assess externally the personal intention of the faster whereas on the level of the material act, the social practice cannot be easily reduced to condemnation or approval.

For Grelon and Intorcetta, the question was about the proper way for Christianity to be inserted into a non-Christian society. Grelon's stance is not just informed by a Christian or European worldview, but also by the local Chinese context. From this perspective, fasting was a social and superstitious practice linked to Buddhism and heterodox sects, and he believed that Christianity should reject it to ensure that converts integrated better into the mainstream of Chinese society, as well as into Christian practice. Grelon's deliberations might therefore be seen at least partially as a pragmatic response to local circumstances. In a certain sense, he was being accommodationist too, but in a quite different way from Intorcetta.

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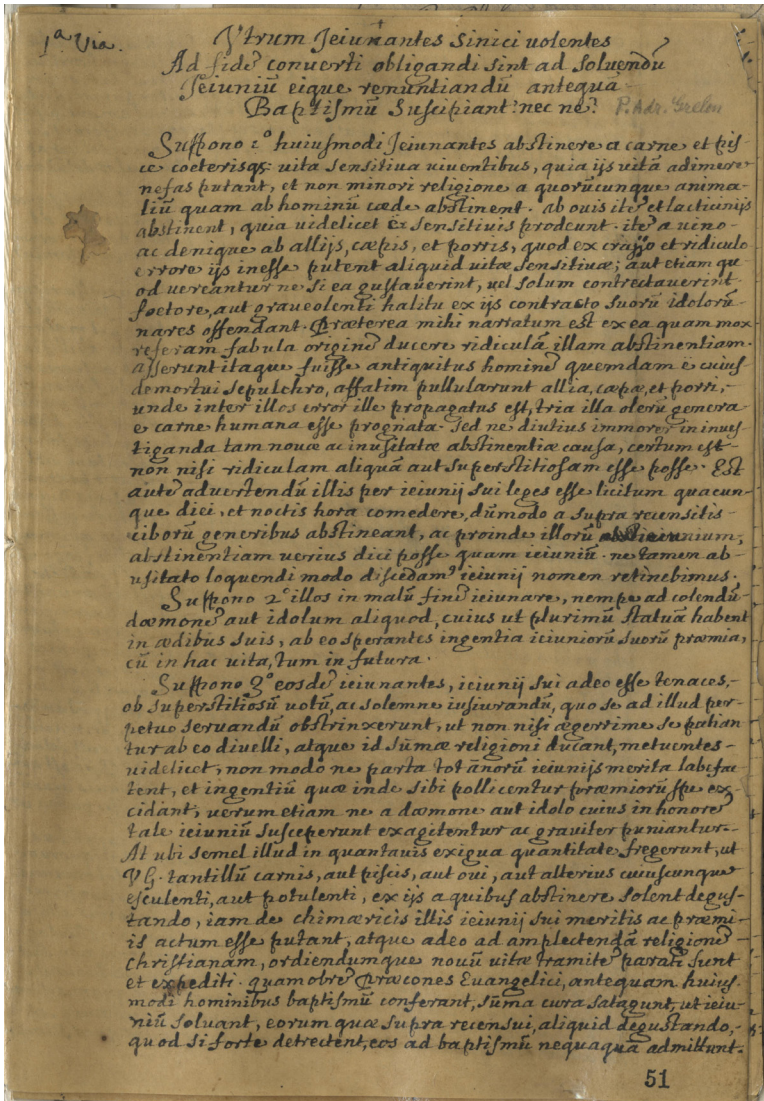
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dec. 1668

Whether Chinese fasters who want to convert to Christianity are obliged to break and renounce the fast before baptism?⁷

[Four preliminary considerations]

First consideration: Fasters abstain from meat, fish and other sentient life because they consider it forbidden to deprive them of life, and they are just as scrupulous about not killing animals as they are about not killing human beings. They also abstain from eggs and dairy products, which evidently come from sentient life. Similarly, they abstain from wine, garlic, onion and leeks because of the absurd idea that there is some sentient life in them.⁸ They even fear that if they taste or even touch those things, the bad smell would offend the nostrils of their idols. I have been told that this abstinence from food comes from an absurd legend: in ancient times, garlic, onion and leeks were seen sprouting in abundance from a man's tomb, and from that time, the legend has spread widely among them that these three kinds of vegetables sprout out of human flesh. I shall not spend more time inquiring into the reason for this unusual and strange abstinence from food, since it is obviously absurd or superstitious. We should bear in mind that their fasting rules allow them to eat at any time, as long as they abstain from the food mentioned above.⁹ Hence their fast should be more properly called abstinence. However, I retain the word "fast" since it is the common expression.

Second consideration: They fast for the evil intention of worshipping a demon or idol whose statues they have in great number at home, in the hope of great rewards for their fast in this life and the next.

7 Translation by Thierry Meynard and Daniel Canaris.

8 According to the *Brahma's Net Sutra*, those who take Buddhist precepts cannot eat the five pungent herbs: garlic, chives, leeks, onions, and asafetida, not because there is life in them, as Grelon says here, but because this gives rise to anger and ignorance.

9 In terms of practice, this is a very important difference with the Christian tradition and its designated times in which any consumption of food is forbidden. Actually, Buddhist monks also observe a time-based fast, not eating any food after noon until the next day.

Third consideration: The fasters are steadfast in their practice because of a superstitious vow or solemn promise by which they have bound themselves to observe the fast in perpetuity. Only with the greatest difficulty do they agree to discard it because they see it as the summit of their religious practice. They are obviously afraid of undermining the immense merits acquired through so many years of fasting and being deprived of the immense rewards promised to them. They also fear being harassed and severely punished by the demon or the idol in whose honour they had undertaken the fast. The moment that they have broken the fast with a small quantity of meat, fish, egg, or any food or drink made out of it, they think that all the illusory merits and rewards of their fast are gone, and they are then ready to become Christians and begin a new course of life. For this reason, the missionaries, before baptizing those people, make great efforts to have them break their fast by eating the food mentioned above. However, if they refuse, they should never be admitted to baptism.

Fourth consideration: In China or in Tartary those fasters are always despised and considered as *Sie kiao tie gin* [*Xiejiao de ren*], or heretics belonging to a sect forbidden by the laws of the country, and their leaders and followers are often arrested by the mandarins and heavily punished. When the police come to interrogate them, they go to buy meat, fish, garlic and other food, which are brought through the village and leave them hanging in the courtyards of their house so that they do not look like fasters. In this way, they deceive the police and can escape.¹⁰

Now that all these considerations are known beyond any doubt, let us examine whether the fasters who want to become Christians should be required to break their fast, or whether they should be able to decide freely and be baptized even if they refuse to break it.

[Counterargument: it is not required that the fast be broken]

The following reasons would seem to support the conclusion that breaking the fast is not a necessary condition for baptism.

First reason: In and of itself, fasting is morally neutral. Whether it is either good or bad depends on the end to which it is directed. Thus, fasters should not be required to break and renounce their fast

10 Among the fasters are the followers of sectarian groups like *zhaijiao*. All those four considerations can be found in the manuscript of the *History of Christianity* written around 1700 by the Polish Jesuit Dunyn-Szpot; ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 104, f. 285v.

before baptism, but only to stop fasting for the bad end for which they used to fast. The intention being correct, the action will be also correct. Moreover, only four conditions are required to determine that candidates are duly prepared for a valid baptism: first, that they have an earnest desire to receive baptism; second, that they express an explicit or implicit faith in the mysteries to be believed; third, that they are contrite for their past sins; fourth, that they express a firm resolve to obey the divine law and avoid sins in the future.¹¹ The fasters can fulfil all those conditions without renouncing their vow of fasting. Even if they keep fasting, they should be considered duly prepared for baptism. Thus, as long as they meet these four conditions, they should not be denied baptism. Consequently, they have the right to request baptism from a minister, who in turn has the duty to baptize them, especially if there is no other minister from whom they can receive this important sacrament.

The second reason is that, by denying baptism to the fasters who refuse to break the fast and by teaching that it is an obstacle for receiving the Divine law, we are preventing a great number from joining the Church, and we would seem to be guilty of their eternal damnation. Is there not the danger that God, who wants all men to be saved and know the truth, will seek from our hands their blood?

The third reason is that experience teaches us that some fasters, despite refusing to break their fast, have become true and staunch Christians after baptism.

[Argument in favour of requiring that the fast be broken]
[I – Three different opinions]

[I-1 Opinion of the first missionaries]

The affirmative argument, which I myself embrace, rests on the following reasons.

First, there is the authority of all the first Fathers who have worked in this vineyard of the Lord for more than eighty years.¹² They have always considered it wrong to baptize those who refused breaking

11 According to the Catechism of Trent, desire, faith and repentance of sins are required for baptism.

12 There was not a uniform policy on this matter. See the report of Intorcetta, in his sixth objection; ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 150, f. 75v, as well as his answer to Grelon; ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 150, f. 70. See also Grelon's response to Intorcetta; ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 158, f. 63v-64v.

their fast although they were plainly not unaware of the arguments mentioned above insofar as even someone who is not a theologian could come up with them. Since those arguments did not have enough weight for them to baptize the fasters, and indeed we shall see below the weakness of those arguments, why should we depart from their judgment and practice? If we do so, it shows that the first fathers were mistaken, while we know they were men who were both outstanding for their doctrine and remarkable in their virtue and zeal for souls, and inferior to none in their knowledge of China. – *But you will say that not everything that the first fathers did in this matter has reached our ears and they may have baptized some people who were refusing to break their fast.*

I do not deny this may have happened, but as long as you cannot bring any positive evidence, I have the right to deny it. Some of the first fathers who are still alive and are now exiled with us [in Canton]¹³ not only deny that they had ever dared to do so, but they also confirm that Aleni, Cattaneo, Vagnone, Longobardo, Figueiredo, Furtado, Dias, Adam [Schall] and others known to them had never done such a thing. Otherwise they would have contradicted themselves and would have done something different from what they taught. I add further that, even if some had done it on occasion — which has never been proven — it does not follow that they should be imitated since they would have strayed far away, in this matter, from the longstanding view of the first fathers.¹⁴ – *You will then say that the first fathers would have changed their opinion if they had seen how some fasters, despite refusing to break their fast before baptism, would renounce it later and become very good Christians.*

13 Besides Grelon, the other missionaries in Canton were the Jesuits: Feliciano Pacheco, Pietro Canevari, Francesco Brancati, Jacques Le Faure, Andrea-Giovanni Lubelli, Jean Valat, Stanislao Torrente, Manuel Jorge, Humbert Augery, Claude Motel, Jacques Motel, François de Rougemont, Giovanni-Domenico Gabiani, Christian Herdrich, Prospero Intorcetta, Antonio de Gouvea, Francesco de Ferrariis and Philippe Couplet, the Franciscan Antonio de Santa Maria Caballero and the Dominican Domino Navarrete. Among these, the missionaries with the most experience in China were the Franciscan Santa Maria (1602–69) with 38 years of service in China, and the Jesuits António de Gouvea (1592–1677) with 32 years, Francisco de Ferrariis (1609–1671) with 28 years, and Jean Valat (c.1614–96) with 17 years. Those four supported Grelon against Intorcetta.

14 Writing in 1667–68, Grelon mentioned those Jesuit missionaries in China who had already passed away, the most recent being Adam Schall von Bell (1592–1666). Others mentioned were Lazzaro Cattaneo (1560–1640), Alfonso Vagnone (1566–1640), Niccolò Longobardo (1559–1654), Giulio Aleni (1582–1649), Rodrigo de Figueiredo (1594–1642), Francisco Furtado (1587–1653), and Manuel Dias the younger (1574–1659).

I respond first that the first fathers always considered such an experiment illicit, and never would have taken a risk in such a serious matter.

Secondly, some fasters after baptism may have mended their ways, but according to the same logic, I could baptize someone who keeps a concubine, or anyone who falsely asks for baptism. If their wrong situation is exposed, no one would dare argue that their baptism is licit. We should not consider what could take place after baptism, because this is uncertain and known to God alone, but only the present situation of the individual asking for baptism, which can be known only through external indications. We shall see below whether the words of the fasters are enough for this. It is licit for me to baptize and absolve a man when I know through revelation he will become wicked and even be numbered among the damned, as long as I am sure that he is correctly disposed for baptism or repentance. However, I am not allowed to baptize or absolve a man when I know by human means that he is asking for the sacraments on false pretences, even if I know through revelation that in the future he would mend his ways and turn out a holy man.

Thirdly, if some people have stopped fasting after baptism, despite refusing to do so before, this is clear evidence that, after receiving a fuller knowledge of the divine law, they were troubled by scruples and pangs of conscience, and that they condemned their own stubborn superstition and dared not persist in such a dangerous state. Moreover, let us suppose that when becoming Christian, they condemned and cursed the earlier evil intention according to which they fasted before but had decided to keep their fast in honour of God and for greater merit. After making some progress in faith and virtue, how would they abandon such a holy and praiseworthy resolution? How would such a change not appear to them as a defect instead of a merit? However, we and the Chinese Christians always praise those who stop fasting, either after or before baptism, as if they had just begun to believe in truth, and we have no further doubts about their faith.

[I-2 Opinion of Chinese Christians]

I proceed from this to the second reason. There is a consensus among Chinese Christians that the fasters who are unwilling to relinquish their fast are insincere in their faith and unready for baptism. Thus, the Christians themselves would be very much scandalized if they see us baptizing the fasters.

– *You will say that Christians think this way because the fathers taught them so.*¹⁵

Firstly, you candidly admit what I wanted to stress, namely that this was the common opinion and practice of the fathers until now, which ought to be considered authoritative among all prudent persons.

Secondly, it is not so much that the Chinese Christians received this opinion from the fathers, but rather that the fathers received it from the Chinese Christians. Indeed, the fasters after their conversion related the mysteries of their own sect to the fathers, constantly affirming that, according to what they knew about their kindred, those who were so enslaved to their fast to the point of refusing to break it were not ready for baptism. For this reason, the fathers have always thought it wrong to baptize them.

[I-3 Opinion of the pagans]

Thirdly, not only Christians but also pagans would be scandalized if they were to see fasters keeping their fast after being admitted to baptism. This would make Christianity fall into a great disrepute among them because, as I have said before, the fasters are regarded as heretics and rebels throughout the whole land. On several occasions when imperial edicts were promulgated against the illegal sects of the land and officers punished their followers, Christians were mistakenly arrested by their agents for the same crime. Many members of those sects were brought to the tribunal and claimed to be Christians in order to avoid death. What would happen if fasters were to be arrested among our Christians? The pagans would seize this opportunity to spread the slander that the Christian law is the same as that of the fasters. They would fabricate against us the same crimes of which they accuse them, and would launch frequent persecutions against us. This is what happened to the early Christians [in the Roman empire]: all the outrages of the heretics at the time were wrongly associated with Christianity because the heretics paraded themselves under the name of Christianity. The name of Christ would no longer enjoy good repute in any place, but it would stink among the emperor and his officers. By wanting to open the gate of the Church to the fasters, we would close it to the many who dislike them and who consider it shameful to live mixed with them and to profess the same faith.

15 See Intorcetta's report; ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 150, f. 75.

– But perhaps you will say that there is a problem in our argument because, even if the fasters break their fast before baptism, it is left to them to decide that if they want to keep fasting in God’s honour, they can keep fasting without any sin, and even for their praise and merit. If they continue to keep the fast, there will surely be many fasters among the Chinese Christians.

I answer that there is no problem at all because our long experience has consistently taught us that those who have broken their fast by tasting meat, fish, or something alike in any quantity, have immediately renounced their fast entirely. This is because, as mentioned above, the fasters are convinced that, with a single morsel of a forbidden food, however small, all the merits accumulated by their fast are gone. Some may resume after baptism the fast that they have broken, but then, they would likely abjure their Christian faith. This clearly shows how difficult it is to observe Christianity and this fast at the same time.

[II – Arguments showing the wicked intention of the faster]

Fourthly, this fast is proven to be completely pagan and full of superstition, not only because of its nature, but even more because of its wicked teaching and diabolical end. How could anyone not see that the choice of vegetables that they are allowed to eat and their abstinence from all other food is a mere superstition and an absolutely inappropriate cult that is unworthy of a Christian, by which God is not venerated but offended. Even if this fast is indifferent on account of its nature, it is certainly very evil on account of its wicked teaching and of its end.

[II.1– Specious argument of fasting for God]

– You will say that before being baptized, the fasters had put aside the wicked intention they had, and even if they retain their fast, it is morally indifferent.¹⁶

This superstitious fast could theoretically be retained if the original intention by which it was undertaken were no longer present. On a practical level, however, this seems so difficult that it is humanly impossible to consider it worthy. Indeed, the fasters are so much accustomed to associate their fast with the demons and the worship of the idol that they can hardly, if at all, distinguish with

16 Intorcetta’s report, second objection; ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 150, f. 74v.

the intellect, let alone with the will, the difference between fasting and fasting for such a superstitious end.

Secondly, it would follow that we could baptize a man who keeps concubines and does not want to send them away but promises not to have relations with them. Likewise, we could baptize someone who keeps statues of idols in his home, so long as he affirms that he keeps them not for worship, but for their beauty and antiquity, just as many in Europe collect old coins and statues of gods. It is theoretically possible that the latter does not adore the idols and the former does not have relations with the concubines, but practically speaking, people who just converted to faith cannot be prudently expected to do so. When discussing moral questions, we ought not only to pay attention to theory, but even more to what is practically possible. Otherwise, many things considered illicit by moral theologians could be proven licit. I would like you to note that in both cases under examination, I am leaving aside the question of scandal and I am arguing as if there were no scandal, because the mere risk of scandal, which would be extreme in both cases, would make these practices illicit. We shall return below to the question of scandal.

Thirdly, suppose it is possible in practice for a faster to keep fasting by leaving aside the wicked intention of his past. However, the faster surely needs to prove to me his intention so that I can prudently perform my duty and baptize him. Thus, I ask how he can prove his intention. You will say from his own words;¹⁷ but, in my opinion, it is easy for him to deceive. Do you want to convince us that the Chinese are always so sincere and truthful that we can safely trust their mere words in such an important matter? I ask you how many have received baptism under false pretences in order to steal money or rewards from us, or because they think it is possible to associate Christ with Evil? How many have deceived us by keeping concubines at home or in their village, shamelessly saying they have only one legitimate wife, and thus have stained themselves with this sacrilege? I am not among those with the most experience in this mission, and yet I could easily count many Christians of this kind. Perhaps the other fathers here with us know many more examples, and I call upon them to bear witness to Chinese sincerity.

17 Intorcetta had proposed that the fasters make a solemn and public vow that their fast was not for worshipping any idol, but only for God and as penance for sins; ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 150, f. 71.

However, what need is there to bring up examples from other places when there are already plenty here that are relevant to the question of fasting? I shall cite one notable example, or rather several gathered into one, so that you can see the faith and sincerity of the fasters, and how much care and caution is necessary so that the human race does not receive baptism unworthily. One of our fathers told me that he had baptized four hundred people of both sexes in a few days. Among them, three hundred were fasting and all of them were examined before baptism and broke their fast by tasting the food prepared by the Christians, except for three women already advanced in age who adhered more strongly to the superstition and refused to comply, and thus were excluded from baptism. However, among those who broke the fast, the Christians remarked that some did it falsely by touching the food or broth with only their lips, or by discreetly spitting out the food in their mouth and not swallowing it. Those fasters believe that tasting food with their mouth does not violate their fast, and as long as the food does not go to their stomach, their merits remain fully intact. After the Christians told the father about this deceit, the father severely reprimanded those hypocritical fasters, who then heeded his salutary counsel, decried their cheating and hypocrisy, and, after finally breaking their fast, eagerly received baptism. They cheated by pretending to renounce both their evil and superstitious intention, and also the fast itself. Thus, I have a good reason to think that all those who refuse to break their fast, regardless how much they try to persuade me that they are putting aside their wicked intention, are hypocrites and unworthy to receive baptism and to wear the white garment of the neophyte, symbol of purity and integrity.

Let us suppose that the father in the case above did not force the fasters to break their fast, but let them decide on their own. I ask you how many would have been baptized on false and sacrilegious terms, and afterwards would have abjured the faith, causing immense scandal to Christians and disgrace for the name of Christ. Indeed, they never would have wholeheartedly received the faith which they profess today with edification, or held firm in this time of persecution. This is because, once the obstacle of fasting is removed, they are strengthened by the help emanating from the grace of baptism, which they would otherwise be lacking.

Fourthly,¹⁸ I need to consider not only the intention of the fasters

18 The Latin text has *tertio*, which I have corrected.

but also the opinion of the Chinese Christians to avert scandal. It would not be a trivial matter for them if they were to discover fasters being admitted to baptism without having first broken the fast. Indeed, they constantly affirm that those who refuse to break the fast are enslaved to their superstition and thus unworthy of baptism. It is better to adopt their judgment than ours because they have a much better knowledge of the tricks and cheating of their own people.

[II-2 Suspicions about the words of the fasters]

– You will then say that the penitent speaks in confession for and against himself, and if he confesses properly and tells the priest either explicitly or implicitly that he regrets his sins and resolves to correct himself, the priest should believe and absolve him. It is the same for baptism.

Firstly, there is a great difference between baptism and confession because confession is not public but secret, and because it is a rule that the confessor cannot request external evidence and even less public evidence of his contrition and inner disposition without violating the seal of confession. This certainly does not apply to baptism.¹⁹

Secondly, in many cases, the confessor is not obliged and should not believe the words of the penitent, unless the penitent proves their truth with external evidence, for example, by making restitution, repairing a scandal, or avoiding the occasion of sin. In his capacity as both judge and spiritual doctor in the confessional, the confessor can require the penitent to perform or forgo an action according to his present situation and need for the satisfaction of his past sins and to avoid future occasions. If the penitent refuses to comply, the confessor wisely thinks that he is not correctly disposed and should be denied absolution. This can be very well clarified with some examples. Let us suppose someone has stolen something which he keeps hidden at home against the will of the owner and does not wish to return it, even though he could do it; or someone has caused a great scandal to another but does not want to make up for it; or one finds himself in a proximate occasion of sin but does not want to avoid it despite being able. Who would doubt that the confessor is obliged to deny absolution in such cases? However, you will say that the unwillingness to perform these actions is an

¹⁹ For the difference between the sacraments of baptism and penitence, see the decree of session 14 of the Council of Trent (November 25, 1551).

evil in itself. Is it so surprising that a penitent who refuses to make amends cannot be absolved?

I add here other examples of things, which by themselves are morally neutral, but are bad because of the bad end to which they are directed or because of other circumstances. Let us suppose that a sorcerer wants to convert, but keeps some herbs and other instruments which are morally neutral in themselves but had been used for witchcraft. The prudent confessor would surely instruct him to hand over or burn all the items. Even if the sorcerer promises never to use them again for evil purposes, the confessor should not trust him and urge him to burn them. If he refuses to comply, the confessor will wisely think that he is still attached to his past witchcraft and not correctly disposed for absolution. Here is another example. Let us suppose that in a certain city it is customary for prostitutes to wear a type of external sign by which they are recognised, like a yellow ribbon on their shoes, as I have once heard. It may happen that one of these prostitutes wants to rise out of her disgraceful condition, or to speak more accurately, feigns this intention. Therefore, she approaches the confessor and, at the end of her confession, testifies her sorrow for her former sins and a firm and sincere resolution to make amends. Yet she wishes to retain the external sign, not because she intends to do what she used to do, but because the colour of the ribbon pleases her very much and because the thing in itself is morally indifferent. What should the confessor do? If he reasons correctly, he would never absolve her unless she first abandons the sign of prostitutes, not only because he thinks she is not well disposed, but even more because he fears a very serious scandal.

Similarly, Chinese fasters should not be admitted to baptism without first breaking and renouncing their fast due to the scandal involved and because the Chinese fasters cannot be considered properly disposed. Even if they tell me one thousand times that they sincerely hate the previous intention by which they were fasting, if I see them observing their fast so tenaciously to the point that they cannot be persuaded either by the fathers or by the Christians to simply swallow a morsel of meat, fish, egg or garlic, or drink a single sip of wine or broth, I shall never be able to trust them, let alone believe that they regret their former sins.

Surely, their stubbornness in observing the fast so tenaciously without any good reason clearly proves that they are driven not by a good, but evil spirit. Their stubborn clinging to their own judgement about matters which are so holy and which do not allow

for even the smallest appearance of evil is suspicious and, it would seem, inspired not by God but the devil. By way of comparison, when holy hermits sent messengers to Saint Simeon Stylites in order to examine his true intention, they instructed the messengers to allow the monk to continue his way of life if they found him to be docile and obedient, but if they found him disobedient, they should pull him away from the column and demolish the column itself.²⁰ What do you think those holy fathers would have said if they had chanced upon our fasters? What judgement would have they made about this stubborn observance of a superstitious fast? From their way of dealing with Saint Simeon, I believe that they never would have baptized them and, even more, would have condemned their superstition and stubbornness. Thus, if I were to encounter a faster who is docile and prepared to break his fast, I would be less inclined to suspect him and more inclined to give him leeway, unless I fear a risk of scandal for the Christians and the pagans, or I fear that he may return to superstition and idolatry. But as long as I see that he is determined to not break his fast, I would deny him baptism.

[II-3 Alleged excuse of distaste]

– *But you will say that if the faster dislikes meat, fish, eggs, dairy and wine, at least in this case, he should not be obliged to eat them.*²¹

Firstly, as experience has taught us repeatedly, I consider such a nausea as fake and a malicious cover-up. By this, the fasters want to conceal their superstition, and when they request baptism, almost all of them plead nausea as an excuse, which could be easily overcome if they were serious about becoming Christians. Some of them may dislike this or that food, but it is hard to believe they dislike all the items from which they are abstaining.

Secondly, even if they dislike all those kinds of food, which I find hardly credible, this carries little weight morally speaking. Suppose they dislike those foods: should they be released on this account from the obligation of breaking the fast? Not at all. A sick man dislikes even more the medicine that he needs to recover his health, and yet he ingests it. I do not require them to gorge themselves with a great quantity of meat and wine, but to swallow a morsel of meat, fish, or egg, or at least to sip a bit of wine or broth, so that I can test

20 Saint Simeon Stylites (c. 390–459) was a Syrian monk whose biography was written by Theodoret.

21 Intorcetta's report, concerning the second challenge in breaking the fast; see ARSL, *Jap. Sin.* 150, ff. 72v–73.

their intention, ease my own scruple, and avoid scandal among the Christians. What is more just than my request? What is easier to fulfil? Certainly, I could have said that they ought to have performed a great undertaking, as the servants wisely advised Naaman who was refusing to obey Elisha's instruction to wash seven times in the Jordan River.²² Is there anything easier than this simple little request that I make so that they can be cleansed, through baptism, not from the leprosy of the body but of the soul and obtain eternal salvation? Those who refuse to fulfil the request are publicly declaring that they have no earnest desire to be cured of unfaithfulness. In the same way, a sick man who refuses to obey the doctor and swallow a small pill, rightly should be considered effectively as not wanting to be cured of his illness.

It is quite apparent that the fasters do not speak sincerely when excusing their abstinence with the claim that they dislike these foods so much, that they cannot taste them without nausea. If they were arrested by the police and brought to the tribunal to give an account of their sect, then they would make great efforts to persuade the police that they are not fasting, as I have mentioned above. Moreover, if the officers were to command them to eat meat to check their claim, how much surer are they about the truth of their position, which they thought was pleaded so nobly? When pushed by the fear of lashes, how resolutely and eagerly they discard this feigned horror of meat! How greedily they devour the dishes brought to them!

To illustrate this point, let me tell you briefly an amusing story that happened not long ago to Muslims in the city of Ci Nan [Jinan?]. A serious controversy started among them about some errors of their religion. The matter was brought to the tribunal of the viceroy, who, after many attempts to settle the matter realized that he was wasting his time. To settle the case, and certainly to criticize their superstitious errors and make fun of them, he ordered pork to be brought in, told them to eat it, and threatened to whip them if they disobeyed. Without much deliberation among them, they decided what to do. They put aside their dislike for pork, which is indeed much stronger than the dislike of the fasters, they immediately obeyed the order. While they filled their bellies with pork, the viceroy and the bystanders feasted on this most amusing scene. Don't you think that the fasters would do exactly the same if ordered by an officer? They would do it without any doubt. Therefore, why should you trust them when they claim nausea as an excuse?

22 2 Kings 5: 5-19.

[II– 4 Cases of Brahmans in India and Jews in Europe]

– *You will then object that neither the Brahmans in India who convert to Christianity, nor the Jews in Europe who are initiated into the Christian mysteries are obliged to eat pork in order to prove they have sincerely embraced Christianity. Therefore, why should the Chinese fasters be forced to break their fast before receiving baptism?*

I shall first answer the question about the Brahmans, and then the one about the Jews. There is a great difference between the fast of the Brahmans and the one of the Chinese, both in terms of form [i.e. the subjective intention of the faster] and matter [i.e. the objective content of the fast]. The Brahmans only abstain from meat, fish and eggs, while they eat dairy products and all sorts of vegetables without making any distinction. In addition, their fast, or better their abstinence, is not directed to the worship of the demons or idol, except perhaps in terms of a general intention, but is conducted for social prestige and advantage. As we know, Brahmans have the noblest lineage among the Indians because of their priestly status. While they enjoy privileges and tax exemptions, if they were to be found violating the rules of abstinence, they would be deprived of all their privileges, and counted among those of the lowest class. The same can be said of a nobleman in Europe. If he were to practice a vile trade or taint his family with a heinous crime, the king would deprive him of his noble insignia. As for the Brahmans living around Goa or other territories under Portuguese rule, when they become Christian, they willingly eat meat, fish and eggs because they are not afraid at all of losing their social status. However, Brahmans living under pagan rulers are allowed to continue their former abstinence after receiving baptism. Otherwise, they would be rejected by their family, deprived of their noble insignia, privileges, and prerogatives by the ruler, and perhaps punished even more harshly. Yet, you might contend that since the abstinence of the Brahmans is directed through a special intention toward the worship of an idol (I confess here my ignorance), there is no reason why they should be allowed to keep their abstinence when they become Christian while the Chinese are not allowed to retain their fast. I answer that there are very serious reasons for allowing those who receive baptism to keep their abstinence with the hateful partial intention by which they used to fast, on account of their other partial end, that is, the protection of their noble status and of the prerogatives and privileges attached

to it.²³ If you can show me similar reasons for which our Chinese fasters can be dispensed from breaking the fast, such as an officer who would be deprived of his title and a son of his inheritance or an ordinary man who would be punished with lashes, exile or more serious punishments, then in those cases I would ungrudgingly approve that they persevere in their fast, on the condition there is no danger of scandal. This would appear to me a sufficient reason and I would prudently trust those who promise not to fast anymore out of a wicked and superstitious intention. However, it is far from the case that the fasters in China would fear dangers if they were to violate the fast. On the contrary, keeping the fast poses even more serious dangers, not only for themselves, but also for all of Christendom. Thus, there is a great difference between the fast of the Brahmans and the fast of the Chinese that we are discussing here. You would not say that since the nobility of the Brahmans originates from or is based on idolatry insofar as it was conferred on their ancestors by virtue of their priestly office, it would be wrong for a Christian to protect his noble standing through fasting. On the contrary, an aristocrat can licitly protect the dignity and nobility of his class that his ancestors obtained with illicit functions and duties, as long as he desists from observing such duties, because those Brahmans obviously chose to embrace Christianity, and not to deal anymore with their priestly duties.

I now answer your point concerning the Jews. When they embrace Christianity, they are not forced to taste pork to determine whether they receive baptism with a sincere mind. For experience teaches us that those who become Christians have no difficulty when ordered to eat pork before and after baptism and they do it willingly, even though a few of them may cheat and do it falsely. As I was writing those things, I was told by one of our fathers that, Father Pietro Gravita,²⁴ a man remarkable for his zeal and piety, in the past had converted some Jews in Rome using the following method: before admitting them to baptism, he organized a banquet at which pork was served; if he noticed that they did not reject pork but willingly ate it, then he would congratulate them for their sincere and perfect conversion to Christ, and he would give them baptism without any hesitation or scruple. But if he noticed that some were leaving pork untouched, he would consider on this basis

23 In moral theology, there is the possibility to opt for a lesser evil.

24 Pietro Gravita or Caravita, * 1.VIII.1587 Narni, SJ 14.VII.1605 Roma, † 24.XII.1658 Roma, *DHC* II, 1808.

alone that they were still holding to their errors, and he would delay their baptism for some time. The fact that all this was done under the eyes of the supreme pontiff and with the approval of the whole Roman curia provides very strong evidence against our fasters and their protectors. In order to strengthen and further illustrate this point, let us imagine that there is a Jew who wishes to embrace Christianity but declares that he shall never taste pork, hare, rabbit, blood, fish without scales, and anything that is forbidden to be eaten by the ancient law, claiming this, not on account of the law of Moses, which he openly repudiates, but rather, in honour of Christ. Who can convince himself that such a man is a good Israelite who speaks sincerely and without trickery, and not a hypocritical Pharisee telling skilful lies? Who would dare to give him baptism unless he changes opinion and casts off his mistaken behaviour? I should add that if a Jew who had already converted to Christianity were still persistently abstaining from pork and other food forbidden by the ancient law, this would give grounds for suspicion that he is Christian only in name and that he still follows the Jewish law of Moses, so much that the Holy Office of the Inquisition would not allow him to go without impunity. Why therefore do you think that a Chinese person promising not to fast anymore with an evil and superstitious intention should be more trusted than a Jew claiming to keep his abstinence from certain foods without any bond to the law of Moses? If you disapprove of the abstinence of the Jew, and rightly so, even though it was once holy and pleasing to God, why would you approve of the Chinese fast, which is full of superstition and has always been hateful to God? How could you possibly support a fast that, besides being directed towards an evil end and many other vitiating circumstances, is practiced with such a stubborn and inflexible will?

[III – Refutation of six other arguments]

[III-1 External signs of conversion]

– *But you will say that sometimes the faster does not wish to relinquish his fast but shows clear signs of faith and penitence, such as if he burns his idols or hands them over to be burnt, and so there is no doubt about the rightness and sincerity of his intention.*²⁵

25 See Intorcetta's report about the first challenge in breaking the fast; ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 150, f. 71v.

I answer that it is inconsistent and plainly contradictory to assert that he seriously believes and regrets his fast while he tenaciously clings to it, as it has already been extensively proven. Hence, I would not trust the faster in the case you are considering just as I would not trust anyone who destroys or burns nine of his ten idols, but keeps the one to which he is most devoted. I would take the same approach towards someone who repudiates only nine of his ten concubines, but keeps the one with whom he is most passionately in love. "Who indeed sins in one is guilty in all,"²⁶ and "an action is good when good in every respect; it is wrong when wrong in any respect."²⁷ The fast is like an idol to which the faster is attached with a raging love and with which he "fornicates", as Scripture says.²⁸

[III-2 Alleged reason of social pressure]

*– You will then object the fasters fear that if they do not comply with the fast, this could cause gossip among their servants and neighbours and give them a reputation for fickleness and inconstancy. The fasters fear their derision and mockery, and what is much more serious, they are afraid of arousing the anger of the demon to whom they had made the solemn promise of fasting, and dare not enter into the fray to battle this brutal enemy.*²⁹

Frankly speaking, I am quite amazed that the advocates of the opposing position bring such weak arguments into the discussion. Far from adding weight to their argument, they make it even more doubtful and deprive it of whatever likelihood it had. I shall refute the fear of the demon elsewhere,³⁰ but let us discuss the fear of mockery from servants and neighbours.

I answer that vain, ridiculous, and most unstable is any man who is defeated by something so trivial after having overcome such extreme difficulty. There is a much greater risk of derision and hatred from servants and neighbours when a man tramples upon the idols, rejects the native and ancestral religion, and takes

26 James 2: 10.

27 Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Ia IIae, q. 71, a.5, quoting: Dionysius, *De Div. Nom*, cap IV.

28 Cf. Exodus 34 :16; Revelation 2: 20.

29 Intorcetta's report; ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 150, f. 72v-74v.

30 See below the second point of the conclusion.

up a foreign one, than when he violates a fast forbidden by Chinese laws. I ask you, who would fear the mockery of neighbours and servants? In fact, they would be praised instead by those who do not fast, as they reject and laugh at it, and often incite people to forsake it. Sometimes they purposely mix the pork fat or something similar in food, deceiving those off guard and forcing them to break their fast unknowingly. It remains that they may still fear the derision of other fasters, but if we examine the most secret recesses of this fear, we shall certainly discover considerable and unmistakable evidence of a lurking idolatry and superstition. To keep the fast out of such a fear is not only vain and ridiculous, but also evil and disordered.

Why does the faster hold to the fast? Indeed, he holds to it so that the other people of his sect think that, even though he had received baptism, he changed nothing about his fast, and continued fasting the same as before, materially [i.e. objectively] and also formally [i.e. subjectively], that is, for the demon or the idol. Indeed, he does not declare to the people of his sect that he has changed his intention and fasts no longer for the idols but for God. He does this because he did not really change intention (as it is clear to me) and because he is afraid of being laughed at if he would declare it. For if he were to say that he had changed intention and no longer fasts for the demon or the idol, those neighbours and servants keeping the fast would consider him to be just as fickle and inconstant as if he had abandoned the fast itself. This is indeed what this sect teaches them, or at least, pretends on the basis that there has been a change in the evil intention of the fast. This is intrinsically evil and against the commandment of professing the true faith and honouring God and his true religion. Hence Christ spoke against such liars: "Those who are ashamed of me and my words, of them the Son of Man will be ashamed when he comes in glory..."³¹

And let us suppose he has truly changed his intention and declared to his servants and neighbours that he is fasting no longer for the demon or the idol, but for God. Yet he still commits a grave sin, because he shares with idolaters the rituals and works of infidelity and this is strictly forbidden by both the Bible and the holy fathers. Saint Paul in the chapter 10[:20–21] of the First Letter to the Corinthians says: "I do not want you to be partners with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons." Similarly, in chapter 6[:14] of the Second Letter

31 Luke 9: 26.

to the Corinthians: "Do not be mismatched with unbelievers," that is, as Thomas Aquinas explains: "Do not partake in the works of infidelity with the unfaithful."³²

Who would doubt that this fast is a pagan observance and a work of infidelity? Indeed, it was established to worship the demon and the idol, and nowhere was it used by the Christians, but only by pagans and idolaters. The scholastic and moral theologians generally teach that someone who wishes to worship God with pagan rituals commits a mortal sin because he worships God not as he should do, but with a pernicious worship; formally and truly he professes a false religion. Just as anyone who worships an idol with the true intention of worshiping God professes idolatry, anyone who practices today the Jewish rituals or observes the abstinence ordered by the Old Law with the intention of a true worship, is in fact professing the sect of the Jews. Anyone who professes a false religion necessarily denies the true one, and consequently denies the faith on which the true religion is founded. This is never licit, not even when one fears death or loss of wealth, let alone derision. This can be proven by an analogy, or rather by an inference from a more specific context. Moral theologians teach that the Catholics living among heretics are not allowed to eat meat on days of abstinence merely out of fear of mockery, but this could be done at times when there is a greater evil, such as fear for one's life or honour. In this case, it is licit because the natural law provides for the protection of life and temporal goods and outweighs the ecclesiastical law. It should be added that, in this kind of situation, the force of the ecclesiastical precept ceases because the Holy Mother Church does not wish to oblige her sons to keep the observance at such a great harm. However, you should also understand that the Church has set some limits: the eating of meat on days of abstinence should not be construed, in light of place, time and the persons [involved], as the profession of a heretical sect. In such a case, it would be better to endure death and extreme torments than to eat meat. Under very similar circumstances, we have the shining example of constancy

32 Aquinas, *Super II Epistolam B. Pauli ad Corinthios lectura*, VI.3. The two quotes from Saint Paul and the one from Aquinas can be found with the same wording and order in Francisco Suarez, *Defensio fidei catholicae et apostolicae adversus anglicanae sectae errores* (1613), liber VI, caput 9.17; Cologne (1582), 836. Suarez discusses whether Catholics under King James could "enter the churches of heretics and communicate with them in their rites, without intention of worship in order to avoid temporal penalties." It seems that Grelon consulted this book in the Jesuit library of Canton.

and courage in that elderly saint Eleazar described in Maccabees. He preferred to undergo the torture threatened by the tyrant instead of simulating the consumption of pork.³³ Thus, how could the fear of derision be a sufficient reason for keeping the fast among other fasters? How is this not at the very least the external profession of the same sect? Nevertheless, we shall discuss more elsewhere about belonging to a false sect.

[III-3 Possibility for exceptions?]

– *Thirdly, you will object that it is not correct to say that fasters should never be baptized, because it may be allowed and expedient to do so in many cases.*

I answer that I shall not require a faster on the verge of death to break his fast by eating meat, fish or something similar because he is evidently no longer able to observe it. Hence, it would be sufficient for him to make the firm resolution of abandoning the fast were he to live longer, or failing that, to make a general act of contrition for the sins of his whole life. I do not see any other case in which the fast could not be broken. Even if you succeed in showing me one, I shall treat it in the same way as the case of someone close to death. I still affirm that a man who could but still refuses to break his fast is not correctly disposed for baptism because of the reasons mentioned above and other reasons I shall deal with below.

[III-4 Alleged impediment to the propagation of Christianity]

– *Fourthly, you will object that if we are too strict in admitting the fasters for baptism, we shall surely deter a great number of people from becoming Christians. Perhaps they might become one day very good Christians and abandon their fast after baptism.*

I answer: who can prudently expect disobedient and stubborn catechumens to become good Christians? Although I cannot know for sure the future, I would not baptize them. Bad things should not be done in order to produce good things. It is incumbent upon you to determine first whether those people can be licitly baptized, and then you can use this argument.

33 See 2 Maccabees 6: 18–31. Our text seems an indirect reference to Saint John Chrysostom, *Homil. 25 on Matthew*, also mentioned in Suarez (1613), liber VI, caput 9.24, 857–858: “But if you refuse to feign, you have confessed Christ, just as did Eleazar in the book of *Maccabees*, who refused to eat sheep’s meat under the appearance of pork.”

Second, as I see it, you are not dealing with any extraordinary and rare case when you suppose that many people who, in your opinion, should be baptized are kept away from baptism because of what you believe is the excessive severity of our position. In reality, if the many reasons adduced for the opposing view prove anything, they prove not only that a faster refusing to break his fast could be baptized in some exceptional and rare circumstances, but also, as it will be easily apparent to anyone examining them, that this could be done licitly in all cases, unless something prevents it.

Third, it would follow from your position that all the first fathers of this mission foolishly erred in denying baptism to those who refused to break their fast, because they deterred myriads of people from embracing Christianity, and it is to be greatly feared that these fathers will have some responsibility for the eternal damnation of these people on the Day of Judgment. Yet, how fortunate are we to have reached an understanding of China so quickly, that is so much clearer and more correct than that of the first fathers with their years of practice and experience, that we can now correct their errors! This seems almost true! One may persuade himself about this, but it seems to me much safer to follow the footsteps of the first fathers than to go astray and walk along a new and unfamiliar path. I attribute so much to their authority and experience that I would rather err with them than being right with a few people.

Fourth, I answer that God does not want a multitude of useless sons like those fasters. Unless they are forced before baptism to renounce their fast, there will be countless Christian fasters in the future, and we shall quickly see marriages full of guests not wearing the wedding garment.³⁴

Fifth, not as many people as you think are deterred from joining Christianity because of this. This can be seen in the example mentioned above with the three hundred fasters baptized in one village. There were only three elderly persons who clung to superstition and one of these was so moved by the example of those three hundred people that in the end she broke their fast and joined the church.

Sixth, I refute the argument maintaining that countless people are deterred from joining the church. Indeed, we also teach it is illicit and wrong to burn bundles of gold or silver paper, called *kin yin tim* [*jinyinqian*] or *chi ciem* [*zhiqian*], during funerals or on any other occasion. Should we allow Christians to burn money-paper in order to attract pagans to the faith?

34 Matthew 22: 11.

– But you will say that there is a great difference between that ritual of burning paper and the Chinese fast. Indeed, the fast is morally neutral by its nature, and once the evil end has been eliminated, it is completely harmless. If directed toward a good end, it is a good and deserving work. Surely the same cannot be said about the ritual of burning paper, which is entirely pagan and superstitious, because the gold or silver paper in this form and shape is by nature directed toward an evil end, namely the worship of the demon and idols. As this ritual does not have any other use than assisting the helpless dead in the afterlife and providing money for their necessary expenses, Christians cannot use this ritual without committing a very serious offense against God.

On the contrary, although there is a great difference between the Chinese fast and the ritual of burning paper on a material level, they are almost equivalent in terms of their form and can both be reduced to the same sin of superstition or idolatry. Indeed, paper burning is as morally neutral and harmless as the Chinese fast, but both these practices derive malice from the evil end to which they are directed. The golden or silver paper with its form and shape is designed for a superstitious and idolatrous use, and similarly the fast with its form involving abstinence not only from meat, fish, egg, milk and wine, but also from other vegetables, is designed by its nature for an idolatrous and superstitious worship. Let us imagine that there is a Chinese man who wants to become Christian on the condition that he is allowed to burn this kind of paper not in order to worship an idol or help the dead, but to worship the true God. Do you not think this is ridiculous and laughable? It is certainly and beyond any doubt. No less ridiculous should be considered the faster who says that he wants to persist in such a bizarre and superstitious fast to worship the true God.

– You will insist that the burning of paper is not a correct means to worship God because it is an empty and inappropriate cult.

I reply that the same applies to the Chinese fast with its abstinence from onions and leeks. Who does not see it is a very foolish way to worship God and has been regarded by wise people as an impertinent worship?

– You will insist that this fast may not be a correct worship to honour God, but it cannot be denied that the faster can choose to separate it from the evil end according to which it was previously undertaken, and in that case, it becomes morally neutral and harmless. This could certainly not be said about the burning of paper money, as it cannot be separated from the end to which it is directed according to the customs widely accepted throughout China.

On the contrary, you hold that the burning of paper cannot be separated from the evil end for which it was established because of the intention of the burner. In fact, the fast is also inseparable from its end.

– Many pagan literati make the distinction: they practice paper burning all the time, neither to worship idols in which they do not believe nor to help the souls of dead, which they do not consider as immortal, but only as a political ritual, both for hao can [haokan], as they say, or ti mian [timian], that is to say, for the honour, and for the splendour and pomp of the funerals. If, after rejecting the evil and superstitious end for which the burning of paper was established, a Christian were to use this ritual for purely political purposes and, like the literati, for hao can, it could be considered morally neutral. But you will not say that it is morally neutral because it gives an occasion of scandal to the Christians and the pagans who would think on the basis of this concrete act that one is performing a pagan ritual, according to the end for which it was established.

I respond that the same applies to the faster who does not break his fast before baptism and keeps fasting after baptism. All people, both Christian and pagan, would think on the basis of this concrete act that he keeps fasting according to the pagan way and for the same end as before, and this would give occasion to great scandal.

I shall add that more scandals arise from Christians observing this fast than from Christians burning bundles of paper money, because, as I noted above, this fast is odious to Chinese and Tartars [i.e. Manchus] and the fasters are held in disrepute. As they are deemed heretics and rebels, the fasters are often put in jail and severely punished. Yet, the ritual of burning paper is not an offense among Chinese and Tartars, who always praise it and make use of it. Countless are the people who shrink from embracing Christianity because they see that the Christians are not allowed to perform this ritual during funerals.

I do not want you to think that I approve of the paper burning ritual and that I brought it up to persuade you that Christians should be allowed to do it so that more Chinese may be won over to the faith. In fact, I condemn it and consider it as illicit. All of these reasons have been raised only to examine the ritual of burning paper and to show that your argument proves too much, and thus proves nothing.

All these reasons notwithstanding, if we condemn the pagan ritual of burning paper and forbid Christians from performing it for the sole reason that it was established for a superstitious and idolatrous end, how much more should fasting be condemned and

forbidden to Christians because, besides being established for a superstitious and idolatrous end, it is also liable to many dangers and the origin of very serious evils.

Furthermore, it could be seen as quite absurd, and perhaps some people might insult us, and rightly so if they hear that, on the one hand, we allow Chinese Christians this bizarre and superstitious fast, and, on the other, we have until now dispensed them from the ecclesiastical fasts and have released them from most of the obligations of fasting thanks to a papal indulgence.³⁵

[III-5 Alleged negative reaction of the pagans]

– Fifth, you will object there is the danger that if we force the fasters to break their fast before baptism, the pagans would despise and mock Christianity. Some may seize the opportunity to belittle Christians and denounce Christianity, saying that it is a sect of gluttons, which condemns abstinence and forces its followers to devour meat, even against their will.

I answer that this is purely a way of creating terror, and I ask from which pagans should you fear such reproach? There is certainly no reproach from those who do not fast, because like us they condemn the fast, and admire and respect the holiness of Christianity; they do this even more because it condemns and forbids Christians from fasting as something illicit. Reproach is to be feared from the fasters alone, who are a tiny minority among the pagans. Can it be that, because of the very few fasters attacking and reproaching our own fast as too lax, you want to persuade us that we should discard it and embrace their heterodox abstinence? The Pharisees attacked Christ our Lord and accused him of lax morality because his disciples did not fast like those of John [the Baptist], and because he dined with publicans and sinners, eating indiscriminately from the dishes which were brought to him and drinking wine. They tarnished his reputation and did not hesitate to utter the most atrocious blasphemy, calling him an alcoholic. Can it be that Christ would have changed his way of life for this reason? Not at all, but instead, he condemned the hypocrisy of the scribes and the Pharisees, vindicated the innocence of the disciples from their calumny, and spoke against those hypocrites, saying: "Leave them alone; they are blind and leaders of the blind."³⁶ We should say

35 Popes Innocent X (r. 1644–55) and Alexander VII (r. 1655–67) gave such authorizations.

36 Matthew 15: 14.

the same about the fasters who reproach us, and not be concerned about their reproaches, provided that we fulfil our mission and walk rightly according to the truth of the Gospel.

Moreover, if we want to speak with them on a rational level, we will not lack any arguments for refuting their accusations and “silencing the ignorance of the foolish,”³⁷ since they themselves recognize that our fast is much more difficult than theirs is. They are very impatient with hunger and eat at least three times a day, as much as they want, and, according to their ridiculous fasting rules, they are allowed to take food at whatever time, day or night. What a remarkable fast indeed!

Consider what I said above. Your last argument, like all the others, implies that we could licitly, and in fact should, baptize the fasters who refuse to break their fast, not only in some exceptional cases, but always. Rather, it even implies that it would be better for them not to break it but always to persevere in it and that we should encourage it to prevent Christianity from acquiring a bad reputation among pagans and being ridiculed as if it condemned fasting and ascetic life and delighted instead in banquets and the fine care of the body. In fact, your argument goes too far and openly contradicts the unanimous decision of the fathers that the fasters should not be baptized before breaking their fast, other than in exceptional circumstances, such as on the verge of death.³⁸

[III-6 A more powerful argument]

In any other situation [than the case of a faster dying], if someone is able to break his fast but refuses to, I insist that he should not, and cannot licitly be baptized. This was sufficiently proven above, and I shall prove it again with a stronger argument.

Let us suppose that the minister of baptism because of his duty and need to conform to the decisions made during the meeting of the twenty-three fathers is bound under pain of grave sin to teach, encourage, and even order the fasters to break their fast. Indeed, this is what was decided: “The fasters who have not broken their fast are not to be admitted to baptism barring exceptional circumstances and on the condition that there is no danger of scandal and their

³⁷ 1 Peter 2: 15.

³⁸ The resolution allows only for exceptional circumstances, but by mentioning people at the point of death, Grelon interprets it in a very narrow sense.

correct intention can be ascertained."³⁹ If I am bound to make them break their fast, I am also bound to use all necessary means to obtain this end, that is, teaching, encouraging, and, if necessary, even ordering them.

This having been stated, my argument is as follows: I cannot licitly baptize someone whom I consider not correctly disposed for baptism [major premise]; I know that the faster who could renounce his fast but still refuses to do so is not well disposed for baptism [minor premise]; thus, I cannot licitly baptize him [conclusion]. The major premise is self-evident, and the minor premise is proven in this way: it is certain that someone who is not contrite and ashamed of the sins of his past life is not correctly disposed for baptism, and it is certain that such a faster is neither contrite nor ashamed, and thus is not ready for baptism. Likewise, the major premise is certain, and the minor premise is proven this way: it is certain that he who is not contrite or ashamed not only lives in the state of original sin, but also commits an actual sin; as the faster who refuses to break his fast commits an actual sin, it is therefore certain that he is not contrite or ashamed. The minor premise is proven in this way: it is certain that he who resists the legitimate authority and the order of God in a grave matter commits a grave actual sin; the faster who refuses to break his fast does precisely this; therefore, it is certain that he commits a grave actual sin. The minor premise is proven in this way: when someone resists the legitimate authority and order of God and on such a grave matter disobeys the missionaries instructing, exhorting and ordering him to break the fast out of concern for his salvation, he treats with contempt not only a man, but God himself who speaks in the person of his minister, as Our Lord Jesus Christ said: "Who listens to you listens to me; and who despises you despises me."⁴⁰

Now I want to prove with a more powerful argument that the faster who refuses to break his fast is not only unprepared for baptism but also corrupts himself with a new and most serious crime. He is not well disposed for baptism and commits a very serious sin; he is so attached to his fast that he would rather forgo baptism than it; therefore, the faster who is so attached to his fast that he refuses to break it is not only unfit for baptism, but stains himself with a new and very serious sin. The major premise is clear,

39 Those are the exact words of article 6 of the Canton conference; see ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 162, f. 253; Louis de Cicé, *Acta cantoniensia authentica*, Paris, 1700, 21.

40 Luke 10: 16.

and the minor does not require further justification, since the faster refusing to break his fast declares plainly that he does not wish to become a Christian, except on the condition that he is allowed to keep his abstinence intact. Many fasters and other opponents would surely say that by pushing them to break the fast, we prevent them from joining Christianity. Yet, we do not prevent them, but they themselves recoil and, preferring their fast to Christianity and baptism, “they push aside the Word of God and judge themselves unworthy of eternal life.”⁴¹

[III–7 Alleged necessity of a gentle pedagogy]

– But you will say that it is not charitable and wise to coerce pagans who want to become Christians to go through such troubles, and impose on them difficult conditions that could drive them away from their holy and salvific resolution. Instead, they should be enticed gently and received warmly, and we should not indulge their weakness so that we may win them over to Christ.

On the contrary, I recognize that it is neither charitable nor wise to impose on them difficult demands which are only advised for obtaining higher perfection or do not regard their situation. Therefore, it is not expedient to require them to separate from their wife and lead a celibate life, or to give all their money to the poor. It is even less expedient to impose on them harsh conditions which are not at all necessary or do not regard their situation and could drive them away from their resolution of becoming Christian. For example, I could tell them: “I won’t baptize you unless you agree to wear a hair shirt all your life and pray three hours a day. Are you ready to conform to those conditions and receive baptism?” Alternatively, I could say: “You should be ready to die for your faith, and immediately after having received baptism, you will be burnt alive. Do you want to become a Christian?”

Neither prudence nor charity permit the imposition of such conditions, because this would be like holding a noose over their neck. This may lead them into sin, and many being frightened by those hardships would retract from the yoke of Christianity and reject baptism. However, God does not consider what they may become, just as He does not recompense merits or punish sins that might only hypothetically take place in the future.

However, the condition I am imposing on them is very different

41 Acts 13: 46.

from the things above. It is not difficult, but extremely easy, and absolutely necessary. I do not hold a noose over their neck, or lead them into sin, but, as much it is in my power, I loosen the noose of Satan in which they are entangled, and as a doctor of souls, I offer them medicine to cure their unfaithfulness. If they abhor the medicine and reject baptism, they will stain themselves with a new sin, and their perdition will certainly not be imputed to me but to them alone. "We tried to cure Babylon, but she could not be cured."⁴² I do not impose something unnecessary or inappropriate, but something plainly necessary to remove their evil state which is not something hypothetical in the future, but truly present and actually existent and thus is incompatible with the effect of baptism.

[IV – Conclusion]

From this discussion, you should first conclude that the catechumens who refuse to break their fast retain their disposition toward the evil end by which they were fasting; they do not even love the fast as such, for "no one hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it."⁴³ If the faster wears down his flesh with fasts and vigils, he certainly does it in view of an extraordinary good, be it true or apparent, and for some end which he chooses above good health. Those fasters love their fast only as a means to obtain the end they have resolved to reach. Thus, they love more the end than the fast itself, in line with the axiom: "The reason for which a thing is such is greater [than the thing itself]."⁴⁴ To think that fasters do for God what they were doing for the demon or idol is to deceive oneself, as I said above. Although it is theoretically possible to change this evil intention into a good one, it is practically impossible to do so for a Chinese person who grew up with superstition and idolatry and only recently converted to faith, and who is not spiritual enough to separate something precious from a vile thing.

Second, one should conclude that those fasters were never contrite about the evil intention with which they were fasting, because they still adhere to it very stubbornly. Similarly, a keeper of concubines could not be considered contrite about his shameful and dishonest love for a concubine when he wants to retain her despite promising

42 Jeremiah 51: 9.

43 Ephesians 5: 29.

44 Axiom from the *Summa theologiae* 1a. 36, 2, based on Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* 2. 72a29.

not to touch her again. In addition, those who hope to receive from the demon or idol the rewards of their fast do not believe in God, as they should. They are afraid that if they shift their fast away from the demon or idol, they would be guilty of violating their vows and would be severely punished. Unless we want to deceive ourselves, this is the crux of the problem and the true hindrance for the fasters. This is the reason why they are so unwilling to be torn away from their fast, as they themselves say so often.

Third, the Chinese Christians should be told not to ruthlessly provoke the fasters by examining their fast, since this could deter them from joining the Church. Instead, they should kindly entice them, exhort them cheerfully, and lead them to the fathers. On the other hand, we must prevent the propagation of mistaken ideas among Christians and pagans about the compatibility of their fast with Christianity, and the possibility of being admitted to baptism without breaking the fast because this could give rise to serious scandals.

Fourth, when we instruct fasters about the mysteries of Christianity and tell them that once they have broken their fast and received baptism, they can fast all their life with praise and merit for the honour of God, this has to be understood as an ecclesiastical fast, or another reasonable fast, but not as the former, bizarre and superstitious fast. If some fasters, after having broken their fast, still want to abstain all their life from meat, eggs, dairy and wine — which I think will seldom or never happen — this could be allowed provided that they have changed the form of their fast, using for example onions and leeks or at least a bit of pork fat as condiment for their vegetables in the Chinese way. By doing this, they would not think they are fasting as they used to do. This would avoid scandal among Christians and pagans, and the danger of relapse into superstition and idolatry, by using and having before their eyes and hands the very means with which they worshipped the demon and idol and by which they were shackled and enchained as their prisoners. This is because the presence of food from which they were abstaining moves their [mental] power and is usually a strong incentive for either good or evil.

Fifth, the opposing view of a few missionaries appears milder and kinder than ours, promoting better the salvation of souls, and providing for the salvation of more people. But it is not the case. Far from promoting the salvation of souls and providing for the salvation of more people, their position prevents their true and sincere conversion and, even worse, promotes a fake and

apparent conversion. As a result, many fasters would persevere in their superstition and sacrilegiously receive baptism under false pretences. These fasters would have renounced the fast to receive baptism worthily if your excessive kindness and indulgence had not pushed them into fraud. Many such people will be found at the hour of death to have kept fasting all their life for the demon or idol under the belief that they can serve two masters, Christ and Belial.⁴⁵ The presumed probability of your position will be of no use to those people. Do you not fear that they shall rise up against you at the day of judgement and complain that you have deceived them? Stop boasting that your position is milder and kinder. It is no kindness for a doctor to hide illness from the patient. Fearing to make the patient sad, the doctor does not dare to administer bitter medicine and thus kills him. Nor is it a kind surgeon who refrains from using hot irons, as he ought, but instead applies to the scar a light cure that does not heal the wound, leaving an ulcer creeping inside and the organs to corrupt. I prefer to make the fasters feel sad for the sake of their penance and salvation than to push them into destruction and sink into annihilation by telling them pleasant things. As Saint Augustine said, I prefer to use merciful cruelty with them than I do a cruel mercy.⁴⁶

[Appendix: other forms of fasting in China]

Besides the fasters we have been talking about, there are many kinds of fasts in China. Some people fast in honour of the idols, but their fast is not continuous and does not last their whole life. They fast only three or four times a month, or a week. Nor do they fast until death, but they do so only for a certain period determined by the vow and oath they have made. Others fast in honour of the famous well-deserving men of the country. Others fast in honour of their deceased and living parents. Finally, others fast for some political and profane aims.⁴⁷ You may ask what I think about these different fasts.

As for the first kind of fast which is undertaken in honour of a demon or idol either for life or only a certain number of years, the same judgement ought to be made, and all the reasons

45 Belial is another name for Satan in the Bible.

46 Saint Augustine, *Epistola* 153, 6.17.

47 Intorcetta gives a more detailed description of the Chinese fasts, with their Chinese names; see ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 150, f. 71v.

mentioned above condemn both of them since the same abstinence of food is observed in both. The other forms of fasting which on the surface seem to be purely civil, are undoubtedly superstitious and idolatrous, or at least verge on being so.⁴⁸ In places where the plague prowls, every illness is dangerous, because they serve as a preparation for contracting plague due to the great corruption of the air which easily infects an already weakened and otherwise badly impaired body. Similarly, in those pagan regions where the plague of superstition and idolatry has prowled for so long, and where the minds of people are prone to them, we should use all our efforts to ensure that those among the pagans who embrace faith abstain from anything that seems to have an affinity with idolatry and superstition. Therefore, leaving aside all these sorts of fasts, I would give the same advice that a doctor would give about mushrooms. They say that some mushrooms, despite their excellent appearance, are poisonous and they advise that these mushrooms be thrown away to avoid harm even though they have already been well seasoned and cooked. I should say the same about all these fasts: no matter what appealing intention with which they seem to be graced, for the most part something superstitious and idolatrous lurks beneath. It is no less difficult to distinguish licit and illicit fasts than edible and poisonous mushrooms. Therefore, it is safer to refrain from all Chinese forms of fasting, and fast only according to the Christian way.

Second, I greatly suspect that the famous and well-deserving men of the country were added to the calendar of idols or Chinese saints, and so I consider it illicit to fast in their honour. Why fast in honour of parents and such heroes? Is it to obtain an advantage that these cannot provide, or to procure advantage from God, whom they have never worshipped? Alternatively, is it to obtain some good from them, such as the alleviation of their punishments to which they have been eternally condemned? Both these options are clearly illicit and involve clear superstition or idolatry.

Moreover, fasting has three ends: first, to suppress the concupiscence of the flesh; second, to contemplate divine things, because through abstinence the mind becomes better suited and more available to dedicate itself to contemplation; third, to pay the

48 There was no consensus among the missionaries over whether some Chinese rites may be religious in a positive sense or in a negative sense, and therefore the Jesuits developed the neutral category of political rites. However, Grelon still considered the fast as being religious and in a negative sense, that is, as superstition.

penalty due for sin. There are also secondary ends, like the worship of God and the veneration of his saints, and for this reason, several vigils and the feasts of the saints have been established with the obligation of fasting. Similarly, the faithful fast to ask favours from God. However, none of those ends corresponds with the Chinese fasts. Thus, all their fasts are vain, ridiculous, and stink of superstition and idolatry. Thus, Christians cannot undertake them. The fast should be a holy and sacred observance. Through the institution and practice of the Church, fasting has no other use except the worship of God and of his saints, and the related ends just mentioned. It is shameful for a Christian to fast for secular ends.

So that I do not appear too harsh and unfair toward the Chinese fasters, as a form of compensation to you, I allow a Chinese Christian to fast as witness to the immense pain which he has felt for the death and eternal damnation of his pagan parents, provided that he does it in a Christian and not pagan way.⁴⁹

For the greater glory of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph, her spouse and patron of the mission [in China].⁵⁰

[In a different hand, in Portuguese] I made mention of this in the third document of the sixth letter from the packet [sent by] this first route. This treatise was written by Father Adrien Grelon in his own hand. Macao, 10 December 1668. Luis Da Gama.

Ad M. D. G. B. q. S. M.
 Et S. Josephi eius sponsi ac missionis Patroni
 O dia foy mencio na 3.ª da b. virgem, nascida de 1.ª vez.
 Este tratado he composto pelo P. Adriano Grelon, e escrito de sua
 letra. Macao 10 de Dezembro de 1668.
 Luis Da Gama

ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 150, f. 61v (detail)

49 See Intorcetta's report, fourth objection; ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 150, f. 75.

50 The mention of Saint Joseph as patron of the Chinese mission indicates that Grelon finished writing this report after the Canton conference: as noted in the introduction, the saint was chosen as patron on the final day of that conference.

Summary

From the beginning of the China mission, the Jesuits famously sought to accommodate Christianity to local culture by accepting practices such as the veneration of ancestors. The attempt by some Jesuits to tolerate Chinese vegetarianism is less known but deserves attention because of its cultural, anthropological and religious implications. The controversy which erupted in 1668 between the Jesuits Prospero Intorcetta (1626–96) and Adrien Grelon (1618–97) during the Canton Conference reveals two radically different understandings of the role of vegetarianism in Chinese society, as well as divergent implications for the Christian community. We shall first contextualise the controversy, the relevant documents in the Jesuit archives in Rome (ARSI), and the main arguments that were presented for and against the baptism of those who practise vegetarianism. Since recent scholarship has largely focused on the tenets of accommodation, we decided to translate the text of Grelon, an opponent of accommodation on the question of fasting, followed by the transcription of the original Latin text.

Résumé

Depuis le début de la mission en Chine, il est bien connu que les Jésuites ont tenté d'acculturer le christianisme en acceptant des pratiques comme le culte des ancêtres. La tentative de certains jésuites de tolérer le végétarisme chinois est moins connu mais mérite cependant l'attention pour ses implications anthropologiques et religieuses. La querelle qui opposa Prospero Intorcetta (1626–96) et Adrien Grelon (1618–97) durant la conférence de Canton révèle deux compréhensions radicalement différentes du rôle du végétarisme dans la société chinoise, ainsi que des conséquences divergentes pour la communauté chrétienne. Nous replacerons dans son contexte historique la querelle, les documents dans les archives romaines (ARSI) et les principaux arguments qui furent discutés pour ou contre l'admission au baptême des végétariens. Puisque la recherche actuelle s'est concentrée sur les partisans de l'acculturation, nous avons décidé de traduire ici le texte de Grelon, un opposant à l'acculturation sur la question du végétarisme, suivi par la transcription de l'original latin.

A note about the Latin text

The transcription of this text contains only necessary minor adjustments to assist the comprehensibility of its contents: 1) abbreviations have been silently expanded. 2) Punctuation has been made uniform, and capital letters are used according to modern style. 3) The letter “j” has been substituted by the letter “i” throughout: before and in between vowels, and at the beginning and end of words, while for verbs with the letters “io”, the “ii” form has been retained. 4) Graphic variations have been eliminated, favouring the most frequently-used version. 5) The letters “u” and “v” have been differentiated, while the use of the letters “h”, “y”, and double letters have not been adapted. The numbering system is shown in square brackets. Additions made to the original text are shown by means of parentheses (< >); the cross symbol, (+) is used for illegible words.

ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 158, “*Controversiae variae: 1668–1698*”; ff. 51-61v:
P. Adr. Grelon SJ. *1a via Cum nota authent.* P. Lud. Da Gama, 10
dec. 1668

[51^r] Prima via.

Utrum ieiunantes Sinici volentes ad fidem converti obligandi sint ad solvendum ieiunium eique renuntiandum antequam baptismum suscipiant? nec ne?

Suppono primo, huiusmodi ieiunantes abstinere a carne et pisce coeterisque vita sensitiva viventibus, quia iis vitam adimere nefas putant, et non minori religione a quorumcunque animalium quam ab hominum caede abstinere. Ab ovis item et lacticiniis abstinere, quia videlicet ex sensitivis prodeunt. Item a vino ac denique ab alliis, caepis et porris, quod ex crasso et ridiculo errore iis inesse putent aliquid vitae sensitivae; aut etiam quod vereantur ne si ea gustaverint, vel solum contrectaverint foetore, aut graveolenti halitu ex iis contracto suorum idolorum nares offendant. Praeterea mihi narratum est ex ea quam mox referam fabula originem ducere ridiculam illam abstinentiam. Afferunt itaque fuisse antiquitus hominem quemdam e cuius de mortui sepulchro, affatim pullularunt allia, caepa et porri. Unde inter illos error ille propagatus est, tria illa olerum genera e carne humana esse prognata. Sed ne diutius immorer in investiganda tam novae ac inusitatae abstinentiae causa. Certum est non nisi ridiculam aliquam aut superstitiosam esse posse. Est autem advertendum illis per ieiunii sui leges esse licitum quacunque diei et noctis hora comedere, dummodo a supra recensitis ciborum generibus abstineant, ac proinde illorum nimium abstinentiam verius dici posse quam ieiunium, ne tamen ab usitato loquendi modo discedamus ieiunii nomen retinebimus.

Suppono secundo, illos in malum finem ieiunare, nempe ad colendum daemonem aut idolum aliquod, cuius ut plurimum statuas habent in aedibus suis, ab eo sperantes ingentia ieiuniorum suorum praemia, cum in hac vita, tum in futura.

Suppono tertio, eosdem ieiunantes, ieiunii sui adeo esse tenaces, ob superstitiosum votum, ac solemne iusiurandum, quo se ad illud perpetuo servandum obstrinxerunt, ut non nisi aegerrime se patiantur ab eo divelli, atque id summae religioni ducant, metuentes videlicet, non modo ne parta tot annorum ieiuniis merita labefactent, et ingentium quae inde sibi pollicentur

praemiorum spe excidant, verum etiam ne a daemone aut idolo cuius in honorem tale ieiunium susceperunt exagitentur ac graviter puniantur. At ubi semel illud in quantavis exigua quantitate fregerunt, ut verbi gratia tantillum carnis, aut piscis, aut ovi, aut alterius cuiuscunque esculenti, aut potulenti, ex iis a quibus abstinere solent degustando, iam de chimaericis illis ieiunii sui meritis ac praemiis actum esse putant, atque adeo ad amplectendam religionem Christianam, ordiendumque novum vitae tramitem parati sunt et expediti. Quam ob rem praecones evangelici, antequam huiusmodi hominibus baptismum conferant, summa cura satagunt, ut ieiunium solvant, eorum quae supra recensui, aliquid degustando, quod si forte detrectent, eos ad baptismum nequaquam admittunt.

[51^v] **Suppono quarto**, eosdem ieiunantes tum apud Sinas tum apud Tartaros passim male audire, et pro Siê Kiaó Tiě giñ haberi, id est pro haereticis; sectam aliquam regni legibus prohibitam profitentibus, ac pro talibus, a Mandarinis saepe comprehendi, ac graviter puniri. Unde fit ut cum ab eorum satellitibus conquiruntur, carnes emant, pisces, allia et coetera eiusmodi, quae per vicos et plateas circumferunt, et in suis aedibus e loco patenti suspensas servant, ne videlicet appareant hominibus ieiunantes, atque ut satellitum oculos deludant ac manus effugiant.

His igitur ita praesuppositis veluti certis et indubitatis, quaeritur an exigendum sit ab eiusmodi ieiunantibus, cum vol<en>t ad fidem converti, ut suum illud ieiunium solvant, an potius ho<min>i eorum arbitrio permittendum, et si forte id praestare renuant, nihilominus tamen iis conferendus sit baptismus.

Pro parte negante id esse ab eis exigendum veluti necessariam dispositionem, videntur pugnare sequentes rationes.

Prima <ratio>. Ieiunium illud est ex se indifferens, et bonum fit vel malum, ex bono vel malo fine in quem dirigitur; ergo non est necessario exigendum ab illis ieiunantibus ut ieiunium suum frangant, et illi renuntient antequam baptizentur, sed dumtaxat ut ieiunare desinant ob malum finem, ob quem ante ieiunabant. Clarum est antecedens, probatur consequentia. Ad hoc ut censeatur quis ad baptismum et ad eius effectum rite dispositus, quatuor tantum requirantur: primum, ut serio velit suscipere baptismum; secundum, ut habeat fidem mysteriorum credendorum, vel explicitam, vel implicitam; tertium, ut sit contritus, vel attritus de peccatis praeteritis; quartum, ut eliciat firmum propositum servandae in posterum legis divinae et vitandi peccata illi opposita. Atqui illa omnia praestare possunt ieiunantes, quamvis renuntiare

nolint ieiunio suo. Ergo quamvis illud retineant, censeri possunt ad baptismum rite dispositi; ergo non est propterea baptismus iis denegandus, dummodo quatuor praedicta praestent. Iis enim positus ius habent petendi baptismum a ministro cui vicissim incumbit obligatio hunc illis conferendi, maxime vero ubi nullus est alius minister, a quo tam necessarium sacramentum suscipere possint.

Secunda ratio est quia baptismum negantes huiusmodi ieiunantibus, cum ieiunium frangere renuunt, et passim docentes illud esse impedimentum ad susceptionem divinae legis, innumeros ab ea amplectenda arcemus, ac proinde rei quodammodo videmur aeternae illorum damnationis; et periculum est ne de manibus nostris eorum sanguis exquiratur a Domino, qui omnes homines vult salus fieri et ad agnitionem veritatis venire.

Tertia ratio est quia docuit experientia nonnullos ieiunantes, quibus quamvis ieiunium frangere renuentibus, cum esset baptisma collatum, fuisse postea veros ac solidos Christianos.

Pars vero affirmans, quam et ego amplector, sequentibus nititur rationibus.

Ac prima, quidem autoritate omnium antiquorum Patrum qui ab octoginta et amplius annis in hac Domini vinea laborarunt et semper nefas duxerunt, iis ieiunantibus baptismum conferre qui ieiunium solvere renuerent, quamvis rationes superius allatas minime ignorarent, utpote quae unicuique etiam non theologo in mentem venire facile possunt. Si igitur eae rationes non satis apud illos habuerunt ponderis, ut baptismum huiusmodi hominibus conferendum censerant, cur nos ob easdem rationes (quae quam solidae sint infra videbimus) ab eorum sententia ac praxi discedamus, et eos erroris quodammodo arguere videamur, inter quos scimus [52^r] tot extitisse viros et doctrina praestantes, et virtute ac zelo animarum insignes, ac denique Sinicarum rerum experientia nemini inferiores.

At inquires non omnia quae in illa materia, antiqui gessere Patres, ad nostras pervenerunt aures, et fieri potuit ut sicut quidam e nobis aliquos baptizarunt quamvis ieiunio suo renuntiare detrectantes, ita et illi nonnullos eiusmodi baptizarent.

Non nego id fieri potuisse, sed nego factum, et quamdiu ad hoc probandum nullum attuleris argumentum positivum, tamdiu pro me stat possessio: quidam enim ex antiquis Patribus qui etiam nunc sunt superstites, et una nobiscum in hoc exilio versantur, non solum negant se id unquam ausos facere, verum etiam affirmant Alenios, Cataneos, Vagnonos, Longobardos, Figueredos, Furtados,

Diasios, Adamos et alios sibi notos id nunquam fecisse, alioqui enim sibi ipsis contradixissent, et aliter ac docebant fecissent. Immo addo quod quamvis nonnulli ex antiquis Patribus id forte aliquando fecissent, quod probari nequaquam potest, non propterea sequeretur eos esse imitandos, utpote qui hac in parte a sententia ab antiquis Patribus communiter recepta tam longe discessissent.

Dices secundum si Patres antiqui perspectum habuissent ieiunantes aliquos qui quamvis ante baptismum ieiunium solvere renuissent, postea tamen illi renuntiassent, et optimos Christianos evasisse mutassent fortasse sententiam.

Respondeo primo, illos huiusmodi experientiam semper iudicasse illicitam, atque adeo in re tam gravi periculum facere noluisse.

Respondeo secundo, hanc rationem nimis probare inde enim sequeretur me posse concubinarium, quamvis suam concubinam retinentem, baptizare, et alios huiusmodi ficte ad baptismum accedentes, quia nonnulli per errorem hoc pacto baptizati post baptismum resipuerunt. Quod tamen nemo licitum esse ausit affirmare, si constet de malo eorum statu. Non enim attendendum est quid post baptismum futurum sit, quod est incertum et soli Deo cognitum, sed ad praesentem statum accedentis ad baptismum, de quo mihi constare nequit nisi per signa externa; utrum autem ad id sola ieiunantis verba sufficiant, infra videbimus. Mihi quidem licet et baptizare, et absolvere hominem quem per revelationem certo sciam futurum hominem nequam, immo e numero reprobos, dummodo mihi constet ad baptismum aut poenitentiam rite dispositum accedere. At mihi nunquam licet aut baptizare aut absolvere hominem quem mortaliter certo scio ad haec sacramenta ficte accedere, quamvis aliunde mihi per revelationem certo constaret futurum, ut ille resipisceret, et vir sanctus evaderet.

Respondeo tertio, quod si forte sint aliqui, qui post susceptum baptismum ieiunio suo renuntiarunt, cum id ante facere renuissent, id ipsum indicium esse satis manifestum, eos post adeptam pleniorum divinae legis notitiam, scrupulis et conscientiae stimulis agitados, suam illam superstitionem ac pertinaciam damnasse nec ausos fuisse diutius in tam periculoso statu perseverare. Alioqui enim si cum fidem Christianam amplexi sunt, serio et ex [52^v] animo damnata ac detestata priore illa intentione mala ex qua ante ieiunabant, nihilominus tamen ad Dei honorem, et ad maius meritum, statuissent ieiunium suum retinere, ut illos facere arbitraris, quomodo postea quam in fide et virtutibus

iam progressum aliquem fecisse debuerant, tam sanctum ac tam laudabile propositum desererent; et quo modo talis mutatio non illis vitio potius quam laudi verteretur; atqui certum est eos qui sive ante, sive post baptismum, tale ieiunium deserunt, cum a nobis tum a Christianis passim laudari, quasi tunc vere incipient credere, et nos de eorum fide nihil amplius dubitemus.

Unde ad secundam rationem progredior. Quae est communis Sinensium Christianorum consensus, qui semper iudicarunt ieiunantes qui ieiunium suum abiicere nollent, non vere et ex animo credere, ac proinde nequaquam esse ad baptismum dispositos. Unde ipsimet Christiani non parum scandalizarentur, si nos viderent huiusmodi hominibus baptismum conferre.

Dices ita sentiunt Christiani quia a Patribus ita sunt edocti.

Respondeo primo, ergo id ingenue fateris quod volebam, nempe hanc fuisse hactenus communem Patrum sententiam et praxim, quod certe apud cordatos omnes plurimum habere debet momenti et authoritatis.

Respondeo secundo, non tam Christianos a Patribus, quam a Christianis Patres id accepisse. Siquidem ipsimet ieiunantes post suam ad fidem conversionem, iis suae sectae mysteria referarunt, constanter affirmantes pro ea quam habebant notitia sui similium, eos qui ieiunio suo ita addicti essent, ut illud frangere renuerent, non esse ad baptismum rite dispositos. Quo factum est ut Patres iis baptismum conferre semper nefas arbitrati sint.

Tertio, non solum Christiani, sed ipsi etiam infideles scandalizarentur si viderent huiusmodi ieiunantes ad baptismum admitti, et post illum iam susceptum in ieiunio suo perseverare, id quod apud illos in magnum cederet divinae legis opprobrium, quia ut supra praenotavi, ieiunantes illi pro haeticis et perduellibus in toto regno habentur, et non semel contigit, ut cum edicta regia contra varias sectas regni legibus prohibitas promulgarentur, et praefecti in earum asseclas animadverterent, Christiani ab eorum ministris, veluti eiusdem criminis rei, per errorem comprehenderentur; aut etiam ut multi ex iis sectariis ad tribunalia perducti, se Christianos simularent, ut hoc e mentito nomine, quod eorum capitibus imminebat periculum declinarent. Quid ergo futurum putamus, si re ipsa inter nostros Christianos, huiusmodi ieiunantes deprehenderentur? Inde procul dubio ansam arriperent infideles, calumniandi eandem esse cum illa ieiunantium secta, Christianam legem. Eadem quorum illos accusant crimina in nos confingerent, ac crebras contra nos persecutiones excitarent, uti olim fieri solitum legimus contra priscos illos Christianos, quibus

per summam iniuriam ethnici, omnia illius temporis haereticorum flagitia appingebant, quia videlicet illi haeretici Christiano nomine gloriabantur. Atque ita iam non essemus amplius bonus odor Christi in omni [53^r] loco, quin potius foeteret nomen nostrum coram pharaone, et omnibus servis eius, et Ecclesiae ianuam aperire volentes huiusmodi ieiunantibus, illam clauderemus innumeris aliis qui ab iis abhorrent, et sibi indecorum ac probrosum putant cum illis permixtim vivere, atque eandam legem profiteri.

At fortasse dices in nostra sententia idem prorsus timendum esse incommodum, quia quamvis ieiunantes ante baptismum ieiunium solvant, eorum tamen arbitrio relinquitur, ut si id postea ad Dei honorem servare velint, id citra culpam, immo cum laude et merito possint. Quid igitur si in eo servando pergant, tunc certe inter Christianos multi reperientur ieiunantes.

Respondeo, nequaquam timendum esse hoc incommodum, quia constans ac diuturna docuit experientia, eos qui semel ieiunium suum, carnem vel pisces, aut aliquid simile, in quantumlibet parva quantitate, degustando fregissent, illud statim omnino dimisisse, ob rationem superius allatam, quia videlicet sibi persuadent hi ieiunantes, merita omnia ieiunio suo collecta, unica quantumvis exigua cibi vetiti degustatione perire. Quod si forte aliquando contingat nonnullos fractum semel ieiunium resumere post baptismum, ii simul fidem eiurant, ex quo satis apparet quam sit difficile, ut fides et illius ieiunii observatio, simul in eodem pectore consistent.

Probatur quarto, quia ieiunium illud est omnino gentilicum et superstitione plenum, tum quodammodo ex natura sua, tum vero multo magis ex prava institutione, et ex fine diabolico in quem dirigitur. Quotus enim quisque est, qui non videat delectum illum quorundam olerum quibus vesci liceat, et abstinentiam a quibusdam aliis esse meram superstitionem, et cultum omnino impertinentem, ac Christiano homine indignum, quo sane Deus offenderetur potius quam coleretur. Sed esto sit ex natura sua indifferens tale ieiunium, certe ex prava institutione et ex malo fine in quem dirigitur est pessimum.

Dices, antequam baptizentur ieiunantes, pravam illam quam ante habuerunt intentionem deponunt, atque adeo ieiunium illud etiam si retineatur erit innocens.

Sed contra, primo quamvis speculative loquendo fieri possit ut retento illo ieiunio adeo superstitioso, non remaneat prior illa intentio ex qua susceptum erat, practice tamen videtur adeo difficile, ut mortaliter impossibile merito censi possit. Sunt enim

hi ieiunantes ista assueti, suum illud ieiunium, ad daemonis, aut idoli cultum referre, et superstitionem illam tam alte imbiberunt, ut vix ac ne vix quidem, illa duo ieiunare, et propter talem finem ieiunare, intellectu nedum voluntate ab invicem separare queant.

Respondeo secundo. Inde sequeretur baptizari etiam posse hominem qui habens pelliceseas nollet eiicere dummodo polliceretur se illis non abusurum; item eum qui vellet idola sua domi retinere, dummodo affirmaret se illa retinere non eo animo ut iis cultum exhiberet, sed solum ob elegantiam vel antiquitatem operis, sicuti in Europa multi sunt qui servant antiqua numismata aut statuas deorum. Fieri enim potest speculative loquendo, ut neque hic idola veneretur, neque ille pellicibus utatur, quamvis practice loquendo, neutrum sperari prudenter possit, ab hominibus recens ad fidem conversis; in moralibus autem non solum attendendum est quid speculative, sed etiam, et multo magis quid practice fieri possit, aut non possit; alioqui enim multa probari possent esse licita, quae tamen theologi morales decent esset illicita. Velim autem advertas me in utroque [53^v] casu mox allegato, praescindere a ratione scandali, et argumentari ex suppositione quod nullum esset scandalum, quia si esset periculum scandali, quod sine dubio in utroque casu foret maximum, vel ex eo solo capite certum est rem esse illicitam. Sed de scandalo videbimus inferius.

Respondeo tertio. Demus fieri etiam practice posse, ut ieiunans retento ieiunio deponat pravam illam intentionem, ex qua ante ieiunabat. At certe mihi constare debet de eius animo, ut prudenter operari possim, eique tuto baptismum conferre. Quaero igitur unde id mihi constare queat? Dices ex eius verbis, sed contra id meo quidem iudicio est sibi gratis illudere. An forte nobis persuadere vis, adeo sinceros et veraces esse Sinas, ut meris eorum verbis, in re tanti momenti tuto fidere possimus? Quot quaeso vidimus qui ut pecuniam, aut praemium aliquod a nobis extorquerent, vel certe quod Christum cum Belial coniungi posse arbitrarentur, baptismum fecte susceperunt? Quot alios qui concubinas domi, vel ruri alentes nos fefellerant, et intrepide mentientes nullam se praeter legitimam uxorem habere, eodem se sacrilegio contaminarunt? Ego certe quamvis non ex antiquioribus in hac missione satis multos numerare possem huiusce farinae Christianos, et forsitan coeteri Patres qui hic nobiscum degunt longe plures quam ego noverint. Atque adeo hos omnes huius Sinicae sinceritatis testes appello.

Sed quid opus est aliunde exempla depromere cum in hac ipsa ieiunii materia nobis abunde suppetant? En tibi unum luculentum,

aut potius in uno plura simul collecta, in quibus cernere poteris ieiunantium fidem ac sinceritatem, et quanta nobis cura ac cautela adhibenda sit, ne id genus hominum ficte ac indigne baptismum suscipiat. Narravit itaque mihi quidam e nostris Patribus, a se quadringentos utriusque sexus homines intra paucos dies baptizatos, e quibus trecenti circiter erant ieiunantes, qui omnes antequam lustrarentur, parata de industria, a Christianis edulia degustando, ieiunium solverunt, exceptis tribus mulierculis iam aetate provectis, quae suae suspertitioni pertinaciter adhaerentes, id praestare renuerunt, et idcirco a sacro baptisinate exclusae sunt. Inter eos autem qui ieiunium solverunt, animadvertere Christiani nonnullos esse qui id ficte facerent, cibos aut iuscula primoribus dumtaxat labris delibando, aut buccellam in os immissam non deglutiendo, sed clanculum expuendo; quia videlicet existimant hi ieiunantes, per cibos ore tantummodo gustatos non violari ieiunium, ac nisi traiciantur in stomachum, integra adhuc et illibata manere sua merita. Monitus itaque a Christianis Pater de illa simulatione, serio adhortatus est hypocritas illos ieiunantes, qui salutaribus eius monitis obtemperantes, suam fraudem atque hypocrisim detestati sunt, et soluto tandem ieiunio alacres baptismum susceperunt. Sicut ergo illi antea mentiebantur, et se non solum pravam ac superstitiosam intentionem, sed ipsummet etiam ieiunium deponere simulabant. Ita iustam habeo rationem existimandi eos omnes qui tale ieiunium frangere renunt, quantumvis mihi persuadere conentur, se pravam ac suspertisiosam intentionem deponere, hypocritas esse, ac proinde indignos qui ad baptismum admittantur, et candida neophitorum veste, candoris et innocentiae tessera induantur.

Fingamus ergo Patrem in supradicto casu, ieiunantes illos non adegisse ad frangendum ieiunium, sed hoc eorum arbitrio permisisse. Quot quaeso putas fuisse ad baptismum ficte ac sacrillige accessuros, ac postea cum ingenti Christianorum scandalo ac Christiani nominis dedecore fidem [54^r] eiuratos, aut ut verius dicam nunquam ex animo suscepturos, quam tamen hodie cum aedificatione profitentur, et huiusce persecutionis tempore illibatam servant, quia videlicet sublato illo ieiunii obice, gratia baptismali, et ex ea tanquam radice pullulantibus auxiliis roborati sunt quibus erant alioqui carituri.

Respondeo tertio. Non solum mihi constare debet de intentione ieiunantium sed ipsis etiam Christianis, ad amoliendum scandalum aut reparandum, quod alioquin apud illos non mediocre foret, si ieiunantes non fracto prius ieiunio ad baptismum admitti

cernerent, nam pro certo tenent, et constanter affirmant eos qui illud frangere detrectant, suae adhuc superstitioni addictos esse, ac proinde baptismo indignos: eorum autem hac in parte iudicio standum potius quam nostro, utpote quibus, longe melius quam nobis nota sint suae nationis hominum ingenia ac fraudes.

Dices secundo. In tribunali poenitentiae reo pro se ac contra se dicenti creditur, atque adeo si poenitens rite confiteatur, et mihi vel formaliter vel virtualiter afferat se dolere de peccatis et habere propositum emendationis, teneor illi credere et illum absolvere. Ergo a pari in baptismo etc.

Respondeo primo, magnam, baptismum inter et poenitentiam, esse disparitatem; quia enim poenitentiae tribunal non est publicum sed secretum, non potest regulariter loquendo confessarius a poenitente, aliud signum externum multo vero minus publicum exigere suae contritionis, et internae dispositionis, ne violetur sigillum, quod certe in baptismo non est timendum.

Respondeo secundo, multos esse casus in quibus non tenetur nec potest prudenter confessarius fidem adhibere verbis poenitentis, nisi ipse eorum veritatem aliquo signo externo comprobet, ut verbi gratia cum facienda est aliqua restitutio, cum tollendum aut reparandum aliquod scandalum, cum vitanda peccati occasio, et universim potest confessarius, utpote qui non solum iudicis, sed spiritualis etiam medici partes agit in hoc sacramento, iniungere poenitenti, iuxta praesentem illius statum ac necessitatem, ut hoc aut illud faciat vel omittat, tum ad satisfaciendum pro peccatis praeteritis, tum ad ea in posterum vitanda. Quos si praestare renuat, prudenter iudicat confessarius eum non esse rite dispositum, atque adeo et potest et debet ipsi negare absolutionem. Quod planius fiet quibusdam exemplis. Verbi gratia furatus est quis rem alienam, aut illam retinet invito domino, et non vult restituere cum possit; aut fuit causa gravis alicuius scandali, et illud non vult reparare; aut in proxima peccati occasione versatur, et ab ea non vult discedere cum possit. Quis dubitat quin teneatur confessarius in praedictis casibus poenitenti absolutionem negare? At inquires illa nolle praestare per se malum est; quid ergo mirum si renuens non possit absolvi?

Propterea adiicio quaedam exempla rerum per se indifferentium, et quae tantum malae sunt, ex malo fine in quem referuntur, [54^v] et ex adiunctis circumstantiis. Supponamus verbi gratia veneficum aliquem qui afferat se velle converti, et confiteatur, sed dicat se velle adhuc retinere apud se herbas aliquas, et alia id genus instrumenta de se quidem indifferentia, sed quibus ad veneficia sua uti solebat. Ipsi haud dubie praecipiet prudens confessarius,

ut illa omnia sibi tradat, aut ipsemet comburat, et quantumvis polliceatur se iis post hac nunquam male usurum, non tamen ideo ipsius verbis fidem adhibebit, sed potius urgebit ut comburat, et si id praestare detrectet, prudenter iudicabit aliquem adhuc affectum ad praeterita veneficia in eius pectore residere, atque adeo ad absolutionem non esse rite dispositum. Adhuc affero aliud exemplum. Supponamus in aliqua civitate moris esse, ut meretrices externum aliquod symbolum gestent quo pro talibus agnoscantur, ut verbi gratia vittas croceas in calceis, sicuti revera alicubi fieri audivi. Si igitur contingeret ut quaedam ex illis meretricibus, e turpitudinum coeno cupiens emergere, aut ut verius loquar, hunc animum simulans confessarium adiret, et peracta confessione protestaretur se de praeteritis culpulis dolere, et serium ac sincerum emendationis habere propositum, verumtamen sibi statutum esse signum illud externum retinere, non quidem quod eo animo illud gestare velit quo ante solebat, sed quia sibi multum arridet ille color et aliunde est res ex natura sua indifferens. Quid in eo casu facturum putas confessarium? Haud dubie, si sapiat, illam nunquam absolvet quin prius meretricium illud signum abiiciat, non solum quia prudenter iudicare debet non esse rite dispositam, verum etiam propter gravissimum quod inde oriretur scandalum.

Ergo, a pari, neque ieunantes Sinici ad baptismum sunt admittendi, nisi prius ieiunio suo renuntient, et illud frangant, tum propter scandalum, tum quia non possunt censerī rite dispositi, et quamvis mihi millies afferent, se sincere et ex animo detestari priorem ex qua ante ieiunabant intentionem, si videam illos tam mordicus eidem adhaerentes ieiunio, ut neque Patris neque Christianorum adhortationibus flecti possint; maxime vero in re tam facili qualis est buccellam carnis, aut piscis, aut ovi, aut alii etc. gustare, aut unicam vini aut iusculi guttulam haurire, nunquam mihi persuadere potero, illos ut par est credere, nedum de prioris vitae peccatis attritos esse.

Et certe illa ipsa pertinacia et animi durities qua ieiunio tam obstinate adhaerent, quamvis omnes aliae rationes deessent, argumentum est per se satis evidens, non bono eos agi, sed malo spiritu; nam omnis pervicacia, et proprii iudicii tenacitas, in rebus etiam sanctissimis, et quae ne minimam quidem mali speciem prae se ferunt, suspecta est, et daemonis, potius quam Dei instinctu videtur afflata, ut recte argumentabantur sancti illi anachoretae, cum ad S<anctum> Simeonem stylitam legatos destinarunt, qui eius explorarent animum, iis praecipientes, ut si forte docilem et dicto audientem cernerent, in coepto vitae instituto pergere

sinerent; sin vero reluctanten, et parere renuentem, eum vi a columna avulsum ad se perducerent, ipsamque columnam disturbarent. Quid ergo dicturos fuisse putas sanctos illos Patres si forte in ieiunantes nostros incidissent? Et quale de eorum pertinacia in servando tam superstitioso ieiunio iudicium laturos? Certe si ex his quae erga sanctum stylitam gesserunt, coniectare licet, nunquam commissuros puto ut huiusmodi hominibus baptismum conferrent, quin potius eorum superstitionem ac pervicaciam damnaturos. Quamobrem si ieiunantem offenderem docilem, et ad solvendum ieiunium paratum, mihi multo minus suspectus foret eius animus, et facilius adducerer ut id eius arbitrio permetterem [55^r] nisi aliunde in Christianis, et infidelibus periculum scandali, et in ipsomet, relapsus in superstitionem et idololatriam, timerem. Detrectanti tamdiu baptismum denegarem quamdiu in non solvendo ieiunio obfirmatum viderem.

At inquires si ieiunans a carne, pisce, ovis, lacticiis, vino etc. abhorreat, saltem in eo casu ad ea gustanda non erit adigendus.

Respondeo primo. Nauseam illam non veram, sed fictam arbitrabor, et velamen malitiae quo ille superstitionem suam vult obtegere, uti iam saepissime docuit experientia; nam fere omnes id genus homines, cum ad baptismum volunt admitti, hanc difficultatem obtendunt quam tamen postea si serio fidem amplecti velint, facillime vincunt. Neque enim credibile est ab iis omnibus a quibus abstinere solent abhorrere, esto fortassis ab uno aut altero huiusmodi esculentorum genere abhorreant.

Respondeo secundo. Quamvis ab omnibus abhorrent, quod tamen non facile crediderim, videtur enim moraliter impossibile, sed parum refert, supponamus revera abhorrere, numquid propterea a frangendo ieiunio eximendi erunt? Minime vero, nam multo magis abhorret aeger a pharmaco, quod tamen recuperandae valetudinis desiderio haurire non recusat. Ab iis non exigo ut carnibus aut vino se ingurgitent, sed unam dumtaxat aut carnis, aut piscis, aut ovi etc. buccellam deglutiant, aut saltem vini vel iusculi guttulam hauriant, quo eorum explorem animum, mihi ipsi scrupulum eximam et Christianorum scandalum avertam; quid quaeso aequius postulari potest? Quid praestare facilius? Certe etsi rem grandem eis dicerem facere deberent, ut sapienter monebant servi illi dominum suum Naaman, Elisa eo praecipiente ut septies lavaretur in Iordane, obtemperare renuentem. Quanto magis cum rem iis tam levem ac tam facilem praecipiam, idque non ut a corporis, sed ut ab animae lepra per baptismi lavacrum mudentur, ac tandem aeternam salutem consequantur. Qui ergo

id praestare renuunt manifeste declarant nolle se serio et ex animo ab infidelitate sanari. Non secus ac aeger qui medico obtemperare, et levissimum aliquod pharmacum sorbere recusaret, nolle efficaciter ex sua infirmitate convalescere merito censeretur.

Atque ut evidentius appareat quam parum sincere loquantur ieiunantes cum causantur se a quibus abstinere solent eduliis ita abhorre, ut ea sine nausea gustare nequeant. Si forte contingat ut a praefectorum satellitibus comprehendantur, et ad tribunalia rapiantur suae sectae rationem reddituri, tunc omni ope atque industria conantur, ut supra animadverti, persuadere se non esse ieiunantes; et si in eo casu eos praefecti iuberent carnes comedere, quo de rei veritate certiores fierent, quam praeclare ii secum agi putarent? Quam prompto ac lubenti animo, fictum illum carniū horrorem, vero verberum horrore ac metu percussi deponerent? Et quanta aviditate apposita sibi fercula vorarent?

Quod ut exemplo confirmem paucis narrare lubet rem omnino lepidam, quae non ita pridem in urbe Ci Nan fu Mahometanis contigit. Cum igitur inter eos, circa varios suae sectae errores gravis esset orta controversia, et res ad proregis tribunal deducta esset; is post tentatas varias illius componendae vias, videns se oleum et operam perdere, ut tandem eorum litem dirimeret, vel certe, ut superstitiosos eorum errores carperet, ac ludibrio haberet, iis suillam iussit apponi praeciens ut comederent, ac verbera ni parerent intentans. Tunc sane non multa iis consultatione opus fuit, ut quid sibi agendum esset statuerent. Neque horrorem suillae quem habent haud dubie longe maiorem quam nostri ieiunantes, a cibus sui ieiunii lege vetitis causati sunt quo minus parerent, sed protinus morem gessere, et ventres suos suilla [55°] pascentes, proregis simul ac circumstantium oculos iucundissimo pavere spectaculo. An forte non idem facturos putas ieiunantes, si a praefecto iuberentur? Facerent procul dubio. Cur ergo iis cum nauseam illam et horrorem praetexunt fidem adhibendam putas?

Obiicies secundo. Neque Brachmanes qui ad fidem convertuntur in India carnibus vesci, neque Iudaei qui Christianis mysteriis initiantur in Europa suillam gustare compelluntur, quo probent se serio et ex animo Christianam legem amplecti, cur ergo hic ieiunantes ad frangendum ieiunium adigendi erunt antequam baptismum suscipiant?

Respondeo primo. De Brachmanibus et postea de Iudaeis respondebo. Quod igitur ad Brachmanes attinet, dico inter illorum, et Sinensium ieiunium, magnum esse discrimen tum quoad materiale, tum quoad formale. Brachmanes enim a carne dumtaxat, pisce et ovis abstinent, coeterum lactiniis et cuiuscunque generis

oleribus, ac leguminibus indiscriminatim vescuntur; nec suum illud ieiunium, aut potius abstinentiam ad daemonis aut idoli cultum, nisi forte generali quadam intentione sicut et reliqua opera sua, sed ad proprium quodammodo honorem ac commodum referunt. Sciendum enim est Brachmanum prosapiam esse inter Indos nobilissimam utpote sacerdotalem, ac propterea (†) gaudere praerogativis ac immunitatibus, quibus omnibus exciderent et inter infimae sortis homines numerarentur, si suam illam abstinentiam violasse comperirentur, non secus ac inter nos vir nobilis qui vile aliquod opificium exerceret, aut atroci aliquo facinore sibi ac familiae suae labem aspergeret, ac idcirco a rege nobilitatis insignibus spoliaretur. Iam vero si de Brachmanibus Goae vicinis, aut quibuscunque aliis Lusitanorum imperio subiacentibus agatur, ii omnes quando fiunt Christiani, carne, pisce, et ovis libenter vescuntur, quia videlicet supra dictum incommodum nequaquam metuunt. At vero Brachmanes qui in ethnicorum principum ditionibus versantur, cum Christianam legem suscipiunt, in pristina illa abstinentia perserverare sinuntur, nam alioqui ab ipsis parentibus et propinquis eiicerentur, et a principe nobilitatis insignibus, et privilegiis omnibus ac praerogativis spoliarentur, et gravioribus fortasse poenis mulctarentur. Quod si contendas illam Brachmanum abstinentiam ad idoli cultum speciali intentione dirigi (quod fateor me nescire) ac proinde non esse potioem rationem cur illis cum Christiani fiunt, permittatur eam retinere, quam Sinis ieiunantibus suum ieiunium. Respondeo graves immo gravissimas subesse causas, cur illis Christiana sacra suscipientibus permittatur ut damnata ac detestata prava illa intentione partiali, ex qua fortassis ante ieiunabant, suam tamen abstinentiam adhuc retineant, ob alterum finem partialem, nempe ad tuendam generis sui nobilitatem, et huic annexas praerogativas ac immunitates. Si ergo mihi similes causas assignaveris in nostris ieiunantibus Sinicis, cur a solvendo ieiunio excusari possint, ut verbi gratia, praefectum qui alioqui dignitate, filium qui haereditate spoliandus sit, aut plebeium hominem qui sit verberibus exilio, aut aliis gravioribus poenis mulctandus, in eo casu [56^r] nisi aliunde esset periculum scandali, haud aegre iis essem assensus, ut in suo ieiunio perserverarent; tunc enim mihi appareret sufficiens ratio, ut illis pollicentibus non amplius ex prava et superstitiosa intentione ieiunatuos prudenter fidem adhiberem. Atqui tantum abest ut haec ieiunantibus incommoda metuenda sint si ieiunium violaverint, quin potius, non solum ipsimet verum etiam toti Christianitati, timenda sint multo graviora si illud servaverint.

Magna est ergo disparitas, inter Brachmanum et Sinensium ieiunium de quo hic loquimur. Neque rursus dixeris Brachmanum nobilitatem ab idolatria originem ducere, et in ea esse fundatam, utpote eorum maioribus ratione sacrificulorum muneris collatam, atque adeo pro ea tuenda ieiunare homini Christiano nefas esse. Contra enim est, nam licite potest vir nobilis, dignitatem ac generis nobilitatem, illicitis muniis, et officiis a maioribus partam tueri, dummodo ipse eadem munia obire desinat, quod sane praestant Brachmanes ad fidem conversi, non enim amplius sacrificulorum munera obire pergunt.

Iam vero quoad Iudaeos respondeo. Illos cum Christianam legem suscipiunt, ad gustandam suillam non adigi, quo constet eos non fecte sed sincere et ex animo ad baptismum accedere, quia id minime necessarium est, nam diuturna constat experientia eos qui Christiani fiunt nullam hac in parte pati difficultatem, et sive ante sive post baptismum suillam gustare iussos, libenter morem gerere, quamvis interdum non desint qui fallant, et ficti id faciant. Sed ecce cum haec scriberem a quodam e nostris Patribus mihi narratum est, insignem illum et zelo et pietate virum P<atrem> Petrum Gravita, olim erga Iudaeos qui Romae ad fidem converterentur sic se gerere solitum; illos antequam ad baptismum admitteret; de industria ad convivium invitabat in quo sane suilla non deerat; si quos ergo animadverteret suillam non respuere, et illa libenter vesci, tum sibi iisque veluti de sincera ac perfecta eorum ad Christum conversione gratulabatur, iisque incunctanter, et sine scrupulo baptismum conferebat. Quos vero cerneret a suilla abhorrere, et ingustatam relinquere, vel ex hoc solo capite iudicabat suis adhuc erroribus pertinaciter adhaerere, eorumque baptismum in aliquod tempus differebat. Quae cum gererentur in oculis Summi Pontificis, et spectante atque approbante tota curia Romana, validissimum nobis suppetit contra nostros ieiunantes eorumque patronos argumentum. Cuius vis atque robur ut clarius eluceat, fingamus hominem Iudaeum qui Christianam legem amplecti velle prae se ferat, sed profiteatur se neque suillam, neque leporem, aut cuniculum, neque sanguinem, neque pisces squamis carentes, nec denique quidquam eorum quorum esus erat antiqua lege vetitus, gustaturum unquam, affirmans tamen id se nequaquam facturum ex affectu aliquo erga legem Mosaicam cui palam dat libellum repudii, sed potius in ipsius Christi honorem. Quis quaeso sibi persuadeat huiusmodi hominem esse bonum Israelitam sine dolo et sincere loquentem, et non potius hypocritam pharisaeum callide mentientem? Et quis illi unquam audeat baptismum conferre,

quin prius sententiam mutarit et pravum illum affectum prorsus exuerit? Adde quod si Iudaeus iam ad fidem conversus, a suilla et aliis cibis veteri lege prohibitis passim abstinere cerneretur, sufficientem in aestimatione prudentium ansam praeberet suspicandi se non nisi nomine tenus esse Christianum, sed revera adhuc [56^v] Iudaeum, et Mosaicae legi addictum, adeo ut sanctum Inquisitionis tribunal eum impune abire minime pateretur. Cur ergo tu homini ethnico pollicenti se non amplius, ex prava ac superstitiosa intentione ieiunaturum, plus fidei praestandum putas, quam Iudaeo affirmanti se non amplius ex affectu ad legem Mosaicam suam illam a certis cibis abinentiam servaturum? Etsi in hoc huiusmodi abinentiam reprobas, et quidem merito, quamvis olim sanctam ac Deo acceptam? Cur in illo ieiunium approbas superstitione plenum et Deo semper exosum? Numquid enim tale est ieiunium quod eligit? In quo praeter malum finem et alias multas circumstantias vitiantes, tam obstinata et inflexibilis reperitur propria ieiunantis voluntas.

At inquires contigere interdum potest, ut tanta ac tam clara fidei ac poenitentiae signa prodat ieiunans, ut de recta ac sincera intentione sua nullum mihi relinquat dubitandi locum, quamvis alioqui a ieiunio suo nolit discedere, ut verbi gratia si ipsemet idola sua comburat, aut mihi combutenda tradat.

Respondeo, illa duo cohaerere non posse et manifestam involvere contradictionem, serio illum credere, et ieiunii sui poenitere, et tamen eidem ieiunio tam mordicus adhaerere ut iam fuse probatum est. Quare neque in eo casu quem supponis ei fidem adhiberem, sicuti neque illi qui decem habens idola, novem quidem confringeret, aut combureret, sed tamen unum cui plus quam coeteris esset addictus servaret; aut qui decem alens concubinas, novem eiiceret, sed unam quam coeteris ardentius deperiret, retinere vellet. "Qui enim peccat in uno, factus est omnium reus," et "bonum ex integra causa, malum autem ex quocunque defectu." Est autem ieiunium illud, veluti quoddam idolum, cui insano amore captus est ieiunians, et cum quo, ut Scripturae verbis uti liceat, veluti fornicatur.

Obiicies secundo. Verentur ieiunantes ne si ieiunium deserant, domesticis ac contribulibus suis materiam sermonum praebeant, et apud eos levitatis et inconstantiae notam incurrant; timent eorum irrisiones et diceria, et quod longe gravius est, timent ne daemon in odium violati ieiunii sibi quondam solemniter iureiurando promissi, eos divexet atque exagitet; et non audent cum efferato hoste in arenam descendere.

Respondeo ut ingenue fatear, valde miror quod tam parum

solidae rationes in medium afferantur a contrariae sententiae propugnatoribus, tantum enim abest ut ad eam stabiliendam aliquid momenti conferant, quin potius eam falsitatis magis suspectam reddant, et ei quidquid aliunde habere poterat probabilitatis adimant. Quod igitur attinet ad metum daemonis, eum alibi data opera confutabo. Nunc ad metum irrisionis domesticorum ac contribulium.

Respondeo vanum esse ac ridiculum, et cadentem non in constantem, sed in inconstantissimum virum, utpote qui superata maxima difficultate, vincatur alia levissima. Multo enim magis ipsi timendum erat periculum non solum irrisionis, verum etiam odii domesticorum ac contribulium, ob conculcata idola, desertam patriam et avitam religionem, et susceptam novam, ac peregrinam, quam ob violatum ieiunium Sinicis legibus vetitum. Deinde, quaero quorumnam contribulium ac domesticorum irrisiones timeant? Non certe eorum qui non ieiunant, a quibus potius laudabuntur, improbant enim et irrident tale ieiunium, ac saepe ieiunantes ad illud deserendum sollicitant, immo aliquando de industria porcinum adipem, aut aliquid simile eorum eduliis miscent, atque ita incautos decipiunt, ac nescientes, ieiunium quodammodo violare compellunt. Ergo superest ut aliorum dumtaxat ieiunantium irrisiones timeant, cuius quidem metus si intimos recessus penitus rimari voluerimus [57^r] profecto intus latentis idololatriae ac superstitionis indicia deprehendemus nec pauca, nec obscura; unde ieiunium continuare ex tali metu, non solum est vanum et ridiculum, verum etiam malum et inordinatum. Quid enim tunc intendit ille ieiunans? Certe intendit ut alii eiusdem sectae existiment, illum quamvis Christiana sacra susceperit, nihil tamen immutasse circa suum ieiunium, et eodem prorsus modo ieiunare quo ante ieiunabat, non solum materialiter sed etiam formaliter, id est, propter daemone[m] aut idolum, non enim iis declarat se mutasse intentionem, et non amplius propter daemone[m] sed propter Deum ieiunare, tum quia de facto illam non mutavit, ut apud me est fere evidens; tum quia timet ne irrideatur si hoc declaret non enim minus levis et inconstans inter contribules ac domesticos ieiunantes audiret, si diceret se iam mutasse intentionem, et non amplius propter daemone[m] aut idolum ieiunare, quam si ipsummet ieiunium desereret. Quod est vere eandem cum illis sectam profiteri, aut saltem eam simulare, ex suppositione quod iam pravam ieiunandi intentionem mutarit. Utrumque autem est intrinsece malum, et contra praeceptum confitendi veram fidem, et honorandi Deum veramque eius

religionem. Ac propterea contra huiusmodi simulatores pronuntiat Christus: "Qui me erubuerit et meos sermones, hunc Filius hominis erubescet cum venerit in maiestate sua..."

Et quamvis supponamus illum mutasse de facto intentionem, et coram domesticis ac contribulibus declarasse se iam non propter daemonem aut idolum, sed propter Deum ieiunare. Adhuc tamen graviter peccat, quia in observantiis atque operibus infidelitatis, cum idolatris communicat, quod severe prohibetur tum in Scriptura, tum a sanctis Patribus. Dicit enim Paulus Prima Cor<inthiis> 10: "Nolo vos socios fieri daemoniorum; non potestis calicem Domini bibere et calicem daemoniorum, non potestis mensae Domini participes esse et mensae daemoniorum." Item <Secu>nda Cor<inthiis> 6: "Nolite iugum ducere cum infidelibus;" id est ut D<ivus> Thomas exponit: "Nolite communicare in operibus infidelitatis cum infidelibus."

Quis autem dubitare potest quin illud ieiunium sit observantia gentilica, et opus infidelitatis? Quod ad colendum daemonem et idolum institutum est, et nullibi gentium a Christianis, sed a solis gentilibus et idolatris usurpatur. Unde vulgo docent theologi scholastici et morales, eum qui gentilium ritibus ac caeremoniis cultum vellet exhibere Deo, peccare mortaliter quia licet Deo cultum exhibeat, non tamen eo modo quo debet, quod dicitur cultus perniciosus, et est formaliter ac vere falsam religionem profiteri, sicut qui adoraret idolum cum vera intentione colendi Deum vere idololatriam profiteretur, et qui nunc exerceret ritus Iudaicos, vel servaret abstinentiam veteri lege praeceptam intentione cultus, vere esset professor sectae Iudaeorum. Unde necesse est ut qui sic profitetur falsam religionem, abneget veram, et consequenter fidem in qua fundatur. Quod certe nunquam licitum esse potest, ne quidem ob metum mortis aut iacturae bonorum temporalium, quanto minus ob metum irrisionis. Quod confirmatur a pari, aut potius argumento a minori ad maius ex eo quod docent theologi morales Catholicum inter haereticos versantem, non posse licite carnes comedere die interdicto, ob solum metum irrisionis, sed in re tanti momenti requiri alicuius gravioris mali, ut putas vitae vel honorum iacturae metum, in quo casu erit licitum, quia tunc recurrit ius naturae ad tuendam vitam et bona temporalia. Quod praeponderat praecepto ecclesiastico. Adde quod in illa occasione cessat vis praecepti ecclesiastici, neque enim pia mater Ecclesia filios suos intendit obligare cum tam gravi damno. Quod tamen intellige cum ea limitatione nempe dummodo illa carnum comestio die interdicto non possit censi ex circumstantiis loci,

temporis et personarum, esse aliqua professio sectae haereticae, quia tunc subeunda potius mors est, et perpetianda extrema quaeque supplicia quam carnes comedere. Atque huius constantiae ac fortitudinis in simili fere casu luculentum habemus exemplum apud Machab<aeos> de sancto illo sene Eleazaro qui sibi intentata a tyranno supplicia subire maluit [57^v] quam vel tantummodo porcinae esum simulare. Quomodo ergo solus metus irrisionis erit ratio sufficiens ut ieiunians possit licite ieiunium suum continuare coram aliis ieiunantibus? Et quomodo hoc non est eandem cum illis sectam saltem exterius profiteri? Sed de hac falsae sectae professione plura alibi.

Obiicies tertio. Durum omnino videtur dicere in nullo casu posse baptizari ieiunantes nisi frangant ieiunium, esto id passim fieri non liceat, at certe negari non potest quin contingere possint multi casus in quibus et liceat et expediat.

Respondeo a ieiunante iam in extremis constituto, et fere animam agente, non exigam ut carnem aut piscem aut aliquid simile comedat ad frangendum ieiunium, quod video iam amplius servare non posse, sed satis mihi erit ut firmum eliciat propositum illud deserendi si diutius viveret, aut etiam tantum in genere conteratur de totius vitae peccatis. Extra huiusmodi casum non video alium assignabilem in quo non possit ieiunium frangere, et si alium mihi assignaveris in quo non possit, quem iudico valde metaphysicum, tunc eodem modo me erga illum geram, quo erga hominem in articulo mortis constitutum. At vero si possit quidem sed tamen nolit ieiunium frangere, contendo huiusmodi hominem non esse ad baptismum rite dispositum, ob rationes supra allatas et inferius afferendas.

Obiicies quarto. Si nos adeo difficiles praebeamus in admittendis ieiunantibus ad baptismum, haud dubie innumeros ab amplectenda fide Christiana absterrebimus? Qui fortasse aliquando optimi Christiani forent, et post baptismum iam susceptum ieiunio suo tandem aliquando renuntiarent.

Respondeo, qui sperare prudenter licet e tam immorigeris et obstinatis catechumenis futuros aliquando bonos Christianos? Et quamvis id certo praeviderem futurum non illis propterea baptismum conferrem. Non enim sunt facienda mala ut inde eveniant bona. Tibi prius incumbit probandum, posse illos licite baptizari, deinde uti poteris hoc argumento.

Respondeo secundo, iam ergo ut video non agis de aliquo casu extraordinario, et admodum raro, quando quidem supponis tam multos, qui nimia, ut ais, sententiae nostrae severitate a baptismo

arcentur, tuae sententiae beneficio baptizandos? Et revera rationes omnes pro contraria opinione allatae si quid probant, non solum probant in aliquo casu extraordinario, et admodum raro, posse baptizari ieiunantem ieiunium frangere renuantem, verum id semper licite posse fieri, nisi aliud obstat, ut cuivis eas expendenti facile patebit.

Respondeo tertio ergo pinguius erraverint omnes antiqui huius missionis Patres, qui ieiunantibus ieiunium solvere renuentibus baptismum constanter negantes tot eorum myriades ut supponis, ab amplectenda fide absterruerint, et valde timendum est ne in die iudicii, eorum aeternae damnationis inveniantur rei. O nos ergo beatos qui tam brevi temporis spatio, clariorem ac certiore assecuti sumus rerum Sinicarum notitiam quam illi tot annorum usu ac experientia: adeo ut illorum iam possimus emendare errata. Quasi vero? Id ita sibi persuadeat qui volet, at mihi sane tutius videtur eorum inhaerere vestigiis, quam ab iis discedere, et per novum ac nondum tritum iter incedere, tantumque illorum auctoritati ac experientiae tribuo, ut cum iis errare malim quam sapere cum paucis aliis.

Respondeo quarto Deum non concupiscere multitudinem filiorum inutilium, quales haud dubie futuri essent innumeri ieiunantes, nisi ante baptismum ieiunio suo valedicere compellerentur [58^r] ac brevi videremus nuptias discumbentium plenas hominibus non habentibus vestem nuptialem.

Respondeo quinto, non esse tam multos ut putas qui propterea ab amplectenda fide Christiana absterrentur, ut videre est in exemplo superius relato de trecentis illis ieiunantibus in uno pago baptizatis, tribus tantum vetulis obfirmato animo in sua superstitione haerentibus, quarum etiam una trecentorum illorum exemplo permota, et ipsa tandem ieiunium solvit eorumque numero est aggregata.

Respondeo sexto, retorquendo argumentum ideo innumeri ab amplectenda fide absterrentur, quia illicitum et nefas esse docemus, papyraceas illas massas deauratas vel deargentatas, quas Sinae vocant *Kin yin tim*, vel *chi çien*, in mortuorum funeribus, aut alia qualibet occasione comburere, ergo ne propterea id erit Christianis permittendum ut ad fidem alliciantur infideles?

At inquires inter ritum illum ac ieiunium Sinicum, maxima est disparitas. Ieiunium siquidem est ex natura sua indifferens, et sublato malo fine erit omnino innocens. Si vero in bonum aliquem finem referatur, iam erit opus bonum ac meritorium. Quod certe dici nequit de illo ritu qui est mere gentilicus ac superstitiosus, nam illa papyrus

ita deaurata vel deargentata in tali forma et figura, est ex natura sua determinata ad malum finem, nempe ad cultum daemionis et idolorum, et ut inde sublevetur inopia defunctorum, atque illis suppeditetur pecunia in sumptus necessarios, neque ullum alium habet usum, ac proinde non possunt Christiani sine gravissima Numinis offensa talem caeremoniam usurpare.

Sed contra quamvis magnum sit discrimen inter ieiunium Sinicum et illum ritum quoad materiale, tamen quoad formale, sunt moraliter et aequivalenter fere idem, et ad idem peccatum superstitionis vel idololatriae reducuntur. Coeterum ex natura sua, tam est indifferens et innoxia illa papyri combustio, quam ieiunium Sinicum, et utrumque malitiam contrahit ex malo fine in quem ordinatur. Nam sicut illa papyrus ita deaurata vel deargentata cum tali forma et figura, est determinata ad usum superstitiosum et idolatricum, ex institutione aut consuetudine, ita et illud ieiunium in tali forma, id est involvens abstinentiam non solum a carne, pisce, ovis, lactiniis et vino, sed etiam a certis quibusdam oleribus, est determinatum ex institutione, aut consuetudine, ad cultum idolatricum et superstitiosum. Fingamus ergo ethnicum aliquem qui velit Christianus fieri ea lege, ut sibi liceat huiusmodi papyrum comburere, non quidem ad colendum idolum, aut sublevandum mortuorum inopiam, sed potius ad colendum verum Numen. Nonne illum ridiculum ac risu dignum putares? Haud dubie et sane merito. Ergo non minus ridiculus censendus erit ieiunans qui dixerit se velle in illo suo tam heteroclitico ac superstitioso ieiunio, ad veri numinis cultum persistere.

Instabis illam papyri combustionem non esse medium ad Dei cultum idoneum, esset enim vanus et impertinens cultus.

Respondeo et idem tibi repono de illo ieiunio Sinico cum abstinentia ab alliis, caevis et porris. Quis enim non videat ineptissimum esse medium ad colendum Deum, et in aestimatione prudentium cultum omnino impertinentem?

Instabis rursus esto non sit aptum huiusmodi ieiunium ut ad Dei honorem referatur. At certe negari non potest quin pro ieiunantis arbitrio separari possit a malo fine ob quem ab eo fuerat ante susceptum, et in eo casu remanebit indifferens et per consequens innoxium. Quod certe dici non potest de illa papyri combustionem, quia supposita tali institutione, non potest papyrus talis formae ac figurae [58^v] et in talibus circumstantiis comburi, quin virtualiter, vel formaliter comburatur ob eum finem ad quem est determinata ex institutione, vel consuetudine in toto regno communiter recepta.

Sed contra gratis dicis non posse illam papyri combustionem,

per intentionem comburentis separari a malo fine ad quem est instituta, quia tam est ab illo praescindibilis ac separabilis quam ieiunium a suo.

Et de facto separatur a multis litteratis infidelibus qui huiusmodi ritum passim usurpant, non ad colenda idola in quae non credunt, nec ad sublevandas defunctorum animas, quas non interpretant immortales, sed tantum velut caeremoniam politicam, et ad hao can, ut aiunt, vel ad Ti mien, id est ad honorem, et ad decus ac pompam funeris. Ergo posset etiam Christianus, reiecto pravo et superstitioso illo fine ob quem instituta ipsa papyri combustio, usurpare ritum illum tanquam mere politicum, et ad hao can, sicut illi litterati et sic esset indifferens. Etenim dices neque adhibita illa cautione esset innocens, quia illa non obstante daret occasionem scandali tum Christianis tum infidelibus, qui cum fundamento a parte rei existimarent ab eo usurpari talem ritum more gentilico, et ob eum finem propter quem est institutus.

Respondeo idem retorquendo de ieiunante qui ante baptismum non renuntiat ieiunio suo, et post illum iam susceptum, illud adhuc retinet. Omnes enim et Christiani et infideles, cum magno fundamento a parte rei existimare possunt, illum adhuc more gentilico ieiunare, et ob eundem finem propter quem ante ieiunabat, et sic illis non mediocris scandali praeberetur occasio.

Immo addo longe graviora oriri posse scandala ex Christianis ieiunium illud servantibus, quam ex papyraceas illas massas cremantibus, quia ut supra praenotavi ieiunium illud Sinis pariter ac Tartaris est exosum, et ieiunantes apud illos passim male audiunt, pro haereticis ac perduellibus habentur, et saepe ut tales coniiiciuntur in vincula ac graviter puniuntur. Ille autem ritus comburendi papyrum nihil omnino habet offensionis nec apud Tartaros, nec apud Sinas, quin immo ab utrisque et laudatur et passim usurpatur. Et sane sunt innumeri qui a suscipienda Christiana lege abhorrent, quod videant Christianis non esse licitum, talem in suis funeribus ritum usurpare.

Nolim tamen putes mihi probari hunc ritum, et ista a me eo animo in medium afferri, ut persuadeam Christianis esse permittendum, quo ad fidem alliciantur ethnici; illum etenim damno et prorsus illicitum iudico. Eo igitur dumtaxat spectant rationes omnes a me allatae circa illum ritum ut ostendam tuum argumentum nimis probare ac proinde nihil.

Si ergo non obstantibus his rationibus hunc tamen ritum gentilicum damnamus, et Christianis prohibemus, vel ex eo solo capite quod ad finem superstitiosum et idolatricum est institutum: quanto magis damnandum est et Christianis prohibendum

ieiunium illud quod praeterquam quod in finem supersitiosum et idolatricum est institutum, hoc habet insuper, ut multis sit obnoxium periculis et gravissimorum esse possit origo malorum.

Adde quod non parum absurdum videri posset, et forte non deessent qui nos sugillarent, et sane merito, si audirent nos ex una parte ieiunium adeo heteroclitum ac superstitiosum Christianis Sinensibus permittere, et ex altera cum iisdem in ieiuniis ecclesiasticis dispensare, uti de facto ex indulgentia Summi Pontificis ad tempus dispensamus, eosque a maxima illorum parte eximimus.

Obiicies quinto periculum esse ne si ieiunantes antequam baptismum suscipiant ad violandum ieiunium adigamus, id in maximum cedat Christianae legis contemptum ac ludibrium apud infideles. [59] Qui fortassis inde ansam arripiunt obtrectandi Christianis et iis exprobrandi Christianam legem, sectam esse helluonum, utpote quae abstinentiam damnet, et sectatores suos ad vorandas carnes adigat, vel invito.

Respondeo hoc esse merum terriculamentum; et quaero a quibus nam infidelibus timendae sint huiusmodi oblocutiones? Non certe a non ieiunantibus, qui nobiscum tale ieiunium damnant, et vel ex eo divinae legis sanctitatem magis suspicient ac venerabuntur quod illud reprobet et Christianis prohibeat ut illicitum. Ergo a solis ieiunantibus, qui sunt infinitis ut ita dicam partibus, aliis gentilibus pauciores timendae sunt. An ergo quia pauci illi ieiunantes ieiunium nostrum carpunt ac damnant, ut nimis laxum, ideo nobis persuadere vis ut eo abiecto heterodoxam illorum abstinentiam amplectamur? Certe et Pharisei Christum Dominum carpebant, et laxioris vitae criminabantur quod eius discipuli non ieiunarent sicut discipuli Iohannis, et quod ipsemet cum publicanis ac peccatoribus accumbens, ferculis sibi apposis indiscriminatim vesceretur, ac vinum biberet; eius famam proscindebant et per atrocissimam blasphemiam vini potatorem appellare non dubitabant. An propterea Christus coeptum vitae institutum mutavit? Minime vero, quin potius scribarum ac Pharisaeorum hypocrisis damnans, discipulorum innocentiam ab eorum calumnia vindicavit ac tandem de hypocritis illis loquens pronuntiavit: "Sinite illos caeci sunt et duces caecorum." Idem igitur de ieiunantibus nobis obloquentibus dicendum minimeque curandum de eorum obtrectationibus, dummodo ministerium nostrum impleamus, et ad Evangelii veritatem recte ambulemus.

Coeterum si ratione velimus cum iis agere nobis haudquaquam deerunt argumenta quibus eorum confutemus oblocutiones et "obmutescere faciamus imprudentium hominum ignorantiam,"

cum ipsimet et fateantur nostrum ieiunium suo esse longe difficilius. Sunt enim famis impatientissimi, ac ter minimum interdiu comedunt, qualibet et vice ad satietatem, et quod est omnino ridiculum, iis ut supra animadverti, per ieiunii sui leges licitum est qualibet diei ac noctis hora cibum sumere. Egregium vero ieiunio.

Praeterea velim animadvertas quod iam superius monui, tuam illam ultimam rationem, sicut et omnes alias, probare non solum raro et in aliquo casu extraordinario, sed semper baptizari licite posse, ac debere ieiunantes quamvis ieiunium frangere renuant, immo optandum esse ut illud non frangant, sed semper in eo perseverent, atque ad id hortandos esse, ne videlicet Christiana religio male audiat apud infideles, et traducatur quasi ieiunia et victus asperitatem damnet, et e contra epulis ac lauta corporis tractatione delectetur. Ergo illa ratio nimis probat et aperte impugnat id quod nuper unanimi Patrum consensu statutum est, scilicet non esse baptizandos ieiunantes, quin prius ieiunium frangant, nisi forte in aliquo casu admodum raro et omnino extraordinario, qualis est verbi gratia articulus mortis.

In alio autem quocunque casu, si ieiunans possit ieiunium frangere, et id recuset, iterum, iterumque contendo nec debere nec posse licite baptizari, quod iam satis superque probavi, et de novo probo hoc efficacissimo argumento. Suppono ministrum baptismi, tum ratione officii [59^v] sui, tum ut se conformet cum eo quod nuper statutum est in coetum viginti trium Patrum, teneri, et quidem sub culpa gravi, docere et adhortari ieiunantem ad frangendum ieiunium, immo si opus sit hoc illi praecipere. Sic enim ait statutum ieiunantes non fracto ieiunio non admittantur ad baptismum, nisi in aliquo casu extraordinario, in quo secluso scandalo, constaret de recta ieiunantis intentione. Si enim teneor procurare ut ille ieiunium frangat, ergo et teneor adhibere media ad eum finem consequendum necessaria, quae sunt illum docere et adhortari, et si opus sit praecipere ut ieiunium frangat.

Quo posito sic argumentor: non possum eum licite baptizare quem mihi certo constat non esse ad baptismum rite dispositum; atque mihi certo constat talem esse ieiunantem qui cum possit ieiunium frangere renuit; ergo non possum eum licite baptizare. Clara est maior, probatur minor. Mihi certo constat eum non esse ad baptismum rite dispositum quem mihi certo constat non esse contritum neque attritum de peccatis vitae praeteritae; atqui mihi certo constat talem ieiunantem non esse contritum neque attritum; ergo mihi certo constat non esse rite dispositum. Maior itidem

certa est; probatur minor. Illum certo constat nec contritum esse nec attritum quem certo constat non solum in peccato habituali existere, verum etiam actu peccare, atqui ieiunans ieiunium frangere renuens, ita se habet; ergo certo constat nec contritum esse nec attritum. Probatur minor, illum constat actu peccare et quidem graviter, qui in re gravi legitimae potestati et Dei ordinationi resistit; atqui ita se habet ieiunans ieiunium frangere renuens, ergo certo constat illum actu graviter peccare. Probatur minor, ille legitimae potestati, et Dei ordinationi resistit et quidem in re gravi, qui in suae salutis negotio, Praeconem Evangelicum docentem, adhortantem, praeipientem ut ieiunium frangat audire detractat, eique obtemperare renuit, ac proinde non solum hominem, sed Deum ipsum in sui ministri persona loquentem contemnit, iuxta illa Christi Domini verba: "Qui vos audit me audit, et qui vos spernit, me spernit."

Sed adhuc efficaciore argumento probatur ieiunantem ieiunium frangere renuentem, non solum non esse ad baptismum rite dispositum, verum etiam novo se scelere, eoque gravissimo contaminare. Ille ieiunans non est ad baptismum rite dispositus, et gravissime peccat. Qui ita affectus est, ut ante baptismum carere velit quam suo ieiunio, at qui ita affectus est ieiunans qui ieiunium frangere renuit, ergo non solum non est ad baptismum rite dispositus, verum etiam novo se peccato eoque gravissimo inquinat. Clara est maior, minor vero non indiget ulteriori probatione, cum ipsemet ieiunans ieiunium frangere renuens, aperte profiteatur nolle se Christianum fieri, nisi ea lege ut sibi liceat abstinentiam suam sartam tectam servare. Et id ipsum fateantur necesse est ipsimet adversarii quippe qui nobis obiiciunt ideo ab amplectanda Christiana lege arceri tam multos ieiunantes, quod eos ad frangendum ieiunium adigere velimus. Non enim nos arcemus eos sed ipsimet propria sponte resiliunt, et ieiunium suum Christianae legi ac baptismi anteponentes, repellunt verbum Dei, et aeternae vitae indignos se iudicant.

At inquires non est charitatis neque prudentiae, infideles fidem amplecti cupientes in huiusmodi angustias coniicere, easque iis condiciones proponere ac difficultates obiicere, quae eos a tam sancto ac salutari proposito absterrere possint, sed sunt potius suaviter alliciendi ac benigne suscipiendi, atque eorum infirmitati non nihil indulgendum, ut eos Christo lucrifaciamus.

Sed contra, fateor non esse charitatis neque prudentiae eas illis difficultates obiicere, quae tantum sunt consilii et maioris perfectionis, aut quae ad rem non pertinent. Ergo, non expedit

ab iis exigere, ut a coniugio abstineant, ac coelibem vitam ducant, ut omnes suas facultates pauperibus erogent? Multo autem minus expedit difficiles aliquas condiciones iis proponere minime necessarias, et ad rem non pertinentes, quae illos possent ab amplectendae fidei proposito [60^r] abstertere, ut verbi gratia si illis dicerem: “Si vobis baptismum conferre nollem nisi ea lege ut cilicium perpetuo gestaretis, ut diebus singulis tres horas orationi impenderetis, parati ne essetis ad eas condiciones amplectendas, et baptismum cum onore suscipiendum?” Aut: “Si vobis iamiam pro fide moriendum esset, si statim post susceptum baptismum, vivimento igne cremandi essetis, an tamen nihilominus velletis fieri Christiani?” Huiusmodi condiciones nec prudentia nec charitas permittit illis proponere, quia hoc esset illis laqueum iniicere, et ad peccatum velut inducere, non est enim dubium quin multi his difficultatibus perterriti Christianae religionis iugum detrectarent, ac baptismum respuerent, sed tamen Deus non attendit quid in eo casu facturi essent, et sicut non remunerat merita, ita neque punit peccata mere conditionate futura. At vero conditio quam ieiunantibus propono, a supradictis est longe diversa, neque est difficilis sed facillima, et omnino necessaria, atque adeo illis laqueum non inicio, aut ad peccandum induco, sed potius quantum in me est e diaboli laqueis, quibus irretiti tenentur, expedio, et ut spiritualis medicus, iis ad sanandam eorum infidelitatem pharmacum porrigo; quod si a pharmaco abhorrentes, et ob eius horrorem baptismum respuentes, novo se peccato contaminent, non mihi certe sed iis solis imputabitur, et ex ipsismet perditio illorum; “curavimus enim Babylonem et non est sanata”; iis nequaquam propono conditionem minime necessariam et ad rem non pertinentem, sed plane necessariam ad amoliendum malum eorum statum, non conditionate futurum, sed revera praesentem et actu existentem, ac proinde baptismi effectui repugnantem.

Ex dictis colliges primo, ieiunantes qui ad fidem accedentes ieiunium solvere renuunt, adhuc retinere affectum ad priorem finem malum ob quem ante ieiunabant; non enim amant ieiunium ut sic et praecise propter seipsum, “nemo enim carnem suam odio habuit, sed magis nutrit ac fovet eam.” Aut si illam ieiuniis macerat ac vigiliis atterit, id certe facit intuitu eximii alicuius boni, veri vel apparentis, et propter aliquem finem, quem utique magis diligit quam vegetum ac florentem carnis suae statum. Ergo ieiunantes illi ieiunium amant ut medium conducens ad illum quem sibi proposuerunt finem adipiscendum, ac proinde ipsum finem longe plus diligunt quam ieiunium, iuxta vulgatum illud axioma “propter

quod unumquodque tale est illud magis." Sibi autem persuadere illos iam propter Deum facere, quod ante propter daemonem, aut idolum faciebant, est, ut supra animadverti, semetipsum gratis velle decipere quamvis enim illa pravae intentionis in bonam mutatio, speculative loquendo sit possibilis, est tamen practice loquendo moraliter impossibilis homini ethnico, in superstitione et idololatria ab incunabulis educato, ac recens ad fidem converso, qui sane non est adeo spiritualis ut separare queat pretiosum a vili.

Unde colliges secundo, tales ieunantes nequaquam esse attritos de prava intentione ex qua ante ieunarunt. Quippe qui eidem ieunio adhuc tam tenaciter adhaereant; sicuti neque concubinarius censi posset attritus de turpi et inhonesto pellicis amore, quam vellet adhuc retinere quantumvis polliceretur se illa posthaec non abusurum. Immo addo illos neque in Deum credere ut par est, qui adhuc a daemone aut idolo sperant ieunii sui praemia, et timent ne si illud deferant ab iis tanquam violati voti ac iuramenti rei gravi aliqua poena mulcentur. Et hic est, nisi nosmet ipsos fallere volumus, nodus [60°] difficulatis, et vera ieunantium remora, id est ratio propter quam a ieunio suo tam aegre avelluntur, ut ipsimet saepissime fatentur.

Colliges tertio. Quod quamvis monendi sint Christiani ne ieunantium exacerbent animos iis importune exprobrando suum ieunium, quod posset eos ab amplectenda fide abstertere; sed eos potius suaviter alliciant, benigne hortentur, et ad Patres perducant, ex altera tamen parte cavendum est, ne hic error inter Christianos et infideles irreat, videlicet ieunium illud non esse obicem ad Christianam legem suscipiendam, et posse ieunantes illo retento admitti ad baptismum. Hinc enim gravissima orientur scandala.

Colliges quarto. Cum ieunantes catechumenos fidei mysteriis imbuimus, iisque dicimus quod si post fractum semel ieunium susceptumque baptismum, ad Dei honorem perpetuo ieunare velint id cum laude et merito possint, hoc esse intelligendum de ieunio ecclesiastico, aut alio rationabili, non autem de illo pristino heteroclitico ac superstitioso. Si qui tamen essent qui cuperent a carne, ovis, lacticiniis et vino perpetuo abstinere, quod aut nunquam aut certe rarissime eventurum puto; post semel rite fractum ieunium, id non esset illis prohibendum, dummodo sui illius ieunii formam ita immutarent, utendo verbi gratia, alliis caevis et porris et saltem porcino adipe, ad condienda sua olera iuxta morem Sinarum; ut non amplius censi possent eo quo ante solebant modo ieunare, idque tum ad vitandum et Christianorum et infidelium scandalum, tum ob proprium ipsorum et periculum,

relapsus in superstitionem et idololatriam, usurpando et prae oculis ac manibus semper habendo eadem media quibus alias idolum ac daemonem coluerunt, quae sunt veluti compedes ac catenae quibus ab iis vincti ac captivi tenebantur. Obiectum enim praesens movet potentiam et cum ad bonum tum ad malum solet esse vehemens incitamentum.

Colliges quinto. Quod quamvis contraria opinio quae paucissimorum est videatur prima fronte mitior ac benignior quam nostra magisque promovere salutem animarum, ac longe plurium saluti consulere. Revera tamen non ita se res habet, et tantum abest ut magis promoveat salutem animarum, et plurium saluti prospiciat, quin potius impedit veram ac sinceram earum conversionem, et nonnisi fictam promovet atque apparentem. Hinc enim natum est fieri, ut multi ieiunantes in sua superstitione perseverent et fecte ac sacrilege baptismum suscipiant, qui fortasse tandem aliquando erant ieiunio suo renuntiaturi, et digne baptismum suscepturi, nisi tua illa nimia benignitas atque indulgentia eos impulisset in fraudem. Multique huiusmodi homines in hora mortis inveniuntur toto vitae tempore propter daemonem aut idolum ieiunasse, existimantes se duobus dominis servire, et Christum cum Belial coniungere posse. Quibus certe tunc nihil proderit tuae opinionis praesumpta probabilitas. Nonne ergo times ne illi in die iudicii contra te insurgant, et se, querantur a te fuisse deceptos? Desine ergo tuam illam opinionem iactare, tanquam mitiorem ac benigniorem. Non est enim benignus medicus qui infirmi aegritudinem dissimulat, et timens illum contristare, non audet illi amarum a quo abhorret pharmacum propinare, atque ita illum perimit. Neque chirurgus qui parcit ferro et ignibus, cum iis utendum esset, ac levi curatione contentus, cicatricem obducens vulnus non sanat, et apostema relinquit ad interiora serpens [61'] ac praecordia corrumpent. Ego vero malo ieiunantes ad poenitentiam et salutem contristare, quam illis loquendo placentia, eos impellere in ruinam ac mergere in interitum: malo erga illos uti crudelitate misericordiae quam misericordia crudeli, ut loquitur Augustinus.

Appendix de aliis ieiunantibus Sinicis

Praeter eos ieiunantes de quibus egimus sciendum est inter Sinas multa esse alia ieiunantium genera; quidam enim etsi in honorem idolorum ieiunent, illorum tamen ieiunium non est continuum neque perpetuum, ter enim aut quater dumtaxat in mense, aut in hebdomada, ieiunant, neque in eo ieiunio ad mortem usque pervenerant, sed ad certum ac definitum annorum numerum,

prout voto ac iuramento se obstrinxerunt. Alii sunt qui ieiunant in honorem illustrium quorundam virorum de republica benemeritorum. Alii in honorem parentum sive iam defunctorum, sive adhuc superstitum. Alii denique ob alios fines politicos ac profanos. Quaeres fortasse quid de illis omnibus sentiam.

Respondeo primo. Quoad primum ieiunii genus quod in honorem daemonis aut idoli, sive ad vitam, sive ad certum dumtaxat annorum, susceptum est, idem prorsus ferendum esse iudicium, et contra utrumque militant omnes rationes supra allatae, et utroque enim eadem servatur ciborum abstinentia. Alia vero ieiunia quae specie tenus videntur mere politica, mihi etiam valde suspecta, sunt superstitionis et idololatriae, et saltem magnam cum illa habent affinitatem. Sicut enim in iis locis ubi lues grassatur morbi omnes sunt suspecti ac periculosi, quia sunt plerumque veluti dispositiones ad luem contrahendam ob magnam corruptionem aeris qui facile inficit corpus iam imbecillum, et aliunde male affectum. Ita in istis gentilium regionibus ubi idololatriae ac superstitionis lues tam late grassatur, et ubi populorum animi in illam sunt adeo proni ac proclives, omni ope atque industria nobis procurandum est, ut ii qui ex gentilibus ad fidem accedunt, ab omnibus quae aliquam cum idolatria ac superstitione affinitatem habere videntur absterneant. Quamobrem citra omnia huiusmodi ieiunia, idem illis consilium darem quod medici circa fungos, quorum quamvis optimos afferant tamen esse noxios, atque auctores sunt, ut postquam bene conditi iam fuerint et in escam parati, proiciantur ne noceant. Idem itaque dico de omnibus illis ieiuniis, quaecumque demum speciosa videantur intentione cohonestari; latet enim in illis, ut plurimum, aliquid superstitionis et idololatriae, et non est minus operosum licita ab illicitis discernere quam fungos noxios ab innoxiiis. Atque adeo tutius est ab iis omnibus abstinere et more Christiano ieiunare.

Respondeo secundo. Valde suspicor ne illustres illi viri de republica adeo bene meriti, iam sint idololorum aut sanctorum Sinicorum fastis adscripti, atque adeo illicitum censeo eorum in honorem ieiunare. Deinde quaero quid sit in parentum, et in huiusmodi heroum honorem ieiunare? Velest ad aliquod beneficium ab iis postulandum, quod neque ipsimet per se praestare possunt, neque suis a Deo precibus impetrare quem nunquam coluerunt; vel est ad aliquod bonum iis procurandum, ut verbi gratia levamen poenarum quibus sunt in aeternum addicti; atqui utrumque est illicitum, et manifestam involvit superstitionem aut idololatriam.

Praeterea ieiunii triplex est finis. Primus ad refranandas carnis

concupiscentias; secundus, divinorum contemplatio, id est ut mens per abstinenciam aptior reddatur, ac liberior, ad vacandum contemplationi. Tertius est satisfactio pro poenis peccatorum. Hi sunt tres fines primarii ieiunii. Praeter quos sunt alii secundarii, ut ad colendum Deum et venerandos eius sanctos, et propterea institutae sunt aliquot vigiliae sanctorum ac festorum in quibus ieiunium praecipitur. Item adhiberi solet a fidelibus ad impetranda Dei beneficia. Atqui nullus horum finium congruit ieiuniis Sinicis. Ergo illa omnia vana sunt et ridicula ac superstitionem et idololatriam [61^v] redolentia ac proinde in homine Christiano minime ferenda. Cum enim ieiunium sit opus sanctum et observantia sacra quae ex institutione et usu Ecclesiae non solet adhiberi nisi ad colendum Deum et eius sanctos et ad alios fines supra relatos, turpe esset homini Christiano eandem observantiam adhibere ac referre ad fines adeo prophanos.

Ne tamen tibi nimium austerus et parum aequus videar erga ieiunantes Sinicos, ad tuum quaecunque solatium permitto homini Christiani ieiunare ad testandum vehementem quem ex infidelium parentum morte, ac aeterna damnatione percepit dolorem, dummodo id Christiano more faciat et non gentilico.

Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam, Beatissimae Virginis Mariae,
Et Sancti Iosephi eius sponsi ac missionis patroni

A deque faço menção no 3º § da 6ª carta do maço desta Prima via.
Este tratado he compuesto pelo Padre Adriano Grelon, escrito de
sua letra. Macao 10 de dezembro de [1]668.

Luis da Gama.

