

Kirk Summers / Scott M. Manetsch (eds.)

Theodore Beza at 500

New Perspectives on an Old Reformer



Academic Studies

74



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To our mentors and dear colleagues
Douglas Kelly
John Woodbridge

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Preface

The two editors of the present volume first met in Geneva in September 2005 while attending a colloquium there marking the 400th anniversary of Theodore Beza's death. The University of Geneva and the Institute of the History of the Reformation hosted the memorable gathering and Librairie Droz under the direction of Max Engammare (who contributes an essay to this volume) published the proceedings in 2007. Beza certainly received honors due his stature. Even so, we would seem remiss if we then allowed the occasion of the 500th anniversary of his birth to pass without receiving a similar observance. As 2019 approached, the editors began conversations about ways to pay homage to the influential reformer while at the same time highlighting the work of a new generation of scholars who are interrogating the life and work of the reformer from fresh perspectives. A valuable set of tools and conditions have emerged to aid their investigations, most notably the completion of the correspondence volumes begun by Alain Dufour in 1961, as well as a greater availability of archives and original source material online. Thus, the editors invited a group of gifted scholars from Asia, America, and Europe whose research focuses on Beza and his influence to submit papers to four panels, organized around certain broad themes, to be held at the Sixteenth Century Conference in St. Louis, Missouri in 2019. The H. Henry Meeter Center in Grand Rapids, MI, lent its *gravitas* to the event by sponsoring all four of these panels. The presenters further marked the occasion with a celebratory dinner one evening during the conference. Expanded versions of these papers now compose the contents of this volume. We hope that future generations will look back to 2019 and know that a group of scholars assembled for a weekend to remember the talents and convictions of an often-forgotten reformer who made such a significant impact on history.

As one would expect, we have many people to thank for the resulting publication. First, we are grateful to our contributors for their willingness to share their scholarship and for meeting the deadlines that allowed this project to move forward so quickly. They did so amid a devastating pandemic, the likes of which would have been so familiar to those living at Geneva and throughout Europe in the Early Modern period. We acknowledge too the excellent editorial work carried out by Bryan Just, a graduate assistant at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, IL. Furthermore, we thank Thomas Carlton, a doctoral student in French at the University of Alabama, for kindly making the initial translation of Max Engammare's article for us, and to the University of Alabama's Department of Modern Languages and Classics for remunerating

him for his services on our behalf. We are indebted to the encouragement and resources offered by Karin Maag, director of the Meeter Center, where many of the ideas in this volume first germinated and were brought to fruition; it was she who so graciously offered the sponsorship of the panels.

Finally, the editors recognize the many scholar-mentors in their own careers who modeled the dedication and academic acumen necessary to carrying out this project. We have chosen to single out two to whom to dedicate this volume, Dr. Douglas Kelly, who for many years taught theology at Reformed Theological Seminary and who guided some of Dr. Summers' first research on Beza, and Dr. John Woodbridge, a one-time mentor and now colleague of Dr. Manetsch, who just completed his fiftieth year on the faculty at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. For these two colleagues and friends, along with the greater community of scholars who have touched and enriched our professional and personal lives over the years, we are profoundly grateful.

Abbreviations

AEG	Archives d'Etat de Genève
ANF	The Ante-Nicene Fathers
Archiv Tronchin	Archives Tronchin, Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire, Geneva.
ARG	<i>Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte</i>
BC	<i>The Book of Concord</i>
BHR	<i>Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance</i>
BSHPF	<i>Bulletin de la société de l'histoire du Protestantisme français</i>
CB	<i>Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze</i>
CO	<i>Ioannis Calvini opera omnia quae supersunt.</i>
CR	Corpus Reformatorum
CTJ	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
CTS	Calvin Tract Society (Calvin's Commentaries)
Die Debatte	Die Debatte um die Wittenberger Abendmahlslehre und Christologie
HAAG	<i>La France protestante ou vies des protestants français</i>
Hist Ecclés	<i>Histoire Ecclésiastique des Église Réformées au royaume de France</i>
HZW	<i>Huldrych Zwingli Works</i>
JEMH	<i>Journal of Early Modern History</i>
Lefort, ed.	<i>Le Livre du recteur: Catalogue des Etudiants de l'Académie de Genève</i>
LW	Luther's Works
NPNF	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers
OER	<i>Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation</i>
PG	<i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca</i>
PL	<i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina</i>
RE	<i>Real Encyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche</i>
RCP	<i>Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève.</i>
RHPR	<i>Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses</i>
RRR	<i>Reformation and Renaissance Review</i>
RTP	<i>Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie</i>
SCJ	<i>Sixteenth Century Journal</i>
WSFS	<i>Oeuvres de Saint François de Sales</i>
WTJ	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>

Kirk Summers, Scott Manetsch

Introduction: New Perspectives on an Old Reformer

The End Goal of Faith

Théodore de Bèze (or Theodore Beza) marked two birthdays in his life: the first on the 24th day of June, 1519, when his mother Marie Bourdelot and his father Pierre de Bèze welcomed him into this world in the cathedral town of Vézelay in Bourgogne; and a second that he identified as his spiritual birthday and “the beginning of all good things,” when at the age of nine his uncle, who was overseeing his care, sent him to live and study in the home of Melchior Wolmar at Orléans.¹ Wolmar, a German immigrant who favored the new evangelical movement recently set in motion by Luther, immersed the young Theodore in a rigorous humanist curriculum and profoundly shaped his outlook on life. “Although I was a mere boy when you took me in,” Beza recalls later, “and you had other, more advanced students of great hope to teach, what effort did you not put forth willingly for my formation?”² Under his German tutor, Beza learned both the new evangelical critique of Roman Catholicism and also the tools of the past: Hebrew, Greek, Latin, philosophy, ancient law and history. Wolmar instilled these in him until they became second nature. He learned Latin to the point that, as Alain Dufour observes, he could compose in the ancient tongue even more easily than his native French.³

It is natural for us, from our vantage point five hundred years later, to celebrate the first birthday and to honor the life of someone who had a significant impact on the sixteenth century. The occasion of the quincentennial of his birth (1519–2019) leads us to think in broad brush strokes of such a remarkable individual who put his stamp on so much: we remember Beza the theological polemicist, Beza the successor of Calvin, Beza the first rector of the Genevan Academy, and so on. None of these great achievements, however, should minimize in our minds the other way in which Beza reckoned time, beginning with his entrance into the residence of Wolmar and his slow spiritual awakening

1 Beza to Wolmar, 12 March 1560, in CB 3:45: “And therefore it happened that I arrived at your house on 5 December 1528, a day that I am in the habit of celebrating as none other than a second birthday, and rightfully so.” Beza included these autobiographical details in a letter addressed to Wolmar that serves as the preface to his *Confessio Christianae fidei* (1560).

2 Beza to Wolmar, 12 March 1560, in CB 3:45.

3 DUFOUR, A. (2006), 12.

that began, by his own account, at age sixteen when there he read Heinrich Bullinger's *De origine erroris, in divorum ac simulachrorum cultu* (1529).⁴ This was for him a pivotal moment, a starting point, one in which he began to prepare—though with fits and starts—for his life's calling as a pastor-teacher and to face the long and arduous process of personal sanctification.⁵ The same Beza who so confidently defended the Reformed faith on an international stage, who for so long after Calvin's death bore the mantle of elder statesman in the cause, also carried a heavy inner burden for ministering to the Genevan flock and traveling his own path of obedience and renewal.

Beza tended to think of the Christian's experience as a journey. Throughout his many writings, especially the correspondence, the poems and emblems, the sermons that he preached, and his New Testament annotations, he characterizes this journey as one fraught with perils and temptations, requiring constant circumspection, resolute fortitude and endurance. He knew this from his own struggles. The man whom we know best through his most enduring accomplishments saw himself differently, as he anxiously fought with all his resources to finish the course and reach the final goal set before him. This perspective, his inward focus on his personal relationship with God, emerges starkly from a letter written to a wealthy Moravian baron Václav Morkovský the Elder of Zástřizl (1554–1600; hereafter Zastrisell the Elder) in September of 1597.⁶ Though the letter never arrived at its destination, the aged Beza intended to relate news of the publication of his *Poemata varia*, the cost of which was borne by the Zastrisell family itself, and to communicate the difficulties created for Geneva and his own household by the ongoing war between France and Savoy. To these more mundane matters he adds the following solemn reminder of his personal spiritual journey, begun so long ago under the care of Wolmar:

If you are wondering how I am faring and what I am doing, old age—but not any illness, by God's grace—prevents me from meeting my public responsibilities, so I keep myself at home, resting, consoling myself with prayers and private studies day and night, intent on just one goal, escaping a shipwreck of faith and hope to arrive finally at the longed-for harbor.⁷

4 On Beza's gradual conversion, see MEYLAN, H. (1976), and MANETSCH, S. (2006). Manetsch discusses the role of Bullinger's tract in Beza's disillusionment with Roman Catholicism on 42–43. For Beza's debt to the Zurich reformer, see Beza to Bullinger, 18 August 1568, in CB 119–123.

5 Meylan likens Beza's conversion to a “long hesitation of a Christian humanist.” See MEYLAN, H. (1976).

6 Beza to Zastrisell the Elder, 26 August/5 September 1597, in CB 38:152–156.

7 Beza to Zastrisell the Elder, 26 August/5 September 1597, in CB 38:155.

Beza favors this harbor motif in his writings, as it spoke to him in optimistic terms of the end of the journey—the safety, the calm refuge of a port, the heavenly rest that awaits.⁸ He worries much about shipwrecks too, though only in the metaphorical sense: the journey into the harbor is beset on all sides with perils. Writing later to the same Zastrisell the Elder and more aware than ever how quickly his health is failing, he describes the same state of mind: “intent on this one thing, that I not falter (*impingam*) in the harbor itself, as they say.”⁹ Serious illnesses constantly sent him to this mental picture. A protracted bout of bronchitis, for example, that incapacitated him for two whole months in 1580, made him assume that he was close to his life’s goal. Thus, he confides to James Lawson (1538–1584), then Moderator of the Church of Scotland, that only God’s grace keeps him from being overwhelmed by the tempests during his illness and faltering in the harbor itself (*in ipso portu impingam*).¹⁰ He repeats the exact same sentiment to the tutor of Scotland’s King James VI, Peter Young (1544–1628), a few months later.¹¹ This is the very same year in which Beza publishes an emblem in the edition of the *Icones* (dedicated to King James VI himself) that warns the godly not to approach their final destination undisciplined, recklessly, and at the mercy of fortune.¹² The accompanying woodcut, fittingly, depicts an out-of-control ship reaching the harbor with sails fully furled and beginning to sink. Later iterations of this emblem bear the revealing title “A Ship Faltering in the Harbor” (*impingens in portu*).

In the letter to Zastrisell the Elder cited above, Beza is concerned about a shipwreck of *faith and hope*. He uses a comparable phrase in the dedicatory letter of his paraphrases on Solomon’s *Ecclesiastes* (1588), addressed to Jean Casimir, Count Palatine, and his nephew.¹³ Beza considers the *Ecclesiastes* to

8 On the harbor motif, see the editors’ comments at CB 41:33n.10. The motif appears frequently after Beza’s sixtieth birthday (see Beza to Heinrich Möller, 21 August 1579, in CB 20:164 and n. 9 for Beza’s application of it in the context of his own life’s journey); it appears also in Beza to Rudolph Gwalther, 9 July 1580, in CB 21:171; Beza to Nicolas Rhediger, 21/31 December 1597, in CB 38:228; and Beza to Philippe Duplessis-Mornay, 4/14 July 1599, in CB 40:92. In writing to Crato von Krafftheim (13 March 1577, in CB 18:51), Beza speaks of the Lord as the helmsman who aims the ship for the port amid the tempests. Also in 1577 (*ibid.*, 208), he describes himself as “wholly intent, by the kindness of God, on being transported through the midst of the tempests to the port.” For *impingere* in the non-classical sense of “to stumble, to falter,” cf. Beza’s Latin translation of 1 Cor 8:9 (*impingendi causa*).

9 Beza to Zastrisell the Elder, 1/11 March 1600, 41:33. The editors note that he borrows the expression from Quintilian 4.1.61 and Augustine, *Enn. in Psalmum* 54.24. See also Beza to Paludius, 1/11 March 1600, in CB 41:41; and Beza to David Paraeus, 10/20 April 1660, in 41:46.

10 Beza to James Lawson, 16 March 1580, in CB 21:79.

11 Beza to Peter Young, 20 May 1580, in CB 21:127. Here the editors point to Augustine’s *De vita beata* and *De cataclysmo* as the source of this image (see 128n.6).

12 Beza, *Icones*, Mm.iii^v.

13 Beza to Jean Casimir and his nephew, 15/25 August 1588, in CB 29:243–263 (appendix XI).

be a work that surpasses by far all the wisdom of the philosophers of antiquity. There is “no twist of the labyrinth of this mortal life, however winding,” he says, “from which I feel this guide cannot extricate us.” Human reason may resist these remedies for human affairs, but a mind that is open to them and not dependent on its own powers will avoid many a Scylla on the one side and many a Charybdis on the other. On these, people have frequently, not only faltered (*impegerunt*), but even made a shipwreck of piety and salvation. He concludes:

In this work one does not hear Heraclitus uselessly weeping or Democritus mocking the wretched, nor someone blaspheming nature, or rather attacking God; no, one hears the Spirit, the one teacher of the truth, who seeks out the blind through all the byways of this world and takes them by the hand, leading them sweetly to the harbor of eternal happiness.¹⁴

In contrast to the Greek philosophers, Beza recognizes that human wisdom in and of itself fails to lead lost souls from the darkness to the harbor of eternal happiness. As a person tries to become clever in his own thoughts, apart from the revealed Word, he says in 1567 while referencing the heretical ideas of Valentino Gentile (c. 1520–1566), “they dash against the rock and make a shipwreck.”¹⁵ Thus in a later letter he warns his friend Pierre Loiseleur de Villiers (1530–1590) against panicking and relying on his own wits while traversing the vast sea of life’s voyage: many an unfortunate sailor, he tells him, seized by ambition or desperation, or even a sudden ill-advised impulse, grabs the rudder of their own ship and consequently brings about their own ruin.¹⁶

In the letter to Zastrisell the Elder, Beza mentions two remedies he relies upon to safeguard his journey: he consoles himself by constant praying and by immersing himself in his studies. These are not mere platitudes. The reference to praying here is grounded in an important feature of Beza’s spiritual life and piety, embodied in the “daily prayers” that Beza translated into Latin and sent to Zastrisell the Younger at the latter’s request.¹⁷ Since the young nephew of Zastrisell the Elder once lived in Beza’s home while studying in Geneva, it seems likely that the young nobleman heard these prayers firsthand from Beza and admired them; there is also a likely connection to the somewhat mysterious book of household prayers published in London by John Barnes with the title

14 Beza to Jean Casimir and his nephew, 15/25 August 1588, in CB 29:259.

15 Preface to the Collection on Valentino Gentile, 5 August 1567, in CB 8:241 (ital. mine): “*impegens scopulum naufragium faceret.*”

16 Beza to Pierre Loiseleur de Villiers, 23 July 1578, in CB 19:129.

17 MANETSCH, S. (2003), esp. 281. See also Beza to Zastrisell the Younger, 18/28 June 1597, CB 38:97 and n. 12.

Maister Beza's Household Prayers (1603, 1607, 1621).¹⁸ The title page (1607) proclaims these prayers to be “for the consolation and perfection of a Christian life,” and as such reflect Beza’s fervent requests before God. Among the twenty-eight prayers included in the English version appears “A prayer to know God in Jesus Christ;” “A prayer for the well using of afflictions;” “A prayer to obtain the virtue of hope;” and “A prayer that we may not depart from the holy Church.” In the latter, we hear a very familiar refrain from the deep wells of the reformer’s soul:

In only one thing, therefore, must my soul take comfort, that as Noah was preserved from the universal shipwreck in his wooden mansion by the promise that he kept in his heart, so that a thousand falling on his right hand, and a thousand on his left hand, he remained sound and safe under your wing, even so I hold myself assured against the assaults of sin, and in the midst of the woeful rocks of this world, yea, even in the straits of the grave, that you will always preserve from all calamities and miseries those who stand fast in the ark of your Church, grounded upon your Word in the gospel of reconciliation to the Lord Jesus, and depart in his faith.¹⁹

Beza prays for the same mercy once bestowed upon Noah. While the flood waters overwhelmed and *shipwrecked* his less-fortunate earthly compatriots, Noah remained protected in the ark with his family. Beza envisions the Christian life in the same way, as a journey in a boat through the flood of the deadly perils lurking beneath the waves and through the straits. For the Christian, the ark becomes the Church, and the solid ground on which it comes to rest the Word. “The Church,” Beza remarks in his notes on 1 Timothy 3:15, “produces children of God and brings them up through the preaching of the Word and examples of truly good works.” He continues: the chaotic world lacks this truth; to live outside the protective ark of the Church is to “inhabit a world of darkness, lies, error, deceit, superstitious fears, the spirit of confusion and bafflement, with corruption permeating everything.”²⁰

Beza also relies on prayer to steady his soul in the face of the storm buffeting and battering the Church. He is convinced that the Church is the safe haven from the universal shipwreck of the human race. Yet, Beza was keenly aware that the Church itself faced a relentless and direct assault from Satan and the

18 MANETSCH, S. (2003), 281.

19 BEZA, T., *Maister Beza's Household Prayers* (1603), F9^f-11^f (we have taken the liberty to modernize the orthography).

20 BEZA, T., *Iesu Christi Domini nostri Novum Testamentum* (1598a), pt. 2:351. The phrase *spirit of confusion* comes from Isaiah 19:14. In [Beza] to Dürnhoffer, 9 April 1577, in CB 18:81, Beza describes the enemies of the Huguenots in France as being “drunk with the spirit of confusion.”

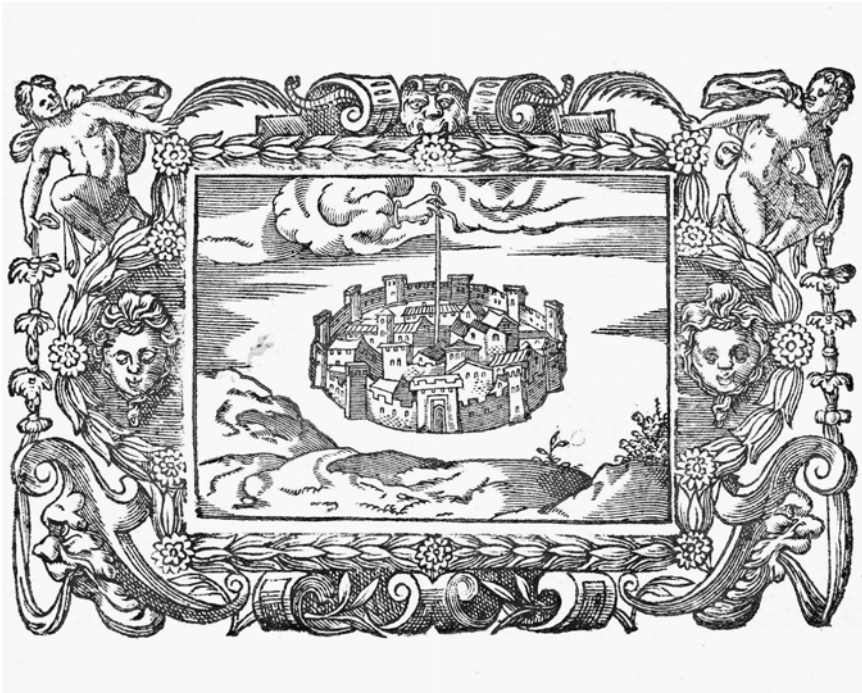


Figure 1 from *Les vrais portraits* (1581); Beza recognized that God's hand faithfully steadied the Church while human frailty constantly destabilized it. Credit: Kirk Summers.

Antichrist, and that it is possible for individuals within the visible Church to succumb to the onslaught, even if God always keeps afloat a remnant Church. How will he and others endure the violence of their enemies without faltering? He shares with Lorenz Dürnhoffer of Nuremberg (1532–1594)²¹ his fear that if tensions with Catholics and other confessional adversaries continue on pace in various parts of Europe, that there will be “no street corner immune from slaughter.”²² What a relief, he exclaims, that God has given this world as a place to tarry for a time, as in an inn, but not to live permanently! Thus, he encourages his friend: “Let us therefore appeal to God for either a timely departure from here to Heaven, or the necessary constancy to finish the remainder of our course successfully” (Figure 1).

Beza persistently appeals to God for the strength not to falter before arriving safely in the harbor of his reward or not to stumble before reaching the goal

21 On Dürnhoffer and his favorable disposition toward the Calvinists, see Beza to Dürnhoffer, 9 March 1570, in CB 11:80n.1; and CB 31:xxii.

22 Beza to Dürnhoffer, 3 May 1580, in CB 21:112.

(*meta*) of the course.²³ The remedy of prayer to which he constantly returns underscores the devotion of his heart and soul to the task of holding true to his faith. This intense piety and inner striving to “put to death the old man” remains an under-studied aspect of the reformer’s story, but in every case it should be the starting-point to appreciate his life’s work and accomplishments. His consuming passion to please and obey God, born from a spirit of gratitude and humility, expresses itself in myriad, complex ways. Whether Beza is sitting in the Consistory or writing a polemical treatise, whether he is attempting to influence international politics or exhorting the persecuted, one senses his fervent belief and devotion.

Of course, Beza could not have the influence on the world stage or in theological disputes or even as a leader among pastors at Geneva unless this fervency was matched in him by a remarkable intellectual rigor. Wolmar’s tutelage together with other evangelical influences prepared him, not only to face the long journey of sanctification, but also for his calling as pastor, teacher and defender of the faith. He revealed in the letter to Zastrisell the Elder that he relied on prayer *and* study of the Word to steady his soul. In his retirement from public life, Beza devoted himself to the polishing of his fifth and final edition of the major annotations on the New Testament, which would appear the next year in 1598.²⁴ This scholarly work seems to have comforted him in many ways. While he only occasionally preached from the pulpit because of his physical frailty during these final years, he still had the mental capacity to serve the Church through translation and annotation, the influence of which on subsequent generations proved profound. With this, he retains the sense that he is fulfilling his calling to the end. He never characterizes his scholarly annotating, paraphrasing, translating, or poetry writing as burdensome, no more than he did his preaching; however, he did see the back-and-forth polemical exchanges as extremely tedious and perhaps unproductive. There was something about using his training and creativity to edify people directly that satisfied him.

But was Beza, then, not the austere polemicist as he is commonly depicted today? Is he not the one who systematized, dogmatized and gave Calvin’s teach-

23 Johannes Crato (1519–1585) alludes to Beza’s frequent use of this imagery in a letter written on 11 November 1582, in CB 23:201: “If I have written anything that misses the mark, please guide me back to the path. Often I remember that saying of yours: “Those finishing the last stretch of life’s race need more *spiritus*.” The play is on *spiritus*: athletes need deeper breaths and more wind; Christians nearing the end of their life’s journey need more support from the Spirit.

24 For Beza’s immersion in this final edition of his major annotations in the year 1597 during his retirement (which began in 1595), see the editors’ comments at CB 38:xv. On his editions of the New Testament, see KRANS, J. (2006), 202–206; GORDON, B./CAMERON, E. (2016), 187–216.

ing a Scholastic turn? Again, Beza despised the business of writing polemical treatises. In 1579, while writing to the Hebraist Heinrich Möller (1530–1589) about his forthcoming poetic renditions and paraphrases of the Psalms (a topic to which we will return later), an exasperated Beza sighs, “How I really prefer to spend my life consumed in readings and writings of this type rather than in writing doctrinal apologies!”²⁵ In the same year, he tells André Dudith that he will not waste time responding with yet another treatise to the Ubiquitarians, since he is more interested in Christian writings that console him about his coming death than anything Aristotelian.²⁶

Even so, with reluctance, Beza continues to write these apologies, as irksome as they are, because he fears his opponents are not errant faithful, but calculating enemies of the true Church. Just three years later, in the dedicatory letter of the third volume of his *Tractationes theologicae* (1582), addressed to Walter Mildmay (1520–1589), Chancellor of the Exchequer for Queen Elizabeth, Beza warns that one of Satan’s most shrewd deceits is to “dispatch his wolves to howl at the terrified flock,” thus drawing away the pastors from their daily chores to defend dogma.²⁷ Beza recognizes that, while the pastors need to guard the truth, they do so against militant adversaries so tenacious in attacking it that they never cease to pour out their “scribblings” to confuse ordinary people. This sport of writing polemics, into which the pastors are drawn, plays right into Satan’s schemes, and, he laments, “what was the outcome of those old disputes among philosophers is happening now: that too often among a great majority the truth imperceptibly descends into Academic skepticism and ends finally in open atheism.” But there is something more that Satan’s ploy achieves. Beza rails against the role that polemics play in transforming religion into a mere intellectual exercise, devoid of spiritual application on the level where people really live. He continues:

Second—in Heavens name!—are we very far away now from introducing a kind of new Scholastic theology into the Church in place of a true theology that we should be proclaiming openly from the pulpit in the presence of all? Finally, how preposterous is it for us to seem willing to defend one side of this sacred city known as the Church—admittedly the most important side, but not the only one—while neglecting a breach by the enemy on the other side? This also is a very clever trick of Satan for which we should be on guard: we should not occupy ourselves with defending the dogmatic part of the Christian religion to the point that we not only do not show concern for the

25 Beza to Heinrich Möller, 25 March 1579, in CB 20:52. Möller, who studied under Melancthon, taught Hebrew at Wittenberg from 1560–1574; he abandoned his post for his native Hamburg for fear of repercussions over his crypto-Calvinist leanings; see RE 13:269 and CB 13:40 n.5.

26 Beza to André Dudith, 2 June 1579, in CB 20:123.

27 Beza to Walter Mildmay, 15 March 1582, in CB 23:30.

practical part, which is the end goal of our faith, but go so far as to lose it altogether. This is the expected outcome for churches where the pastors have been thrown out and the pillars of the schools overturned: extravagance, drunkenness, usury, blasphemy, contempt for the divine Word receive no rebuke. Instead, it becomes the essence of piety to mock God and men with the marvels of an omni-majestic monster, to dissolve all hope of concord by incendiary speeches and writings, and finally to heap any and every kind of shameless lies, in front of the uneducated, on all those disagreeing with them.²⁸

The editors of Beza's correspondence believe that by the phrase "new Scholastic theology" here Beza is alluding to the controversy caused by Pierre Ramus' (1515–1572) brief sojourn in Geneva in 1570 and the likelihood, in their view, that he "accused Beza of introducing a *Scholastic*, that is, Aristotelian educational program."²⁹ Should we imagine, however, that this controversy is still fresh on Beza's mind ten years after Ramus' death? Surely, Beza has new concerns and a different point to make to Mildmay.

The context of Beza's ruminations shows he worries that the legitimate defense of dogma could degenerate into Scholastic-type disputes that are excessively subtle and technical, thus detracting from the practical application of theology.³⁰ "Are we not very close to becoming Scholastic theologians again?" he asks, in essence. By far the majority of the treatises included in the third volume of the *Tractationes theologicae* reflect just such technical disputes with Lutherans on the presence of Christ in the Supper. Also, the phrase "omni-majestic monster," an allusion to the ubiquity controversy, suggests his current preoccupation. This endless dogmatic wrangling over finer and finer points, particularly with the Lutherans, is what is giving him pause, if not weighing down his spirit. In fact, he does not want to resort to Aristotelian subtleties. A quick perusal of his correspondence in the late 1570s and early 1580s reveals his growing angst over the creation and eventual publication of the Lutherans' *Formula of Concord* (1580). This is a doctrinal challenge that signals the further fracturing of the Church and portends persecution for Reformed-leaning Protestants in Germany. He feels the constant pull to refute its assertions with overwhelming

28 Beza to Walter Mildmay, 15 March 1582, in CB 23:30. Already in 1576 Wilhelm IV Landgraf von Hessen-Kassel advised Beza that too much "quibbling over things known only to God and inscrutable to human reason" will destroy the unity of the Church while doing nothing to strengthen the piety of its members (21 October 1576, in CB 17:203). On Beza and the balance of orthopraxy and orthodoxy in pastoral work, see MANETSCH, S. (2007).

29 Beza to Walter Mildmay, 15 March 1582, in CB 23:32–33n.5.

30 For Beza's concern for practical ministry over scholarly writing, see MANETSCH, S. (2012), 302.

precision.³¹ It is noteworthy, however, that as early as 1578, Zurich antistes Rudolf Gwalther (1519–1586) conveys his appreciation for Beza's restraint in responding to the drafters of the Lutheran *Formula*, observing that he uses language that is "brief, clear, simple, yet weighty."³² But at the same time, in a moment of startling frankness and contrast, Gwalther expresses his doubt that dogmatic theologian Girolamo Zanchi (1500–1576) can draft a common Reformed confession effective enough to counter the *Formula*.³³ Gwalther complains that Zanchi resorts to unnecessary ambiguity and ingenuity in his language, noting that he once proposed the impenetrable phrase, "The bread is the *essential* body of Christ, but not *essentially*." Such "intolerable" word-battles (λογομαχία) may be suited to the schools, Gwalther quips, but they are nonsensical to the faithful in the churches.³⁴ He much prefers Beza's more straightforward way of writing.

Gwalther's detection of a studied clarity in Beza's writing warrants our attention. For Beza, by his own account, orthodoxy remains fundamental to the Christian religion, but it does not exist for its own sake or as an academic exercise; it exists to support the restoration and renewal of God's people. The congregations in the churches need the pastor to translate dogma into practical

31 Indicative of the inner *pull* are Beza's comments about polemical writing to Rudolf Gwalther (5 October 1576, at CB 17:171): "Would that I were permitted to spend whole days in these tasks that are most proper to our calling [sc. as teacher], for my own consolation, at least, and since I am needed. But neither these times nor many other factors allow for it much, distracted as I am by various concerns, though still ones that are not foreign to the duties of our office. Still, I do what I can, and granted I am not doing as good a job as I should, I ask for help, and I pray that those who have an abundance of free time write these parts, now more necessary for us than before, seeing that much craftier adversaries have emerged as a result of our writings."

32 Gwalther to Beza, 26 March 1578, in CB 19:79. Gwalther is referring to Beza's work titled *Ad repetitas Jacobi Andreae et Nicolai Selneckeri calumnias responsio* (1578). This work of seventy-four pages does not directly concern the *Formula*, only a work of Selnecker that circulated in German and an oration of Andrea. On this see Beza's letter to Dürnhoffer, 25 March 1578, in CB 19:76–77.

33 Zanchi never accomplished this common Reformed synthesis, but did produce a confession laying out his theological positions that now exists in a modern critical edition: Zanchi, *De religione Christiana fides/Confession of Christian Religion*. Throughout much of 1578, Beza continued to call for someone to step forward to write a common confession, but to no avail (see Beza to Dürnhoffer, 20 May 1578, in CB 19:97), but he soon began to favor an idea, suggested to him by Dutch jurist Paul Knibbe, for a "harmony" of Reformed confessions (Beza to Gwalther, 27 May 1578, in CB 19:101–106).

34 Beza to Gwalther, 26 March 1578, in CB 19:79. Daniel Toussain later the same year complains to Beza, "I often advised him [Zanchi] that he should treat everything more briefly, clearly, and less scholastically, yet I did not insist as much as I wanted to." See Toussain to Beza, 14 September 1578, in CB 19:171. Beza himself tells Gwalther on 6 December 1578 that after reading some of it, he is not satisfied with the results of Zanchi's work (CB 19:190).

principles for living, which Beza identifies in the letter to Mildmay as the “end goal of our faith.” In other words, the pastor’s responsibility to the flock and even to other pastors lies ultimately in the work of encouragement, instruction, and correction. Beza felt this pragmatic calling in his own soul: “My larger annotations,” Beza writes to Dürnhoffer with great satisfaction in April 1581, “are at press; I much more gladly put my effort on those than I do writing apologies and ‘recooking cabbage.’”³⁵ The colorful reference to rehashed cabbage is borrowed from the Roman satirist Juvenal, who uses it as a metaphor for the repetitious drudgery of classroom lessons that suck the life from the schoolmaster, so to speak. Beza sees a parallel in the kind of apologies he is forced to write to defend one of the “walls” of the Church. The admission to Dürnhoffer is telling: while it is true that Beza left behind a conspicuous polemical corpus that earned him a reputation among some for being Aristotelian, Scholastic, and doctrinaire, we would be mistaken to think of this as his primary love rather than a rock of Sisyphus.³⁶ Beza devoted himself first and foremost to the standing of his flock and himself before God. A spiritual potency drives him more than an intellectual one. “Remember to pray for us here,” Beza asks the same Dürnhoffer, referencing threats Geneva faced around the same time Gwalther wrote the aforementioned letter, “that we continue on in our current state of safety or else become a pleasing sacrifice to the Lord.”³⁷ And it was only a year earlier that he confides to the same Dürnhoffer his willingness to win the martyr’s palm while “relying on the Lord’s goodness and kindness.”³⁸ These simple words, so full of devotion and resolve to surrender to God’s will even to death, reflect Beza’s unbending commitment to live the Christian life to the very end.

Christian Humanism

The *shipwreck* figure that Beza employs with such frequency and his uneasiness with abstract doctrine exposes an underlying and underappreciated current of devoutness within his personality. Another current running deep in Beza’s spirit accounts for much that is patently observable in his life’s work: the humanistic learning that Wolmar imparted to him in those early years continues to inhabit his mental and moral reflexes throughout his life. Despite the criticism he directs to secular learning from time to time, with balance and caution he

35 Beza to Dürnhoffer, 25 April 1581, in CB 22:96.

36 DUFOUR, A. (2009), 39.

37 Beza to Dürnhoffer, 25 March 1578, in CB 19:76.

38 [Beza] to Dürnhoffer, 9 April 1577, in CB 18:80.

himself consistently embraces it. His German tutor formed and molded him through the study of antiquity, instilling in him its language, its best ideas and values, its rhetorical power and its storehouse of treasure. He taught him to engage it. Although first and foremost a religious reformer, Beza also embodies well the humanist ideal of the Renaissance. When his mind grows weary from the bitter theological debates and the battles with Satan, Beza seeks refuge in the measures and rhythms of poetry, in beautiful expressions and themes, and in clever turns of phrase that draw from and vie with the remnants of Greek and Latin literature. Beza in no way rejects the best attainments of the human spirit.

Beza's 1599 edition of poetry includes a poem written by Jean Jaquemot (1543–1615) that testifies to the complex interrelationship between piety and learning in Beza. Jaquemot was no passing acquaintance.³⁹ Son of a refugee from Bar-le-Duc, he served as Rector of the Genevan Academy from 1586–1591. He not only translated Beza's *Abraham Sacrifiant* into Latin and advised Beza on the publication of his 1597 edition of poems,⁴⁰ he imitated Beza's own output by writing tragedy, prayers and poems, even including some of the same stock characters in the latter, such as the fictional Zoilus.⁴¹ In his *Lyrice* (1591), he addresses an acclamatory ode to Beza and rejoices when Beza approves his poetry; in another volume, he includes two tombeaux to Beza's wife.⁴² But it is the poem appearing in Beza's 1599 volume that draws special attention here because it is directed to Beza's library.⁴³ Beza must have recognized it as an homage to a poem on his library that he himself originally published in his 1548 edition of poetry and reprised in later editions.⁴⁴ Beza's original speaks to the breadth of his humanist learning by describing in glowing terms the cherished books on his shelf. Here we find a nod to Livy, Ovid, Propertius, Plautus and Terence, and more on the Latin side; and Homer, Aristotle, Sophocles, among others on the Greek side. Although these texts point to an earlier period in his

39 On Jaquemot, see HAAG 4:39–40. Jaquemot left Geneva for a brief time to serve the church of Neuchâtel in 1591 (see Beza, in the name of the Pastors of Geneva, to the Classis of Neuchâtel, 8/18 July 1591, in CB 32:104). See also the letter from Beza and Jaquemot to the church at Neuchâtel, 14/24 October 1589, in CB 30:272 and n. 1.

40 Jean Jaquemot's translation of the *Abraham Sacrifiant* appears in the 1597 edition of Beza's poetry (283–343) and as an independent edition: *Abrahamus sacrificians: Traegaedia Gallice a Th. Beza iam olim edita, recens vero latine a Ioanne Iacomoto Barrensi conversa*. For his involvement in the publication of Beza's *Poemata varia* (1597), see CB 37:233n.13.

41 For the prayers comparable to *Beza's Household Prayers*, see JAQUEMOT, J., *Musae Neocomenses* (1597), 75–98.

42 JAQUEMOT, J., *Lyrice* (1591), 62–64; 110; *Variorum poematum liber* (1601), 155–156.

43 The poem appears in BEZA, T., *Poemata varia* (1597), at Aa3.

44 On the poem and its fortunes, see SUMMERS, K. (2001), 220–221 and 347–348; SUMMERS, K. (1991); and LUDWIG, W. (1997), 141–144.

life marked by more secular allegiances, Beza never abandoned them, as his frequent allusions to them throughout his writings testify.⁴⁵ Jaquemot's address, however, is not to the individual books in Beza's library, which by 1597 had grown considerably in number,⁴⁶ but to the Library itself, here personified, with the request that it make room to receive Jaquemot's own books of poetry. The poem succinctly and cleverly expresses the kind of interplay that took place in Beza's library between books as serious sources for the truth and books as a refuge from the things that trouble the mind. Jaquemot pens the following hendecasyllables to honor his mentor:

To the Library of the Most Reverend Doctor Theodore Beza

Learned Library of the great Beza—the nine sisters of Phoebus and Charm devoted to the chorus of the Muses admires nothing more genuine, nothing more eloquent, elegant, or erudite than him—would you please place a few books on your lowest shelves, if there is room? It is a small gift my daring Thalia now bids me dedicate to you. But do not hand them over to your master to read immediately; wait until you see him freed from heavy cares and seeking to break the long tedium of his serious Muse with honest diversion. Then and only then, faithful Patroness, please ask him to relax with our Muses. If he finds a bit of pleasure in reading them, they will not fear the rather insolent tongues of the crowd, nor will the drinking vessels of the stall that sells hot pepper be meagre.

The ending likely alludes to Horace, *Epistle* 2.1.269–70, where the Augustan lyricist dismisses his rivals' poems as worthy for the shops in the district where peppers are sold. Horace imagines that the shopkeepers could use the sheets of paper with their ephemeral poems to wrap up purchased spices for patrons. Zurich classicist and theologian Josias Simler (1530–1576) implies its currency as a literary reference when he appeals to it in an analogous context in a much earlier letter to Beza: if the Genevan theologian will reply to the Antitrinitarians, Simler says in essence, he will gladly send his own response to fishmongers and Horace's pepper shops.⁴⁷ Here, in contrast, Jaquemot hopes to celebrate in

45 For Beza's embrace of humanistic learning throughout his life, albeit with appropriate caveats, see SUMMERS, K. (2018b). Here in the poem addressed to his library, Jaquemot praises Beza for combining serious spiritual matters with more humane pursuits. Jaquemot himself in another poem praises the study of the ancients and advocates for an openness to reading pagan authors: JAQUEMOT, J., *Musae Neocomenses* (1597), 169–170.

46 On the sale of Beza's library toward the end of his life, see Georges Sigismond de Zastrisell to Beza, 1/11 March 1598, in CB 39:42–43, esp. n. 2 and 106–110.

47 See Simler to Beza, August 1568, in CB 9:132, with additions by the editors at CB 11:348. Simler, who is sending his work *De aeterno Dei Filio* as a gift to Beza, expresses his wish in the accompanying letter that Beza will write a tract against the anti-trinitarians: though he realizes Beza is occupied by the sad situation confronting the Reformed churches in France,