Kirk Summers / Scott M. Manetsch (eds.)

Theodore Beza at 500

New Perspectives on an Old Reformer



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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

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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.

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Abbreviations

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

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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.

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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 mantel 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.

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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).

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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): "*impingens* 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.

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Maister Beza's Houshold 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 Houshold Prayers* (1603), F9^{r}-11^{r} (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."

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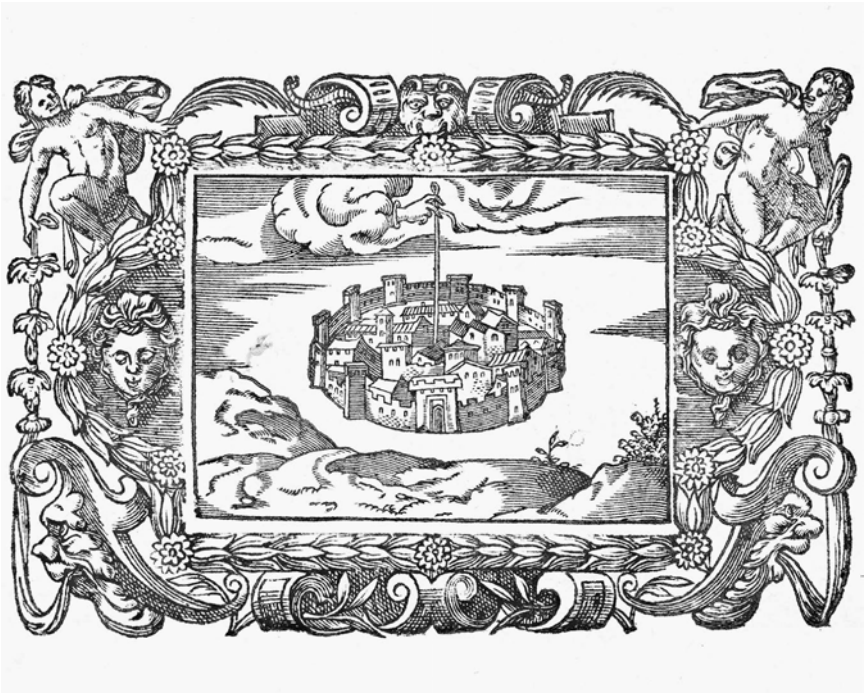


Figure 1 from *Les vrais pourtraits* (1581); Beza recognized that God's hand faithfully steadied the Church while human frailty constantly destabilized it. Credit: Kirk Summers.

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.

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(*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.

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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 Melanchthon, 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.

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> 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 controversary 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 orthropraxy 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.

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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 (λογομαχίαι) 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 Selnecceri 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).

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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.

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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 *Lyrica* (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 Houshold Prayers*, see JAQUEMOT, J., *Musae Neocomenses* (1597), 75–98.

42 JAQUEMOT, J., *Lyrica* (1591), 62–64; 110; *Variorum poematium 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.

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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,

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such a district with substantial draughts and toasts to Beza's approval.[48] The very elusiveness of the concluding pun underscores the easy transition that Jaquemot envisions within Beza's study. The reformer moves deftly between the *grave* Muse of theology, polemics, and academics, to the *relaxing* Muse of epigrammatic puns and pleasing lyrics. Jaquemot observes in Beza a marriage of passionate spirituality and deep classical learning, of humanism and a thirst for serving God. Beza wants to be correct in his doctrine, no doubt—he loathes inexactness and ambiguity—but he also stays grounded to his humanity through the ancient models. His library catered to both these facets of his personality.

Beza dreamed of a religious peace that would allow him to retire from his defense of the faith to literary pursuits in his library. He says so explicitly in a letter to his friend André Dudith (1533–1589).[49] When political changes compelled the Hungarian humanist and former Roman Catholic bishop of Pécs to retreat from public life to Moravia, Beza observed that he was enjoying the kind of leisure that Scipio Africanus once did, that is, withdrawn from service, not out of desire for inaction and self-indulgence, but because of the vicissitudes of fortune. Beza regrets that the world will lack the benefit of his public service, but adds on a more personal and self-reflecting level: "Still, when I consider you as an individual, I cannot but envy your solitude, in which I do not doubt but that you prove Cicero right when he says, 'Nothing is sweeter than leisure devoted to literature.'"[50] This is a forced leisure that allows for time to read, think, and write. Cicero certainly knew such extended periods of leisure on his country estates, reading literature and discussing philosophical ideas with a gathering of friends. For these two humanists of another era, such an ideal scenario smacked of paradise. In an earlier letter, Dudith requests that Beza send him some intellectually gifted person to keep him company,[51] and Beza responds that he would gladly oblige if only the troubles of the times permitted. Unfortunately, he says, these adversities have "turned almost all Gauls from refined citizens into soldiers, from cultivators of the Muses into savage warriors."

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still, if he should write it, Simler adds, "gladly I will see to it that these writings of mine are sent off to the fishmongers and, as Horace said, 'carried down to the district where they sell incense and perfumes and pepper.'"

48 Jacques Lect (1558–1611) expresses a similar sentiment when sending his own volume of poems to Beza: "I hope that then Apollo, who now scarcely offers me a few drops of water, will fill my goblets to the brim." See BEZA, T., *Poemata varia* (1599), 98r. Lect is referring to his *Poematum liber unus*.

49 Dudith left the Roman Catholic Church while on a mission to Poland, where he met and married a Reformed woman. On Dudith, see COSTIL, P. (1935); GÁBOR, A. (2009); and Christophe Thretius to Beza, 15 September 1567, in CB 8:170n.8.

50 Beza to Dudith, 15 December 1577, in CB 18:207.

51 Dudith to Beza, 10 September 1577, in CB 18:178–182.

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This cultivation of the Muses for Beza here stands in as a shorthand for human beings living to their potential as human beings. God did not create human beings for conflict, but for interaction and the enjoyment of beauty. It is this shared appreciation for "leisure devoted to literature," surely, that led Beza to dedicate the 1569 edition of his poetry to Dudith.[52]

To judge by the frequent references made to ancient authors in later poems, Beza continues to add classical texts to his library throughout his life. He does so without apologies or disparagement; the constant assumption is that these writings can enrich his thought and in some ways even strengthen his piety. We can glean this from a poem that he composes in late 1578 or early 1579; it is a commendatory poem meant to accompany Jean de Serres' new edition of the works of Plato.[53] As is to be expected in such cases, Beza offers high praise for the scholarly editing and annotating of Serres, without whom, we are told with a considerable degree of hyperbole, the ancient philosopher would succumb to the ravages of time. More importantly, though, Beza also uses the opportunity to consider the proper Christian attitude to pagan wisdom by addressing Plato himself. For a pastor and theologian so keen on defining and defending orthodoxy within the Church, his accommodating stance to a system of thought not originating from Christianity comes as a surprise. The full poem reads as follows:

> If the fall of the human race left behind any trace of the divine in mortals—
> the fall that enveloped the mind's light in a blinding fog and made the will
> tumble so completely and miserably headlong into vice–even this residual
> element seems to have been swept off along with right reason. If someone
> should disagree that these were restored and embodied in you, great Plato,
> as though by divine agency, what would this person not deny with a bold
> face? And yet, what else is this intellectual light you provide except one akin
> to the moon's pale light that illumines the dark night? Thus, we marvel at the
> celestial gifts you preserved, and we can study them, appropriating and
> adapting them for our purposes. This we may do, provided the light that
> shines from Heaven above for us, the only light drawn from the bosom of
> the true God, alone governs us as we wander on the sea of the world. But
> how I would wish, immortal glory of wise men, that you bore the gifts of
> this heavenly light as well, for truly then you would deserve to be called a
> divine prophet! Still, since such wishes are futile, what remains but for me
> to thank you for this extraordinary gift? Now that the rust is finally rubbed
> away, rust that–alas!–so many introduced, as did the long passage of time,
> you finally shine beautifully from Serres' great skill and labor. For this

52 The text can be found at Beza to Dudith, 14 May 1569, in CB 10:88–100.

53 For the poem, see CB 19:226–227 (Note that line 13 should not end in a period but a semi-colon; and in line 24, *niteas* should be emended to *niteat*); and *Poemata varia* of 1599, 109^{v}-110^{r}. For its original context: SERRES, J., *Platonis opera quae extant omnia* (1578), ***.v^{r}.

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> reason, Plato, we owe you many things, but I must say we owe Plato himself to you, Serres.[54]

Serres has presented the text of Plato with exceptional skill; this is the basic premise of the tribute. More to our interests, though, the poem illustrates how certain themes wend their way through Beza's writing, crossing genres and making their appearance in diverse contexts. They are themes incubated and birthed from the principles, values and metaphors that populate the reformer's thinking. For us, this means that his worldview can and should be pulled together and examined from across his literary output. Each type of writing along with its circumstances or aim adds nuance to certain central, leading ideas.

Thus, in the poem for Serres we recognize a number of concepts familiar from elsewhere in Beza's writings. As we have noted before, for example, Beza imagines the Christian experience in terms of a maritime voyage. As with all travelers on the sea, the Christian needs guidance, though for this type of journey a divine helmsman is required, seeing that human wisdom does not suffice to reach the intended harbor safely. Calvin's doctrine of the noetic effects of the Fall—the notion that, in the fall of Adam and Eve, mankind's rational capabilities were severely damaged—is represented through imagery of light and fog.[55] The Fall, as the poem says, ruined the will completely, but in the case of the rational mind some dim light still shines, even if not always visible under the thick mist. In other words, by God's grace human beings can grope through that darkness and still stumble upon a measure of earthly truth. For the phrase "blinding fog," Beza uses the Latin *caligine caeca*. Notably, he pens this around the same time that he would have been composing a series of three emblems (published in 1580 with the *Icones*) teaching visually and poetically this very truth by way of the spatial positioning of the moon/earth/sun.[56]

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54 *Poemata varia* of 1599, 109v-110r.

55 For Calvin on the noetic effects of the Fall, see HELM, P. (1998); HELM, P. (2004), esp. chapter 5 on the soul and its ability to reason rightly, and chapter 8 on natural theology (esp. 238–240); ADAMS, E. (2001); STEINMETZ, D. (1991); HOITENGA, D. (2003). See also the overviews by SCHREINER, S. (2009); and LANE, A. (2009). Also, SUMMERS, K. (2018b), esp. 141–144.

56 The emblems (by which we mean both poem and image) appear at BEZA, T., *Icones, id est verae imagines virorum … illustrium* (1580a), Pp.iii^{r}-Qq.iv^{r}. The connection between the poem praising Plato and the three emblems is betrayed through his echo of the fog metaphor with the Latin phrase *atra caligine*, that is, *dark fog*, or perhaps better, *obscuring fog*. The three emblems together form a single narrative. In the first, the moon stands opposite her brother the sun and reflects his light with her full face (here the Artemis/Apollo conceptions of the heavenly bodies predominate), just as the Church shines with full splendor when face-to-face with Christ. In the second emblem, however, the earth, representing human wisdom, intervenes between the sun and the moon, showing how the pure radiance of the Church can grow dark. Human

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Human wisdom operates surrounded by a dark, almost impenetrable mist. But Beza, as other Christians embracing some of the humanist ideals, does not find the mind completely incapacitated to the extent the human will is. The ancients exercised remarkable insight, attaining to some degree of truth and beauty. This was a concession on the part of God, a virtue graciously extended so that human beings could retain a modicum of dignity while functioning and coexisting in the world. Thus, Beza can praise Plato for the "celestial gifts" he preserved, while signaling his readiness to engage the philosopher's ideas as worthy of study. He even talks of adapting and appropriating Plato's teaching. His careful choice of words is important, because they indicate his willingness to gain "common grace" insights from Plato, but not become a Platonist.[57] It is only in the context of Christ's work to redeem his people from the damage caused by the Fall that Plato can be truly useful. In other words, what Plato teaches must be adjusted in accord with the heavenly knowledge that only comes through renewal in Christ. He illumines the mind so that the faithful can understand more clearly everything in the world they see. Primarily, the redeemed understand that God has created everything for his own glory and that creation operates within his purpose and power. Still, the poem makes a remarkable assertion that reveals a deep appreciation for the human capacity to learn and know: if only Plato could have truly recognized the divine aspect in the nature of things, Beza regrets, he himself would not only be praising him for his earth-bound wisdom, he would be extolling him as a prophet of God! Such was Beza's appreciation for mankind's intellectual achievements.

Friends and Correspondents

We have so far given attention to several aspects of the Genevan reformer that add richness and depth to his character. We have observed in his most introspective moments a spiritual sensitivity and devoutness manifesting itself in surrendering to God's mercy. He contemplates his journey with all its hazards, the endurance needed for the race, the end goal, the harbor and the hoped-for

wisdom, in essence, envelopes the Church in a mist from which it is difficult to peer outward at the truth. The third emblem shows the moon positioned between the earth and the sun, revealing a dark face toward the earth itself while illumined on the opposite side by the bright sun. In this case, those on the earth cannot see the darkened moon and therefore imagine that it has disappeared, just as human wisdom imagines the martyrs of the true Church have vanished. The enemies of Christ do not realize that the martyrs now look upon his face up close and shine more brightly than they can imagine.

57 Calvin discusses the value of secular wisdom and common grace insights at *Institutes* II.ii.12–24 (CO 2:195–205). See also SUMMERS, K. (2018b), 142–143.

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rest. Conspicuous too is an inner pastoral compass that regularly redirects his impulses from the defense of orthodoxy, seemingly interminable and increasingly academic, to what is immediately practical and useful for the flock. He is, certainly, attuned to the innate simplicity and more mundane concerns of the faithful. How should they live day to day? From where do they gain assurance in their faith? These kinds of questions lie far from the purview of abstract theological debates, yet they give shape and purpose to much of what Beza writes and does. We should not overlook his love of poetry and literature either. Before fleeing Paris to devote himself to the Protestant cause, Beza dreamed of living the life of a Latin poet. But more broadly speaking, he was true to his training under Melchior Wolmar in that he embraced all that ancient learning had to offer. Yet, even after abandoning this purely literary proclivity for a more celestial-oriented vocation, he did not completely turn his back on the ancient world. As a reformer, he continued to engage it as a way to think about the human potential as God originally intended it to be. In some ways, he thought, the Greeks and the Romans had pointed humanity back to its roots, even if feebly and inadequately so. They remain, in other words, a valid starting point for talking about the proper place for human beings in the universe. What does it mean to be a man or a woman perfectly integrated into God's creation? The ancients had at least recognized that human beings thrive best where there is harmony, order, beauty, righteousness and piety, even if they never realized them as they should.

Fortunately, Beza left behind a voluminous and varied correspondence, which we have relied on here to support various points in our characterization of him.[58] Without question, these are valuable historical documents that chronicle events—sometimes major, sometimes trivial—that would otherwise be lost to history. They function for the latter half of the sixteenth century much as Cicero's equally ample correspondence functions for the late Roman Republic, if one is alert to both the personal spin and misinformation that pervades the great orator's letters. This is not to say that Beza writes without his own Genevan and Reformed biases, but we do not see him fashioning the facts to enhance his own personal prestige as does Cicero, who often looks out first and foremost for his own standing, power and reputation. Even so, Beza mirrors Cicero in the range of friendships he maintains: some are cordial and practical in nature, others political, or existing primarily as part of a network for the sharing of international news. But just as Cicero has his Atticus, an intimate and trusted friend with whom he could share personal information or unguarded thoughts

58 The extant letters to and from Beza, dating from 1539 to 1605, number 2,792 in the published correspondence.

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and emotions, so Beza has a close circle of correspondents with whom he rejoices, bemoans, regrets, empathizes and confides. At times he gives consolation or receives it in turn. It seems that it is here, in the correspondence with his most trusted friends, and not in Geneva itself, where Beza's own spiritual needs are ministered to the most. Given their less-guarded, more personal nature, these exchanges with trusted friends fill in missing lines and add touches of color to the portrait of our reformer.

Beza had one such friend in Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575), antistes of the Zurich church after Zwingli and father-in-law of the future antistes Gwalther (mentioned above). Perhaps in the rich correspondence with Bullinger, more than that with any other, the density of Beza's personality, including his internal vulnerabilities and uncertainties, stands on full display.[59] In addition to sharing information and strategizing with Bullinger about the direction of the Reformed movement, Beza finds in him a confidant, mentor, spiritual encourager and steadying hand.[60] "I have always attributed to you paternal authority and I always will," Beza tells Bullinger in a mysteriously strained exchange of 1573.[61] The other letters that would shed light on the matter of contention are lost, but what is clear is that Beza is at pains to assure his old friend of his continuing respect and sincerity toward him. With so many depending on him for advice and guidance, Beza seems genuinely relieved to have someone who will question his actions and motives to keep him on the right path.

Several threads running throughout the letters illustrate this. In one remarkable exchange extending over several years, Bullinger can be seen constantly tempering, or attempting to temper, Beza's bitterness toward the controversial Parisian educator and rhetorician Pierre Ramus (1515–1572). Beza's longstanding hostility toward Ramus continues to seethe even after the latter met an untimely death during the general massacre of Huguenots in France that began on St Bartholomew's Day in August 1572. Writing to Beza a few months after the tragic event on 10 January 1573, Bullinger describes a work of suspected apostate Pierre Charpentier (1524–1574) that has come to his attention; in it, this thorn in the side of Protestant leaders attacks Beza personally and blames him and his followers for the bloodshed in France.[62] Bullinger notes that Charpentier seems to be claiming both Ramus and Francesco Porto (1511–1581),

59 For an overview of the correspondence between Bullinger and Beza, see CAMPI, E. (2007).

60 In the signature of a letter of 1554, Beza calls himself "a son born by you in the Lord." See Beza to Bullinger, 7 May [1554], in CB 1:128.

61 Beza to Bullinger, [October 1573], in CB 14:235.

62 Bullinger to Beza, 10 January 1573, in CB 14:2. The title of the work is *Lettre de Pierre Charpentier, Jurisconsulte, addressée à François Portes, Candiois, par laquelle il monstre que les persecutions des Eglises de France sont advenues, non par la faulte de ceux qui faisoient profession de la Religion, mais de ceux qui nourissoient les factions et conspirations qu'on appele la*

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Professor of Greek at Geneva during this time, as partisans supporting his side in this particular argument, and so he advises Beza that a response is necessary.[63] Ramus is dead, however, and Bullinger submits that he was a better person than to approve of this sort of divisiveness and betrayal. In any case, the Zurich reformer believes Beza has carried on his vendetta against Ramus long enough and therefore includes this gentle rebuke: "I have gathered from your letters that you and Ramus did not see eye to eye on all matters. But now that he has died in martyrdom, I would prefer you not continue to express your aggravation with him. And seeing that there is enough aggravation all around us, I pray that the Lord protect his churches from evil."[64]

Bullinger's counsel is marked by varying degrees of understatement. His concession that in the past Beza and Ramus "did not see eye to eye on all matters" hardly reflects the plethora of disagreements and the level of enmity. As Ramus remained ostensibly Roman Catholic until 1569 (albeit for years suspected of Protestant leanings), certainly Beza had little cause to waste time on him before that date. Nonetheless, in two works published in 1543, Ramus famously vilified the supremacy of Aristotelian logic in the schools while promoting his own program to reform how students should think and analyze problems. He followed these with additional works disparaging the methodologies of several Classical thinkers. These attacks on traditional logic and time-honored texts without question long rankled Beza. Early in 1572, he writes to Bullinger that, when he was in Paris in 1543, he saw firsthand the sort of trouble Ramus' ideas could cause. He adds that already in 1562, during a return trip to France, he feared Ramus and his educational reform as potential sparks for discord among Protestants themselves.[65] Beza attempts to undermine Bullinger's rather positive opinion of Ramus by arousing fears of anarchy in the Church:

Cause. For a discussion of this work and relevant bibliography, see KINGDON, R. (1967), 112–113; MANETSCH, S. (2000b), 46–50.

63 Ironically, Ramus and Charpentier were bitter adversaries, famously quarreling before Parlement over the transfer of a royal professorship in the mid-1560s, and so it is clear that Charpentier is being disingenuous by appealing to him (see SKALNIK, J. [2002], 83–87). As for Porto, the editors of Beza's correspondence note that Charpentier's entire letter is "written under the assumption that Porto does not approve of Beza and the extremists, but should be counted with the party of moderates who respect the edicts and are friends with Charles IX, who treats them well." This association put Porto in an uncomfortable position and forced him to write a response. On his response, published in both Latin and French, see MANETSCH, S. (2000b), 50.

64 Bullinger to Beza, 10 January 1573, in CB 14:2.

65 Cf. Beza's tirade against Ramus as a fomenter of discord at Beza to [Joachim Camerarius], 1 July 1572, in CB 13:144–145 and n. 11.

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> I did not write about his erudition, nor his eloquence, but about the man's character, seeing that I first encountered it some thirty years ago. I saw with my own eyes at that time the controversies he stirred up in the Parisian Academy, what sorts of viewpoints he espoused in literary matters, and what and how many evils he inflicted by opening a school of the most outrageous ignorance. Therefore, when I was in France ten years ago and I came to understand that he in no way favors our side, already then I predicted—that I were a false prophet!—that the spirit of discord will enter into the French churches together with this man. Who imagines we could be on good terms with someone who thinks Aristotle a sophist, Cicero ignorant of how to teach rhetoric, Quintilian without learning, Galen and even Euclid illogical?[66]

Ramus' educational vision and methodologies were so repugnant to Beza that there was little room for compromise among them. Beza clung to Aristotelian logic as an orderly and precise system, and therefore a gift of God, while regarding Ramus' dialectics as untidy and imprecise, unsuited to the forming of young minds or the discussing of theology. While Ramus traveled through Germany and Switzerland after his conversion to Protestantism in 1569, hoping to size up possible safe landing spots for himself during religious turmoil in France, he found Geneva (not to mention many other cities) already wary of him. Beza and the rector of the Genevan Academy at the time, Jean le Gasgneux, objected when Ramus began to teach a public course on Cicero's *Catilianarian Speeches*, complaining to the Company of Pastors in May of 1570 that he was refusing to "change his method of teaching," being confident in his own methodology.[67] When Ramus inquired about a job at the Academy through a third party, Beza wrote directly to Ramus to refuse him.[68] He was emphatic that, not only did the school have no current vacancy, but also it was the resolve on the part of everyone there to follow the Aristotelian method in all things. Ramus was not the right fit.

In October 1570, Ramus returned to Paris after the restoration of peace there. Meanwhile, the Huguenot churches were taking advantage of the current climate to reorganize themselves into a more coherent, uniform body. Despite being a relative newcomer to the Protestant faith, Ramus used the opportunity to assert his views on the "priesthood of all believers" and to interfere with Beza's more centralized ecclesiastical vision.[69] As moderator of the pivotal French National

66 Beza to Bullinger, 14 January 1572, in CB 13:31. Beza employs the "false prophet" image frequently in this way; for example, Beza to Bullinger, 4 September [1553], in CB 1:113; and Beza to Crato, [30 November 1574], in CB 15:203.

67 RCP 3:26.

68 Beza to Ramus, 1 December 1570, in CB 11:295.

69 SKALNIK, J. (2002), 90.

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Synod of La Rochelle (1571), Beza found himself battling the congregationalist views of Ramus and Jean Morély (ca. 1524–ca. 1594). His utter frustration with their opposition at such a crucial moment of unity manifests itself pointedly in the above-mentioned letter to Bullinger, the same one in which he boasts his prophetic awareness that Ramus would harm the church in the future. Beza trumpets how his prophecy was fulfilled at the synod and its aftermath: this "neophyte to Church order," he grumbles, now promotes chaos in the Church; Beza accuses him of pushing for a structure devoid of clerical leadership or hierarchical oversight.[70] Ramus' real purpose was probably less nefarious than Beza portrays it: guided by his own experiences in trying to obtain an education, Ramus sees value in involving more voices of the laity in decision-making and matters of excommunication and discipline. But Beza must have felt that Ramus was rejecting the Genevan model of ecclesiastical government and creating a divide between the Genevan model and that practiced by the French churches. There was also in Beza an innate suspicion of social climbers because of his own upbringing in the lower nobility.[71] For these reasons, it greatly relieved him to secure a letter of condemnation against Ramus and Morély at the French National Synod of Nîmes in May of 1572.[72] Beza undoubtedly understood that Morély represented a more extreme position regarding democratic governance in the churches than his supposed collaborator.[73] Ramus was only advocating for wider access to members of the congregation to the governing processes of the church, in "geometric proportion" to their education and standing.[74] Even so, for Beza there was value and economy in linking them together as a common opponent.

Bullinger is not so sure that this constitutes the best approach to the problem. For the sake of peace in the Church, he has been attempting to moderate Beza's vitriol against Ramus for more than a year. The fact is, Ramus made a positive impression on both Bullinger and Gwalther when he visited Zurich during

70 Beza to Bullinger, 14 January 1572, in CB 13:31.

71 Kingdon considers these prejudices of Beza in KINGDON, R. (1967), 18.

72 The details of how all these events unfolded and what actions Ramus took need not detain us here; it is enough to note that sharp conflict over matters of Church order and discipline (often termed *eutaxia* in Beza's letters) rocked the French churches and boiled Beza's blood. For the ecclesiastical dispute between Beza and Ramus, see CB 12 (1571) *passim*, and Bullinger to Beza, 11 February 1572, in CB 13:43 n.2. Besides these passages and editorial notes, I have relied on SKALNIK, J. (2002); BIETENHOLZ, P. (1971); MARUYAMA, T. (1978), 80–129; KINGDON, R. (1967), 37–137; and MANETSCH, S. (2000b), 39–50.

73 For an extensive treatment of Morély's proposal, see KINGDON, R. (1967), 43–96; also, SUMMERS, K. (2018a), 104–111.

74 On the importance of the word *geometric* in Ramus' thinking about Church government, see SKALNIK, J. (2002), 155–157.

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his tour after his conversion.[75] In the immediate aftermath of the synod at La Rochelle in April 1571, whose Geneva-backed decisions Ramus and others found objectionable, Bullinger continually reminds his fellow reformer that Ramus is a sincere friend to Geneva. In December of that same year, for example, Bullinger sums up the Zurich position about the controversy among the French churches, saying he and his colleagues know nothing of Morély except what Beza tells them, while adding the following evaluation of Ramus:

> But Pierre Ramus, when he was visiting Zurich, conferred with us on all the major doctrines of our religion; indeed, he seemed far different than the way you depict him, unless he has undergone a complete transformation. Nor in his conversations did he say things that showed him to be hostile to the Genevan church and you; to the contrary, he showed himself a sincere friend of it.[76]

Bullinger is responding to a lengthy letter, written just weeks before, in which Beza defends the Genevan form of consistorial discipline and tries to thwart the efforts, as he sees it, of the "democrats" in France to drive a wedge between Zurich and Geneva.[77] There, Beza characterizes Ramus as "completely ignorant," someone who has never brought a Bible or a godly interpreter's book into his home." Instead of assenting to the decisions of the synod, or at most humbly dissenting, Beza claims he has ample evidence that Ramus "arrogantly, haughtily, and stubbornly cursed both the living and the dead and shredded the acts of the synods."[78] Furthermore, Beza echoes Bullinger's earlier assessment that Ramus and Morély are "learned and pious men" with a sneering and ironic "those good men of yours."[79]

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75 KINGDON, R. (1967), 101; SKALNIK, J. (2002), 114–115. Skalnik cites an entry in Bullinger's diary dated 28 August 1569: "Professor Petrus Ramus of the famous University of Paris exhibited for my judgment some books he had written on the subject of religion and especially on the sacraments. They pleased me."

76 Bullinger to Beza, 4 December 1571, in CB 12:244.

77 Beza to Bullinger, 13 November 1571, in CB 12:220–221; cf. 228: "I beseech you earnestly and with my whole heart to be on constant guard against what they are intent on accomplishing, namely, to involve you in these quarrels and thereby alienate you from us; we will take care to do the same." KINGDON, R. (1967) transcribes the same letter in Appendix II, 209–215, with the relevant material on 212. According to Beza, Morély and his partisans act "as if those who refuse to establish disruptive and seditious democracy in the Church are introducing oligarchy or tyranny into it." Beza does write to Ramus directly on the matter around the same time (the precise date of this letter is unknown), as it appears in the *Epistolae theologicae* [1573] without date or addressee; on the likelihood that it was sent to Ramus, see Beza to [Ramus], 1571, in CB 12:253–257). MARUYAMA, T. (1978), 123–125, provides a brief analysis of it.

78 Beza to Bullinger, 13 November 1571, in CB 12:221.

79 For Bullinger's original statement, see his letter to Beza, 24 October 1571, in CB 12:207.

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After the synod of Nîmes, the exchange concerning Ramus between the two reformers continues along the same lines. In response to Beza's rant about Ramus' assessment of Aristotle and other ancient authors, along with his own prophecy that Ramus would introduce discord into the churches, Bullinger gently rebukes Beza, urging him to treat Ramus with moderation by admonishing him in a friendly way and instructing him with kindness.[80] He adds a warning based on experience and knowledge of Church history:

> I cannot approve of the tactic of those who are too prone to engage in condemning and renouncing, especially in matters not related to the overthrow of the chief points and articles of our faith. I have always approved of moderation and always will, since I have learned from ecclesiastic history how many evils have befallen the Church because of the rash judgments of even the best men against those who could have been dealt with in moderation. These become frustrated by the harsh way in which their brothers treated them and afterwards become pernicious enemies of the Church.[81]

In essence, Bullinger wants to start with the assumption that Ramus' heart is in the right place. He urges Beza to take the same tack.

As noted, Beza secures his victory against his rivals when in May of 1572 the synod of Nîmes condemns Ramus and his partisans over the matter of discipline.[82] When Bullinger hears the decisions taken, he expresses to Beza in the strongest terms his regret that the two did not reconcile, stooping instead to calling each other names; he believes that if they do not resolve their differences in private soon, they will cause harm to many faithful.[83] Even so, Beza's frustration over the matter is not spent with the success of the synod, nor is he immediately swayed by Bullinger's admonition. The fact that Ramus

80 Bullinger is referring to the comments that Beza made about Ramus on 14 January 1572 (see CB 13:30–31). For Bullinger's response, see his letter to Beza, 11 February 1572, in CB 13:43.

81 Bullinger to Beza, 11 February 1572, in CB 13:43.

82 A letter from the Synod to the pastors of Zurich on 17 May 1572 (CB 13:267–272, annex 3) describes the censoring of Ramus, Morély, and their supporters in their absence (see 269).

83 Bullinger to Beza, 12 July 1572, in CB 13:166: "As for your private letters to me, I have not read them without sadness, because from them quickly I understood with what near implacable hostility the two of you carry on. He labels you a 'substantial' philosopher, and you call him a most vain trifler. Yet if this burst out into the public, these mutual hard feelings and anger toward those whom many people in France have a high regard will supply the longed-for weapons for our adversaries and will damage those in the Church who still have rather fragile consciences. Therefore, I would wish you settle your quarrels by a friendly and earnest conference, privately, whether in writings or in direct conversation, and, abstaining from the name-calling and abuse as befits brothers who are servants of the same Lord and confessors of the same faith, you forgive each other."

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continues to agitate does not help the matter. Dufour calls attention to a letter written by Ramus to Gwalther in July of 1572 in which he defames Beza shortly before being murdered in the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre.[84] Despite the fact that Ramus did not attend the synod, he nonetheless accuses Beza of having read aloud a letter from Bullinger to the Synod in which allegedly the Zurich reformer adopts the Genevan positions on both the Eucharist and discipline. The implication is that Beza was trying to manipulate the synod through deceit. Gwalther naturally shares the letter with Bullinger, who himself quickly fires off a rebuttal to Ramus: "Doctor Beza, a man who has done well by the Church and a beloved brother, could not have read such letters of Bullinger, because he neither received nor had such letters. Nor is he so vain—I know this well enough—to concoct and read aloud in a gathering of brothers something that he did not receive from me." Bullinger informs Beza of this letter and his response to it, though notably not mentioning Ramus by name in the process.[85] Clearly, neither know that Ramus has already perished in the massacre.[86]

At some point before the beginning of 1573, however, both hear the news about Ramus' murder.[87] The passing touches Bullinger deeply and occasions the frank admonition to Beza on 10 January 1573 with which we began this account: "I would prefer that you not continue to express your aggravation with him." Bullinger explicitly interprets the death of Ramus as a martyrdom, indicating that despite the bad blood he engendered among colleagues at times, he is still to be included among the faithful. Thus, when writing to Beza a few weeks later and relaying his eagerness to see François Hotman's (1524–1590) retelling of the massacres in the *Narratio de furoribus Gallicis*, Bullinger reminds Beza—apparently under the assumption that Beza himself is contributing to the work—that Ramus deserves a place in the narrative: "Truly the most fitting thing for you to do is to honor the name of our friend Ramus who died for Christ."[88]

84 DUFOUR, A. (2009), 144. For the letter, see Ramus to Gwalther, 17 July 1572, in CB 13:276 (annex 5), and Bullinger's reply to Ramus, 10 August 1572, in CB 13:278–279 (appendix 5). Ramus died on 26 August.

85 Bullinger to [Beza], 9 September 1572, in CB 13:186.

86 See the editors' comment on this at CB 13:195n.10.

87 For a description of the assassination, see KINGDON, R. (1967), 111–112, and the bibliography cited on 112n.1.

88 Bullinger to Beza, 27 January 1573, in CB 14:21. The jurist Hotman escaped the massacre because he was away teaching at the University of Bourges when it occurred. He published his work under pseudonyms, at four presses in six different editions: one at Basel by Thomas Guarin, one at La Rochelle by Barthélemy Berton, and four at London by Henry Bynneman or William Williamson. In each case, false locations of publication were given. Bynneman also produced an English version in 1573 titled, *A true and plaine report of the furious outrages of Fraunce & the horrible and shameful slaughter of Chastillion the admirall*. On Hotman's pseudonym, see BIETENHOLZ, P. (1971), 351.

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Bullinger's warning to Beza and reminders of his piety, so delicately expressed to a person of Beza's stature, nonetheless exhibit a palpable impatience with the unending denunciations. Bullinger attempts to pull Beza from the bitter path of vindictiveness. At the same time, Bullinger's words reveal a genuine brotherly affection for the Parisian scholar: Ramus proved himself a sincere follower of Christ while at Zurich and died for his faith. To his mind, Beza is unfairly treating him as an enemy of true religion.

Beza finds himself duly admonished. Just nine days after Bullinger writes his letter of 10 January, Beza replies with a contrite acknowledgement of Bullinger's reprimand:

> As for Pierre Ramus, although it is true that I disliked many things about him, and for good reason, nevertheless I have learned, by God's grace, to hate sins and failings, not people; and, even if I feel hatred toward the person, far be it from me to keep attacking a dead person, especially one who was cruelly butchered. To do so would not only be inhuman, but even impious.[89]

It is difficult to think of many correspondents or friends in 1573 who could elicit an admission on the part of Beza that he had strayed so grievously. Beza stands at the pinnacle of the French Reformed movement at this time, admired and respected by many for his intellect and gravitas. Even so, the refrain concerning Ramus that runs through several years of letters with Bullinger leading to this final exchange exposes to what extent Beza needed his network of correspondents to moderate and correct him. His far-flung friends in a variety of ways constantly serve to remind him of his humanity—"to do so would not only be inhuman"—and the kind of love that his faith demands—"but even impious." These words open a small window into the deep, internal tensions that tug and pull on him as the external and public work of ministry is carried on. Surely, without the letters we would be at a loss to assess the motivations and struggles of a spiritual leader caught between the now and the not-yet.

The number of stories that the letters tell and the range of topics on which they touch surpass our ability to catalog them here. Even the exchange concerning Ramus is but one narrative illustrating the deferential relationship between Beza and the Zurich reformer during the latter years of his life. For other examples of the same, we could also point to Beza's alteration of his *Epistolae theologicae* (1573) in the middle of the press run due to Bullinger's displeasure with one of the letters. In this unusual case, Beza replaced a letter written to the minister Pierre Dathenus on the subject of discipline with a less controversial

89 Beza to Bullinger, 19 January 1573, in CB 14:14.

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