

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (1273)

1215–1340. Guided by the works of Aristotle, Aquinas embraced the power of human reason to examine important issues, both natural and divine. The title of his most famous work, *Summa Theologiae*, reflects the confidence that he and other scholastics had in their ability to summarize knowledge for the benefit of teachers and students alike. Aquinas's systematic approach to this monumental task is embedded within the organization of the *Summa* itself. The material is divided into major topics, which in turn are divided into subtopics. He breaks down the content further still with "articles" where he poses a series of questions related to the corresponding subtopic. He then lays out the evidence for yes and no responses, ultimately guiding his reader to what he considers to be the correct conclusion. In doing so, Aquinas sought to convey not only theological fundamentals but also a way of thinking about complex issues in a logical and orderly way. The excerpt below is from the *Summa's* examination of the question of how we know that God exists, which for Aquinas was the essential starting point for understanding and explaining God's teachings.

On the Existence of God

Article II. Whether the existence of God is demonstrable.

Let us proceed to the second point. It is objected (1) that the existence of God is not demonstrable: that God's existence is an article of faith, and that articles of faith are not demonstrable, because the office of demonstration is to prove, but faith pertains (only) to things that are not to be proven, as is evident from the Epistle to the Hebrews, XI. Hence that God's existence is not demonstrable.

Again, (2) that the subject matter of demonstration is that something exists, but in the case of God we cannot know what exists, but only what does not, as Damascenus¹ says (Of the Orthodox Faith, I., 4.) Hence that we cannot demonstrate God's existence.

Again, (3) that if God's existence is to be proved it must be from what He causes, and that what He effects is not sufficient for His supposed nature, since He is infinite, but the effects finite, and the finite is not proportional to the infinite. Since, therefore, a cause cannot be proved through an effect not proportional to itself, it is said that God's existence cannot be proved.

But against this argument the apostle says (Rom. I., 20), "The unseen things of God are visible through His manifest works." But this would not be so unless it were possible to demonstrate God's existence through His works. What ought to be understood concerning anything, is first of all, whether it exists.

Conclusion. It is possible to demonstrate God's existence, although not a priori (by pure reason), yet a posteriori from some work of His more surely known to us.²

In answer I must say that the proof is double. One is through the nature of a cause and is called *propter quid*: this is through the nature of preceding events

simply. The other is through the nature of the effect, and is called *quia*, and is through the nature of preceding things as respects us.

Since the effect is better known to us than the cause, we proceed from the effect to the knowledge of the cause. From any effect whatsoever it can be proved that a corresponding cause exists, if only the effects of it are sufficiently known to us, for since effects depend on causes, the effect being given, it is necessary that a preceding cause exists. Whence, that God exists, although this is not itself known to us, is provable through effects that are known to us.

To the first objection above, I reply, therefore, that God's existence, and those other things of this nature that can be known through natural reason concerning God, as is said in Rom. I., are not articles of faith, but preambles to these articles. So faith presupposes natural knowledge, so grace nature, and perfection a perfectible thing. Nothing prevents a thing that is in itself demonstrable and knowable, from being accepted as an article of faith by someone that does not accept the proof of it.

To the second objection, I reply that, since the cause is proven from the effect, one must use the effect in the place of a definition of the cause in demonstrating that the cause exists; and that this applies especially in the case of God, because for proving that anything exists, it is necessary to accept in this method what the name signifies, not however that anything exists, because the question *what it is* is secondary to the question *whether it exists at all*. The characteristics of God are drawn from His works as shall be shown hereafter. Whence by providing that God exists through His works as shall be shown hereafter. Whence by proving that God exists through His works, we are able by this very method to see what the name God signifies.

To the third objection, I reply that, although a perfect knowledge of the cause cannot be had from inadequate effects, yet that from any effect manifest to us it can be shown that a cause does exist, as has been said. And thus from the works of God His existence can be proved, although we cannot in this way know Him perfectly in accordance with His own essence.

Article III. Whether God exists.

Let us proceed to the third article. It is objected (1) that God does not exist, because if one of two contradictory things is infinite, the other will be totally destroyed; that it is implied in the name God that there is a certain infinite goodness: if then God existed, no evil would be found. But evil is found in the world; therefore it is objected that God does not exist.

Again, that what can be accomplished through a less number of principles will not be accomplished through more. It is objected that all things that appear on the earth can be accounted for through other principles, without supposing that God exists, since what is natural can be traced to a natural principle, and what proceeds from a proposition can be traced to the human reason or will. Therefore that there is no necessity to suppose that God exists.

But as against this note what is said of the person of God (Exod. III., 14) *I am that I am*.

Conclusion. There must be found in the nature of things one first immovable Being, a primary cause, necessarily existing, not created; existing the most widely,

¹John of Damascus (ca. 676–749), a Christian theologian. [Ed.]

²Here Aquinas is distinguishing between knowledge obtained through logic and reason (a priori) as opposed to from facts and observation (a posteriori). [Ed.]

good, even the best possible; the first ruler through the intellect, and the ultimate end of all things, which is God.

I answer that it can be proved in five ways that God exists. The first and plainest is the method that proceeds from the point of view of motion. It is certain and in accord with experience, that things on earth undergo change. Now everything that is moved is moved by something; nothing, indeed, is changed, except it is changed to something which it is in potentiality. Moreover, anything moves in accordance with something actually existing; change itself, is nothing else than to bring forth something from potentiality into actuality. Now nothing can be brought from potentiality to actual existence except through something actually existing: thus heat in action, as fire, makes fire-wood, which is hot in potentiality, to be hot actually, and through this process, changes itself. The same thing cannot at the same time be actually and potentially the same thing, but only in regard to different things. What is actually hot cannot be at the same time potentially hot, but it is possible for it at the same time to be potentially cold. It is impossible, then, that anything should be both mover and the thing moved, in regard to the same thing and in the same way, or that it should move itself. Everything, therefore, is moved by something else. If, then, that by which it is moved, is also moved, this must be moved by something still different, and this, again, by something else. But this process cannot go on to infinity (1) because there would not be any first mover, nor, because of this fact, anything else in motion, as the succeeding things would not move except because of what is moved by the first mover, just as a stick is not moved except through what is moved from the hand. Therefore it is necessary to go back to some first mover, which is itself moved by nothing, and this all men know as God.

The second proof is from the nature of the efficient cause. We find in our experience that there is a chain of causes: nor is it found possible for anything to be the efficient cause of itself, since it would have to exist before itself, which is impossible. Nor in the case of efficient causes can the chain go back indefinitely, because in all chains of efficient causes, the first is the cause of the middle, and these of the last, whether they be one or many. If the cause is removed, the effect is removed. Hence if there is not a first cause, there will not be a last, nor a middle. But if the chain were to go back infinitely, there would be no first cause, and thus no ultimate effect, nor middle causes, which is admittedly false. Hence we must presuppose some first efficient cause, which all call God.

The third proof is taken from the natures of the merely possible and necessary. We find that certain things either may or may not exist, since they are found to come into being and be destroyed, and in consequence potentially, either existent or non-existent. But it is impossible for all things that are of this character to exist eternally, because what *may* not exist, at length *will* not. If, then, all things were merely possible (mere accidents), eventually nothing among things would exist. If this is true, even now there would be nothing, because what does not exist, does not take its beginning except through something that does exist. If then nothing existed, it would be impossible for anything to begin, and there would now be nothing existing, which is admittedly false. Hence not all things are mere accidents, but there must be one necessarily existing being. Now every necessary thing

either has a cause of its necessary existence, or has not. In the case of necessary things that have a cause for their necessary existence, the chain of causes cannot go back infinitely, just as not in the case of efficient causes, as proved. Hence there must be presupposed something necessarily existing through its own nature, not having a cause elsewhere but being itself the cause of the necessary existence of other things, — which all call God.

The fourth proof arises from the degrees that are found in things. For there is found a greater and a less degree of goodness, truth, nobility, and the like. But more or less are terms spoken of various things as they approach in diverse ways toward something that is the greatest, just as in the case of hotter (more hot) which approaches nearer the greatest heat. There exists therefore something that is the truest, and best, and most noble, and in consequence, the greatest being. For what are the greatest truths are the greatest beings, as is said in the *Metaphysics* Bk. II. 2. What moreover is the greatest in its way, in another way is the cause of all things of its own kind (or genus); thus fire, which is the greatest heat, is the cause of all heat, as is said in the same book (cf. Plato and Aristotle). Therefore there exists something that is the cause of the existence of all things and of the goodness and of every perfection whatsoever — and this we call God.

The fifth proof arises from the ordering of things for we see that some things which lack reason such as natural bodies are operated in accordance with a plan. It appears from this that they are operated always or the more frequently in this same way the closer they follow what is the Highest; whence it is clear that they do not arrive at the result by chance but because of a purpose. The things, moreover, that do not have intelligence do not tend toward a result unless directed by some one knowing and intelligent; just as an arrow is sent by an archer. Therefore there is something intelligent by which all natural things are arranged in accordance with a plan, — and this we call God.

In response to the first objection, then, I reply what Augustine says; that since God is entirely good, He would permit evil to exist in His works only if He were so good and omnipotent that He might bring forth good even from the evil. It therefore pertains to the infinite goodness of God that he permits evil to exist and from this brings forth good.

My reply to the second objection is that since nature is ordered in accordance with some defined purpose by the direction of some superior agent, those things that spring from nature must be dependent upon God, just as upon a first cause. Likewise what springs from a proposition must be traceable to some higher cause which is not the human reason or will, because this is changeable and defective and everything changeable and liable to non-existence is dependent upon some unchangeable first principle that is necessarily self-existent as has been shown.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What objections does Aquinas think some people may have to the idea of God's existence?
2. What does he offer as proof against such objections? Summarize one of them in your own words.

3. In its most basic form, scholasticism was a method of logical inquiry and exposition. In what ways do both the content of this excerpt and its organization, notably Aquinas's use of objections and proofs, reflect these characteristics?

2. A Female Mystic

Hadewijch of Brabant, *Letters and Poems* (1220–1240)

The body of religious work written or dictated by women during the thirteenth century is considerable and attests to heightened piety of laypeople across Europe. Often the line between the genres of writing was blurred as ordinary women explored different means of religious expression. Hadewijch of Brabant was one of many such women writers, and our knowledge of her comes primarily from her writings in her native Dutch, which include thirty-one letters, fourteen visions, forty-five stanzaic poems, and several other poems. Although criticized by members of her own, probably Beguine, community, Hadewijch nonetheless typifies many women writers of this period. She uses mystical and seemingly erotic language to describe a relationship with Christ. Love is a central concept throughout her work, which she consistently genders as female. For her, the word refers to her experience of the divine, far removed from the systematic doctrine of scholastic summas. Although some Beguines bordered on the edge of unorthodoxy and were at times accused of heresy, most works by female mystics fit harmoniously with the writings of such church leaders as St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) and Richard (1123–1173) and Hugh of St. Victor (1096–1141).

Letter 11

Ah, dear child, may God give you what my heart desires for you, and may you love Him as He deserves. Still, I could never endure, dear child, that someone before me loved God as dearly as I. I believe that many loved Him as fondly and dearly, yet I could hardly bear that someone would know Him with such passion.

From the age of ten I have been overwhelmed with such passionate love that I would have died during the first two years of this experience if God had not granted me a power unknown to common people and made me recover with His own being. For He soon granted me reason, sometimes enlightened with many wonderful revelations, and I received many wonderful gifts from Him, when He let me feel His presence and showed Himself to me. I was aware of many signs that were between Him and me, as with friends who are used to concealing little and revealing much when their feelings for each other have grown most intimate, when they taste, eat, and drink and consume each other wholly. Through these many signs God, my lover, showed to me early in life, He made me gain much con-

fidence in Him, and I often thought that no one loved Him as dearly as I. But meanwhile reason made me see that my love for Him was not the dearest, though the strong bonds of our loving had prevented me from sensing or even believing this. Such then is my present state. I do no longer believe that my love for Him is the dearest, nor do I believe that there is one alive who loves God as dearly as I. Sometimes I am so enlightened with love that I realize my failure to give my beloved what He deserves; sometimes when I am blinded with love's sweetness, when I am tasting and feeling her, I realize she is enough for me; and sometimes when I am feeling so fulfilled in her presence, I secretly admit to her that she is enough for me.

Stanzaic Poem 8

Born is the new season as the old one that lasted so long is drawing to a close.
Those prepared to do love's service will receive her rewards: new comfort and
new strength.

If they love her with the vigor of love, they will soon be one with love in love.

To be one with love is an awesome calling and those who long for it should spare
no effort.

Beyond all reason they will give their all and go through all.

For love dwells so deep in the womb of the Father that her power will unfold only
to those who serve her with utter devotion.

First the lover must learn charity and keep God's law.

Then he shall be blessed a hundredfold, and he shall do great things without great
effort, and bear all pain without suffering.

And so his life will surpass human reason indeed.

Those who long to be one with love achieve great things, and shirk no effort.
They shall be strong and capable of any task that will win them the love of love,
to help the sick or the healthy, the blind, the crippled or the wounded.
For this is what the lover owes to love.

He shall help the strangers and give to the poor and soothe the suffering when-
ever he can.

He shall pay loyal service to God's friends, to saints and men, with a strength that
is not human, by night and by day.

And when his strength seems to falter he will still place his trust in love.

Those who trust in love with all their being shall be given all they need.
For she brings comfort to the sad and guidance to those who cannot read.
Love will be pleased with the lover if he accepts no other comfort and trusts in
her alone.

Those who desire to live in love alone with all their might and heart shall so
dispose all things that they shall soon possess her all.

Stanzaic Poem 12

Like the noble season born to bring us flowers in the fields, so the noble ones are called to bear the yoke, the bonds of love.

Faith grows forever in their deeds, and noble flowers blossom and their fruits. The world is fathomed with faith, and the lover dwells in highest love, one with her in everlasting friendship.

"My yoke is sweet, my burden light," love's lover speaks with words conceived in love.

And outside love their truth cannot be known: to those who do not dwell in love the burden is not light but heavy, and they suffer fears unknown to love. For the servants' law is fear but love is the law of sons.

What is this burden light in love, this yoke so sweet?

It is that noble thrust inside, that touch of love in the beloved which makes him one with her, one will, one being, one beyond revoke.

And ever deeper digs desire and all that is dug up is drunk by love, for love's demands on love surpass the mind of man.

These things are beyond the mind of man: how the lover whom love has overwhelmed with love beholds the beloved so full of love.

For he rests not an hour, before he sails with love through all that is, and looks upon her splendor with devotion.

For in love's face he reads the designs she has for him, and in truth in love's face he sees clear and undeceived so many pains so sweet.

This he clearly sees: the lover must love in truth alone.

And when in truth he sees how little he does for love, his higher nature burns with rage and pain.

But from love's face, the lover learns to live a life devoted to the love of love.

This is a design that makes pain sweet, and the lover gives his all to love's fulfillment.

Things of great wonder come to those who give their all to love.

They will be glued to love with love, and with love they will fathom love.

All their secret veins will run into that stream where love gives love away, where love's friends are made drunk with love and filled with wonder at her passion.

And all this remains concealed to strangers, but to the wise it stands revealed.

God grant that all who crave love be well prepared for love, that they may live of her wealth alone, and draw her into their love.

No cruel stranger will ever cause them grief; their life is free and undisturbed, and well may they say, "I am all of love and love is all of me."

For what will harm them when they claim the sun, the moon, and all the stars?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does Hadewijch use gender imagery and language to express her feelings?
2. How would you describe Hadewijch's relationship with God and God's relationship with her?
3. What might have concerned some members of Hadewijch's community and some church authorities about her writings, as well as those of other female mystics? How did Hadewijch's approach challenge some accepted ways of thinking?
4. How does Hadewijch reflect the religious and cultural change of her times?

4. Imagining Hell

Dante Alighieri, *Divine Comedy* (1313–1321)

Like Hadewijch of Brabant, Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) combined poetry and the vernacular to explore the mysteries of faith and love. Born in Florence at a time rife with political struggles, Dante served in the city government and as a papal envoy, and eventually suffered exile from his beloved city. But Dante is most celebrated as one of the world's greatest poets. Through his artistry, Dante is widely credited with making Tuscan the language of Italy and spreading its use. His most famous poem, the *Divine Comedy*, describes his imaginary trip from hell to purgatory to paradise. Written between 1313 and 1321, the poem functions at both literal and allegorical levels as Dante embarks on a journey to understand the meaning of life. The excerpt that follows is from the first part of the poem, *Inferno*, in which the pagan poet Virgil guides Dante through the circles of hell. Along the way, they meet a colorful cast of legendary and historical characters whose sins help Dante better understand his own sins, a crucial first step toward his ultimate salvation.

From *The Inferno of Dante*, trans. Robert Pinsky (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994), 47–53.

Dante Alighieri, *Divine Comedy* (1313–1321)
(1265–1321) IMAGINING HELL / DANTE ALIGHIERI 247

"Imagining Hell" Florence, Italy. Poet who use vernacular Italian rather than Latin to write. This enhanced the Italian language. This is his imagined trip from Hell to Purgatory to Paradise (Heaven.)

So I descended from first to second circle —
Which girdles a smaller space and greater pain,
Which spurs more lamentation. Minos¹ the dreadful
Snarls at the gate. He examines each one's sin,
Judging and disposing as he curls his tail:
That is, when an ill-begotten soul comes down,
It comes before him, and confesses all;
Minos, great connoisseur of sin, discerns
For every spirit its proper place in Hell,
And wraps himself in his tail with as many turns
As levels down that shade will have to dwell.
A crowd is always waiting: here each one learns
His judgment and is assigned a place in Hell.
They tell; they hear — and down they all are cast.
"You, who have come to sorrow's hospice, think well,"
Said Minos, who at the sight of me had paused
To interrupt his solemn task mid-deed:
"Beware how you come in and whom you trust,
Don't be deceived because the gate is wide."
My leader answered, "Must you too scold this way?
His destined path is not for you to impede:
Thus is it willed where every thing may be
Because it has been willed. So ask no more."
And now I can hear the notes of agony
In sad crescendo beginning to reach my ear;
Now I am where the noise of lamentation
Comes at me in blasts of sorrow. I am where
All light is mute, with a bellowing like the ocean
Turbulent in a storm of warring winds,
The hurricane of Hell in perpetual motion
Sweeping the ravaged spirits as it rends,
Twists, and torments them. Driven as if to land,
They reach the ruin: groaning, tears, laments,
And cursing of the power of Heaven. I learned
They suffer here who sinned in carnal things —
Their reason mastered by desire, suborned.
As winter starlings riding on their wings
Form crowded flocks, so spirits dip and veer
Foundering in the wind's rough buffetings,

¹Minos is a mythological king and judge. Virgil casts him in the *Aeneid* as a judge of the underworld, and it is Dante who transforms him into a demonic creature.

Upward or downward, driven here and there
 With never ease from pain nor hope of rest.
 As chanting cranes will form a line in air,
 So I saw souls come uttering cries — wind-tossed,
 And lofted by the storm. “Master,” I cried,
 “Who are these people, by black air oppressed?”
 “First among these you wish to know,” he said,
 “Was empress of many tongues — she so embraced
 Lechery that she decreed it justified
 Legally, to evade the scandal of her lust:
 She is that Semiramis² of whom we read,
 Successor and wife of Ninus, she possessed
 The lands the Sultan rules. Next, she [Dido]³ who died
 By her own hand for love, and broke her vow
 To Sychaeus’s ashes. After her comes lewd
 And wanton Cleopatra. See Helen,⁴ too,
 Who caused a cycle of many evil years;
 And great Achilles,⁵ the hero whom love slew
 In his last battle. Paris and Tristan⁶ are here —”
 He pointed out by name a thousand souls
 Whom love had parted from our life, or more.
 When I had heard my teacher tell the rolls
 Of knights and ladies of antiquity,
 Pity overwhelmed me. Half-lost in its coils,
 “Poet,” I told him, “I would willingly
 Speak with those two⁷ who move along together,
 And seem so light upon the wind.” And he:
 “When they drift closer — then entreat them hither,
 In the name of love that leads them: they will respond.”
 Soon their course shifted, and the merciless weather

²The ancient Assyrian queen Semiramis became legendary for sexual excess; one legend says that she legalized incest, to justify her own behavior.

³Dido is the Carthaginian queen who kills herself for love of Aeneas in Virgil’s epic.

⁴Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, was the lover of both Julius Caesar and Mark Antony. Helen caused the rift that led to the Trojan War when she eloped with Paris.

⁵The idea that Achilles died for the love of the Trojan Polyxena was popular in the Middle Ages, but does not come from Homer.

⁶Tristan is a hero from medieval French romances, the lover of Iseult, the wife of his uncle, King Mark of Cornwall.

⁷Those two are Paolo and Francesca, historical contemporaries of Dante. Francesca was the wife of Gianciotto Malatesta of Rimini, but she fell in love with his brother, Paolo. Gianciotto murdered the lovers when they were discovered. The murder caused enormous scandal, and although Dante does not use Paolo’s name at all, or Francesca’s until line 103, there can be no doubt as to the identity of these lovers. The encounter that follows, in which Francesca tells Dante their sad tale, is one of the most celebrated passages in the *Commedia*.

Battered them toward us. I called against the wind,
 “O wearied souls! If Another [God]⁸ does not forbid,
 Come speak with us.” As doves whom desire has summoned,
 With raised wings steady against the current, glide
 Guided by will to the sweetness of their nest,
 So leaving the flock where Dido was, the two sped
 Through the malignant air till they had crossed
 To where we stood — so strong was the compulsion
 Of my loving call. They spoke across the blast:
 “O living soul, who with courtesy and compassion
 Voyage through black air visiting us who stained
 The world with blood: if heaven’s King bore affection
 For such as we are, suffering in this wind,
 Then we would pray to Him to grant you peace
 For pitying us in this, our evil end.
 Now we will speak and hear as you may please
 To speak and hear, while the wind, for our discourse,
 Is still. My birthplace is a city⁹ that lies
 Where the Po finds peace with all its followers.
 Love, which in gentle hearts is quickly born,
 Seized him for my fair body — which, in a fierce
 Manner that still torments my soul, was torn
 Untimely away from me. Love, which absolves
 None who are loved from loving, made my heart burn
 With joy so strong that as you see it cleaves
 Still to him, here. Love gave us both one death.
 Caina awaits the one who took our lives.”
 These words were borne across from them to us.
 When I had heard those afflicted souls, I lowered
 My head, and held it so till I heard the voice
 Of the poet ask, “What are you thinking?” I answered,
 “Alas — that sweet conceptions and passion so deep
 Should bring them here!” Then, looking up toward
 The lovers: “Francesca, your suffering makes me weep
 For sorrow and pity — but tell me, in the hours
 Of sweetest sighing, how and in what shape
 Or manner did Love first show you those desires
 So hemmed by doubt?” And she to me: “No sadness
 Is greater than in misery to rehearse
 Memories of joy, as your teacher well can witness.
 But if you have so great a craving to measure
 Our love’s first root, I’ll tell it, with the fitness

⁸The direct mention of God is avoided in Hell.

⁹The city is Ravenna, on Italy’s Adriatic (eastern) coast, Francesca’s home.

Of one who weeps and tells. One day, for pleasure,
 We read of Lancelot,¹⁰ by love constrained:
 Alone, suspecting nothing, at our leisure.
 Sometimes at what we read our glances joined,
 Looking from the book each to the other's eyes,
 And then the color in our faces drained.
 But one particular moment alone it was
 Defeated us: *the longed-for smile*, it said,
Was kissed by that most noble lover: at this,
 This one, who now will never leave my side,
 Kissed my mouth, trembling. A Galeotto,¹¹ that book!
 And so was he who wrote it; that day we read
 No further." All the while the one shade spoke,
 The other at her side was weeping; my pity
 Overwhelmed me and I felt myself go slack:
 Swooning as in death, I fell like a dying body.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What transgressions have the people in Dante's second circle of hell committed?
2. What attitude does Dante express toward those who are in hell?
3. Dante is often portrayed as a "medieval" rather than a "Renaissance" poet. Why? What connections do you see in his poetry with the intellectual culture and Christian worldview of the time?

5.

The New Power of Medieval States

Pope Boniface VIII, *Unam Sanctam* (1302)

and

King Philip IV of France, *General Assembly of Paris* (1303)

In the thirteenth century, secular rulers throughout Europe sought to broaden their authority over people living within their lands, including the clergy. The pope vigorously resisted such efforts; as head of the universal church, the pope believed that he had exclusive jurisdiction over clerical matters. The documents below elucidate both sides of the argument against the backdrop of a bitter contest for power between Bon-

From *Documents of the Christian Church*, ed. Henry Bettenson (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 115–16; and *Medieval Europe*, ed. Julius Kirshner and Karl F. Morrison (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 390–91.

¹⁰Lancelot is a worthy knight in the Arthurian romances (see chapter 11, document 3). He betrays King Arthur, becoming the lover of Arthur's wife, Guinevere.

¹¹Galeotto, or, in French, Gallehaut, acted as messenger between Lancelot and Guinevere. The French version of his name has become a synonym for "pander" or "go-between."

iface VIII (r. 1294–1303) and King Philip IV of France (r. 1285–1314). The first is the papal bull Unam Sanctam issued by Boniface to counter what he regarded as Philip's flagrant violations of clerical privilege. King Philip responded in kind by calling an assembly of his closest advisors to bring a host of charges against the pope, building on a strategy that he had already used in his conflict with Boniface. A year earlier, Philip had convened representatives of the clergy, nobles, and townspeople to garner support for his antipapal policies. His strategy succeeded in weakening the pope's claim to universal authority while laying the groundwork for the development of representative institutions in France.

Unam Sanctam

We are obliged by the faith to believe and hold—and we do firmly believe and sincerely confess—that there is one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, and that outside this Church there is neither salvation nor remission of sins. . . . In which Church there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism."¹ At the time of the flood there was one ark of Noah, symbolizing the one Church; this was completed in one cubit² and had one, namely Noah, as helmsman and captain; outside which all things on earth, we read, were destroyed. . . . Of this one and only Church there is one body and one head—not two heads, like a monster—namely Christ, and Christ's vicar is Peter, and Peter's successor, for the Lord said to Peter himself, "Feed My sheep."³ "My sheep" He said in general, not these or those sheep; wherefore He is understood to have committed them all to him. . . .

And we learn from the words of the Gospel that in this Church and in her power are two swords, the spiritual and the temporal. For when the apostles said, "Behold, here" (that is, in the Church, since it was the apostles who spoke) "are two swords"—the Lord did not reply, "It is too much," but "It is enough."⁴ Truly he who denies that the temporal sword is in the power of Peter, misunderstands the words of the Lord, "Put up thy sword into the sheath."⁵ Both are in the power of the Church, the spiritual sword and the material. But the latter is to be used for the Church, the former by her; the former by the priest, the latter by kings and captains but at the will and by the permission of the priest. The one sword, then, should be under the other, and temporal authority subject to spiritual. For when the apostle says "there is no power but of God, and the powers that be are ordained of God"⁶ they would not be so ordained were not one sword made subject to the other. . . .

Thus, concerning the Church and her power, is the prophecy of Jeremiah fulfilled, "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms," etc.⁷ If, therefore, the earthly power err, it shall be judged by the spiritual power; and if a

¹Eph. iv. 5.

²Gen. vi. 16.

³John xxi. 17.

⁴Luke xxii. 38.

⁵John xviii. 11.

⁶Romans x. 1.

⁷Jer. i. 10.