



Book Two: Creation (On the Truth of the Catholic Faith; Summa Contra Gentiles)

St. Thomas Aquinas

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Creation is the second book of St. Thomas Aquinas' Summa Contra Gentiles work, also known as Summa Contra Gentes. Book two includes an introduction, bibliography, and both an index by subject and by terms.

The Summa Contra Gentiles is not merely the only complete summary of Christian doctrine that St. Thomas has written, but also a creative and even revolutionary work of Christian apologetics composed at the precise moment when Christian thought needed to be intellectually creative in order to master and assimilate the intelligence and wisdom of the Greeks and the Arabs. In the Summa, Aquinas works to save and purify the thought of the Greeks and the Arabs in the higher light of Christian Revelation, confident that all that had been rational in the ancient philosophers and their followers would become more rational within Christianity. This exposition and defense of divine truth has two main parts: the consideration of that truth which faith professes and reason investigates, and the consideration of the truth which faith professes and reason is not competent to investigate. The exposition of truths accessible to natural reason occupies Aquinas in the first three books of the Summa. His method is to bring forward demonstrative and probable arguments, some of which are drawn from the philosophers to convince skeptics. In the fourth book Aquinas appeals to the authority of Sacred Scripture for those divine truths which surpass the capacity of reason.

Summa Contra Gentiles is often portrayed as an early missionary's manual or handbook. Where the Summa Theologiae was written to explain the Christian faith to theology students, Summa Contra Gentiles is more apologetic in tone, as if it was written to explain and defend the Christian truth for missionaries in hostile situations against unbelievers, with arguments adapted to fit the intended circumstances of its use, each article refuting a certain heretical belief or proposition.

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