The following work has been inspired by the conviction that a generation and more of historically nuanced and profound contemplation of the metaphysics and theology of Thomas Aquinas nonetheless has managed, in the density of the historical foliage, to mislay central doctrinal tenets of the Angelic Doctor. Moreover, these tenets are precisely those that prove most essential to the metaphysician and the theologian: in particular, those that concern the intrinsic analogicity of being as divided by act and potency, an analogical division that is the foundation both for the doctrine of participation and for the causal demonstrations proving the truth of the proposition that God exists. Instead, whether in process theology, in the Catholic theologians of the Communio school, or in Thomists such as Montagnes, one finds free-floating relation taken as the metaphysical basis for the analogy of being and hence for theism. This is a systematically untenable situation, and it is in significant part to remedy it that this work is written.
Of course, this work concurs with the writings of certain older Thomists—e.g., Maritain, Anderson, Garrigou-Lagrange—unjustly impugned as somehow historically insensitive because they refused to submerge speculative questions in historical obscuration. There is little point in putting the matter more gently: as we shall see below, it has come to be assumed that because he does not expressly revisit it in later works, Thomas abandoned his teaching on analogy from *De veritate*. By the conclusion of this work, I hope the reader may see why this position struck earlier generations of Thomists—and strikes this author—as rather like saying that Thomas changed his views on noncontradiction as the first principle because he did not substantially re-engage it in the *tertia pars* of the *Summa theologiae*. To my mind, the systematic consideration of this question has not properly been pursued. I will argue that the systematic reasons for the affirmation of the analogy of being as the analogy of proper proportionality persist unabated from *De veritate* forward—indeed, that they grow stronger—and are actually stated in the *Summa theologiae* even though they are not brought forward to address this precise question. (Indeed, one might think, Thomas already explicitly answered it in *De veritate* and so had no need to raise it again, especially since there is no contradiction between the two treatments.)

My account of the relation between *De veritate* and the *Summa theologiae* will be found later in this work. Not the least confusion that has long bewildered people is Thomas’s seeming emphasis upon analogy of attribution and proportion in the *Summa theologiae*, while earlier, in *De veritate*, he argued for proper proportionality as the analogy of being and as alone capable of avoiding the error of affirming God to have a determined relation to creatures.

Analogy of proper proportionality implies no determined relation of the analogates: e.g., “as light is to the eye, so is truth to the mind” does not render light to be truth, or the eye to be the mind. Rather, a similarity of diverse rationes of act is discerned, which one may call “illumination”—but this “illumination” is not tantamount merely to one thing, one univocal object, but is analogous, applying to the two cases proportionately. Such analogy is the way in which we grasp the division of being by act and potency, in terms of the
likeness of diverse rationes of act: e.g., as the frog is to its act of being, so the angel is to its act of being; or, as potentially walking is to actually walking, so potentially whistling is to actually whistling.

Standing in contrast to analogy of proper proportionality as the analogy of being are the analogy of attribution and analogy of proportion. Analogy of attribution extends the meaning of a term from its central proper case—for instance, health as centrally pertaining to a living organism—to causes, effects, or signs that are not properly and intrinsically designated by the term. Hence medicine is said to be healthy as a cause of the health of the organism, but is not itself a proper subject of health. Simple analogy of proportion implies determined relations: e.g., the proportion of nickel to dime implies the determined relation of five to ten, because the distance from the nickel to the dime is the same as the distance from the dime to the nickel. By contrast, while the creature has a real determined relation to God, God has no real determined relation to the creature, because God infinitely—that is, by no mere finite increment—transcends the creature. Thus although Thomas allowed in De veritate that one might speak of an analogy of what he called transferred proportion as long as the comparison of any one to any other “boils down to” or is retranslatable in terms of proper proportionality, there neither is nor can be any strict analogy of proportion between creature and God. As will be shown below, Thomas’s example of transferred proportion in De veritate, q. 23, art. 7, ad 9, is “sicut se habet princeps ad civitatem ita gubernator ad navim,” or “as the ruler is to the city, so is the pilot to his ship”—a classic illustration of proper proportionality. His later insistence on analogy of proportion between creature and God is consistent with this emphasis in De veritate.

Likewise, with respect to analogy of attribution of created effect to divine cause: while the effect is always attributed to the cause, and so analogy of creature to God will always be treated by Thomas attributively, the being of the creature is not God. Rather, being is predicated of the creature itself: and it is on the basis of the being of creatures that the truth of the proposition that God exists is demonstrated. As nonexistent beings are not attributable
as real effects, the analogy of being is prior to the analogy of attribution and is in fact its necessary condition. While the analogy of being does not substitute for causal analysis, the analogy of being as the likeness of diverse *rationes* of act is the foundation and precondition for causal resolution to God. Further, while the effect is attributed to God, God is not attributed to the effect, i.e., God is not essentially “cause of Steven Long.” Inasmuch as God infinitely transcends the created effect, there is no determined relation of God to created effect, which means that the attributive analogy of creature to God presupposes and must be “backwards translatable” into the analogy of proper proportionality that as the creature is to what is its own, so God is to what is His own.

Relation to God—the relation of createdness, the causal relation of participation—presupposes the being of the creature inasmuch as nonexistent beings have no real relations (and God is not really related to the creature). Hence the analogy of being is necessarily ontologically prior to participation and the relation to God. Attributive analogies of created effect to God as first cause, and of proportion of one to another, always presuppose, and must be finally retranslated into, the analogy of being as an analogy of proper proportionality regarding the likeness of diverse *rationes* of act as limited by potency. Seeing this, however, requires speculative understanding of Thomas’s teaching in *De veritate*; it also suggests the value of understanding that the formal reign of a principle in a science is not necessarily best determined by counting words.

*The internecine controversies within Thomism over the nature* of the analogy of being are famous, as likewise are the misplaced allegations of “onto-theology” and reductionism which—condign as they are for most post-Enlightenment thought—have no point of genuine contact with the teaching of Aquinas. The controversy regarding analogy of being taken up within this work, however, is singularly disruptive inasmuch as it clouds the essential conditions for all knowledge of God and for the understanding of the transcendence and intelligibility of the act of faith.

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One senses that for some theologians it might be a happy event to be able to treat our knowledge of God, or of the theological character of the act of faith, without any reference to metaphysics. Alas, this is impossible, not only because revelation is given to us in human language and so carries with it human categories, but also because revelation pertains both to God Who is the creator of all finite being and to creation in relation to God: it presupposes *natura*. Hence, the relation of the being of things to God, and the truth that God is first cause of the being of creatures, are doubly written into revelation itself, both as primordial revelation in creation and as supernatural revelation strictly speaking. Accordingly, there are only two possibilities: that the being common to finite things (or as Thomas agreeing with Aristotle would say, the being said of substance and the categories) is intelligible in such a way as to render possible a contemplation of God that does not reduce or deny the transcendence of God; or else created being is such that no intelligible speech of God is possible proceeding from finite being.

Someone might ask whether there is not a third possibility. Could there not be speech about God that God Himself authorizes and that so escapes any taint of created categories? To which the response is that even human speech inspired by God remains both human and speech; and that if such speech were to be wholly de-nuded of any created intelligibility, it would by that fact be wholly unintelligible to the human creature and thereby cease to be speech since speech is more than sound whose signification is either unknowable or nonexistent. It would follow that all theology would become some species of advanced glossolalia, and that seeking to derive any rational implications from it would be impossible. Further, there would of course literally be no language in which it could so much as be suggested why Christian belief should be received as meaningful, much less as true. For the very idea of transcendence is—dare one say it?—an idea, that is, it posits that God has no real relation of dependence on creatures, but rather that creatures depend wholly upon God. Hence, if analogy of being does not pertain to all ideas and judgments of the real from the start, there will be no possibility of speaking of God without placing God in a determined
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relation to the perfection of the creature and so reducing the transcendency of God. This is to say that we are returned to the original position: either being is analogous and so affords the possibility of intelligible discourse regarding God, or being is not analogous and so there is no such possibility of intelligible discourse about God.

In framing the issue in this way, one means no discourtesy to Scotus, whose preoccupation was to assure precisely that our reasoning regarding God would be safeguarded. Yet he labored under the erroneous judgment that only univocal concepts and judgments could assure that the middle term in our reasoning would not be equivocal. And it is indeed the much condemned Cajetan who corrects this error in accord with the doctrine of Aquinas. But to understand his correction requires something rather more than a deep appreciation of its virtues as a semantic theory, for the metaphysical doctrine of Aristotle, and further of Aquinas, is greatly implicated here.

Accordingly, as there is indeed no way around the metaphysical flame, this work undertakes to show how it is that Aristotle and later Thomas are able to pass through it without being consumed in the fire of univocality or denial of divine transcendency. This is, by the way, an occasion to correct certain erroneous readings of Aristotle that deny he should be credited with upholding the divine transcendency. Though he lacked the ability to show what Thomas made clear—namely, how divine providence did not imply God being determined by creatures—Aristotle upheld absolute divine transcendency to the point that he preferred to deny divine knowledge of creatures rather than compromise the divine transcendency in the least degree. It is truly past time for this doctrinal and historical fact to replace the proposition urged by some that pagan thought could not rise to God save as the “highest part of the world.” For this proposition is simply false of the thought of Aristotle inasmuch as it requires that God be subject to a reciprocal causality from creatures which Aristotle does not admit. Where does Aristotle allow that God depends upon anything outside of the divine nature, or that anything can effect alteration in God? For God to be merely “part of a whole” or the highest part of the
world, God must be dependent upon the world to be. This is not the case with Aristotle, for whom God is not merely “the highest part of the world” but utterly transcendent of the world, in absolutely no dependence on the world. It is one thing for philosophers to apply a method; it is another for them to deny historico-doctrinal data where these do not accommodate their method. I refer, of course, to the important work of Fr. Sokolowski, *The God of Faith and Reason*, an instructive and genuinely profound work, which yet insofar as it suggests that creation is a doctrine knowable only through revelation, implies negation both of the teaching of Aquinas, for whom it is naturally demonstrable, and of Aquinas’s clear judgment that this doctrine of creation is to be found in the teaching of Aristotle.

It is of course common today to begin either with more general logical or semantic concerns or with extensive textual considerations, but we begin here with a purely speculative problem whose analysis is shared by Aristotle and Aquinas and which is essential to metaphysical scientia: the problem of Parmenidean monism. This is a problem that stands athwart the very entryway to metaphysics. Without adequate speculative penetration of this foundational consideration, the approach to the analogy of being is vitiated.

Accordingly, the order of this work is as follows: First, it addresses the aforesaid Parmenidean problem and its solution, representing the strong element of continuity that binds the thought of Aristotle and Thomas. I will consider this problem summarily rather than in a full historico-doctrinal presentation because the purpose for its consideration is purely speculative. It is in relation to this problem that the fundamental analogicity of being that is our speculative object becomes clear. Second, following upon this consideration of the metaphysical foundations, we will give in brief exegetic/doctrinal metaphysical arguments for viewing the analogy of being as that of the likeness of diverse rationes of act and potency (a doctrine perfected rather than transmuted by Aquinas in his full articulation of the real distinction of essence and existence). Third, I will reply to the most prominent objections both to the understanding of the analogia entis as an analogy of proper proportionality founded upon the division of being by act and potency, and
to the view that Thomas persisted in holding this teaching. Only after engaging these prominent objections will I, fourth, briefly address the import of the analogy of being as not only the foundation of all knowledge of God, but also as a safeguard to the intelligibility and transcendence of the act of faith, and as a manifestation of the persistent integral importance of metaphysics within theological method. Fifth, and finally, I offer an appendix addressing the vexed question of the nature of the analogical “abstraction” to be found in the negative existential judgment of separatio which lies at the root of the discovery of being as subject matter for a science: what Thomas refers to in the *Summa theologiae* as “abstraction through composition and division” (*ST*, I, q. 85, art. 1, ad 1).

*The importance of all this is more than a simple corrective reallocation of scholarly attention from one part of Thomas’s corpus to another, or yet another sed contra to Barthian fideism. The point is to draw attention to the unity and coherence of Thomas’s metaphysics and its centrality both in instructing us on the foundation of our knowledge of God and in safeguarding the intelligibility and transcendence of the act of faith.*

This book is thus, in a sense, a primer addressing the most decisive metaphysical issue for theologians. But it is no introductory work, because it presupposes familiarity with the terms introduced in this prologue, and thus implicitly with the metaphysics of esse and with the context of modern and postmodern negations of the praeambula fidei and of the essential role of metaphysics within theological method. Metaphysics within theological method is subordinated to the formal object of the theologian: God and all things as related to God, whether known through supernatural revelation or proportionate natural truth.

Lest I be guilty of impiety, let me pay tribute here to two authors in particular: Jacques Maritain, whose metaphysical acumen is arresting, and James Francis Anderson. The references to Maritain in this work should speak for themselves of this author’s high regard for his thoughts on the foundation of metaphysics. As
for Anderson, after completing this work, I reread John Knasas’s fine work *Being and Some Twentieth Century Thomists*. In the notes, I saw his reference to Anderson’s book *The Bond of Being* and his mention of a text indicating that Anderson saw that the analogy of being is prior to the relation to God. Knasas did not, to my mind, understand this so well as he did the many other complex issues he sorts through in his book. As he puts it:

James Anderson, *The Bond of Being*, lucidly argues for analogy of proportionality as the analogy between God and creatures. In Thomistic texts that speak of analogy of proportion between God and creatures (Aquinas, *S.T.* I, 13, 5c, and *C.G.* I, 35) Anderson argues that we do not have a distinct type of analogy but a mix of proportionality and proportion. In the mix, proportionality is basic (*The Bond of Being*, 248–49). Formally speaking there is proportionality; materially, there is proportion (232–33). Anderson’s position leads to this strange expression: “Once more, however, it must be pointed out that the very being itself of the creature does not consist in its relation to God: the relation itself is ontologically posterior to the being of the creature” (119). This remark seems to say that the ontologically prior situation is an independence of God and creatures.

While Anderson speaks of formal proportionality and material proportion, I prefer the language of *De veritate* regarding “transferred proportion” as a proportion that necessarily must be expressible in terms of proper proportionality: but it is the same insight. Further, what Knasas calls the ontologically prior situation for the creature is on Anderson’s (and my) account, not independence of God: if anything is “ontologically prior to creation” for the creature, it is not relation—God has no real relation to the creature—but nothingness. Nonexistent beings have no real relations. Hence only *pari passu* with God’s bestowal of being to the creature—and only because of that being—is the creature really related to God. It may sound good to say that the creature is constituted by its relation to God, but this is not true: the creature is
not constituted by its relation to God, but by God; and for God to constitute or cause is not for God to change or be really related, but for the creature to be. The effect of God is the very being of the creature; insofar and inasmuch as the creature exists, it is therefore related to God as its cause. God is not really related to the creature, and the creature is really related to God inasmuch as it exists, as it has being. Hence the analogical formality of being is prior to and the basis of the real relations of creatures to God, and it is necessarily ontologically prior to the relation of createdness, prior to the relation of causal participation (the creature participates nothing until it exists).

Anderson saw this crucial point, a point that has been forgotten in the intervening years, although he seems not to have articulated it as clearly and strategically, nor explained it as thoroughly, as I try to do below. He consigns it to a marginal comment; but at that time no one had yet made the argument that the analogy of being should be viewed as nothing other than the causal relation of participation. (*The Bond of Being* was published in 1949—even the work of Lyttkens is subsequent, to say nothing of Klubertanz, Montagnes, et alia.) In any case, having read some of his work years ago, I did not recollect his analysis until after writing the present book. I am as happy to have discovered the same truth, as likewise I am now to honor Anderson—an insufficiently appreciated author—for his insight: an insight that should not have fallen from view in the many ensuing constructions of the analogy of being as simply equivalent with the analogy of causal relation and participation.

It is a salient insistence of this present work that causal relation and participation are founded—both in reality and in our knowledge—upon being as analogically divided by act and potency. If nothing exists, nothing is causally related, and so the creature must with ontological priority be in order to be causally related; and it is only proceeding from our knowledge of beings according to their diverse *rationes* of act as limited by potency that we infer the reality of the first cause, or discriminate beings according to their hierarchic participation.
To sum up: in this work, I have tried to present as clearly as possible the fundamentality of the analogy of being in metaphysics, and its close relation to the first principle of noncontradiction and to the overcoming of Parmenidean monism. Likewise this work responds to various prominent Thomistic scholars who deny that the analogy of being is a likeness of diverse measures of act as limited in relation to potency. I have also tried to make clear how essential the analogy of being is for the transcendence and intelligibility of all reference to God and thus for the act of faith itself.

The present work seeks to address its subject—the analogy of being—with maximal metaphysical speculative formality and clarity. The very foundation of metaphysics, and the aid given by metaphysics to the theologian, are at stake. For this reason, bringing out the coherence, solidity, penetration, and unity of Thomas’s metaphysics and the corresponding aid it brings theology, is my entire object. As subordinated to the theological object of contemplating God and all things in relation to God, metaphysics serves *sacra doctrina*. It does so especially by articulating the analogy of being upon which all causal inference to God, and all relatedness of creature to God, is founded, and which the superanalogy of faith necessarily presupposes.