

THEOLOGY AS A SCIENCE AND ASCIENCE: AN ANSWER TO SCIENTISTS AND WARNING TO THEOLOGIANS

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ABSTRACT: Doubting theological scholarship and limiting its superiority has been the subject of debate among scientists and theologians for centuries. This paper aims to provide answers to scientists who doubt theology as a science, and to warn theologians who limit theology to just being a science, not recognizing theology as an ascience. Based on the historical and content analysis method was found that theology was transformed into a science, like all other sciences, and was limited only to the extent of science. In fact, on the one hand, actually theology is an essential science, not because of the theologians' recognition, but because of its understanding, characteristics, activities and dimensions as a science. On the other hand, according to its nature, theology is an ascience because of its understanding and presuppositions, position, adequacy, certainty and superiority over science. This finding confirms that theology is indeed the queen or mother of all sciences. If theology is recognized as a science and an ascience, then scientists and theologians will realize a fully integrated knowledge and life in the world.
KEYWORDS: *theology; science; ascience; answers; scientists; theologians; warnings.*

ABSTRAK: Meragukan keilmuan theologia dan membatasi keunggulannya adalah pokok perdebatan di antara para ilmuwan dan para theolog selama berabad-abad. Paper ini bertujuan untuk memberi jawaban kepada para ilmuwan yang merakukan theologia sebagai ilmu, dan memperingatkan para theolog yang membatasi theologia hanya sebagai science, tidak mengakui theologia sebagai ascience. Berdasarkan pada metode historis dan analisis

isi ditemukan bahwa theologia diubah menjadi science, sama dengan semua ilmu yang lain, dan dibatasi hanya sejauh science. Padahal, pada satu sisi, sesungguhnya theologia adalah science secara hakiki, bukan karena pengakuan para theolog, melainkan karena pengertian, karakteristik, kegiatan dan dimensinya sebagai ilmu. Pada sisi yang lain, sesuai dengan nature-nya, theologia adalah ascience karena pengertian dan presuposisinya, kedudukan, kecukupan, kepastian dan keunggulannya atas science. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa theologia memang adalah ratu atau induk semua ilmu pengetahuan. Apabila theologia diakui sebagai science dan ascience, maka para ilmuwan dan theolog akan mewujudkan pengetahuan dan kehidupan yang seutuhnya integratif dalam dunia.

KATA KUNCI: *teologi; ilmu; ascience; jawaban; ilmuwan; theolog; peringatan.*

I. Introduction

Epistemologically, theology is a science because it fulfills to scientific laws, and ontologically because it is also an ascience because it transcends scientific laws. That is why theology is called the queen of sciences. The study of theology as a science is the same as the study of the relationship between theology and science. The relationship between the two is complex and the answers to questions about their relationship are also complex. In discussing the two, experts use different terms, but the substance is the same, such as religion and science, faith and science, faith and facts, science and Christianity, science and the Bible. From all the discussions about these two different clumps of science, Keller suggests four differences between the two include conflict, independence, dialogue, and integration;¹ Polkinghorne presents a parallelism between the two,² and Padgett suggested a mutuality relationship between the two.³ Thus, there are six forms of the relationship between theology and science. The six forms of this relationship can actually be classified into only two opposing views, namely the view that rejects and the view that recognizes theology as a science. There is conflict and independence between theology and science is the view of those who reject theology as a science; while those who recognize dialogue, parallelism, mutuality and integration between theology and science are those who

¹ George E. Keller, III, "What is the Relationship between Science and Religion?" In, Center for Science and Religion, Samford University: <https://www.samford.edu>

² John Polkinghorne, "Science and Theology, Parallelisms", In Religion Science (2008): <https://inters.org/science-theology>;

³ Alan G. Padgett, *Science and the Study of God: A Mutuality Model for Theology and Science*, (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), pp. 1-21

recognize theology as a science.⁴

It is understandable, if scientists do not recognize theology as a science, but it is very unfortunate, if Christian scientists, especially Christian theologians, do not recognize theology as a science. Since the last modern era, the world has been dominated by science, even identified with science, and theology is considered not a science because it does not have a scientific method and there is no certainty about the object of research.⁵ To reject this assumption, some theologians follow the paradigm of science and make theology a pure science. As a result, liberal theologians arose who produced liberal theology with radical critics of the Scriptures who rejected the history of the Bible and Jesus Christ.⁶ In this case, theology is only treated as being the same as other sciences or only as a philosophy of religion. The uniqueness and excellence of theology as queen and or mother of science has been lost.

From the above study, two tendencies are found to limit the theology practiced by theologians today. *First*, limiting theology to pure science so that it loses its original color (nature). *Second*, limiting theology as a science that stands alone with other sciences. There is still a gulf between theology and science because they are still separate and even separate from each other. Theology is indeed the queen of science, but it is separate from science. In fact, there is little integrative study between theology and physics, biology, sociology, anthropology, except the integration between theology and psychology,⁷ and between politics and theology.⁸ The author finds very few studies of integrative theology with physics, biology, sociology, anthropology, except the integration between theology and psychology, and between politics and theology. Apart from being a little, it is also still considered a study that has just begun at the beginning of the 21st century and even then it is still by re-examining the study of classical texts, such as

⁴ Manuel E. Cortes, Jua Pablo Derl Rio, Pilar Vigil, "The Harmonious Relationship between Faith and Science from the Perspective of Some Great Saints: A Brief Comment", In, *The Linacre Quarterly*, 82 (1), 2015, 3-7, Sage Journal: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1179/00222185150000000000000000000000>; Dragos Constatin Sanda, Launa Alexandra Smarandoiu, Costea Munteanu, "The Dialogue between Science and Religion: A Taxonomic Contribution", In *Religion* (2017): <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/8/3/35/html>

⁵ Stevri Indra Lumintang, Danik Astuti Lumintang, *Theologia Penelitian dan Penelitian Theologis: Science-Asience serta Metodologinya*, (Jakarta: Geneva Insani Indonesia, 2016), 2-3

⁶ Stevri I. Lumintang, *Theologia Abu-Abu: Pluralisme Agama*, (Malang: Gandum Mas, 2012), 179-180

⁷ James H. Leuba, "Theology and Psychology" In, *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 9, No. 4, October, 1916): <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1506941>; Robert Innes, "How Should We relate theology and Psychology? In, *Practical Theology Journal*, Vol. 124, 1997: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00330159708839100>

⁸ Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 1-141, Elizabeth Phillips, *Political Theology: A Guide for the Perplexed*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012); Abraham Kuyper, "Calvinism and Politics (Book Chapter)", In *Lectures on Calvinism*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1931), pp.78-109.

Physico-theology: Religion and Science in Europe 1650-1750,⁹ eco-theological studies,¹⁰ sociotheology,¹¹ biotheology,¹² and economic theology.¹³ In particular, theologians generally discuss the relationship between theology and science, including Alister E. McGrath, but he discuss how the natural science can be used by the Christian faith;¹⁴ Herman Bavinck answers the question “Is Theology is a Science?” in his book;¹⁵ and John Polkinghorne explore ways that theology van be open to and informed by science,¹⁶ but none of them explicitly discuss theology either as a science or as an ascience. This reveals a gap between claims that theology is the queen and mother of science and the spirit of integrative studies. Therefore, this paper is important and urgent to be studied.

Starting from the background of the problems stated earlier, theology as a science as well as an ascience is an important and urgent study to answer the question: “what is the reason for theology as a science and as an ascience? Based on this research question, the aim of this research is to provide argumentative answers to scientists who demand theology as a science and to warn theologians who treat theology only as far as science by declaring theology as well as science, outside of science. By recognizing theology as a science, theologians and scientists will be open to the study of the integration of science and theology so that knowledge becomes wholistic; and by recognizing theology as an ascience, theologians and scientists will recognize theology as the queen of science in all fields.

⁹ Ann Blair, Kaspar von Greyer (eds.), “Physico-Theology: Religion and Science in Europe 1650-1750”, In, John Hopskin University Press, 2020: <https://www.press.jhu.edu/news/blog/physico-theology-religion-and-science-europe-1650-1750>; <https://jhupbooks.press.jhu.edu/title/physico-theology>.

¹⁰ Ernst M. Conradie, “The Four Tasks of Christian Ecotheology: Revisting the Current Debate”, In, Scriptura, Vol. 119, No. 1, Stellenbosch, 2020: <http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo>. Stevri Indra Lumintang, “Ecotheologia: Integrasi Theologia dengan Ekologi (Green Theology)”, *Theology the Queen of Science and the Master of Philosophy*, (Jakarta: Geneva Insani Indonesia, 2015), pp. 233-260.

¹¹ Mark Juergensmeyer, Mona Kanwal Sheikh, “A Sociotheological Approach to Understanding Religious Violence”, In, *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Violence*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 620-644

¹² Brian Edgar, “Biotheology: Theology, Ethics and the New Biotheologies”, In *Christian in Science and Technology*, 2009: <https://www.iscast.org/node/261>

¹³ Saul Newman, “Economic Theology” (Book Chapter), In *Political Theology: A Critical Introduction*, Wiley: pp. 131-153, https://media.wiley.com/product_data/excerpt/07/15095284/1509528407.pdf

¹⁴ Alister E. McGrath, *A Scientific Theology: Nature* (Vol. 1), (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), and Alister E. McGrath, *A Scientific Theology: Reality* (Vol. 2), (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002)

¹⁵ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Prolegomena*, Volume One, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), pp. 25-114

¹⁶ John C. Polkinghorne, *Theology in the Context of Science*, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 1-18

Method

This research departs from the paradigm of naturalism that examines the true nature of theology with a qualitative approach to an open, contextual, in-depth, and comprehensive study. By this approach, the research method used is historical,¹⁷ and content analysis as a popular form of textual analysis in theology.¹⁸ The historical method is a systematic effort in collecting data in the form of past events or thoughts regarding the relationship between theology and science throughout its history. Content analysis is a research technique for making replicated and valid conclusions from the text (or other meaningful material) into the context of its use, including systematically describing and analyzing the content of a writing, such as books or articles about theology and science.¹⁹ In this study, the authors analyzed the content of an essential and in-depth understanding of related research based on critical thinking to discover two different study areas: theology and science.²⁰ The content analysis steps in this study are: *First*, select text that is relevant to the purpose of the study. *Second*, code the message embedded in the text concerning the explanation of theology as a science that goes beyond science with its scientific arguments. Furthermore, researchers use two categories to classify the unit of analysis: the content of the basic substance and the form of the message or understanding presented theologically-rationally).

Findings and Discussion

A. Relationship of Theology and Science in History

Before natural and social knowledge was referred to as science in the modern era, long before, namely in the pre-modern era, theology had been recognized as a science. In addition, according to its substance and history, theology is called the queen of sciences, but then theology is changed and limited as explained below.

¹⁷ Totou Elena, Katitori Akrivi, Vassilakis Costa, ect. "Captureing the Historical Research Methodology", In, *International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation (ICER)*, (2009): <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228328281>

¹⁸ Chad Nelson and Robert H. Woods, R.H., Jr., "Content Analysis" In, *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, edited by Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler, (London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2011) p. 109

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 110; Stevri Indra Lumintang, Danik Astuti Lumintang, *Theologia Penelitian...*, p. 114; dan K. Krippendorff, "Reliability in Content Analysis: Some Common Misconception and Recommendations", In *Human Communication Research*, (2004), pp. 411-433: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244014522633>.

²⁰ Elo. S. Kaariainen, M., Kanste, O., Polkki T., Utriainen, K., and Kyngas, *Qualitative Content Analysis: A Focus on Trustworthiness*. SAGE Open, 4(1), pp.1-10: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244014522633>

1. The Beginning was Harmonious, Then Conflict and Theology Lost Their Nature

Rejecting and accepting theology as a science is an ongoing dichotomy throughout the history of the theological and scientific worlds. From the beginning to the end of the middle ages, from Augustine to Thomas Aquinas, the relationship between theology and philosophy, including natural philosophy (science) was harmonious.²¹ In particular, Thomas Aquinas formulated the relationship of theology and science in a very famous sentence: “the sacred doctrine of the Catholic Church is the queen of the sciences, and all other sciences are her handmaidens”.²² At that time, theology was known as the queen of the sciences.²³ Theology and science do not stand alone, nor do they contradict, but rather “enrich” each other. Pope John Paul II later affirmed this belief: “Science can purify religion from error and superstition; religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes. Each can draw the other into a wider world, a world in which both can flourish”.²⁴ In the reform era of the 16th century, reformers, such as Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, and John Calvin, reflected on Aristotle’s philosophy of physics in their sermons and writings,²⁵ and were later affirmed by reformed theologians, among them Abraham Kuyper with Calvinism and science.²⁶

Unfortunately, after the reformation era, precisely at the beginning of the modern era, the relationship between theology and science became no longer harmonious. The 18th century of enlightenment gave rise to a new paradigm of thinking, culminating in the 19th century, particularly with the theory of evolution and cosmology, followed by radical secularization, called atheism.²⁷ Scientists increasingly do not recognize that theology includes science. In addition, they do not recognize the theological method as a scientific method.²⁸ The spirit of modern science has caused to the rise of a number of theologians who use purely scientific principles regarding

²¹ Alexandru-Corneliu Arion, “Relationship between Faith and Science in the Major World Religions”, In Icoana Credintei, Studies and Articles, Vol. 4 No. 7/2018 p. 51

²² Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Theology the Queen of Science and Master of Philosophy...*, 61; Geoffrey Turner, “St Thomas Aquinas on the “Scientific” Nature of Theology”, In New Blackfriars, Vol. 78, No. 921 (November 1997), pp. 464-467: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43250058>

²³ Gijsbert van den Brink, “How Theology Stopped Being Regina Scientiarum-and How Its Story Continues”, In Studies in Christian Ethics, 2019, Vol. 32 (4), pp. 442-454: <https://journals.sagepub.com>

²⁴ Pope John Paul II, “Letter to Director of the Vatican Observatory. 1.6.1988”, In Papal Addresses, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, p. 300: <https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1988/documents>

²⁵ Christopher B. Kaiser, “Science (Physical)”, In *Encyclopedia of the Reformed Faith*, edited by Donald K. McKim, Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 343.

²⁶ Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1931), p.110-141

²⁷ Alexandru-Corneliu Arion, “Relationship between Faith and Science in the Major World Religions” ... p. 53

²⁸ Gerald Birney Smith, “Theology and Scientific Method”, In *Biblical World*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (Oct. 1912), University Chicago Press, Pp. 236-247: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3141922>

higher biblical criticism, including F. Schleiermacher, Ritschel, Harnack, Bruner, Bultmann and Barth.²⁹ As a result, theology is only considered a science, has lost its main spiritual and supernatural aspects. Theology is increasingly lost and losing meaning as fundamental Christian groups become skeptical of science and further away from academia.³⁰ As a result, theology is increasingly separated from the world of science and the real world. Theology's influence (light and salt) is increasingly lacking, and the science blind spot is increasingly missed. Moreland wrote that it is actually possible to become a responsible Christian without interacting with science through its integration studies with theology".³¹

2. Theology is being Restricted to Just a Science

At the end of the modern era (the 1960s), a small percentage of theologians and scientists systematically studied theology and science. Ian Barbour (1923-2013), an American Christian scientist best known for his studies of the integration of science and theology, as stated in his books *Issues in Science and Religion* (1966) and *Religion in an Age of Science* (1990). Likewise, Thomas F. Rorance (1913-2007), a Scottish theologian recognized as a pioneer studying theology and science.³² Furthermore, the study of the relationship between theology and science is increasing. However, many still doubt the science of theology, such as is theology a science?³³ How scientific is theology?³⁴ These questions are answered, and this article is one of the answers. On the one hand, in the context of theology in Indonesia, the government and, in general, scientists have accepted theology as science. The accreditation process indicates this for the recognition of theological higher education (school of theology).

In addition to meeting the demands for national accreditation, it was found that the tendency of lecturers who are theologians was falling into the tendency only to recognize theology as a science, as seen in scientific studies in the form of articles (journals), theses, and dissertations with the

²⁹ G.C.B. Berkouwer, *Modern Uncertainty and Christian Faith*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1853), p. 11; Alexandru-Corneliu Arion, "Relationship between Faith and Science...p. 56

³⁰ Jay D. Green, *An Invitation to Academic Studies*, (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2014), p.7

³¹ J.P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundation for A Christian Worldview*, (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2003), p. 307

³² H.D. Cruz, "Religion and Science, First Published", In Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2017): <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/religion-science>

³³ Greg Peterson, "Is Theology a Science?" in *The Scientific of Theology: Imre Lakatos, Method and Demarcation, Science in Christian Perspective*, March 1998, p.6 The American Scientific Affiliation: <https://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1998/PSCF3-98Peterson.html>

³⁴ Jaco Beyers, "How scientific is theology really? A Metter of Credibility.", In HTS Theological Studies, Vol. 72 No. 4 Pretoria, 2016: <https://hts.org.za/index.php/hts/article/view/3449/8564>

positivism paradigm of research and with a quantitative approach.³⁵ Of course, the theological formulation of biblical exegesis studies cannot be tested correctly with empirical data. Indeed the divinity of Jesus Christ is not tested for truth by empirical data. This is the treatment of theologians who limit theology only as science. Of course, with a quantitative approach, the paradigm of positivism can be applied in practical theology research (applied),³⁶ but not about basic theology, namely biblical, systematic, historical, and philosophical.

B. Theology As A Science

There are at least five arguments in response to scientists who doubt theology as a science. The five arguments are found in its meaning, characteristics, activities, dimensions as science, and theology as scientific truth. These five arguments are explained further in the following discussion.

1. Theology is Science: According to its Meaning

Starting from the simple, theology as a science is understood by its definition. Theology is not only understood narrowly as a philosophical formula, which is the science of God and God in nature as natural theology because God is not the object of study but begins with the meaning of the term. The theology of two words includes *Theos* (God) and *logos* (words or thoughts) which literally mean "thoughts or words about God."³⁷ Of course, the thought of God is meant, not from ideas and not from nature, but God's revelation. Therefore, Franke said that theology is an orderly and meticulous thought and reflection that relies and focuses on God's revelation,³⁸ and based on the revelation of God himself, as emphasized by Muller.³⁹ In this regard, God's revelation is the primary source of theology and doing theology. There is no theology (religious knowledge) without revelation, and without God.

The father of the church, Athanasius, interpreted theology as the knowledge of God in His existence, which is different from the world of His creation; and for Augustine, theology is the teaching of divinity (knowledge)

³⁵ Stevri Indra Lumintang, Danik Astuti Lumintang, *Theologia Penelitian dan Penelitian Theologis...*, p. 59

³⁶ Ibid., p. 151

³⁷ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Introduksi Theologia Sistematika: Sistem Berpikir Logis-Theologis*, (Jakarta: Geneva Insani Indonesia, 2019), p. 44

³⁸ John R. Franke, *The Character of Theology: A Postconservative Evangelical Approach*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), p. 13

³⁹ Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: Volume 1 Prolegomena to Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), p. 104

in the broader context of church doctrine.⁴⁰ From the understanding of Athanasius and Augustine, theology is concerned with epistemology, which is the science of understanding, knowledge, and how to obtain it. Of course, the knowledge of God is not obtained directly by studying God (the science of God),⁴¹ but through the revelation of God written in the Scriptures alone (*Sola Scriptura*). God's revelation is the epistemological principle of the Christian faith.⁴² The primary object of theological studies is not God, but epistemologically literature (Scripture), similar to the object of study of the sciences of language and literature, among which is literature and is recognized as a science.

The study of science progressed from the simpler to the more complex, thus with the theologically increasingly comprehensive and systematic, encompassing all the broad family of theological studies. Although theology is only one epistemologically, theology can be studied in five fields: biblical, systematic, historical, philosophical, and practical.⁴³ Departing from the breadth of the study area, and imbued with Ezra's theological pattern, a theological scholar encompassing researching, conducting, and teaching (Ezra 7:10), the theological theoretics can be defined as: "An activity of believers researches to understand the text of the Bible using biblical exegesis methods, formulates in certain communities with historical-theological methods, and applies them in contemporary contexts entirely to methods consistent with biblical exegesis. The qualitative or quantitative approach, generating theological knowledge".⁴⁴

From this definition, theology can be classified into two study forms: basic theology and applied theology. Biblical, systematic, historical, and philosophical are basic theological groups whose function is as a barrier and reference—theology of practicing pastoral, counseling, mission, education, and others, including applied theology.⁴⁵ The above definition also reveals three areas of theological study, namely text, community, and context, that are integratively formulated.⁴⁶ This explains that theology is coherent and correspondent between text, community, and context. Presupposition to theology is faith in Scripture. The object of theological study is essentially

⁴⁰ D.F. Wright, "Theology", In *New Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Sinclair B. Ferguson, Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), p. 680

⁴¹ Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Book House, 2001), p. 21

⁴² Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatic: Prolegomena*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), p. 38

⁴³ D.F. Wright, "Theology", In *New Dictionary of Theology*...p. 681

⁴⁴ Stevri I. Lumintang, *Introduksi Theologia Sistematis: Sistem Berpikir Logis-Theologis*...p. 46

⁴⁵ Stevri Indra Lumintang, Danik Astuti Lumintang, *Theologia Penelitian dan Penelitian* ...p. 59

⁴⁶ Charles van Engen, *Mission on the way: Issues in Mission Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), p.

the study of Scripture. Scripture informs us of objective truth.⁴⁷ That objective truth is the truth that regularly exists in Scripture itself, systematic with the principle of truth that exists in harmonious unity. There is no contradiction in the object of theological studies. Theology is understood and explained logically, similar to the law of all sciences.⁴⁸

The definition of the term theology also tells us about methods, both methods common to all sciences and methods unique to theological studies. Besides applying general research methods, all sciences, because of the same scientific law, also apply their unique methods, which are only suitable for the family of science itself, such as psychology, sociology, economics, politics, physics, biology, and literature. There are similarities, but there are also differences. The latter, like all sciences, are thus the result of cognitive processes with valid and reliable procedures of the scientific method. So, from the definition of the term theology above, it is asserted that theology is a science because theology is a product through processes and procedures by the laws of scientific science, as further explained below.

2. Theology as a Science: According to its Characteristics

In general, knowledge is divided into two types, namely general knowledge (common knowledge) and scientific knowledge (scientific knowledge). Scientific knowledge (science) is further divided into two parts, namely natural science (natural science), social sciences (social science), and or humanities. The language (literature) and religious sciences or theology belong to the social sciences and humanities.⁴⁹ Although classified as social sciences and or humanities, theology does not mean not dealing with the natural sciences.⁵⁰ As a science, theology has the characteristics of science or science. Scientists including Suryanto, Beerling, and Latif establish the characteristics of science, namely rational, objective, empirical and systematic, analytical, verification, universal, autonomous, methodological and factual.⁵¹

⁴⁷ John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief*, (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2013), p. 5

⁴⁸ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp.142-143

⁴⁹ Simon Rachmadi, "Teologi, Filsafat Keilahian, dan Spiritualitas: Problematika Lokus Ilmu Teologi Dalam Sistem Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia", in *Kurios Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen*, Volumen 7, No. 2 (2021): <https://www.sttpb.ac.id/e-journal/index.php/kurios/article/view>; Ignas Kleden, "Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial dan Teologi Kontekstual", *Jurnal Ledalero*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2018: <http://ejurnal.stfkledalero.ac.id>

⁵⁰ M.B. Foster, "Christian Theology and Modern Science of Nature", In, JSTOR, vol. 44 No. 176 (1935), pp. 439-466, Oxford University Press: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2249910>; Tapio Luoma, *Natural Science in the Theology of Thomas F. Torrance*, Oxford: University Press, (2002), 28-60, 105-140

⁵¹ Bagong Suryanto, *Metode Penelitian Sosial: Berbagai Alternatif Pendekatan*, (Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media Group, 2005), p. 2-3; Beerling, *Pengantar Filsafat Ilmu* (terjemahan), (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1986), p. 4-8; Mukhtar Latif, *Orientasi ke Arah Pemahaman Filsafat Ilmu*, (Jakarta: Kencana, 2014), h. 90.

As a science, one side, theology is a logical truth because it is exegesis from the logically arranged truth of Scripture, from God who created the law of logic in man, according to the general logical law of all other sciences.⁵² Theology is objective truth, free from prejudice and subjectivity, because it objectively examines biblical texts, doctrinal formulas, and historical documents (textual analysis) for basic theology (pure), and or examines the behavior and experience of religious human beings (psychology and sociology of religion) for applied theology, that true life is born of true thinking.⁵³ This applied theology also deals with empirical data to analyze its conformity with basic theology. Theology is also a science because its truth is organized systematically, more than an orderly arrangement, but its essence is a system of understanding and belief.⁵⁴ In addition, theology is also a study of analysis, both text analysis (basic theology) and context and community analysis (applied theology).⁵⁵

Furthermore, theology is open so that whenever there is a new theological thought, it is always tested or verified with the spirit of back to the Bible and tested by tested general theological traditions parallel to all sciences.⁵⁶ Theology as science is universal; its truth generally applies to all humanity throughout the earth, specifically to all believers worldwide. In this respect, theology is different from denominational dogma. Similar to all sciences, theology, on the one hand, is open (developing), but on the other hand, it is also closed, which has uniqueness and autonomy. In this case, theology is autonomous; it has its scientific norms according to its nature. This is what Millard means by the following statement that theology has its unique status, like all sciences, which cannot be reduced by any other science, whether natural or social.⁵⁷ Theology is also not a study without methods because it is produced through a qualitative approach to basic (pure) theology and a quantitative and qualitative approaches to applied theology.⁵⁸ Finally, the author closes this point by stating thousands of reasons that theology is a science, namely thousands of scientific works in the form of *skripsi*, theses, and dissertations that students of theological high schools have produced up to doctoral level, even books, and articles from international journals

⁵² Millard J. Erickson, *Introduction Christian Doctrine*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), p. 18

⁵³ R.C. Sproul, *Pleasing God: Discovering the Meaning and Importance of Sanctification*, (Orlando: Ligonier Ministry, 2012), 205

⁵⁴ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Introduksi Teologia Sistematika: Sistem Berpikir Logis-Theologis...*144-190

⁵⁵ Robert Hall, "Theology and Analysis", In, *The Christian Scholar*, Vol. 48, No. 4, 1965, pp. 309-315, Penn State University Press, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41177530>

⁵⁶ Paul L. Allen, "Is there Verification in Theology?" In, *Analitical Perspectives on Method and Authority in Theology* (2017): <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319447221>

⁵⁷ Erickson J. Millard, *Introducing Christian Doctrine...*, p. 18

⁵⁸ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Theology the Queen of Science and the Master of Philosophy...*p. 29

that have been published. There are thousands in libraries and bookstores, and online journals.

3. Theology is a scientific Activity: Process, Procedure, and Production (P-3)

In addition to all the scientific characteristics of knowledge stated previously, what is meant by science is systematic knowledge as a product of a planned cognitive (thinking) process using procedures that are in accordance with certain scientific methods.⁵⁹ From this understanding, science is the interaction of scientific activities, namely processes, procedures (methods), and products (P-3).⁶⁰ Starting from three aspects of science, it can be defined that theology is systematic, essential and comprehensive knowledge as a product of the scientific process in the form of an ontological thinking activity about the biblical text and its context (the author) in relation to the present context (the reader), with using certain scientific methods by the paradigm and research approach.

As a science, theology is a cognitive process regarding the essential and objective meaning of the biblical text (the author) based on the logical rules of the text itself and theology (tradition) concerning the context (the reader), which is formulated as truth that is understood, experienced and taught. This cognitive process is not based on analyzing human consciousness and feelings regarding theological and or religious truths but is, essentially, studying the Scriptures.⁶¹ Scripture is the essential object of the (cognitive) thought process.

As a science, theology is a scientific procedure using the theological method, specifically following the uniqueness of the theological study family, and of course, using scientific research methods in general. By the field, biblical theology research procedures are slightly different from systematic theology and historical theology. Biblical and theological research procedures such as the fifteen (15) step given by Gordon D. Fee;⁶² the nine (9) steps of theological research proposed by Millard J. Erickson;⁶³ and eight (8) steps of contextual theology research by Samuel Rayan.⁶⁴ Pure or basic

⁵⁹ Dewa Gede Atmadja, Sudarsono, H. Suko Wiyono, *Filsafat Ilmu: Dari Pohon Pengetahuan Sampai Karakter Keilmuan Ilmu Hukum*, (Malang: Madani, 2014), p. 56

⁶⁰ Junjun S. Suriasumantri, "Tentang Hakekat Ilmu: Sebuah Pengantar Redaksi", in *Ilmu dalam Perspektif*, ed. Junjun S. Suriasumantri, (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2009), p. 28-29; Liang The Gie, *Pengantar Filsafat Ilmu* (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Studi Ilmu dan Teknologi, 1987), h. 28

⁶¹ John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief*...p. 5

⁶² Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), p. 6-7

⁶³ Erickson J. Millard, *Introducing Christian Doctrine*..., pp. 19-22

⁶⁴ Samuel Rayan, "Reconceiving Theology in the Asian Context", In *Doing Theology in a Divided World, Papers from the Sixth International Conference of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians*,

theological research (biblical, systematical, philosophical, and historical theology), of course, uses the naturalism or phenomenology paradigm, with a qualitative approach; while applied theology (practical theology) can be studied with the paradigm of both naturalism and positivism, with a qualitative or quantitative approach.⁶⁵ The research methods are adapted to the research approach in accordance with the paradigm. While the integration between theology and science, of course using one of the qualitative and quantitative approaches or both (analytical research).⁶⁶

As a science, theology is the result (product) of scientific knowledge, which is arranged systematically (systemically) in the five areas of theological study as an integrated and unified whole. The five areas of theological study are biblical theology, systematics theology, historical theology and philosophical theology, and practical theology. Each of these theological study areas also consists of some sections. In the following, the author only describes three areas of theological study—biblical theology with an introduction, interpretation, and biblical theology, both the Old and New Testaments. Likewise, systematic theology consists of prolegomena, bibliology, proper theology, theological anthropology, Christology, pneumatology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. Practical theology consists of mission and evangelism, pastoral care, counseling, and education. There are many other forms of systematic theological knowledge. So, theology is scientific knowledge as a product of scientific processes and procedures.

4. Theology is a Science: According to its Dimensions

Even though the two are different, the object of science is material with empirical data, and the object of philosophy is formal with non-empirical data, but both have the same meeting point, namely the dimension of the philosophy of science. At least, there are four (4) dimensions of the philosophy of science, namely ontological, epistemological, axiological, and logical. Likewise, although different from science and philosophy, theology has scientific dimensions that allow it to integrate with science and philosophy.

Theology has an ontological dimension. Ontology is a study part of metaphysics and cosmology, anthropology, and theology (nature). Ontology is an explanation of real existence as the basis of knowledge. In other words, ontology is the study of “that which is” and the real existence within or behind all that exists.⁶⁷ According to scientists talking about the nature that

edited by Virginia Fabela, (New York: Orbis Books, 1985), 124-142

⁶⁵ Stevri Indra Lumintang, Danik Astuti Lumintang, *Theologia Penelitian*...p. 122-156

⁶⁶ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Theology the Queen of Science and the Master of Philosophy*...p. 32

⁶⁷ J.P. Moreland, *Philosophical Foundation for A Christian Worldview*..., p. 175

exists in the universe, but because it is limited to empirical data and its tools, religious scientists often jump to conclusions by saying that the highest is God.⁶⁸ Philosophy also talks about “the highest,” but it is not real because it is only an idea. Immanuel Kant called it the “noumena” (impersonal) world that cannot be known, except the world of phenomena.⁶⁹ Only theology discusses the “Highest” as a Person who exists and is real, namely God (personal) according to His word given in writing in the form of the Scriptures.⁷⁰

Theology also has an epistemological dimension. Epistemology is concerned with the following four questions: *First*, is about conceptual analysis, in questions about knowledge, rationality, and justification. *Second*, regarding the way of acquiring knowledge, namely how to know what you know? *Third*, the question of doubt, do people really have knowledge? *Fourth* is what is often emphasized by modern scientists, namely, what are the basic and criteria for that knowledge right? With regard to how to acquire knowledge, scientists propose four ways, namely sensory, rational, empirical, and divine knowledge.⁷¹ Theological truth starts from revelation, continues on the rational and empirical. This is the same as the Christian thinking paradigm formulated by Augustine and Anselmus: “First believe, then understand. If we wished to know and then believe, we should not be able to either know or believe”.⁷² Faith precedes knowledge, and revelation precedes faith. There is no theology without God’s special revelation, just as there really is no knowledge without God’s general revelation. Revelation is the epistemological principle of the Christian faith.⁷³

Theology has an axiological dimension. Axiology comes from the word *Axios* (Greek), which means value, worthy, and appropriate. In science, the axiological dimension relates to the rules that must be considered in the application of science and technology, namely, propriety, not oriented to the value of economic benefits or uses alone but to human values, namely integrity, humility, and generosity.⁷⁴ The opposite of humanity is dehuman-

⁶⁸ Musa Asy’arie, *Filsafat Ilmu: Integrasi dan Transendensi*, (Yogyakarta: Studi Filsafat, 2016), p. 19

⁶⁹ Robert Merrihew Adams, “Things in Themselves”, In, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 57, No. 4, 1997, pp. 810-825: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2953804>; Athanasios P. Fotinis, “The Logical and Ontological Status of Kant’s Concept of the Noumenon and the Hegelian Interpretation”, In *Academy of Athens*: <http://repository.academyofathens.gr/document/470.pdf>

⁷⁰ Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Dogmatics, Volume 1 Prolegomena*...p. 103

⁷¹ Mukhar Latif, *Orientasi Ke Arah Pemahaman: Filsafat Ilmu*, (Jakarta: Kencana Prenadamedia Group, 2014), 199-200

⁷² David Pignato, “The Primacy of Faith and the Priority of Reason: A Justification for Public Recognition of Revealed Truth”, In, *The Saint Anselm Journal*, Volume 12, No. 2, 2017): <https://www.anselm.edu/sites>

⁷³ Herman Bavincx, *Reformed Dogmatics: Prolegomena*...p. 38

⁷⁴ Del Ratzsch, *Science and Its Limits: The Natural Science in Christian Perspective*, (Downers Grove,

ization. The crimes against humanity of scientists include atomic bombs, nuclear weapons, biological weapons, and mass murder viruses. Ethics and aesthetics are axiological dimensions of theology. This dimension is related to the right attitude born from the truth and to live and work based on the highest value, namely theological, not just technical. There are two styles of ethical attraction, namely absolutism and relativism. Relativism has caused crimes against humanity, and it can only be recovered with the ethics of absolutism, which is based on the highest principle of Christian ethics, namely the word of God, formulated as theology.⁷⁵

Theology has a logical dimension. Logic is the science that studies thinking skills based on its laws, namely a straight, precise, and orderly thinking system, without any contradictions.⁷⁶ Although logic is a branch of philosophy, science and theology also have a logical-analytical dimension. Logic is the idea of God, who created this world with harmonious laws (natural and rational) in nature and in humans in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). Erickson emphasized: "One is that there is a congruity between the human mind and the creation about us. The order of the human mind is basically the same as the order of the universe".⁷⁷ As in science is known, deductive logic and induction, so also in theology. Deductive logic in theology is pure (basic) theology, while inductive logic in theology is practical theology (applied).

The Bible is a source of theology; on the one hand, the Bible is written in a language that transcends logical laws because of God's special revelation, but on the other hand, it is written in a logical language. We must study the Bible logically and draw logical conclusions from the Bible. The logic of the Bible, of particular revelation, does not contradict the logic of science (of general revelation). One of the logical laws is orderly, consistent, coherent, and comprehensive. Theological truth that comes from the Bible is a logical truth because it is consistent and coherent. There is no contradiction in it.⁷⁸ Philosophy and science only recognize rational and irrational laws, while theology even admits that there are people who are anti-rational and some think irrational, but in the Bible and Christian theology, they only recognize the existence of rational, irrational (non-rational), and transrational (change reason) laws. Rational thinking is a cognitive activity about things that go beyond the laws of ratio (reasoning), cannot be accommodated by these

Illinois: IVP Academic, 2000), p. 139

⁷⁵ J.P. Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations for A Christian Worldview*...409-415

⁷⁶ I Dewa Gede Atmadja, Sudarsono, Suko Wiyono, *Filsafat Ilmu*...h. 65

⁷⁷ Millard J. Erickson, *Introducing Christian Doctrine*...p. 43

⁷⁸ K Scott Oliphint, *Reason (for Faith): Philosophy in Service of Theology*, (New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2006), pp. 22-24

laws; there is no room in human ratio. Because theology is a science, its truth, on the one hand, is a scientific truth.

5. Theology is a Scientific Truth

From the four points discussed above, it cannot be doubted that, on the one hand, theology is an absolute science. Not because the theologians were able to convince scientists that theology is a science, but because indeed, the nature of theology; on the one hand, it is an absolute science, and before the criteria for science were set by scientists in the modern era, theology was recognized as a science by theologians in pre-modern times, by Peter Abailard and Thomas Aquinas.⁷⁹ In the modern era, scientists put forward scientific theories of truth and generally agree with the criteria of truth. Suriasumantri proposed three truth criteria, namely coherence, correspondence, and pragmatism.⁸⁰ The truth of coherence is that there is a match between something and something else (hierarchy, schema, system, or value); the truth of correspondence is the compatibility between one fact with another fact, with events and with beliefs; and the truth of pragmatism is the truth that is specific, concrete, individual, operational (practical) and useful. On the one hand, theological truth meets these three criteria (science), but on the other hand, theological truth exceeds these criteria (ascience).

Modern scientists who determine the size of knowledge are recognized as scientific truths if they are real and true. After that, modern scientists and philosophers continue to debate it until the era has changed to postmodern, there is no agreement, even that measure is being discarded by postmodernists.⁸¹ Rationalists assume that truth is coherence between empirical and rational schemes. Phenomenologists argue that truth is a correspondence between ideas and phenomena. Realists, truth is coherence between objective empiricists. The idealists argue that no one knows the truth (noumena), while what can be known is only a shadow (phenomena). The positivists state that the truth is a correspondence between the sensual one with another sensual (events and belief).⁸² Each people see the truth only from the perspective of their respective knowledge so that it is not complete or absolute,

⁷⁹ A.L. Komaromi, "St Thomas Aquinas on Theology and Science", In *Philosophy and Science*, November 8, 2020: <https://philosophy-models.blog/2020/10/08/st-thomas-aquinas-on-theology-and-science>; Geoffrey Turner, "St Thomas Aquinas on the 'Scientific' Nature of Theology", In *New Blackfriars, A Review*, Wiley Online Library, Volume 78, Issue 921, 1997, pp. 464: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com>

⁸⁰ unjun S. Suriasumantri, *Filsafat Ilmu: Sebuah Pengantar Populer*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 2013), pp. 55-59

⁸¹ Thomas C. Oden, "The Death of Modernity and Postmodern Evangelical Spirituality", In, *The Challenge of Postmodernism*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 20; Kevin O'Donnell, *Postmodernisme*, (Yogyakarta: Penerbit kanisius, 2009), pp. 31-34

⁸² I Dewa Gede Atmadja, Sudarsono, H. Suko Wiyono, *Filsafat Ilmu...*, pp. 51-54

not so with theologians, because they depart from revelation. At present, the era has turned into a postmodern era, and postmodernists reject the correspondence of the theory of truth, universal truth, objective and rational, reject dichotomous thinking, and reject foundationalism, nominalism, and essentialism.⁸³

Theologians can accommodate all the conflicting views among modern scientists and philosophers above, with the presupposition of truth because of God's revelation. General statements become the source of philosophy and science, and special revelation is the source of theology.⁸⁴ The truth of philosophy and science is the truth of perspective (scientific), while the truth of theology is the essential, absolute, fundamental, and holistic truth. Therefore, science can fill in what is not clear in theology, and theology can fill in what is not in science.⁸⁵

As a scientific truth, practical (applied) theology, like all other sciences, especially the social sciences, examines the coherence between actual behavior experiences before and after receiving Christian education or counseling services or before and after being evangelized. Practical theology is scientific. In addition, the Scriptures, the councils of Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381), and Chalcedon (451) have survived to this day.⁸⁶ Why are the theological thoughts of the theologians from the Reformation era to the modern era still a reference for contemporary study? The answer, apart from being sourced from the Holy Scriptures, the word of God, and all tested church traditions, is also because these works are scientific truths, formulated on the basis of scientific laws, namely logical because they are coherent, correspondent, comprehensive and pragmatic. Theology is scientific truth; there is no contradiction in it. Contradictions only exist in the minds of people with different religious worldviews.

C. Theology as Ascience

There is no reason anymore that theology is not true science, but it is not without reason that theology is not only as far as science. Polkinghorne describes his research and concludes that the relationship between science and theology is in a relationship of parallelism. In this case, he does not recognize theology as ascience. Of course, although theology is a science,⁸⁷

⁸³ J.P. Moreland, *Philosophical Foundation for A Christian Worldview...*, pp. 146-147

⁸⁴ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Prolegomena...* pp. 340-344

⁸⁵ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Theology the Queen of Science and the Master of Philosophy...* p. 63

⁸⁶ G.L. Bray, "Councils", In, *New Dictionary Theology*, edited by Sinclair B. Ferguson, (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1994), p. 171

⁸⁷ Geoffrey Turner, "St Thomas Aquinas on the 'Scientific' Nature of Theology", In *New Blackfriars, A Review*, Wiley Online Library, Volume 78, Issue 921, 1997, pp. 464: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com>

theology is nothing less than a science. Theology goes beyond science (ascience) because theology is not only concerned with natural law (creation) but also with supernatural law (Creator). In the following, the author presents five arguments that confirm that theology is ascience, but first, it is necessary to explain the meaning and presuppositions of theology as ascience.

1. Understanding and Presuppositions of Theology as Ascience

The word “ascience” is inspired by the term “arational,” which means “beyond the domain of reason”,⁸⁸ and the term “amillennialism” does not mean that it does not recognize the existence of a millennium kingdom, but rather that it does not recognize a millennium kingdom literally, but ideally or symbolically.⁸⁹ Thus the term “ascience”, does not reject the laws of science and not only as far as the laws of science, but beyond them. Theological truths are real but cannot be accommodated by the laws of science because of limited criteria and because they go beyond facts (objects), rational laws, and empirical data. Indeed, this world is not only as far as the criteria of science, nor only as far as the ability of researchers to conduct research. In fact, there are still many mysteries (blind spots). Ascience means actual knowledge, which is produced (product) of cognitive processes in the light of divine illumination through the procedure of researching biblical texts as a primary source using the biblical-theological-historical method, and context research as a secondary source using a method according to a qualitative approach and or quantitative.

The presupposition of science is the revelation of God (creation). Without the revelation of God, there is no knowledge whatsoever. Human is one of God’s creations and revelations, with the capacity to think morally, spiritually, and eternally in accordance with the meaning of being in the image of God. Therefore, it is given the mandate to control all other creations, including the natural sciences, humans, and history.⁹⁰ God created humans as research creatures and also provided knowledge, including providing research objects, namely nature, humans and history. The theological presupposition as science and ascience is God’s revelation in general and in particular. Without God’s revelation, there is no theological truth, not even theological processes and procedures. Theology as a science, because the

⁸⁸ Charles Lassiter, “Arational Belief Convergence”, In Springer, *Computations Modelling in Philosophy*, November 21, 2019: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11229-019-02465-6>

⁸⁹ Keith Mathison, “The Millennial Maze”, In, *Ligonier*, Biblical Studies, General Biblical Studies, Biblical Interpretation, November 25, 2013: <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/millennial-maze>

⁹⁰ Millard J. Erickson, *Introducing Christian Doctrine*...p. 41

truth is not found in nature and the human mind, but through His written revelation, namely the Holy Scriptures. Theology is a science because it is beyond the laws of science. Even though it is beyond the laws of science, theology does not conflict with science, because both come from the same source, restore human existence, and purifying morals and increasing knowledge.⁹¹

2. Position of Theology as Ascience over Sciences

Science is a natural gift from God that is obtained through the process of thinking and researching, while theology is a gift from God naturally and supernaturally, through the process of thinking and researching Holy Scripture in the illumination (demand) of the Holy Spirit.⁹² From this point of view, comes the statement that theology is a science and an ascience. Plato's epistemology places belief at a low level, but the belief that is meant is without foundation (not theology). Scientists divide the position of knowledge into levels, and theology (revelation) is positioned at the highest level. Latif divides knowledge into three levels, namely revealed knowledge, intuitive knowledge, and rational knowledge.⁹³ Susanto places religion (theology) above philosophy and science under philosophy.⁹⁴ Furthermore, epistemologically, knowledge according to its nature is arranged in five levels, namely general knowledge, scientific knowledge, empirical knowledge, philosophical knowledge and theological knowledge.⁹⁵ All of this confirms that theology is a science, because it beyond the laws of philosophy and science, it also asserts that theology is the queen and mother of sciences.

3. The Sufficiency of Theology as Ascience and the Limitations of Science

Indeed, one of the characteristics of science is autonomy. Although influenced by many other sciences or other factors, it means that a scientific discipline, but others do not determine its processes, procedures, and products. Any science should be autonomous, able to make its conclusions, and the development of science itself. However, the autonomous nature of science often also reveals the closeness of that science to others. Joseph

⁹¹ Robert Duncen Culver, *Systematic Theology: Biblical and Historical*. (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publication, 2005), p. 51

⁹² Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, ...p. 33

⁹³ Mukhtar Latif, *Orientasi Ke Arah Pemahaman Filsafat Ilmu*, ...h. 94-95

⁹⁴ A Susanto, *Filsafat Ilmu: Suatu Kajian dalam Dimensi Ontologis, Epistemologis dan Aksiologis*, (Jakarta: PT Bumi Aksara, 2014), h. 122

⁹⁵ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Keunikan Theologia di tengah Kepalsuan*, (Batu: Departemen Literatur YPPII, 2010), 158

Tong emphasized that both scientists and theologians should maintain an “open mind” and “open system”. The phrase “open mind” is a cognitive attitude that is open to learning something else so that it is broad-minded and rich in knowledge, while “open system” is a cognitive attitude that is open, dares to think and learn outside the system but does not leave the existing system.⁹⁶

Usually, science is autonomous but tends to be closed mind and system, which is only to hold on to objective, empirical, and rational scientific measures (systems). However, the truth is not only as far as scientific standards (criteria) because there is still much knowledge that exists in this world, which is not yet even reachable or known by that measure. Because of this, there are many blind spots in science.⁹⁷ On the one hand, theology is a science, but on the other hand, theology is also ascience. That means, on the one hand, theology is autonomous, but on the other hand, theology is an open mind and system. Indeed, not all problems of man and the world can be answered by theology, but the answers to essential and fundamental questions about man and the world are available in theology.⁹⁸ As ascience, theology is open and familiar with the supernatural world, including miracles that happen for real but are not accommodated by the laws or standards of science.

What theology lacks is only technical matters because the Bible is not a textbook of any science. The technical things are available in science, but the basic and essential things are not in any science.⁹⁹ Scientists are limited and limit their studies of religion and theology, both on natural and supernatural things.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, science is only to help theology, while theology as the queen of science can answer matters relating to the main source of everything and the end of everything, which is beyond the university (science).¹⁰¹ As the queen (ascience), theology provides the theological framework, basis, strength, and correction for science.¹⁰²

Science is not the queen or the mother because science is limited to a scientist (researcher) who has limited research methods and objects.¹⁰³

⁹⁶ Joseph Tong, *Fundamental Apologetics*, (Los Angeles: International Theological Seminary, 1999), p.5

⁹⁷ Cornelius G. Hunter, *Science's Blind Spot*, (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2007), pp. 35-50

⁹⁸ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Theology the Queen of Science...* p. 55

⁹⁹ A. Susanto, *Filsafat Ilmu: Suatu Kajian dalam Dimensi Ontologis...* pp. 130-131

¹⁰⁰ H.D. Cruz, “Religion and Science, First Published”, In Stanford Encyclopedia... p.3/27

¹⁰¹ Gijsbert van den Brink, “How Theology Stopped Being Regina Scientiarum-and How Its Story Continues”, In *Study in Christian Ethics*, Vol. 32 (4), 2019, p. 452: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177>

¹⁰² Mark R. McMinn, Jeannine Graham, “Theology as Science: A Response to ‘Theology as Queen and Psychology as Handmaid’”, In *Faculty Publication – College of Christian Studies*, George Fox University: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu>

¹⁰³ A. Susanto, *Filsafat Ilmu: Suatu Kajian dalam Dimensi Ontologis...* pp. 130-131

The object of science is all created material (general revelation) and cannot study formal objects (special revelation), which are the theological domain. Even though the object of study of science is a material object, there are still mysteries in the material object that cannot be inspired by science, such as natural phenomena, natural changes that scientists cannot explain. Any existing methods are still limited to accommodate material objects and natural events, even deliberately limited in the form of populations and samples,¹⁰⁴ which are very likely to be wrong and manipulated.¹⁰⁵ The problem of method is not only a problem for scientists, but also for theologians, because theologians also struggle with relating document data (Holy Scripture) to historical facts, inadequate interpretation, uncertain historical documents and evidence, human incompetence and limitations in research, and reliance on the illumination of the Holy Spirit in research.¹⁰⁶ However, the proven theological tradition has become the second reference in theological research after the Scriptures.

4. Certainty of Theology as Science and Confusion of Science

Certainty is the main principle of science, especially natural science. This law emphasizes logical positivism, which demands certainty from empirical data.¹⁰⁷ Research characteristics with the positivism paradigm include the certainty of research objects, instruments, quantitative data, hypotheses, and results. Therefore, this positivism paradigm is very compatible with the exact sciences (nature), but this exact science paradigm faces difficulties because this type of research is limited to objects so that it cannot know the real ultimate cause, except only the causes of visible objects (measured) and the calculated (number).¹⁰⁸ Because of that, science (positivism) produces inadequate concepts, the relationship between theory and facts is inadequate, too dependent on processes, as if the process determines knowledge (outcomes), and results in knowledge that is not basic and lacking natural, because it ignores the humanity of the respondent.¹⁰⁹ All of this is uncertain in exact science.

In particular, scientists who strictly adhere to scientific laws (closed mind and system) will not admit things outside scientific laws because they

¹⁰⁴ Hamed Taherdoost, "Determining Sample Size; How to Calculate Survey Sample Size", In International Journal of Economics and Management Systems (2017): <https://www.researchgate.net>

¹⁰⁵ Ivonna S. Lincoln, Egon G. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*, (London: Sage Publication, 1985), p. 28

¹⁰⁶ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Theology the Queen of Science*...p. 66-68

¹⁰⁷ Stevri Indra Lumintang, Danik Astuti Lumintang, *Theologia Penelitian dan Penelitian* ...p. 70-72

Walter R. Borg, Meredith D. Gall, *Educational Research: An Introduction*, (New York: Longman, 1989), p.16

¹⁰⁸ J.P. Moreland, *Philosophical Foundation for A Christian Worldview*...p. 348

¹⁰⁹ Stevri Indra Lumintang, Danik Astuti Lumintang, *Theologia Penelitian dan Penelitian* ...p. 70-72

also do not admit there are truths outside of science.¹¹⁰ The truth that is in them is only as far as knowledge. In reality, there are still many events, knowledge, and truths that cannot be accommodated or accepted by the limited meaning of science. Scientists will not accept theologians talking about mysteries. Whereas religion without mystery loses its religious meaning, it can no longer even be called a religion. There are many mysteries in nature. It cannot be concluded as irrational. It also seems like a contradiction, but it is a mystery and a paradox.¹¹¹ In connection with such matters cannot be discussed by scientists. They only talk about things that are accommodated by and in science. They will not talk about things that cannot be reached by science even if they are about everyday realities such as people who are possessed by demon spirits, sick people are healed after being prayed for, and moreover talk about the truth about redemption, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life.

The orientation of scientists is on what is real and true, and that is sensory and measurable. However, not all truth can be measured by numbers. Not all knowledge can be counted. Likewise, not everything in this world is related to science. There are still many that exist, real and true, beyond the reach of science. Science is limited to scientists, objects, and methods, but because scientists make their knowledge absolute, then what happens is confusion. The limitations of scientists starting from the limitations of the five senses can even be misleading,¹¹² not to mention the limitations of reasoning. Therefore, if the finite is made absolute, then it will only result in confusion. Del Ratzsch stated the same thing: "Those who claim either that science is competent for dealing with all matters or that science is the only legitimate for dealing with any matter are seriously confused".¹¹³ It is different from theology; even though many technical sides do not exist in theology, all problems and human needs are substantially and essentially available in theology, which is sourced from God's special revelation. This is what is meant by theology as ascience.

Because theology comes from God's special revelation, namely the Scripture, theology speaks with certainty about the certainty of truth. The Scripture is a book of certainty that conveys the substantial and essential truth, namely about what has happened, is happening, and will happen, from the beginning to the end (telos) according to His design and sovereignty.

¹¹⁰ J.P. Moreland, *Philosophical Foundation for A Christian Worldview*...p. 349

¹¹¹ R.C. Sproul, *Kebenaran-Kebenaran Dasar Iman Kristen*, (Malang: Literatur SAAT, 2020), 7-9

¹¹² Junjun S. Suriasumantri, *Ilmu dalam Perspektif: Sebuah Kumpulan Karangan tentang Hakekat Ilmu*, (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2009), 17

¹¹³ Del Ratzsch, *Science and Its Limits: The Natural Science in Christian Perspective*, (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 1986), p. 93

The certainty of the basic (pure) theology is not in the theologian, not in the process, nor in the procedure according to the method, but in the object, namely the Scripture, the word of God.¹¹⁴ Likewise, the certainty of applied theology is not in the theology, its processes and methods, but in the basic theology which is the basis and reference for applied theology. This is the certainty of theological studies and this is what is meant by *ascience*.

Furthermore, theology as a science is based on the history of God becoming human (incarnation). This is God's act of becoming human and making history. God bridges between the natural world and the supernatural world. The supernatural has become natural. This is God's act of intervention. Even though He had become a human being, His divinity still existed with His humanity. This is what is recognized as *arational* and *ascience*. The supernatural acts in the realm of nature. It works through natural laws and beyond natural laws.¹¹⁵ God became man. Therefore the divine can be known through the natural. The supernatural can be experienced through the natural. This is the starting point for inductive theology. Therefore, theology is sufficient and can embrace both the natural (natural) and the supernatural (supernatural). Theology as science (natural) and *ascience* (supernatural).

5. The Supremacy of Theology as *Ascience* over Sciences

Scientists tend to present the results of their research with great pride in strict scientific processes and procedures. However, with regard to ontological issues, religious scientists tend to be dualistic about their knowledge and faith (theology). They admit that there is a supreme nature in nature, and that is God,¹¹⁶ but their conclusions are not based on scientific studies. In this case, they made an illogical and unscientific leap. It is the theology of their religion that causes them to conclude that, not their knowledge. This reveals the lack of integration studies and exposes the limitations of science. The limitations of science are the limitations of the evidence that there is no absolute evidence, so there is no absolute science.¹¹⁷ The absence of theology in science is more fatal than the absence of science in theology (religion). This was emphasized by Einstein in Suriasumantri's writings, that "Science without theology or religion is blind, and religion without

¹¹⁴ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Theology the Queen of Science and the Master of Philosophy*, ...p. 58

¹¹⁵ Del Ratzsch, *Science and Its Limits: The Natural Science in Christian Perspective*, ...p. 118

¹¹⁶ Musa Asy'arie, *Filsafat Ilmu: Integrasi dan Transendensi...*, p. 19

¹¹⁷ Peter Machamer, "Philosophy of Science: An Overview for Educators," In *Science and Education*, Vol. 7 (1), pp. 1-11 (1998): <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/226856334>; Saleh Abdullah Alabdulkareem, "Science, Fact, and Absolute Truth" Critical Views of Learning", In, *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences* (2013): <https://pdf.sciencedirectassets.com/277811/1-s2.0-S1877042813X00278>

science is lame".¹¹⁸ Indeed, science is not complete without theology.¹¹⁹ In fact, with the study of integration, theology becomes a necessity for all other sciences.¹²⁰ This is where theology excels over science.

Furthermore, starting from the limitations of scientific measuring tools, scientists only depend on material objects, so they never conclude the ultimate one. Even philosophers disagree on the "Supreme". Rene Descartes called "innate idea", David Hume wrote "perception," and Immanuel Kant introduced "nomena". Philosophers talk about the "Supreme," but they only conclude that the "Higher" is impersonal and uncertain, even unknowable, Kant says.¹²¹ If philosophers whose research object is not a material object but a formal object, especially with scientists whose research object is only a material object, they will not be able to talk about, let alone know, the truth of metaphysics. Therefore, they cannot answer ontological questions regarding the origin and ultimate destiny of all living existence.¹²² Van Till asserts that: "the ultimate reality is not the world but the Creator of all creation".¹²³ Theology seeks and finds answers to the ultimate one questions by researching the Bible and Christian theological traditions that are unique and have been tested as belief systems. It is seen in the way Christians understand life, the world, and all reality.

Conclusion

After the writer put forward a number of arguments regarding theology as a science and an ascience, then the author confirmed the truth with the following conditional sentences: For scientists, if theology is not a science, then theology has long since disappeared from the face of this earth, just like the fictional stories that used to be liked by many people, but because it is not a science, it is forgotten and lost in time. If theology is not a science, then theology cannot be studied and researched, theological schools cannot be held, all study programs and academic degrees in theology study groups are not recognized. In fact, it is not so, because theology is a science, because in accordance with the nature of science, theology can be studied and researched for centuries, academic writings on theology

¹¹⁸ Junjun S. Suriasumantri, *Ilmu dalam Perspektif...* h. 4

¹¹⁹ George E. Keller, III, "What is the Relationship between Science and Religion? In, Center for Science and Religion, Samford University: <https://www.samford.edu>

¹²⁰ Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics...* p. 105

¹²¹ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Theology the Queen of Science and the Master of Philosophy...*, p. 59

¹²² Cornelius G. Hunter, *Religion Science's Blind Spot ...*, p. 36

¹²³ Howard J. van Till, "Partnership: Science and Christian Theology as Partners," In *Science and Christianity, Four Views*, edited by Richard F. Carlson, (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity, 2000) pp.195-294; Robert T. Lehe, *God, Science and Religious Diversity: A Defense of Theism*, (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018), p.157-158

continue to grow from year to year, theological high schools with their study programs continue to survive and increase in number, graduates with bachelor's degrees, master's degrees and even doctorates of theology continue to graduate every year. The government and the world community recognize theology because of its scientific nature.

For theologians, theology is not only as a science, but also as a ascience. If theology is just a science, theology can no longer deal with Holy Scripture and the Holy Spirit. If theology is only science, not ascience, then theology only studies material objects (natural) and can no longer study formal objects (supernatural). Thus, the fate of theology will be as limited as that of science. If theology is only science, not ascience, then theology will be in conflict with science which recognizes the position of theology at the highest level. If theology is only science, not ascience, then theology will be increasingly abandoned by humans because theology does not really mean its contribution to the 21st-century information society that relies a lot on science and technology. If theology is just a science, not ascience, then theology is no longer relevant to religion, spirituality, and eternity. If theology is just a science, not a science, then there is no one else to answer the blind spots of science, to answer substantial and essential questions about humans and the world. If theology is only science and not ascience, then the fate of this world is increasingly hopeless because there is nothing to show the way to the "Ultimate One" (supernatural), which exists, is definite and personal, and real (to be human) in the natural world. In fact, theology is a science and ascience. Because theology is the queen or mother of all sciences, scientists and theologians will conduct an integrative study that can be an input for the realization of a complete life in the world.

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