S.R. Eliata

Systematic Theology and Philosophy, Indonesian Reformed Theological Seminary, Jakarta, Indonesia.
E-mail: stephenrehmale meliata@gmail.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6324-0429

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Who is Christ? The soteriological necessity in the Christology of Francis Turretin

ABSTRACT

This article explores the theological question, "If man had not sinned, would Christ still be incarnate?", by comparing the thought of John Duns Scotus and Francis Turretin. It first traces the influence and reinterpretation of Scotus' Christological ontology within Reformed orthodoxy, highlighting scholarly debates over his legacy. For Scotus, incarnation was about Christ serving as the ontological foundation and ultimate mediator between God and creation. By contrast, Turretin appropriates epistemological distinctions from Scotus but reframes them through the lens of covenant theology. For Turretin, the incarnation is necessitated by the fall, and Christ's role as mediator is soteriological, focused on restoring the covenantal bond. Through a comparative analysis of ontology, epistemology, and Christology, this article demonstrates a theological shift from Scotus' Christ-centred ontology to Turretin's covenantal ontology. It concludes that, for Turretin, the incarnation is a redemptive response to human sin, marking Christ's fundamental office as mediator between creator and creature.

1. INTRODUCTION

The question, "If man had not sinned, would Christ still be incarnate?", requires careful dogmatic analysis. This article examines this question by comparing John Duns Scotus and Francis Turretin, two figures frequently considered in discussions of Reformed theology. Some revisionist scholars view

Scotus, a late medieval theologian associated with voluntarism, as influential on Reformed theology from the Reformation to the era of orthodoxy (Van Nieuwenhove 2012).

First, Muller (2003a) identified Scotus' impact on the prolegomena, especially the distinction between God's essence and human essence, which divides theology into *theologia in se* and *theologia nostra*. Secondly, Vos (2001) argued that Scotus' synchronic contingency influenced Reformation debates on free will, where God's will is freely expressed in creation. Thirdly, Van Asselt *et al.* (2001) placed Scotus behind Franciscus Junius' *De Vera Theologiae*, thereby focusing on the distinction between archetypal and ectypal theology. Recent scholarship on Reformation history suggests that Scotist thought serves as a foundational element of Reformed theology. Specifically, Scotus' distinction regarding the nature of theology is recognised as a critical precursor to later Reformed orthodoxy, particularly the distinctions articulated by Franciscus Junius. Building upon these findings, this article examines the relationship between Scotist thought and Turretin's theology, specifically addressing its ontology and its implications for Christology.

Significant research has traced lines from the Reformation to orthodoxy, and recent work engages theologians such as Johannes Cocceius (Van *Asselt et al.* 2011), Gisbertus Voetius (Beck 2007), Petrus van Mastricht, Anthonius Driessen (Goudriaan 2006), and John Owen (Trueman 2007). This article focuses on Francis Turretin because of his important role within Reformed high orthodoxy. Specifically, it examines how Turretin employed the elenctic method to adjudicate dogmatic controversies against rival theological traditions. Moreover, the article investigates Turretin's appropriation of Scotist epistemological distinctions and his subsequent reconfiguration of these categories for Reformed polemics. It argues that Turretin modifies the rationale for the incarnation, shifting the emphasis from ontological to soteriological necessity through the covenant. Ontologically, I would call it a covenantal ontology.

To clarify the main argument, the article proceeds in four steps. First, to examine Scotus' ontology and Christology, in order to establish the foundations of his thought. Secondly, to analyse Turretin's reinterpretation of Scotus' epistemology and ontology, highlighting key points of departure. Thirdly, to show the shift in Turretin's rationale from ontological to soteriological necessity for the incarnation, emphasising how this transition affects his Christology. Lastly, to summarise the significance of this theological shift.

2. THE CHRISTOLOGY OF JOHN DUNS SCOTUS

This section analyses Scotus' Christology, by first examining his ontology. Scotus' Christology derives directly from this ontological framework. His system influences post-Reformation orthodoxy in the 17th century, moving from ontology to epistemology to Christology. Muller (2003a:226-227) argues that 17th-century Reformed theologians used Scotus' theological distinctions. While Scotus made important contributions, Reformed orthodoxy used his insights differently during this period. Before addressing this shift, this section begins with Scotus' own thought.

Cross (1999:6-70) shows that Scotus sharply distinguishes between *theologia in se* (theology in itself) and *theologia nostra* (our theology) (Scotus 1950:Prologue.Ordinatio.III.1).[1] The first is the full divine knowledge possessed only by God. The second is theology as human beings can understand it in this life. Scotus claims that God is the source of all existence and knowledge. This fundamental distinction limits human access to God's truth.

> Here we must recognize that we should expect pure truth from sensible things … but the essences of things are known in virtue of the active intellect, a participation of the Uncreated light (Scotus 1987:131).

Because God is the source of all knowledge, human beings cannot possess God's knowledge. This limitation has theological consequences. All human knowledge points to God as its source.

> [In] God there is no sense image. Neither is He such that He could be perceived by such a sense faculty (Scotus 1987:14).

Human knowledge of God cannot come simply from innate abilities. For Scotus, it depends on "what is beneath Him" (1987:14).

Scotus argues that human beings need God's own action – revelation – for knowledge of him. Revelation bridges the gap between creator and creation so that people can know God. It is a supernatural act that gives human beings knowledge that they cannot attain on their own. Scotus lists five arguments about supernatural knowledge. In summary, supernatural knowledge gives man a comprehensive and relative understanding. By "comprenhesive", Scotus means knowing the final purpose of knowledge. Through revelation, man learns the ultimate end: communion with God in beatitude (Mann

1 In his work, Scotus mentions that "[a]s to the solution of this question [nn.124-140] I proceed thus: first I make a distinction about theology in itself and theology in us". This implies the ontological distinction made by Scotus.

2003:256). Revelation allows human beings to know God as personal, according to his will. For example, knowledge of the Triune God is possible only through revelation.

This analysis demonstrates that, for Scotus, supernatural aid is indispensable in directing man towards the ultimate end of life. As a result, for Scotus, epistemology is always connected to teleological implications that require further grounding in his ontological system. In this broader context, the author contends that Scotus' theology and philosophy are fundamentally shaped by key ontological features. First, Scotus sharply distinguishes between the essence of God, as creator, and that of man, as creature. There is an unbridgeable gulf between them, including the infinite qualitative differences in existence itself. The epistemological discussion above illustrates the radical difference between divine and human knowledge.

Secondly, this sharp distinction is an ontological hallmark of Scotus, setting him against the ontologies of his contemporaries. In his writings, Scotus (1891:366; 1987:19) declares:

> I say that God is conceived not only in a concept analogous to the concept of a creature … but even in some concept univocal to Himself and to a creature.

In this instance, Scotus critiques Henry of Ghent, who maintained that human knowledge of God is analogical. Scotus, however, interprets the matter more radically. Univocity means that being is predicated of God and creatures in the same sense. This claim rests on Scotus' doctrine of divine simplicity. As the highest being, God comprehends all that exists perfectly and indivisibly. By contrast, created beings are marked by limitation. For example, to say "Socrates is wise" does not mean that wisdom is identical with Socrates. Similarly, to say "Trump is wise" implies a different instantiation of wisdom, limited by creaturely finitude. However, to say "God is wise", every attribute in God is identical with his essence. For Scotus, God is "the unqualified perfections" perfect in every respect (Mann 2003:248). The question then arises: Is the category of "wise" applied to God and creatures differently? In this instance, Scotus' univocal ontology functions: "wise" is used in the same sense, although only in God does wisdom exist perfectly and comprehensively, beyond human comprehension.

This analysis yields several implications. First, there is the ontological separation between God and man. Secondly, there is the perfection of God in contrast to human limitation. The ontological issue now extends to Christological implications. If the previous section established the necessity of supernatural knowledge in the form of divine revelation, then that revelation is Jesus Christ who serves as the mediator between God and man. This idea

appears in Delio's (2003:7-8) citation of Scotus: "Utrum Christus praedestinatus fuerit esse Filium Dei". This means that Christ's appointment as mediator through the incarnation was part of God's eternal plan. From eternity, God predestined Christ to be the mediator between himself and creation, aiming at his own glory.

> [T]herefore, the Incarnation takes place in light of God's glory … [it is a] divine intention from all eternity to raise human nature to the highest point of glory by uniting it with divine nature (Delio 2003:9).

Christ represents man and leads man to God. In other words, Christ is the way, source, and end of human life.

In this instance, Scotus' thought departs from and critiques the theology of his contemporaries. First, he abandons the Trinitarian analysis of Aquinas, which was rooted in Aristotle's conception of the divine intellect. Scotus replaces intellect with will, since, for him, existence depends upon divine willing. Accordingly, God's perfection is marked by his freedom and will, whereby he appointed Christ as mediator for creation.

Secondly, Scotus' voluntaristic ontology also shapes his understanding of sin. He insists that the incarnation precedes the fall:

> since the predestination of anyone to glory naturally precedes … foreknowledge of the sin …, much more is this true of the predestination of that soul which was predestined to supreme glory (Scotus 1950:Ordinatio.III.7.3).

Scotus even emphasises that Christ need not have been redeemer had man not sinned, for Christ's predestination was intended to bring man to God's glory, which surpasses all else.

The motif of God's glory as the ultimate end is tied to Scotus' metaphysical analysis of the relation between creator and creature. Scotus begins by affirming that God is perfect love. Because God's love is perfect, it must be free and willed in concrete action; hence, voluntaristic. In his freedom, God chose to love creation through Jesus Christ, who is God, yet simultaneously assumes human nature.

> he foresees the union of that nature that must love him with the greatest love even if no one had fallen (Scotus 1891:III.7.4).

Through Christ, the divinely appointed mediator, the whole Christ (including creation) receives glory. The perfection of Christ's work, in the unity of divine and human natures, constitutes the sole necessary means of grace for man (Goff 2025:13). In other words, for Scotus, the incarnation is necessary even

apart from sin. Likewise, the bond between man and God through Christ is itself necessary, meaning that without Christ, man cannot attain his ultimate end: divine glory.

The discussion of Scotus' Christology thus entails unavoidable implications. I find a profound interconnection between Scotus' epistemology, ontology, and Christology. First, his epistemology depends upon his ontology. Even though Scotus distinguishes sharply between *theologia in se* and *theologia nostra*, this distinction arises from the ontological gulf between God and man. Secondly, although Scotus' ontology exhibits voluntaristic features in the metaphysical domain, within the context of creation, I argue that it is fundamentally Christological. For Christ was predestined by God from eternity to be the mediator bridging the ontological difference between creator and creature, leading man to supreme glory. This also means that man can attain his fullness only in Christ.

> God is first willing some nature non-supreme [sc. non-angelic] to have supreme glory, showing that … he willed that nature to be in the person of the Word (Scotus 1950:III.7.3).

Christ's ontology makes him, for man, the source, way, and end of life. Vos describes this as the "means-aims/end", whereby the entirety of Christ's work grounds human existence and life. It is not an exaggeration to speak of a Christological ontology, for "we have to dwell on the ontological status of Jesus Christ" (Vos 2018:115).

This section demonstrated the uniqueness of Scotus' Christology, which encompasses his ontological and epistemological thought. Elements of Scotus' theology would later be appropriated by Reformed orthodox theologians in constructing new models of theology. Yet in their reception, significant shifts in meaning occurred. The next section examines how Scotus' thought was reinterpreted within Reformed orthodoxy.

3. ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY IN REFORMED ORTHODOXY

The shift in the meaning of ontology and epistemology during the era of Reformed orthodoxy, particularly in the thought of Turretin, which this section examines, can only be discerned through historical investigation. Muller provides a historical account to which the author is indebted, arguing that this shift occurred because a new space for theological discussion emerged during the Reformation: the doctrine of Scripture. Muller notes that medieval theologians were not preoccupied with explaining the nature of Scripture. In the major medieval works of Lombard, Aquinas, and Scotus, Scripture was

understood simply as the means whereby God revealed himself to man (Muller 2003b:196). The Reformation, however, began with the spirit of *ad fontes*, back to Scripture. This change created a new space for discussing the doctrine of Scripture. Scholars generally agree that the historical development of the doctrine of Scripture was marked by John Calvin's teaching on the "twofold knowledge of God" (Calvin 1960:I.ii.1).[2] After Calvin, Muller (2003b:195) observes that the doctrine of Scripture was further reinforced by the emergence of local confessions of faith such as the Irish Articles, the Westminster Confession, the Second Helvetic Confession, the Gallican Confession, and the Belgic Confession.

In its development, Reformed orthodox theologians drew a sharp distinction between *principium essendi* (the foundation of being) and *principium cognoscendi* (the foundation of theological knowledge). *Principium essendi* refers to God as the source of all that exists, while *principium cognoscendi* refers to Scripture as the source of all human knowledge of God. In other words, these theologians distinguished clearly between the source of being/ontology, which is God, and the source of knowledge/epistemology, which is Scripture. According to Muller's (2003b:201) observations, this distinction is typical in the writings of Reformed orthodox theologians such as Polanus, Maccovius, Cocceius, and Turretin. Yet the two principles are not mutually exclusive. Theologians established a directional movement from God, the source of being, to Scripture, the source of human knowledge of God, with the aim of demonstrating that God himself is the source of all revelation accessible to man. Conversely, they also emphasised the deepening of human knowledge of God, creating a spatial dynamic, in which man moves ever closer to his source. Thus, in the thought of Reformed orthodoxy, epistemology is distinguished from ontology, yet the two remain bound together in unity.

The comparison between Reformed orthodox theology and Scotus' thought, as discussed earlier, reveals a significant shift. For Scotus, Christ's ontology serves as the foundation for all understanding of the world. He unhesitatingly makes Christ the basis of all reality, the sole means whereby God relates to creation. By contrast, in Reformed orthodoxy, Christ's position is not immediately apparent. The person of Christ must be read within Scripture as the sole way whereby man comes to know God. Moreover, the ontological framework of Reformed orthodoxy is not grounded directly in Christ. While remaining faithful to Scotus in maintaining the sharp distinction between

2 Calvin contends that there is twofold knowledge of God, that is God as Creator and God as Redeemer. "First, as much in the fashioning of the universe as in the general teaching of Scripture the Lord shows himself to be simply the Creator. Then in the face of Christ [cf. II Cor. 4:6], he shows himself the Redeemer. Of the resulting twofold knowledge of God we shall now discuss the first aspect; the second will be dealt with in its proper place."

ontology and epistemology and in directing one toward the other, Reformed orthodoxy developed a different ontological model grounded in covenant theology. Therefore, before turning to the Christological implications, the article first analyses the ontological-epistemological framework of Turretin, a representative theologian of the high orthodoxy period of Reformed theology.

3.1 *Principium essendi*

According to Muller (2003a:437), the analysis of *principium* in 17th-century theology can be located in two primary *loci*: *locus de Deo* and *locus de Scriptura Sacra*. In his writings, Turretin begins with prolegomena and the doctrine of Scripture. His first question concerns the meaning of the term "theology". Turretin (1992b:I.i.7) defines theology as *theologia a Deo docetur, Deum docet, et ad Deum ducit*. That is, theology is taught by God, teaches God, and leads to him. In other words, every theological inquiry is concerned with God from beginning to end. Turretin (1992b:I.i.7) further concludes that

> this nomenclature embraces twofold principle of theology: one of being, which is God; the other of knowing, which is his word.

This statement indicates that theological discourse must distinguish between ontology and epistemology. Ontologically, all that exists (*ens*) derives from God himself; epistemologically, all that can be known by man derives from divine revelation. This distinction is intended to prevent man from presuming to know God in himself. Turretin describes as "less proper" any theology that attempts to explain God's essence, which is "unspeakable" and "most perfect" (Turretin 1992b:I.i.8). In this way, Turretin safeguards the essential difference between man and God. When discussing the simplicity of God, he cites Acts 17:28, affirming that man is God's offspring "not by a participation of the same essence, but by similarity of likeness" (Turretin 1992b:III.vii.7). He further distinguishes God and man in terms of the infinite and the finite: God's essence is infinite, while human essence is finite. God may be described as finite only "less properly", not in his essence but in human apprehension (Turretin 1992b:III.ix.7-11).[3] Ontologically, Turretin demonstrates that creation derives from God with strict limitation. Creation exists in the copy of God's essence, although not comprehended by man. This step implies two points, namely affirming God as the ontological source and assuming the necessity of situating creation within ontology. For Turretin, the relation between God and creation is intimate. In particular, man was not created in a state of pure nature

3 Turretin stated in his work that "not that God judges his essence to be finite, but that his knowledge is adequate to it". He emphasises that the knowledge of God can occur only insofar as God himself makes it possible, namely when he communicates the knowledge he possesses of his own infinite being to finite humanity.

with autonomous capacity, but in the *imago Dei*, meaning that human capacity depends upon God as creator (Turretin 1992b:V.x.4-5). In other words, man exists in a dependent and conditional relation to God.

The relation between God and man is expressed in Turretin's doctrine of covenant. He identifies three criteria for the establishment of a covenant, namely equality, perfect independence, and freedom from obligation, unless duties are assigned. On these grounds, Turretin argues that a covenant between God and man is impossible: there is no ontological equality between creator and creature; God is perfectly independent, while man is created dependent, and there is no external obligation binding God to man. Nevertheless, Scripture reveals that "God through his infinite condescension willed to enter into a covenant with his creatures" (Turretin 1992b:VIII.iii.1). Across the infinite distance between God and man, God himself initiates a covenant, binding himself to be "God for us" (*pro nobis*). This covenant is simultaneously unconditional and conditional. It is unconditional in that it can occur only by God's initiative, without any contribution from man. Yet it is conditional in that it unfolds within the condition of grace, expressed through the gift of faith (Turretin 1992b:VIII.iii.4). Within this covenant, each party has duties: humanity owes obedience to God's law, while God promises a reward and stipulates eternal life, man's highest blessedness (Turretin 1992b:VIII.iii.10, 12; Beach 2007:180-181).[4] In this way, the covenant initiated by God encompasses the entirety of creation and man. As source, God provides the laws to be obeyed; as end, God grants supreme happiness grounded in himself. Ontologically, man originates from God, but more specifically, human existence is determined within a covenantal relation to God. The covenant thus becomes the meeting space between God and creation, the sphere of life for humanity and all that exists. To abandon the covenant is to abandon the source and goal of life itself, resulting in annihilation and eternal death as punishment (Turretin 1992b:VIII.iii.15).

This analysis demonstrates that Turretin's ontology does not derive directly from God alone. Rather, Turretin's ontology is relational, constituted by the covenantal bond between God and man. For this reason, I conclude that Turretin's ontology may rightly be described as a covenantal ontology.

4 Beach argues that the covenant is conditional insofar as it requires the presence of humanity as the second party bound within it. Yet after the fall, the covenant provides salvation for humanity. Thus, its conditional character does not imply a human contribution to salvation, but rather presupposes humanity as the covenantal partner, while affirming that divine grace operates fully and decisively within the covenant itself.

3.2 *Principium cognoscendi*

The covenant between God and man forms the basis of man's need to know God. In other words, covenantal ontology directs toward epistemic necessity. To know God, human beings construct understandings of him, which are called theology (the words of God or words about God). Yet theology, as the epistemic path toward God, does not speak of God in himself. According to Turretin (1992b:I.v.4), "the object of theology, he is not regarded simply as God in himself". As noted earlier, Turretin restricts man's knowledge of God to his essence. He grounds this in the ontological difference between God, who is infinite, and man, who is finite. Consequently, human knowledge of God must depend upon the extent to which God reveals himself. Turretin (1992b:I.v.4) affirms that theology arises

> but as revealed and as he has been pleased to manifest himself to us in his word, so that divine revelation is the formal relation which comes to be considered in this object.

Thus, epistemologically, God can only be known through his self-revelation to man, mediated by the covenantal bond between God and man.

This distinction is also evident in Turretin's divisions of theology. Broadly, he distinguishes between theology that is infinite and uncreated, existing in God himself as the object known, the knowledge, and the knower and theology that is finite and created, which is the image and ectype of the infinite and archetypal (Turretin 1992b:I.ii.6). Ectypal theology is grounded in God himself, on the one hand, and communicated by God to man through the communication of grace, on the other. Theology, in the proper sense, concerns the knowledge of God as he communicates himself to man through the light of grace. The presence of this light of grace constitutes revelation to man in the world, enabling him to know God. More specifically, Turretin (1992b:I.ii.8-10) identifies Scripture as the medium of this divine revelation.

Turretin's epistemological framework did not emerge in a vacuum. Scholars have traced his distinctions to earlier theologians. For example, Van Asselt (2002:330) observes that Turretin's theological epistemology follows a model developed by Junius, which is more relational in nature. For Junius, the foundation of Reformed orthodox epistemology is God's self-revelation, mediated and communicated to the *subiectis* of man. This emphasis on the relational dynamic between God and man underscores that knowledge is acquired through covenantal relation. In other words, covenantal ontology serves as the basis of epistemology.

> [O]ur theology is most of all a communicated theology through which we all draw on the revelation which God chose to give us in Jesus Christ (Junius 2014:Thesis 8).

Another thinker who represents this trajectory is Amandus Polanus. As a post-Junius theologian, Polanus follows Junius' distinctions but emphasises two ends of ectypal theology, namely the glorification of God as the *summum bonum* and the blessedness of rational creatures (Tipton 2016). In other words, Reformed orthodox epistemology culminates in both God and man: God receives glory, and man receives eternal blessedness. Indirectly, these developments highlight Turretin's uniqueness. Compared with Polanus, Turretin situates the two ends of theology – God's glory and man's eternal life – within the framework of the covenant. He identifies them as the reward and stipulation of the covenantal bond between God and man. Turretin thus distinguishes sharply between epistemology and ontology. For him, epistemology concerns human knowledge of God through revelation, as a consequence of covenantal ontology. The telos of epistemology is not determined within epistemic categories. Rather, it is shaped by ontology: the covenant defines the ultimate end of all things for man.

At this point, the question arises: Where does Christology operate within Turretin's theological construction? At first glance, Christology does not appear in his ontology or covenantal framework, since the covenant is established between God and man. In other words, Christ does not yet appear in the covenant prior to the fall, a matter to be addressed in greater detail later. I find, however, that Christology is treated within Turretin's epistemology. Christ is the mediator between God and man, enabling man to know God. The issue, in this instance, is how to understand divine revelation in Christ alongside revelation in the Word of God. Does this imply two forms of revelation? Turretin himself is not entirely explicit in bridging these. On the one hand, Turretin (1992b:I.ii.6-7) affirms a type of theology communicated from God's archetypal knowledge to creation in the hypostatic union with the soul of Christ. Man is given faith by God to the incarnate Christ, which Turretin calls faith in Christ.

> For no faith in God can be true and saving which is not connected with faith in Christ (Jn 14:1), since we cannot believe in God except through Christ (Turretin 1992b:I.iv.20).

Epistemologically, man can only know God through Jesus Christ, who became incarnate and assumed human nature. On the other hand, Turretin connects this knowledge of God through Christ (theology of union) with divine revelation in Scripture. He views the two as united, meaning that human knowledge of God through Christ is mediated only through Scripture. Man knows the

incarnation and Christ's saving work solely through Scripture. Turretin (1992b:I.ii.7) writes that theology

> communicated to us by God … [which] is called the Old Testament and New Testament … It has Christ for its author and object.

In other words, for Turretin, the entire Scripture testifies to one person, fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who accomplishes his perfect work. Muller (1983:313; 2003b:155) notes that, for Reformed orthodox theologians, the phrase "Word of God" can be understood in four senses, namely Word of testimony, unwritten Word, written Word, and Christ himself. I thus conclude that, for Turretin and other Reformed orthodox theologians, Christ is identified with Scripture. The first implication is that all of Scripture must be read in the light of Christ. The second implication is that human knowledge of Christ must be grounded in God's revelation through Scripture. Through Christ revealed in Scripture, man receives the foundation for true knowledge of God. As God wills to relate to man and to reveal himself, Scripture becomes the means whereby man comes to know the source and goal of life.

In conclusion, Turretin's epistemology is grounded in the revelation of Christ in Scripture. Christ's revelation presupposes the ontological foundation of all reality: God has bound himself to man in covenant to be his God. Covenantal ontology determines all that exists, while epistemology provides the path whereby man moves toward his telos.

4. FROM ONTOLOGY TO SOTERIOLOGY

Turretin's thought, like that of other Reformed orthodox theologians, remains indebted to medieval theology. Scholars have identified Scotus' significant contribution to 17th-century high orthodoxy. For example, Van Asselt *et al.* (2011:119) and Muller (2003a:227) agree that Scotus played a formative role in shaping theological epistemology within the Reformed orthodoxy. Scotus' influence is evident in Junius' distinction between archetypal and ectypal theology, which itself rests upon Scotus' differentiation between *theologia in se* and *theologia nostra*. Tipton (2016) observes that Polanus further developed ectypal theology in a more relative sense, employing the same terminology as Scotus – "our theology". Yet Reformed orthodox theologians did not fully adopt Scotus' thought. As noted earlier, their ontological frameworks diverged. On the one hand, Scotus conceived of Christ as the ontological foundation that determines epistemology. On the other hand, Turretin developed a covenantal ontology in which Christ functions as the epistemic source rather than the ontological ground. Thus, while Turretin's ontology differs from

Scotus', he nevertheless exhibits a dual posture of reception and modification of Scotus' ideas.

Debates concerning the understanding of "being" in Reformed orthodoxy reveal two broad positions. Vos (2001) argues that Reformed orthodox theologians understood being univocally, while Muller (2012) interprets it as analogically. More recent scholarship such as Tipton's (2016) analysis of Polanus identifies a "hidden Thomism" within 17th-century theology. Yet I am inclined to agree with Te Velde's assessment. Te Velde (2013:132) contends that, although Reformed orthodox theologians often employed analogical predication of being, univocal predication cannot be dismissed. Indeed, he argues that they used univocal predication more consistently than analogical predication. In my view, univocal ontology offers several advantages. First, it emphasises the infinite qualitative difference between God, who is infinite, and humanity, who is finite. This difference, in turn, underscores the necessity of covenant to bridge the ontological divide. Thus, to sustain the argument for covenantal ontology, Reformed orthodox theologians (Turretin, in particular) employed a univocal concept of being. Nevertheless, Scotus' reception did not extend to Christology.

Reformed orthodox theologians did not place Christ as the ontological foundation of all reality. Instead, Christ functions epistemologically. I suggest that this shift occurred not merely because of differing ontological or epistemological frameworks, but because of their soteriological commitments. Turretin defines sin as opposition to God's law. Sin is also described as anomia, a discrepancy of the law, encompassing every inclination contrary to the law of God, whether implanted or *inwritten* (Turretin 1992b:IX.i.4-5). This concept is rooted in covenant theology as the foundation of all things. In other words, sin is a violation of the covenant bond itself. The problem of sin demands resolution, and thus a Christological issue is required. Turretin (1992b:IX.iii.1) affirms that the resolution of sin's effects is found in "the blessings of justification by which Christ takes away our guilt by the imputation of his own righteousness". Christ's work is necessary for man's salvation from sin. Accordingly, sin is resolved forensically, through Christ's representative substitution for Adam. As man receives the imputation of sin through Adam, so in Christ, man receives the imputation of righteousness (Turretin 1992b:IX.ix.16). This perspective is evident in Turretin's (1992b:I.iv.6-8) first topic, where he asserts that, in Christ, humanity comes to know the true God as Redeemer.[5] Thus, for Turretin, Christ is the sole way of salvation, restoring humanity to covenantal relation with God. By contrast with Scotus, Turretin

5 Within the Reformed tradition, deeply influenced by Calvin, Turretin distinguishes two modes of knowing God: God as creator and preserver and God as redeemer. The integrity of these two dimensions perfects humanity's knowledge of the true God.

restricts Christ's role to the sphere of soteriology. This raises the question: "If Turretin conceives of Christ soteriologically, is the incarnation necessary apart from sin?"

For Scotus, the incarnation is necessary as God's original purpose for creation. For Turretin (1992a:XIII.iii.3), however, the incarnation is not necessary apart from sin:

> As the Son of God became incarnate only on account of sin, so it would not have been necessary for him to become incarnate if man had not sinned.

For Turretin, Christ's mission in the incarnation is singular: salvation. This mission is expressed through Christ's threefold office as prophet, priest, and king. Through these offices, Christ fulfils the Father's commission, serving as the sole mediator between God and man, manifesting divine love and goodness (Turretin 1992a:XIII.iii.4-13). Turretin maintains that Christ's forensic function for humanity is to represent man before God so that man may be saved. Beach (2007:186) observes that, in Turretin's thought, Christ is "the foundation of the covenant and the bond of our communing with God". In Christ, man is invited into fellowship with him. Turretin employs Calvin's terminology of "union with Christ", signifying man's post-Christ condition and Christ's suretyship in completing the work of salvation (Turretin 1992a,:XII. iii.13; XIV.xiv.26)[6]. Salvation in Christ restores the covenant bond between man and God, reinstating the covenant's duties and stipulations.

Through Christ, man is redirected to the ultimate end: to glorify God and to attain eternal blessedness. This affirms the necessity of Christ in addressing the problem of sin. In other words, Christology is required to sustain covenantal ontology. At this point, the divergence between Turretin and Scotus becomes evident. For Turretin, the problem of sin necessitates resolution, so that all may be restored to covenantal fellowship with God and brought back into alignment with his eternal decree.

5. CONCLUSION

This article demonstrates Turretin's creative step in refusing to fully appropriate Scotus' thought, thereby constructing his own theological framework. In this instance, Turretin distances himself from Scotus' Christology, in order to emphasise the covenantal bond between God and man. Although both Scotus and Turretin share the idea of Christ as mediator, their interpretations

6 In Latin, Turretin employs the expression *Christum habitare in nobis*, which signifies that Christ also dwells within us.

differ entirely. For Scotus, Christ is the universal mediator who bridges the ontological gap between man and God. For Turretin, however, Christ is the mediator specifically to redeem man from sin. Thus, if man had not fallen into sin, would Christ still have become incarnate? Turretin answers unequivocally: No. My analysis shows that the sole reason for Christ's incarnation is to save man from sin. The saving work of Christ restores man to the covenantal bond initiated by God, enabling man to glorify God and to enjoy eternal fellowship with him in love.

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