The words theology and theologian do not occur in Scripture, but it was inevitable that they should be trans­planted into Christian soil. Θεόλoγoς is found, as a V.R. in the inscription of the Apocalypse—the Revelation of John “the Divine,” “the theologian,”—and almost certainly refers to his maintaining the Divinity of the Logos—*τηv του λόγου θεότητα,—*that the λόγος is θεός. In the 3d and 4th centuries a theologian usually meant one who distin­guished himself in defending the personality and Divinity of the Logos. It was on this ground that Athanasius and Gregory Nazianzen were honoured with the distinctive appellation of “ theologians.” The term theology has not yet lost its early signification of “doctrine concerning God,” although a much wider meaning is more common. Theology in its ordinary general acceptation includes, as one of its divisions, theology understood as the treatment of the problems which directly refer to the being, attributes, and works of God. The *Introductio ad Theologiam,* and a later form of it, the *Theologia Christiana,* composed by Abelard in the 12th century, first gave currency to an acceptation of the word inclusive of all religious truth or belief. Among later scholastics the common designation for a general compendium of religious doctrine was *Summa Theologiæ.* Of such *Summæ* among the most celebrated and characteristic are those of Alexander Hales, Albertus Magnus, and Thomas Aquinas. The mediæval mystics deemed the essence of theology to be the immediate intuition of God, who, being once in contact with the soul, reveals to it the truth of all the principles of faith, and gives it at the same time spiritual peace and happiness. This view led to a use of the word which was prevalent among the Reformers and their immediate successors,—a subjective application which identified it with what was characteristic of the mind of a true theologian, an enlight­ened and experienced *homo renatus.* In this sense it was a living practical acquaintance with the revelation of grace and truth made by God to man, a “ habitus practicus,” a “ sapientia eminens practica,” as it was called. With it, however, these earlier Protestant divines generally con­joined that objective application of the term which was current in later scholasticism, and this at length wholly displaced the subjective acceptation ; in other words, theology came to signify, not knowledge of a certain kind as inherent in the mind and operative in the life of the individual, but knowledge in itself, a body of systematized truth, a science. Theology, thus understood, may be viewed, discussed, and applied in a variety of ways, so as to give rise to certain kinds or species of theology. In the 17th century the necessity for specialization of this sort began, from the operation of several causes, to be widely and strongly felt, and it became usual for divines to indicate by the titles of their theological systems the point of view and mode of treatment adopted. An adjec­tive added to the term “ theologia ” served their purpose. Of adjectives thus employed in the 17th and early part of the 18th century, the following may be mentioned as either frequently used or of some intrinsic interest :—theoretica, practica, didactica, elenctica, polemica, irenica, pacifica, positiva, comparativa, dogmatica, theoretico-practica, didac- tico-elenctica, &c.

The extension given to the signification of the term theology was for a very lengthened period almost univer­sally restricted to the knowledge derivable from the Scrip­tures, the systematic exhibition of revealed truth, the science of Christian faith and life. It is still thus, per­haps, that the word is most commonly understood. Two things, however, have naturally suggested the employment of it in a wider manner. First, there was the rise and development of a theology not based on revelation,—the rise and development of what is called natural theology. The Greeks and Romans could not distinguish between nature and revelation, reason and faith, because ignorant of revelation and faith in their distinctive Christian sense. In the patristic and scholastic ages of the church, and for some time after the Reformation, men were not in general prepared to admit that there was a knowledge of God and of His attributes and of His relations to the world which might be the object of a science distinct from and inde­pendent of revelation. Yet the most learned and thought­ful even of the scholastic divines recognized in some measure that such was the case, and could hardly, indeed, do otherwise after they had become acquainted with the contributions which Greek, Jewish, and Arabian philo­sophers had made to the defence and elaboration of the doctrine concerning God. The separation of natural and revealed theology was virtually the work of the scholastics. The *Theologia Naturalis sive Liber Creaturarum* of the Spanish physician, Raymond de Sebonde, who taught theology in the university of Toulouse during the earlier part of the 15th century, was, perhaps, the first work which, proceeding on the principle that God has given us two books, the book of nature and the book of Scripture, confined itself to the interpretation of the former, merely indicating the mutual relations of natural and revealed religion. A conviction of the truth of the distinction which he so clearly apprehended gradually spread ; more and more importance came to be attached to it. The deists proceeded on it, and tried to exalt natural theology at the expense of all theology professedly based on revela­tion, by representing the former as the truth of which the latter was the perversion. The wisest of their opponents, and thoughtful Christian writers in general—the adhe­rents of the moderate and rational theology of the 17th and 18th centuries—strove, on the other hand, to show that natural theology was presupposed by revelation and should carry the mind onwards to the acceptance of reve­lation. Thus natural theology came into reputation, not­withstanding the opposition of those who have denied its existence and contended that the reason of itself can teach us absolutely nothing about God or our duties towards Him. The recognition of natural theology contributed to awaken an interest in the various religions of the world, and thus led to the second circumstance referred to, namely, the rise of what may be called comparative theo­logy, although it has hitherto been more generally designated the science of religions. It can be shown to have originated in the attempts made to prove that the principles of natural theology were to be found in all religions. In Bishop Steuco of Kisami’s *De Perenni Philosophia,* published in 1540, and in Lord Herbert of Cherbury’s *De Religione Gentilium,* published in 1663, we have two of the earliest and most characteristic attempts of the kind. From that time to the present the study of religions has proceeded at varying rates of progress, but without interruption. Important results have been ob­tained, and especially this result, the ascertainment, to the satisfaction of all competent judges, of a right method of investigation,—the establishment, as the true mode of study, of the comparative method. As we have a right to speak of comparative anatomy and comparative philology, so have we a right to speak of comparative theology. The inference from the preceding remarks is obvious. If there be a natural theology and a comparative theology, it is a mistake to identify theology *per se* with Christian theology. The word Christian is, in this case, a real and great restriction of the signification of the word theology, and Christian theology is not the only kind of theology. The proper procedure is to give to theology a general and comprehensive meaning, which can be limited and specialized, when requisite, by adjectives like “natural” or “Christian.”