

4th. Lastly we notice very briefly the theological writers belonging to the various schools of Separatists who object to what they call human dogmas and confessions and systems. In reference to the Independents of England and the Congregationalists of this country, from among whom have arisen many of our wisest, noblest, and most Scriptural theologians, they object to confessions or subordinate church standards on the following grounds. (a) That all confessions proceed on the supposition that the Bible is not sufficient. (b) That they repress or interfere with the free and full study of the Bible by declaring beforehand what a man must believe. (c) That they engender disputes and produce divisions. We reply that our confession, and indeed all Protestant confessions, declare as a fundamental doctrine that the Bible is the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and that the Supreme Judge by which all controversies in religion are to be determined is the Holy Scriptures. Scripture is at once the only source of our confession, and the only standard by which it is to be tried and measured. In the confession itself we have the clear statement of the rightful supremacy of the Scriptures. The need for creeds and confessions grows out of the duty of the church to bear testimony to the truth as against prevailing errors. Practically even those denominations who protest against them, have understood if not written confessions, so that for example no minister who denies the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity can remain in their communion. Without a standard or confession in some shape, discipline would be impossible. Our confessions do not come saying to a man *thou must believe*, but rather asking him 'dost thou believe?' Nor is it true that confessions produce divisions, though they sometimes manifest their existence. But we refer rather to other bodies of Separatists who strongly denounce creeds, confessions and systems as merely human traditions, preparatory to a vigorous effort to make their own narrow and one-sided views dominant over the minds of men. We of course do not object to the fact that they have a positive body of truths as really systematized as Calvin's Institutes; but we do protest against their habit of condemning the evangelical systems of truth as scholastic and philosophical and human theories, instead of bring-