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REPLY TO THE HANDBILL OF N. L. RICE.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN A. RAINES and N. L. RICE.

PARIS, KY. AUG. 25TH, 1842.

MR. RICE:—Sir:—It has become, I suppose, my duty to submit to you, as preparatory to a religious discussion, the following propositions:

1. Is the doctrine of *Election* and *Reprobation*, as taught in the Presbyterian Confession, the doctrine of the Bible?
2. Is the doctrine of hereditary total depravity, as taught in the Presbyterian Confession, the doctrine of the Bible?
3. Is the doctrine of spiritual influences, as taught in the Presbyterian Confession, the doctrine of the Bible?
4. Is the doctrine of the necessity of human Creeds and human systems of ecclesiastical government taught in the Bible.

Will you take the affirmative of the above propositions? If so, I of course will take the negative: and if we can agree on rules, the "*wordy war*" commences.

I should have submitted these propositions at an earlier period, had I not been compelled to leave home within a few days subsequently to what passed between us at your meeting house. To-morrow I leave again. Please reply as soon as it may be convenient, and put your reply into the hands of brother H. C. Chiles, your neighbor, who will hand it to me as soon as I return.

Yours, Respectfully,

AYLETT RAINES.

PARIS, SEPT. 1842.

MR. RAINES:—Sir:—Absence from home has prevented an earlier reply to your letter of Aug. 25th. I have two objections to the form in which you propose the questions to be discussed. The first is, that it is by no means certain that you and I would agree in our interpretation of thly Pres. Confession of Faith; and it is certainly desirable that questions for debate should be distinctly understood by both parties. I am, at all times, prepared to defend the doctrines taught in our Confession of Faith, but I might be wholly indisposed to defend *your* interpretation of them.

My second objection is—that on every question you give me the *affirmative*. I presume, of course, you did not mean to intimate that *your* faith is a mere *negation*; yet as you propose to affirm nothing, such a conclusion might be drawn. In a discussion of this kind, I desire no *advantage*. My cause, I think, does not need it. I shall, of course, presume that you are willing to debate fairly. Instead of the questions proposed by you, I will state the following propositions to be discussed:

1. The posterity of Adam are by nature totally destitute of holiness, and, as to their moral nature, inclined only to sin.
2. God, of his sovereign grace, did from eternity predestinate to eternal life all of the human family who will be finally saved—and this He did, not because He foresaw that they would believe and do good works, but of his own purpose and grace.
3. The conversion and sanctification of men is effected, not simply by the words and arguments of the Holy Spirit, as contained in the scriptures, but by the supernatural agency of the Spirit upon their hearts.
4. The *birth* spoken of in John 1: 13, and 3-4; 1-11, is a change of *state* and not a change of *heart*.
5. The use of Creeds or Confessions of Faith, such for example as the Westminster Confession, is contrary to the scriptures, and destructive of the unity and prosperity of the Church.

Of the three first propositions I am prepared to take the affirmative,—of the two last the negative. You will observe, that I state one proposition not embraced in your questions. I do so, because it presents one of the most important points of difference between us.

The propositions, as now stated, seem to me to present fairly the ground of discussion. You will please let me know at your earliest convenience, whether you approve of them, and what changes you would suggest.

Respectfully,

N. L. RICE.

PARIS, KY. SEPTEMBER 27TH, 1842.

MR. RICE:—Sir:—Permit me to express my surprise, that you should refuse to meet me on the propositions which I submitted. They appear to me to be perfectly unexceptionable. In the first three, I require you to affirm nothing more than what your confession does, in so many words, affirm; and in the last proposition, I only ask of you a scripture license for human Creeds and human formulas of ecclesiastical government. If the affirmative of these propositions is indefensible, it follows that Presbyterianism rests upon a sandy foundation! But if defensible, I perceive not why you should object to defend it.

But, surprised as I am that you should have objected at all, I am still even more surprised at the *nature* of your objections: 1st, "That it is by no means certain that you and I would agree in our interpretation of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith;" and, 2dly, "That on every question I give you the affirmative."

Now, in regard to your first objection, permit me to ask, whether it is not at least as probable, that we should disagree in our interpretation of your *propositions*, as in our interpretation of the Confession of Faith? Or will you, my dear sir, assume that your Confession is misty and dark in

its fundamental articles; and that, although it professes to be an interpreter of the Bible, yet, that it is an interpreter that not only needs to be itself interpreted, but is, at the same time, so hard of interpretation, as to be an unfit document to be appealed to on the arena of religious controversy? In relation to your second objection, I will only say, at present, that if you desired me to take the affirmative of any questions of difference between us, I supposed that you would present them!

I proceed next, to the consideration of your propositions; and in one sentence, I say that there is not one of them to which I do not object.

Take your first proposition. I object to it, 1st, because the word *holiness* is used in so great a variety of acceptations in the holy Scriptures, and in other writings, as to leave it wholly uncertain what idea or ideas you intend to express by it. It sometimes refers to moral qualities, sometimes to moral acts, sometimes to inanimate objects, morally neither good nor bad. If you use it as expressive of moral qualities or acts, I, of course, cannot negative the question! 2d, The whole proposition is far below the standard of the Confession—a very modest proposition, very slyly and very modestly expressed. "As to their moral nature," you say, "inclined only to sin." How very cautious it is, and how very smoothly it slips along!! How unlike the language of the Confession! "*Utterly* indisposed, *disabled*, and made *opposite* to all that is spiritually good, and *wholly* inclined to *all* evil, and that *continually*." The voice of your Confession roars like a lion, while that of your proposition is but little above a squeak!

2d Proposition. Another very smooth and slippery proposition. It contains the *election*, but utters not a single syllable concerning the *reprobation*. Did not God freely and unchangeably foreordain whatever comes to pass? And are not some men and angels, by an eternal decree, foreordained to eternal death—both the elect and the reprobates particularly and unchangeably designed? &c. So affirms your Confession. I object, then, to your second proposition, because you have left out of it these essential elements.

3d Proposition. This proposition is vague and ambiguous throughout. It seems to imply that the Spirit has an agency that is not supernatural. Also, that if the words and arguments of the Spirit convert, such conversion is not by the supernatural agency of the Spirit. Again: that the words and arguments of the Spirit contained in the Scriptures, are not supernatural. And again, that the words and arguments of the Spirit, if not contained in the Scriptures, are supernatural. And worst of all, it would compel me to affirm that both conversion and sanctification are effected, *simply* by the words and arguments of the Spirit contained in the Scriptures. I can never, until I become insane, and perhaps not even then, take either the affirmative or negative of such a proposition!

4th Proposition. The birth includes both a change of heart and a change of state; for we are said to be born not only of water but of the Spirit; of the water because we are baptized, and of the Spirit because the Spirit has impregnated us with the word of truth; and because the whole scheme of salvation is by or through the Spirit. Baptism is but the last act in spiritual regeneration.

5th Proposition. I object to this proposition, because you do not state what particular church you mean. If by "church" you mean the Presbyterian Church, I cannot affirm the proposition; for the Westminster Confession may be, for aught I know, very essential to the unity and prosperity of the Presbyterian Church!—but, perhaps, very destructive to the unity and prosperity of the Methodist Church; and certainly not necessary either to the unity or prosperity of *Christ's Church*! But this is not the only difficulty in this fifth proposition. You speak of "Creeds and Confessions of Faith, *such*, for example, as the Westminster," &c. Now, it is impossible for me to determine what latitude you give to the word "*such*." Do you include the Episcopal Methodist Discipline? The Protestant Methodist Discipline? The Philadelphia Baptist Confession? The Unitarian and Universalian Confessions of Faith? In strictness, I know of no Creeds on earth "*such*" as is the Westminster! It is, however, enough for me to know, that Christ never made a Creed and Confession of Faith for *his* church "*such*" as is the Westminster. But that he put her under "the Apostle's doctrine," "the perfect law of liberty," "the scriptures, which are able to make the man of God perfect;" and that, therefore, a human Creed is as useless to *Christ's church* as would be a third wing to a bird, a fifth wheel to a carriage, or the light of a glow-worm in the noontide blaze of the glorious sun. And, my dear sir, it strikes my mind very forcibly, that if you had visited Jerusalem, with your Westminster, some short time after the Church of Christ had been organized in that city, and had thrown it over upon the shoulders of the church, and commanded them to submit to it, you would, without much delay, have taken a lesson from Peter, or some of the other apostles, that would have contributed but little, without speedy repentance on your part, to the unity and prosperity of your spiritual interests!

In conclusion, permit me to say, that as I have required you to affirm nothing that is not in your Confession of Faith, the Westminster, you ought not to require me to affirm any thing that is not in my Confession of Faith, the Bible,—such, for instance, as the following: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;" "Baptism is for the remission of sins;" "It is the Spirit that quickens"—"begets us through the word of truth;"—the person thus quickened, is, when baptized, "born of the water and the Spirit," &c. &c. Respectfully, **A. RAINES.**

PARIS, SEPT. 1842.

MR. A. RAINES:—It would be easy, as I suppose it would be useless, to expose the utter futility of your objections to the propositions I presented you for discussion. I see the drift of your letter, and, therefore, extraordinary as is the statement of your two first questions, I now accept them. As to the third, I state it in the words of President Shannon, viz:

"Are the scriptures adequate to the conversion of men without a *superadded* spiritual influence?" Will you take the affirmative of this question?

Concerning the New Birth, I will also propose the question as stated by President Shannon, viz:

"Is the New Birth identical with a change of heart?" Of this I will take the affirmative. Will you take the negative?

As to Creeds, your *Reformation* made the condemnation of them, as contrary to the scriptures and ruinous to the Church of Christ, its starting point. Are you willing to stand before the public on your true ground? If you are, you cannot object to the following question, viz:

"Is the use of Creeds contrary to the Scriptures?" Or if you like the following question better, you can take it, viz:

"Are Creeds hostile to the union, peace, harmony, purity and joy of Christians, and adverse to the conversion of the world to Jesus Christ?"

Now, sir, since every question is stated either in your own words, or in the words of leading men of your Church, I hope you will be satisfied. Your argument against Creeds, as contained in your letter, will perhaps be more in place in the discussion. Till then I shall not trouble myself to reply to it.

Your last paragraph will do to laugh at. I can scarcely persuade myself that you were serious in penning it. Hoping for an early reply, I am, respectfully,
N. L. RICE.

PARIS, OCT. 13, 1842.

MR. RICE:—You say, that my "last paragraph will do to laugh at," &c. It has, then, come to this, that to contend for the faith, and nothing but the faith, once delivered to the saints; to preach the word and nothing but the word; is an exceedingly laughable affair! Well, Mr. Rice may laugh at it, if he choose. But as for myself, I beg to be permitted still to entertain the opinion that a refusal on my part to affirm any but Bible propositions, in Bible words, is, after all, not so very ridiculous! At the judgment it will not be ridiculous!

I perceive that I can, to a small extent, operate upon you by *my* words, whether God can, or not, so operate upon the mind of the sinner! For example: in the first instance, you refused to affirm any one of my four propositions; whereas, now, through the influence of my last letter, I perceive you agree to affirm the first *two* propositions. It seems that you need to be dragged into a defence of your Confession. You come by inches; and hold back most manfully. You are right, sir! Prudence is the better part of valor!

Relative to your propositions, with respect to creeds, in your last letter, I have but a brief reply. It is needless for me to affirm or deny any thing in reference to the creed question, so long as you refuse the affirmative of my fourth proposition: for, if you can produce no scripture license for human creeds and formulas of ecclesiastical government, it follows by your own tacit admission, that they are of mere human authority. It would, therefore, be a work of supererogation for me to prove that which is virtually admitted. You, as an advocate of human creeds, are logically bound to show their scripturality; or else acknowledge that they are human devices in religion—systems of human usurpation; and consequently pernicious.

I cannot affirm brother Shannon's proposition relative to conversion by the scriptures; and, for the best of reasons—I *do not believe it*. Were I to affirm that proposition, I have hundreds of friends in this county who would charge against me change and inconsistency. I have often said, in public and in private, in this town and in many other places, that "how far it is the word, and how far it is the spirit, that converts the heart of the sinner, no man knows." And you may find a declaration to this effect in my reply to Mr. Hendricks, page 30. I am not, however, to be understood assaying, in the positive, that brother Shannon's proposition is false. It may be, that before you get through the discussion of that proposition with Mr Shannon, you will have enough of it!

Were it proper, or necessary in the present state of the case, I would negative the proposition, "Is the New Birth identical with a change of heart?" But, sir, as matters now stand between us, I do not consider myself under any obligations to do so. In my first letter, in the four propositions which it contained, I walked up to you manfully, and demanded of you a defence of Presbyterianism in four of its cardinal points. Instead of defending, or even agreeing to defend, you fell back, as our correspondence will show, and commenced a strange manoeuvring to gain, as I thought, and as the unbiassed reader will think, an advantage in the premises. I, in my next communication, endeavored to convince you of the obliquity of your course. You, in your reply, talk of the "futility" of my attempt, "see the drift" of my letter, &c. but suffer yourself to be drawn, by my effort, futile as it was, just, and only just, half way to that point, at which you ought to have taken your first position. Now, sir, I tell you that you don't catch old birds with chaff in that superficial way.

What then, is the conclusion of the whole matter? It is this:—I will have with you no oral debate*—but, the Lord willing, I will, in a pamphlet, to be forthcoming as soon as I can prepare it, expose the deformity of Presbyterianism, in its four grand members, as indicated in the four propositions of my first letter. You, of course, will have the liberty to attack those with whom I am associated, at what point you please; and will, very probably, enjoy the benefit of a replication. This will be putting down every thing in *white* and *black*, an advantage that does not attach to an oral debate, if there be no stenographer; and a stenographer cannot be obtained without a very considerable expense.

I trust, sir, that my present plan will be perfectly satisfactory to all parties concerned. It will shun the excitement and storm of an oral discussion, as well as the evanescence of words thrown out into the wind, houseless pilgrims, to perish in this world's wide solitudes.

Respectfully,

A. RAINES.

*P. S.—This is on the supposition that you refuse to affirm the whole of my *four* propositions.
A. R.

TO THE READER.

HAVING now given the correspondence between Mr. Rice and myself, I shall proceed to examine the grounds of his vaunted triumph—the state of the case as it exists between us.

At the close of his last speech against brother Shannon, he declared his willingness to discuss, with any man considered capable of sustaining our cause, the points of difference between us. I, on my part, forthwith sent him a note, containing an appointment, notifying the people, that on the next Lord's day, I would preach in our church, on *election, depravity, and spiritual influences*. Mr Rice insinuated that an advantage was about to be taken, inasmuch as he could not be present at that time. I then requested him to name his own time for me to discourse on those topics. He hesitated; and did not designate a time. I then said, name to-morrow at 11 o'clock. He replied that he must leave home on the next morning. I then arose, in my pew, and remarked that I was not fond of religious controversy, but that circumstances of such a nature had been thrown around me, as seemed to compel me to say to him, that I would discuss the points of difference between us, at any time and place he would name. Well, said he, I suppose you will submit the propositions. I answered in the affirmative; and thus the matter ended at that time.

Now I wish the reader to fix his mind on the following facts. 1 That I was the challenged party; that the challenge was, in a manner, flung into my face; and, that consequently, a controversy with Mr Rice was not a thing of my seeking. 2. That I did, on that occasion, put myself fully into his hands,—committed to him the naming of the time, place, &c. And 3. That he did not avail himself of this opportunity. If he could not attend on the next day, nor on the next Lord's day, why did he not some other day?

If my not complying with his terms of debate, proves that I "bolted," what does his not complying with the terms which I first proposed, prove? It is also worthy of remark, that the discussion between him and brother Shannon had proceeded on the principle on which I proposed to continue it.

But to proceed: In due time I submitted my propositions, as my first letter (Aug. 25th) will show; propositions founded on his Confession of Faith, affirming not a particle more nor less than his Confession affirms; and covering, as I then thought, and do still think, all the points of difference between us. Certainly, thought I, this will be satisfactory. Not a word of it. He comes out in his reply, as his first letter will shew, with objections to my propositions, and with new propositions, as far below the Confession articles, as cider is weaker than aquafortis. But what are his objections? Why, 1, "That it is by no means certain that you and I would agree in our interpretation of the Pres. Confession of Faith." And, 2, "That on every question you give me the affirmative." Some attention is given to these objections in my second letter. We have now some additional remarks to make.

In regard to the first objection, it is most manifestly connected with an artifice, which perhaps the reader has not discovered. It would have excluded me, had I agreed to Mr Rice's propositions, from all appeals to the Confession of Faith. Indeed, the reason which he assigns for preferring his propositions to his Confession articles, excludes me, to all intents and purposes, from the Confession—"that it is by no means certain that we would agree" &c. To prevent all disagreement in interpreting the Confession, therefore, we must confine ourselves to certain propositions, which, in Mr Rice's estimation, contain a fair interpretation of the Confession. Mr Rice is to be the sole interpreter, and I am to acknowledge, contrary to my best convictions, that he interprets correctly! To use, with but a slight difference, his own language, he shields the doctrine of his Confession from discussion. In his handbill he says: "I was not disposed to occupy the time by debating what the Confession does teach, instead of the question, whether it teaches the truth." Mr Rice is to say, authoritatively, what the Confession does teach,—in other words, I am to cross my hands, and suffer myself to be tied off from his Confession, or there can be no debate. Mr Rice blames me for shielding myself behind scripture propositions in scripture words, while he, at the very same time, is shielding himself, and his Confession of Faith, behind his own interpretations. Now, I ask the reader whether I would not have been an egregious simpleton, had I suffered myself to be gulled by this shallow artifice? I happen to know, or least think I know, that the Presbyterians have greatly departed in doctrine from some of the fundamental articles of their Confession;

and, therefore, if for no other reason, was in no danger from this stratagem of my opponent.

It may, however, be said, that Mr Rice, in his second letter, obviated this difficulty, at least, in part, by agreeing to affirm the first two of my propositions. This, to many, no doubt appears plausible. But the reader must observe, that he has neutralized this meritorious and condescending concession, by giving me at the same time, at least one proposition which he knew I could not possibly affirm: "Are the scriptures adequate to the conversion of men without a superadded spiritual influence?" I say he knew that I could not affirm this proposition—I had told him in my second letter that I could not,—*that I did not believe it!* Instead, then, of obviating a difficulty, he was creating a new one. He was flinging a gross insult into my face; and he was aggravating that insult, by insisting that I should affirm it, contrary to the convictions of my conscience, because, forsooth, an eminent brother had affirmed it! I ought to have said, get thee behind me, adversary. Must I affirm every proposition that all my brethren may feel themselves prepared to affirm—even the most eminent of them? I have not so learned Christ.

But, I gave him the affirmative of all the propositions, and thereby "carefully shielded the doctrines of the reformation from discussion."

My first reply is, that if this be the fact, Mr Rice, when he gave me the affirmative on spiritual influences, carefully shielded Presbyterianism, in one of its most vulnerable parts, from discussion. If Mr Rice's having the affirmative will, to the extent of that affirmative, shield the reformation, then, most unquestionably, my holding the affirmative will, to the full extent of my affirmative, shield Presbyterianism. So that, if I am unjust in four propositions, Mr Rice is unjust in one: and the great teacher has settled the question, that "He that is unjust in the least, is unjust in much."

My second answer is, that in my view of things, there is not a particle of truth in the objection. By giving Mr R. the affirmative, I took the negative, and by so doing virtually bound myself to maintain opposite propositions; the matter of which must have been, parts and parcels of my system, or what I believed to be the truths of the Bible. Take, for example, spiritual influences as taught in the Confession. Mr Rice affirms: I deny. Mr Rice makes the effort to show that these Confession doctrines are the doctrines of the Bible. It will then devolve on me to shew, that Mr Rice misinterprets those scriptures; and to do this, I must give what I consider to be the true interpretation; and in this interpretation, my theory of spiritual operations is developed. Mr Rice opposes this, and shows that my theory is erroneous: that his is the scriptural theory. Mine, of course, goes against the wall. I am then refuted! In other words, if Mr Rice sustains his Confession doctrine of spiritual operations, all the other theories, even were there ten thousand of them in the world, go overboard. Giving Mr Rice, then, the affirmative, was putting into his hands the direct method of refuting, if his Confession is sound in this point, not only the reformation views, but all other views of spiritual influence in the world, that are different from the Presbyterians. And that which is true in this point, is true of the whole four propositions. If Mr Rice had gone to work, and conclusively established the doctrines which I called upon him to defend, all systems, the reformation not excepted, antagonistic to these doctrines, would, with the same conclusiveness, have received their refutation. And yet Mr Rice says: "You affirm nothing; you undertake to prove nothing; you risk nothing." I sit still, I suppose, and permit Mr Rice to prove his system true, and consequently mine false, without refutation or risk!!

But he says, "It is well known to be the universal rule in such debates, that each party shall take as nearly as possible, an equal number of affirmatives." My answer is, that so far as my knowledge extends, there is no such rule as this in the world; or, if it should come to pass that Mr Rice has in his possession such a rule, it is not very generally practiced. In the Campbell and Purcell debate, Mr Campbell held the affirmative of the whole seven propositions. In the Campbell and McCalla debate, Mr Campbell held the affirmative of both propositions. In his debate with Owen, he was in the negative throughout. In the debate with Walker, if my memory does not fail me, he held the affirmative. And in the debate between Breckinridge and Hughes—the written discussion—Breckinridge held the affirmative. An equal number of affirmatives and negatives seems never to have been even dreamed of by these men: whether it was because they were not so shrewd as Mr Rice, or because they were men of less artifice, the reader may determine.

I will now contrast two of Mr Rice's propositions with the articles of the Confession

which they are intended to represent, that the reader may have a specimen of his skill in interpretation; and may also perceive why he wished to keep me out of the Confession, by confining me to his propositions.

DEPRAVITY. "The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consisteth in the *guilt* of Adam's first sin, the *want* of that righteousness wherein he was created, and the *corruption* of his nature, whereby he is *utterly* indisposed, *disabled* and made *opposite* to all that is spiritually good, and *wholly* inclined to *all* evil, and that *continually*." Page 163.

PROPOSITION. "The posterity of Adam are by nature totally destitute of holiness, and, as to their moral nature, inclined only to sin."

Now, reader, what do you think of Mr Rice as an interpreter? Not a word about man's being guilty of Adam's sin; not a word about being utterly disabled; nothing of being *wholly* inclined to sin, and wholly inclined to *all* sin! but "*inclined only to sin*."!! And yet I am to take this as a true interpretation of the above article!!

I can scarcely ever read this article without thinking of the old lady who, wishing to make the company know how religious she was, told them that she broke every one of the ten commandments, in *thought, word and deed*, every day of her life." She filled the description given in this article precisely. But, is this description true of all unregenerate men? Ladies, are you *wholly* inclined to *all* evil—to every sin that might be named, and that is nameless? This doctrine is a libel on human nature, of the grossest kind; and hence Mr Rice had to dilute it!!!

THE SPIRIT. "All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased in his own appointed and accepted time, effectually to call by his word and spirit, &c. &c. This effectual call is of God's free grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man; who is altogether passive therein, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, &c. Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the spirit, who worketh when and where and how he pleaseth:" Page 51-52.

PROPOSITION. "The conversion and sanctification of men is effected not *simply* by the word^a and arguments of the Holy Spirit, as contained in the Scriptures, but by the supernatural agency of the Spirit upon their hearts."

Here, then, we have another luminous interpretation! But nothing is said about infants;—it goes no farther than to the conversion and sanctification of men. It does not even say that sinners are altogether passive under the Spirit's operation; and it leaves even the elect infants unconverted! Sad interpretation, truly!!

If the reader desires a deeper insight into some of the peculiarities of Mr R. let him read those parts of the handbill in which he speaks of my tardiness in the correspondence, on which he founds the suspicion that I intended backing out. Then let him look at the tops of our letters, and he will perceive that mine are dated, while his are not!! This being perceived, the question comes up, "*How did this thing happen?*" Perhaps the most charitable conclusion we could come to is, that the times being hard, Mr Rice could not afford dates to *his* letters; or at least could not afford to print them; the more especially as he was at the expense of making the fifth proposition of his first letter a word or two longer in the printed copy than in the letter—thereby making a material alteration in the meaning of the proposition. This view of the subject has at least this merit: it is much more charitable than to suppose that it was a trick in the Rev. gentleman, to conceal his *own* tardiness! Mr Rice's letter, now in my possession will show that the words "*of Christ*," were not in the original proposition; and as to what I have said of dates, the handbill speaks for itself. It is also true that my first letter was dated Aug. 25th, and his first Sept. 13th. My comment is, that "straws shew which way the wind blows;" and, very nearly in his own words, I have serious doubts whether the intelligent people of Paris and vicinity will think so well of a man who publicly professes to be doing one thing, while underhandedly he is doing another. I know not what your brethren will think of your course; but of one thing I am certain: if a preacher of our order were to take a similar course, his brethren would feel much more inclined to put him out of the ministry, than to be the subjects of his ministrations. There is much intelligence in this community; and too much, I believe, in your church, were it not for its sectarianism, to allow any man thus to *twist* and *turn* without prostrating himself. And to call such conduct *honest*, would, I think, be using the word in a very unjust and offensive sense. But to another point.

I am charged with refusing to affirm any but Bible propositions in Bible words! and with carefully shielding, in this way, the doctrines of the reformation from discussion. My first answer to this is, that, make the worst of this position you can, I still occupy better ground than that occupied by Mr Rice: for he, as I have shown, first shielded

himself behind his own self-authorized interpretation of the Confession; and, in the second instance, when he agreed to affirm my first two propositions, he shielded himself and his Confession behind a proposition which I had previously told him I did not believe! My second answer is, that if I never use a worse shield than the word of God, I shall never deserve to be laughed at. The *shield of faith* is a part of the heavenly panoply; and is the only shield that the christian is authorized to use. He is to "hold fast the form of sound words," and "earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints." Opinions he may have; but his opinions are not his faith; and consequently not essentials of his religion. They are not his shield; and he is under no divine obligation to stake any thing upon them, in public discussion, nor, indeed, any where else. The christian who does so, imprudently perils his master's cause. Nor is this a conclusion to which I have recently arrived. As early as 1830, I delivered myself on this subject as follows: "I have long enough been tossed by the billows of error. I have found a foundation of facts,—facts more permanent than are the foundations of the Andes or the Alleghanies; and, I am determined here to abide. Here, at the foot of the cross, I have laid aside my burden of speculations: and here, until mortal life shall cease, I will stand and contemplate the wonders of redeeming love! Gospel facts are immutable things; like the rock of ages they can never be shaken. Human opinions and speculations may undergo their daily mutations,—may sink into oblivion and be known no more at all, but these facts can never change."—*Christian Evidences*, p. 274. It is true, however, that we sometimes preach and write our opinions. But we make of them a yoke for no man. Bible propositions in Bible words, is our only "Creed." We impose nothing upon the sinner, which Christ and his Apostles have not, in so many words, commanded; and nothing upon the Christian, which has not been either commanded, or else necessarily grows directly out of divine love, the spirit of the christian institution. "*Love is the fulfilling of the law.*" This, then, is our profession. Whether we always act in strict accordance with it, is another question. I only mention it in this place to demonstrate that I, in my correspondence with Mr Rice, have at least acted consistently with my profession. My third answer is, that I did give Mr Rice one proposition which he ought to have accepted—that *baptism is for the remission of sins*. It being in scripture language made it none the worse. Mr Rice would only have had to prove, that the word of the Lord, in this particular case, is only my view and interpretation of the word; and that it means something totally different from what it expresses. My fourth answer is, that if we were to admit that water in John 3: 5. does not mean baptism, and that the new birth and a change of heart are identical, still, the reformation would sustain the loss of no essential article; for we should still retain faith, repentance, confession, the necessity of becoming a new creature, baptism for remission, &c. &c.; and we should have, after all, to acknowledge no greater mistake than Mr Rice charges his confession makers with having fallen into—that of quoting this very passage in their Confession as applicable to baptism. *Confession*, p. 123. Were *they* not sound in the faith? If so—and Mr Rice dare not deny it—then, may we be sound in the faith, even if water in the passage referred to does not mean baptism. This view of the subject will shew how useless it would have been for me to have made my interpretation of John 3: 5. the subject, of, perhaps a day's dispute, when, after all, every essential element of our doctrine, can be sustained in Bible words, without the aid of that passage.

This, perhaps, is the proper place to notice what Mr Rice says of brother Shannon's unsoundness in the faith. "I am sorry," says he, "that Mr Shannon turns out to be unsound in the faith; especially, that he is heretical in so important a doctrine as the influences of the Holy Spirit in conversion." From this it appears that Mr Rice has never learned the difference between *faith* and *opinion*. Now, I say that brother Shannon is not unsound in the faith. He and I do not differ in the fact;—that is, we both believe that the Spirit operates. We differ only in the *modus* of this operation. This is but a difference of opinion, leaving our faith the same. The exact *modus operandi* of the Spirit, in conversion, is what I do not profess to understand, further, than that it is *impartial*, and *through the word*. To me, the mode of operation is a mystery; I satisfy myself with the fact that it operates through the word. In the fact, my faith is as firm as a rock. In the mystery, I think, and let think. And we wish this peculiarity in regard to Bible facts, to obtain throughout the reformation. Uniformity in opinions we know to be unattainable: in faith it is attainable. And well would it have been for the Presbyterian church, if it had understood and acted upon this principle. It would have pre-

served it from being torn asunder, as it has recently been; and from the consequent hatred, strife, and emulation which exist between the two parties.

It is also worthy of remark, that, the time has not far gone by, when Mr. Styles—at that time a good brother of Rice's, and waging war against us, under the banner of Presbyterianism—published two large pamphlets, to prove that A. Campbell “backed out,” because Mr. C. would not affirm that conversion is by the *word alone!* and vaunted and puffed a good deal in Mr. Rice's style, about the signal victory, which, in his own estimation, he had achieved. I mention this, to shew, that it is not exactly a peculiarity of this reformation to refuse to affirm conversion by the word alone; and that there are, in some instances, Presbyterian preachers, who are neither too *spiritual*, nor too *upright* to “brag,” when they have very little reason for it!

Another point. “I had supposed,” says Mr. Rice, “that when a public discussion had been agreed upon, the settlement of the preliminaries, was a matter of mutual agreement between the parties; but it seems I was mistaken.” Not at all! This is precisely my view of the matter. It is but saying, in commercial phrase, “it takes two to make a bargain.” I offered Mr. Rice, in the very first instance, the very best bargain, which, in my judgment, I could afford. He disliked my terms, and proposed other terms. I thought I saw a good deal of the sharper in these terms, as well as in his manner of negotiating. I endeavored to give him my reasons for not complying with his terms. He then proposed other terms, if possible worse,—at least in one point—than the first. I then told him we can't trade,—we'll drop the matter,—I'll do as I please with my own property. He abused and ridiculed me! In the name of wonder, for what? Because I preferred my own terms, to his! Because I maintained throughout, my first position. This, so far as I can perceive, illustrates very accurately, the state of the case, as it exists between Rice and myself, relative to the preliminaries. One point, however, ought to be exhibited more prominently. After writing my last letter, in which I inform him, that as he will not agree to terms, which I consider to be fair and equal, I will have with him no oral debate, I take the whole matter under serious consideration, and after the utmost maturity of reflection, inform him in a postscript, that I will still debate with him on the terms which I had first proposed—for though these are not the words, they contain the purport of the postscript—I wait two weeks for a reply. I leave home for a protracted meeting, and on the very morning* after my departure, *out comes his handbill!!!* Now I ask the reader, was this, or was it not “bolting.” But for my postscript, the negotiation would have been closed;—that kept the question open for Mr. Rice's final answer. He never gave that answer. His last letter, in the handbill, was never seen by me, until in print. He flared out, whilst still I was expecting that possibly we might have a debate. Suppose he had answered my last letter, and had agreed to meet me on the whole of my four propositions? For me, in that case to have shunned a debate in any other way than by backing out, would have been impossible. He had never informed me that he could not, or would not, finally affirm my four propositions. I had a right then to expect, that he would finally come to my terms. My postscript, had neutralized that part of my letter that threatened an appeal to the press. Etiquette, then, required, that he should give me a final answer, as to whether he would, or would not affirm my propositions.—Instead of this, he closes his *brilliant, turning and twisting* career, by publishing an unfinished private correspondence. When he finds that he can obtain no other advantage, he takes “*snap judgment*”—he is off in a gallop, in perfect good keeping with himself, brandishing the sword of the spirit of Westminster, and sounding the trumpet of victory!!! About his bump of courage, I say nothing: that speaks for itself: I only pray, the Lord give him, in time to come, more *consistency*, and more *conscientiousness!!!*

I do not remember that I have ever desired a public debate with any man. I have had, I think, fourteen of them; but it was because they were in a manner forced upon me. I have seldom known oral debates to effect much good, unless taken in short-hand, and published. They generally leave the people's views unchanged, and their spirits soured. This being the case, I could not, as a christian, be desirous to debate with Rice. A prevaricating opponent is never desirable. God is seldom glorified by a debate with a shuffler. In the present case, I have disposed of Mr. Rice, in such a way, as I think is pleasing to God. I have neither *turned* nor *twisted*. I have maintained but one position throughout. The *turning* and *twisting* have been all on the other side. The case will be adjudicated by the Judge of all: and I fear not the decision.

To conclude: The reader will observe: 1st. That I sought not a debate—I was the challenged party. 2. That I offered Mr. Rice, in the first instance, three chances of fastening himself upon me in debate; of not one of which, did he avail himself. 3. I submitted written propositions, founded upon his Confession, every one of which he, in the first instance, refused to affirm; making an effort, at the same time, to *squat* and *hide* behind his own interpretations; and to exclude me from the use of the Confession in the debate. 4. In my second effort, I drive him out of this ambushade, into the open field; and lo! he dodges behind a proposition, which I had before told him I did not believe. 5. I become tired of fox-hunting, and conclude to let reynard run until I can prepare some bait more suitable to his palate. On second thoughts, however, I suspend this last expedient, by a postscript; expecting shortly to receive a final answer, when wonderful to tell, Rice publishes our private and unfinished correspondence: in other words, snugly ensconces himself behind a handbill; and although he had done nothing but *dodge* or *bolt* from the beginning, has the temerity to accuse me with “bolting, at the hazzard of breaking my neck”—“*O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes!!!*”

Reader, the case is now before you. You and I may differ in our decision of this case. I know that I am a fallible mortal; and that to err is human. It is, however, as clear to my mind, as a sun-beam, that truth and justice are on my side. I submit the case.

A. RAINES.

*And this Sunday morning too!! And they fly through the town the whole day: commemorative, perhaps, of the resurrection: or perhaps of the Sunday mail achievement!!!