

the end of the chapter. 1st. The Sadducees attack him, having heard perhaps that he taught the resurrection of the dead, a doctrine not believed by that sect, although they acknowledged Moses. Jesus had the affirmative and the Sadducee the negative; nevertheless the Sadducee opened the debate, and endeavoured to show that according to the teaching of Moses the resurrection of the dead was absurd. He used that kind of argument now known among logicians by the latin phrase of *reductio ad absurdum*, which is considered one of the strongest pushes that can be made at an opponent; he argued that if Moses was right in allowing a woman to have a succession of husbands, that it would create great confusion and difficulty if they were restored to life again—either Moses was ignorant of the resurrection, or else his law was a bad one. This closed the argument of the Sadducee. The Saviour then replied, or rather went about proving the doctrine he preached. He appeals to Moses, and uses the same kind of argument used by the Sadducee, i. e. he reduces his position to an absurdity, “Did you never read what God said to Moses at the burning bush? I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.” Now all these men were dead at the time, God spake these words to Moses, consequently your doctrine teaches, “that God is the God of the dead.” Besides God made promises to these men, that he would give them possession of things which they did not receive before their death, therefore they must be raised from the dead, else God’s promises must fail. Having silenced his opponent, the debate closed.

2dly. He was attacked by a learned advocate of another sect (a lawyer) of the Pharisees. The lawyer first proposed a question for discussion, namely, “Which is the first or greatest commandment in the law of Moses?” When this question was answered, the lawyer acknowledged its correctness. Then the Saviour proposed a question, “What do you think of the Messiah, whose son should he be?” This question led to a debate. The Pharisee affirmed that he should be a son of David, and no doubt thought he was warranted in doing so by the Scriptures. But the Saviour appealed to David himself, and completely refuted the Pharisee. So this short debate ended.

I have now shown the example set before us by our Lord combatting errors, which his opponents honestly thought they could sustain by the Scriptures, but failed to do so. Their failure, however, did not stop the propagation of their errors, and no doubt the same cry against religious debates was then raised by these sects, saying, “these debates do no good.” This has been the plea of error ever since it was introduced into the world. Error has always shunned light lest it should be exposed, and if there be any means of infusing light without expelling darkness, I confess I have never learned how it is done. I hope then I may be excused when removing error, that truth may take its place. One would be led to suppose from the objections urged against us, that truth and error had become homogeneous, and would dwell together in harmony.

Affectionately yours,

M. WINANS.

JAMESTOWN, (OHIO), 12th December, 1840.

Dear Brother Eaton—After much disputation about the conversion of sinners; some contending that they are converted by a direct operation