

FAMILIAR CONVERSATIONS

BETWEEN FATHER OMEGA AND HIS SON ALPHA.

No. 2.

SINCERITY.

ALPHA.—Another item in the faith of the preacher, and upon which he dwelt with great force and eloquence, was the influence or power of sincerity. He enlarged upon this more than any other point, and illustrated with numerous and forcible figures, the nature, operation, effects, and virtues of this quality of mind. As I had no means of taking notes, having attended the meeting incidentally, I cannot recall Mr. Orthodox' own words; but the substance of his remarks proceeded upon the principle that if a religious professor was really sincere, it mattered not materially what were his peculiar doctrines or practice.

OMEGA.—My son, was the preacher himself sincere? But, —see that you have not, either intentionally or unintentionally misrepresented him. Inconsistency itself is not so inconsistent as the person who first speaks of the importance of essentials, and then immediately teaches that it makes little difference whether or not these essentials are received, believed, or obeyed, if there is only sincerity. Your memory, without doubt, has failed you in attempting to retain and rehearse the whole discourse; for surely at least the preacher allowed the audience partially to forget what he advanced regarding essentials before speaking so palpably contradictory.

ALPHA.—It appears to me, father, upon reflection, that to be consistent is one thing, and to deliver a sermon is another, and that there is little connexion between consistency and a sermon. But I am now more interested in substantiating my statements in reference to the teachings of Mr. Orthodox. I cannot suspect my recollection, for it is generally faithful. I may forget words, or the mere verbiage of language, especially a surrounding circumnavigating style to which preachers are frequently addicted; but the thoughts, the views, the doctrines, the real essence of a discourse I cannot so easily forget.

OMEGA.—My beloved, your re-affirmation and explanation are perfectly satisfactory. And, indeed, let me say, that your first statement was well understood; but I designed in throwing out a few hints to impress you with the necessity and morality of being cautious and candid, least you should learn a very popular lesson, one that would add nothing to your intelligence or virtue, that of judging and condemning without evidence and without trial—"judging before the time." The connexionless distance between what is called a sermon and consistency, is apparent to every man of reflection and discernment. Sermons, frequently, pronounced in my own hearing, seem to have been manufactur-