

THE POSSIBLE AND THE IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES.

(Continued from January number.)

IN a former paper we briefly discussed several talents which Bushnell contended are highly necessary, if not absolutely indispensable, in successful preaching. These are the *talent for growth*, the talent of *individualizing power in delivery*, a *great soul* and a *great conscience*, or as he terms it, the talent of a *firmly accentuated moral nature*.

On the necessity of having a great conscience Bushnell is particularly happy and strong. All men have consciences of some kind he admits, for if they had no consciences they would not be men. But there are degrees of conscience power and differences in the kind of timber out of which consciences are made. Some consciences are weak until they get mounted somehow on the back of passion and then they become incurably mad. There is no being so thoroughly wicked and diabolical as he that protests in the fume of his grudges and resentments how conscientious he is. Most of us have at one time or another seen a conscience of this kind at work and have wondered at the audacity that could boast about conscience when malice was clearly the motive power. It goes unsaid that this is not the kind of conscience a minister should have.

There is, says our author, another kind of conscience and one that we venture to say many readers of the JOURNAL have come in contact with. This kind is mainly felt as an irritant. It pricks, nettles, nags but does not rule. It is felt merely as a sliver is felt in the finger or a wasp in the hair. It may be sharp but is never kingly. A man with a conscience that is simply an irritant can never be a great preacher.

The third kind of a conscience must be described in Bushnell's own words. "There is also a slimy, would be tender, slow-moving conscience, that draws itself in various softness like a snail upon a limb till, presto, the conscientious slime hardens into a shell, and what seemed an almost skinless sensibility becomes a horny casement of impracticability, obstinacy, or bigot stiffness." Most of us know where we could find consciences of that kind without a search warrant. Those who have seen the "horny casement" and its unlovely contents need not be told that this variety of conscience is not the right one for a minister.

What is the right one? The right kind is a kingly conscience--one that rules the man. Any other kind merely "sputters before conviction." Its