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A TALK ABOUT THE COLLEGE,

BETWEEN PASTOR, CANDIDATE, AND DEACON.

BY REV. F. H. MARLING.

Deacon.—Good morning, Pastor. I have brought this young man to see you. He has been thinking about giving himself to the Ministry, but does not know much about the preparatory studies he will have to go through, and we thought you could give us all information.

Pastor.—Very glad to see you on such an errand. We want young men for the work, and I am always thankful when such come forward from my own charge. The first question, of course, is as to our young friend being called of God unto this work. We must talk over that very carefully at some other time. But I understand your special errand to-day is to inquire in regard to the educational part of the subject.

Candidate.—Precisely so, sir; I have thought over the other question a great deal, and prayed over it too; and I think I see what my duty is; but I have always intended to seek your counsel before coming to a final decision. It will help me very much, however, if you would be kind enough to tell me what is the course of study at college.

P.—With pleasure; and as I passed through the institution myself, and feel a deep interest in it, I presume I can inform you pretty accurately. The college course, however, is not precisely the same now as in former years. Once it extended through three sessions of nine months each; then it was prolonged to four of eight months; now the full course consists of five sessions of between seven and eight months each. If, however, a student has already taken a degree, or is sufficiently advanced in his general education, or is too old to take the full course, he can enter the theological course, which consists of but three sessions.

D.—Five years! Why, that seems a very long time, Pastor, for a young man to spend in preparing to tell the simple story of the cross!

C.—That is just what I was thinking. The very idea is discouraging. I want to go to work at once. Is there not some "short cut" into the ministry?

P.—Oh, yes! You have only to persuade some ignorant and inexperienced church to give you a "call," after listening to a few fluent discourses, and seeing that you are "a nice, good young man," and two or three good-natured ministers to come together and ordain you, and the thing is done; you come forth a full-blown "reverend gentleman!" Only don't ask me to be one of the two or three, for I will have nothing to do with it. "Lay hands suddenly on no man," said Paul; and I have seen too much of this hasty ordination to take part in it again.

C.—Well, sir, of course you know best; but you will excuse my saying just what I think.