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NOTES AND COMMENTS.

As already announced, the Synod of Montreal and Ottawa will arrange an interesting Programme for the **Synodical Conference** which will take place in connection with the meeting of Synod at Brockville. The following subjects for discussion have been decided upon: I. Religious Life. Rev. James Hastie, Cornwall, will submit a report upon Life and Work, and will be followed by the Rev. D. Ramsay, of Ottawa, with a paper upon, A Deeper Spiritual Life. II. Systematic and Proportionate Giving, to be introduced by the Rev. D. Currie, Perth. III. The Use and Development of the Spiritual Life of our Young People, to be led by the Rev. W. Cruickshanks, Montreal.

Dr. Samuel Davidson, who for sixty years back has been a prominent figure in the field of Biblical Scholarship, passed away a few days ago in London in his 92nd year. He was originally a Presbyterian minister and was appointed professor of Biblical Criticism by the Synod of Ulster in 1837. In 1842 he removed to the Lancashire Independent College, having in the meantime published several works on Biblical subjects. He was perhaps the earliest British theologian to adopt the more advanced critical views that prevailed in Germany. In 1857 he retired from professorial work and devoted himself to the popularising of these views in English. In his later years he became more and more radical and placed himself largely out of sympathy with the

orthodox churches. But he was always an earnest student and did good work in more than one department. A generation ago he was better known than now, and many will probably be surprised to learn that he has only now passed away.

At the present juncture in mission work, more than usual interest centres in the annual meeting of the **W.F.M.S. Meeting.** Woman's Foreign Missionary Society which will take place on the 3rd of

May in Bloor street church, Toronto. The Society will likely continue in session for three days and the work of the past year will be fully reported upon in its several departments. The future, with its bright and promising outlook, will also receive attention; plans and proposals, ways and means falling to be considered. The work so earnestly undertaken and so zealously and successfully conducted by the women of the church evokes the grateful admiration of the community and divine guidance in their business at the forthcoming meeting will be supplicated by the fathers and brethren.

Not infrequently is to be heard the murmur of the pew against the pulpit, and of the congregation against the Presbytery. That there is good cause sometimes for the murmur, is doubtless true. But more often we believe complaints arise from the want of knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of the parties concerned. When, for instance, a Presbytery does not concede to the wishes of a congregation, in a given case, it may be because as a matter of duty the Presbytery cannot do so. In such a case, the proper course for the congregation to follow is not to rail at the Presbytery, but to consider that while congregations have rights, Presbyteries have duties. Should the conviction prevail that the Presbytery gave a wrong decision, then appeal lies to Synod and to General Assembly. Looking at the case from another point of view, that of the congregation, it is important that the utmost care as to eliciting facts, and the utmost moderation ought to be observed by Presbyteries. It may be that, sometimes, decisions are hurriedly arrived at, or arrived at on the representation of one or two brethren whose interests are involved. Members of Presbytery are but human and the fact that they are called upon to act as judges on issues that may be of great local if not of general importance, ought to act as a regulating element in their deliberations. The people have rights and they are as sacred as those of the Presbytery. An even balance is to be aimed at between the Presbyteries and congregations in all their dealings.

The genius of the Presbyterian system is that it is "broad, based upon the people's will," and at the same time is a well-organized and governed association. Democracy is there, but within well-defined restrictions. The people do not govern as in Congregationalism, nor are they subject