## CE. [1886

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## FIRST DAY.

Annual Conferences or District Meetings to assume or undertake the work that belongs to the General Conference and the connexional boards instituted by it; nor, on the other hand, do we think it desirable to load the central boards and offices with labors and duties that would be much more efficiently performed and discharged in the Annual Conferences and District Meetings. The nice adjustment of the connexional and local powers, functions, and responsibilities is a business of considerable difficulty and of immense moment. It cannot be done in an hour, or by men unpracticed in these affairs: wherefore our suggestion that experienced men have time to look into these matters, and give a deliverance on them to the General Conference. Whether by one board or several-one officer or several-let the General Conference, having due regard for efficiency and economy, provide, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to be led to the wisest, safest, and most effective decisions by the pious counsels of faithful men who have the best opportunities, in practice and experience, of forming a judgment in these matters. Of course, different committees of the General Conference will review the different funds and financial interests of the Church, and plan for their strength and efficiency; but what seems to us to be required is a judicious arrangement of departments and funds, and a harmony of action among them to the furtherance of the success of all. It would seem advisable that the General Conference should clearly and fully cover the ground of connexional funds, leaving to the Annual Conferences the largest liberty practicable in the administration of those funds; but by no means the liberty of instituting new or local funds, or handling the connexional funds out of harmony with their plain intent and the interests of the entire Church, as determined by this General Conference. Cases of difficulty unquestionably arise in the administration of connexional funds; under heavy pressure of distress or embarrassment strong and most natural and justifiable local sympathies would operate to increase the local relief, and perhaps sometimes at the expense of the common interest; but we have always to consider whether the highest, greatest and surest good is not obtained by working through the appointed agencies of the General Conference, and thus bringing the strong to the help of the weak, and making the Church in the remotest parts feel the living chord of sympathy, and the common bond of brotherly and affectionate unity. This surely, at all events, is a trust for the General Conference to guard. What funds we have let them be funds in fact, and administered with all energy, loyalty and connexional good faith. It begets a bad habit to neglect the regularly instituted funds, or to undertake to supplant or divert them by others. It is quite apparent that some re-arrangement is required, when Annual Conferences, because they have the power, virtually abolish the Children's Fund, and, with or without power, order collections to supplement the salaries of the

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