

sharing in the contributions, and of having the largest per capita contribution by an individual church.

COMPARISONS.—Comparing this year and last it is seen that the additions to the churches by baptism are 252 less this year.

Comparing the salaries and other expenditures for church purposes, it is shown that there is an increase in this year of \$2,415.52.

The increase was chiefly in expenditures on church buildings, the increase in salaries being only \$15.39.

There has been a falling off in the contributions to Home Missions of \$312.14; and in those to Foreign Missions of \$316.94.

The Conference Fund is larger this year than last year.

TWO PERIODS.—Correct judgment of gain or loss cannot be formed by examination of a single year, nor even by comparing the record of a year with that of its immediate predecessor. Comparing periods gives more accurate and, therefore, more satisfactory results.

There have been things in the history of this Conference—peculiarly trying experiences, which have to be considered in order to a just estimate of the denomination's growth and present standing.

In 1877 the number of churches enrolled was 148, 112 of which reported that year. The membership of the churches was 9131. The salaries and other expenditures for local church work amounted to \$15,704.20.

In 1887 the number of churches enrolled was 145, 115 of which reported that year. The membership was 9607. The salaries and other expenditure for local church work amounted to \$19,693.39.

It needs to be remembered that in the latter half of the decade (from 1882) certain distracting and disintegrating influences were at work in many churches, preventing growth.

In 1897 the number of churches enrolled is 155, 118 of which have reported this year. The membership (estimated) is 11,085. The salaries and other expenditures for local church purposes amounts to \$24,693.39.

During the decade ending with this year the denomination suffered much from an unhappy schism, the culmination of the influences mentioned as at work from 1882. In the first year of this decade (1888) twelve ministers—nine ordained and three licensed—were lost to the conference, with their following; and for a considerable time there was a severe struggle caused by the influence of those who were separated from the denomination. It has been surprising to many, and very gratifying to all, that the denomination so soon recovered from the shock and loss.

"THE STATE OF RELIGION."—The foregoing facts may not show as clearly as some may desire "the state of religion in the churches."

Attendance at monthly conferences and mid week prayer-meetings is, perhaps, regarded as a better index of spiritual condition.

The record of these meetings and the average attendance, as given in the reports from the churches, is as follows: