

# THE CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

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## Editorial Jottings.

"A PHARISEE!" A grave charge to make against any professor, and one which many appear to think is more disgraceful than "worldling," or "liar," or "covetous," or even "swindler." Well, there were some, pretty bad Pharisees in our Lord's time, as no doubt before and after also; yet let us remember that to be a Pharisee was not necessarily to be a bad man; that there was at least one who was not ashamed of Jesus in the darkest eclipse of Messianic hopes, when those who professed the deepest devotion had incontinently fled; and there is no doubt that others did hang on His words and receive His teachings, and that in the first days of the Christian Church they were numbered with the disciples—faithful to the end. Let us remember also the origin and object of the Pharisees; their association was a standing protest against the growing laxity in the observance of the Mosaic laws, especially those referring to personal purity. They desired to conserve for themselves and for the nation the God-given law of their fathers; they would have the people realize that they were a people of priests, a holy nation, and that each one should be a priest in spirit. The idea was a grand one. That, however, passions and infirmity came in, making them intolerant, self-righteous observers of the letter, and not of the spirit, and bringing upon them the denunciations of the Saviour, does not prove that the original purpose was not good, any more than the wickedness of the whole nation proves that the choice of them by God for His own people was bad. Is it not possible that some of us would be none the worse for a few grains of the ancient Pharisaic spirit?

THE conference, more than once alluded to in prospect in these columns, was held during the latter part of March, and was fairly representative

of Ontario. As it was not designed to be public, and as no formal resolutions were passed, there is no report possible, unless all the remarks were chronicled—a task we have no intention of undertaking. There was free, frank converse; and articles from various pens, in this present issue, will indicate the drift of thought on some of the subjects discussed. Mission work and the college had their share, which may manifest itself at the annual meetings of these corporations.

ONE matter spoken of at the late conference in this city that has attracted the attention of outsiders and been the subject of more than a single newspaper article, was Union. It seems to be taken for granted that our churches, as a whole, are tired of a separate existence, and are willing to be absorbed into some larger body, or, as we might say, are tired of single blessedness, and coyly hinting that they will not say "No" to the first party that makes an offer. For our own part we do not believe that, at any rate in the sense in which it is taken; there is a desire for union, in the sense of co-operation, mutual consideration and mutual help. Much might be gained thereby all round, and it is a matter of thankfulness that denominational jealousies have, to a certain extent, given way, and that there is more real co-operation among the various bodies than in the past, a disposition not to multiply churches needlessly because a few of "our people" would like a church of their own order; not to use money needlessly in mission work in one place when hundreds of places are without the Gospel. All this is on the right line; let us have more of it, more of interchange of pulpits, more of fellowship—and all that it brings. But this does not need organic unity; that is an outside thong, and often does not bring true spiritual unity. There is plenty of unity on the streets of Toronto to-day—