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Editorial

CANADIAN and American readers especially, will be interested in the Proposed Revision of the Canadian Prayer Book.

The secretary of the Prayer Book Revision Committee said at the recent General Synod that the Draft was presented "not for immediate adoption but rather for searching scrutiny". Canadian evangelicals, duly scrutinizing the Draft, are disturbed by the definite Anglo-Catholic trend of the suggested Consecration Prayer. The Revision Committee has explicitly stated that it does not intend by this Prayer to alter Eucharistic doctrine; but, as Canon Abraham of London, Ontario, has pointed out in an open letter to the Revision Secretary, "we must ensure that every precaution is taken to safeguard Christian doctrine by clarification rather than by obscuring it by words which, however beautiful, are at best ambiguous, and at worst, contrary to Holy Scripture".

The Revision Committee has promised to consider evangelical objections, and Canadian churchmen will have the sympathy and prayers of the whole Anglican Communion in their search for a Prayer Book which shall be wholly acceptable, a true expression of worship for those who are justified by faith.

Prayer Book discussions are also under way in India, where the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon has been considering the production of a Prayer Book of its own.

The Editor of THE CHURCHMAN is at present in India, returning shortly before Easter, and it is hoped to publish some discussion on the proposals in a future number. As in Canada, evangelicals in the sub-continent are, as Canon S. R. Burgoyne of Landour has written in the *Lucknow Diocesan Chronicle*, "seriously perturbed by the general tendency of the proposals". He remarks that "a strong plea has been made against disunity on matters of worship, and this we shall support, but it must be recognized that certain things cannot be sacrificed merely to bolster unity". A book of worship is basically a statement of doctrine, and it is important that evangelicals, especially those in positions of influence, should not for the sake of unity allow through any proposals such as Reservation (merely safeguarded by a half-hearted rubric) and Prayers for the Dead, which they would not use themselves. And the situation is more especially crucial in view of the active negotiations towards a form of Union in the North on the lines of the Church of South India, for these could be seriously jeopardized by any liturgical tendency in conflict with the true Anglican spirit.

These Prayer Book discussions are not merely of local interest. The day cannot be far distant when suggestions will again be made for revision of the Book of Common Prayer. Experiments in other parts of the world will do much to set the tone of the proposals. There will always be the danger that powerful minorities will seek to impose a change of doctrine by inserting unscriptural phrases in forms of prayer, and this must be resisted, in charity but with firmness. It is in the interests of the Anglican Communion as a whole that there should be no compromise with anything that is not truly scriptural.