This historical study focuses upon the sixteen months between February 1927, when the revised Prayer Book was presented to the Convocations, and June 1928, when for a second time it was rejected by the House of Commons. The emphasis throughout is upon the narrative of events and upon the societies and persons most closely concerned in those events. Consideration is given to both the ecclesiastical and the secular aspects of the controversy. The study is based upon the papers of Archbishop Randall Davidson, made available at Lambeth Palace Library in the late 1960s, under the Library's forty-year rule for Archbishops' papers. The papers relating to the Prayer Book controversy are as yet unsorted and unindexed and consist of a wide variety of documentary material: significant manuscript material as well as printed material of lesser importance. Further private papers of Davidson, made available in 1974, have tended to confirm and illustrate opinions already formed. Manuscript material in the possession of the Church Society and the General Synod of the Church of England has also been examined. The official reports of debates in Convocation, the National Assembly of the Church of England and Parliament, the reports and opinions in the ecclesiastical and secular press and contemporary literature - in both book and pamphlet form - have helped towards a clarification of the main issues in the controversy. The revision was handicapped by the brief that it was expected to fulfil: the restoration of discipline within the Church of England. Strongly held views were evoked from many different protagonists and the issue became one of the most intense with which the Church has been confronted in the twentieth century. The Book's rejection by parliament enabled the controversy in the Church to subside. But it emphasised the underlying dependence of the Church of England upon the State and the difficulty of seeking satisfactory solution at that time to the problems which were implicit in such dependence.

Abstract