
Campaigning for Reform

In 1625 Davenport emerged as an important player in the crusade to advance Protestantism nationally and internationally. This came as a new monarch, Charles I, had ascended the throne and the gulf between the godly and the establishment had begun to widen. James I had disappointed the hopes for reform when he rejected most of the overtures made by puritan spokesmen at the Hampton Court Conference in 1604. However, the king's threat to harry puritans out of the land proved more bark than bite. Pressure for unquestioning subscription to the Three Articles of religion and efforts to enforce complete conformity to the Prayer Book ceremonies were sporadic at best, and they varied from diocese to diocese. James appeared a committed Calvinist, a position reinforced by England's participation in the Synod of Dort. But godly concerns about the country's direction began to grow during the later years of James's reign, particularly over the foreign policy he pursued.

The Thirty Years' War erupted on the Continent in 1618, when Frederick, the Elector Palatine and James's son-in-law, accepted the throne of Bohemia from Protestant rebels who had deposed the strongly Catholic Austrian Hapsburg ruler, Archduke Ferdinand. The Bohemian Revolt soon expanded to become what was, in effect, a struggle for the religious future of the Holy Roman Empire, and perhaps all Christendom. The Spanish Hapsburgs rallied to support their German kinsmen, which threatened the security of the Protestant Netherlands. Most Englishmen expected King James to actively support the Protestant cause, but he resolutely refused to engage England in the struggle militarily, hoping to protect his son-in-law's interest through diplomacy. Imperial forces crushed the Protestants at the battle of the White Mountain in 1620. Frederick was driven from Bohemia