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## St. Stephens Church, Coleman St., London

*Rev. John Davenport led many of our Puritan forefathers to America in the 1630s*



*Gate carving from St. Stephens Church, entitled The Last Judgment Day  
The church was destroyed in the Great London Fire  
of 1666 and was rebuilt by Christopher Wren.  
The new church was destroyed in World War II and was not rebuilt.*



### EXCERPTS FROM "THE NEW HAVEN COLONY"

*by Isabell MacBeath Calder,  
published by Yale Univ. Press in 1934:*

In the seventeenth century Coleman Street was "a faire and large street, on both sides builded with diuerse faire houses." John Davenport was the son of Henry and Winifred (Barneby) Davenport. He had been baptized by Richard Eaton, vicar of Holy Trinity Church, Coventry on Apr 9 1597. In 1622 he became a member of the Virginia Co. of London. In 1624 he was elected as Vicar of St. Stephens on Coleman St. in London, but before he could begin his duties, he was charged with Puritanism by King James I, which he denied. About 1630 Theophilus Eaton (son of Richard Eaton) took over the house vacated by Sir Richard Saltonstall in Swanne Alley (off Coleman St.) He had served as Deputy Gov. of the Eastland Co. at Elbing. The group received a grant of territory from the Council for New England and as "the Gov. and Co. of the Mass. Bay in New England" on March 4 1629 received a charter from the crown.

Mathew Cradock was appointed the first governor of the company. Sir Richard Saltonstall, Samuel Aldersey, Theophilus Eaton and George Foxcroft represented St. Stephens, Coleman St., in the first court of assistants, and John Davenport, Robert CRANE, Owen Rowe, William Spurstow, Edmund White, all living in Coleman St., and possibly Francis Bright of Swanne Alley represented the parish among the commonality.

In Nov. of 1633, Davenport fled to Amsterdam to escape increasing disapproval of the Crown where the group organized their move to the New World. The group included: John and Elizabeth Davenport (left infant son in care of noble lady); Theophilus Eaton, Anne Eaton, dau. of George Lloyd, Bishop of Chester, and widow of Thomas Yale, the second wife of Theophilus Eaton; old Mrs. Eaton, his mother; Samuel and Nathaniel Eaton, his brothers; Mary Eaton, the dau. of his first wife; Samuel, Theophilus and Hannah, the children of his second wife; Anne, David and Thomas Yale, the children of Anne Eaton by her former marriage; Edward Hopkins, who on Sep. 5, 1631 had married Anne Yale at St. Antholin's in London; and Richard Malbon, a kinsman of Theophilus Eaton. Also many inhabitants of the parish of St. Stephen, Coleman St. Nathaniel Rowe (son of Own Rowe who intended to follow); William Andrews, Henry Browning, James Clark, Jasper CRANE, Jeremy Dixon, Nicholas Elsey, Francis Hall, Robert Hill, William Ives, Geo. Smith, George Ward and Lawrence Ward.

Others (probably from the neighborhood, but not members of St. Stephens): Ezekiel Cheever, Edward

Bannister, Richard Beach, Richard Beckley, John Brockett, John Budd, John Cooper, Arthur Halbidge, Mathew Hitchcock, Andrew Hull, Andrew Low, Andrew Messenger, Mathew Moulthrop, Francis Newman, Robert Newman, Richard Osborn, Edward Patteson, John Reader, William Thorp and Samuel Whitehead. The group chartered the "Hector" of London. On June 26, 1637, John Winthrop recorded the arrival of the group from London at Boston.

In Aug. of 1637, Eaton and several others traveled south to view the area around the Long Island Sound. They left members of their party there over the winter to retain possession. Many from the Bay Colony chose to leave for New Haven with Eaton and Davenport: Richard Hull, William Tuttle and William Wilkes of Boston; Anne Higginson and her family, Jarvis Boykin, John Chapman, John Charles, Timothy Ford, Thomas James, Benjamin Ling, John Mosse and Richard Perry of Charlestown; John Benham, Benjamin Fenn, Thomas Jeffrey, Thomas Kimberly, William Preston, Thomas Sandford, Thomas Trowbridge and Zachariah Whitman of Dorchester; John Astwood of Stanstead Abbey, Hertfordshire and Roxbury; Thomas Baker, John Burwell, Jasper Gunn, John Hall, John Peacock, William Potter, Edward Riggs, Thomas Uffot and Joanna and Jacob Sheaffe of Roxbury; Mark Pierce of Newtown; and Nathaniel Turner of Lynn.

Another company headed by Peter Pruden was a notable addition to the group. Perhaps the son of Thomas Prudden of King's Walden, Hertfordshire and a kinsman of William Thomas of Caerleon, Monmouthshire, Prudden was the minister of the Providence Island Company. In 1637 with fifteen Hertfordshire families - among them Edmund Tapp of Bennington, Hertfordshire, James Prudden, William Fowler, Thomas and Hanah Buckingham, Thomas Welsh, Richard Platt, Henry Stonehill and William East - he left England for Massachusetts and went with Davenport's group to Connecticut in March of 1638.

Staying behind in Massachusetts was Nathaniel Eaton, Nathaniel Rowe, Edward and Anne (Yale) Hopkins and John Cotton. Eaton became the "cruel" master of a new college in Newtown. Later he and Anne migrated to Hartford, CT. In 1641 a 3-year mortgage was given to George Fenwick of Saybrook, John Haynes, Samuel Wyllys and Edward Hopkins of Connecticut and Theophilus Eaton, Stephen Goodyear and Thomas Gregson of New Haven for much of Long Island.

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## LONDON PAST & PRESENT, VOL. 1

*Henry B. Wheatley, 1891*

Coleman Street, City, runs from Lothbury to Fore St., Cripplegate. On September 24, 1598, as Francis Bacon was returning to his chambers in Gray's Inn from conducting an examination in the Tower, he was arrested in the neighborhood of Lombard St. "Without warning either by letter or message," by one Sympson, a goldsmith, "a man noted much," writes Bacon, "for extremities and stoutness upon his purse." "He would have urged it to have had me in prison; which he had done, had not Sheriff More, to whom I sent, gently recommended me to an handsome house in Coleman St., where I am." The five members accused of treason by Charles I, concealed themselves in this street. "The Star, in Coleman Street," was a tavern where Oliver Cromwell and several of his party occasionally met.

The street was in these times often referred to as a haunt of Puritans. In a conventicle in "Swan Alley," on the east side of this street, Venner, a wine-cooper and Millennarian, preached the opinions of his sect to "the soldiers of King Jesus." The result is matter of history: an insurrection followed -- "Venner's Insurrection" and Venner, their leader, was hanged and quartered in Coleman Street on January 19, 1661.

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## LONDON'S OLD BUILDINGS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM

*by Jessie D. Wright, 1937*

St. Stephen's, Coleman Street, rebuilt in 1676, has a plain interior with no aisles or columns, a practically flat ceiling, and stained-glass windows, including a large one at the east. At the western end is a gallery on which the organ stands. Panelling surrounds the walls, and there are a well-carved pulpit, reredos, altar-table, and rails. There is also an old font. The exterior is plain with a cornice and pediment crowning the eastern facade, and an inconspicuous tower with a small turret at the west. Over the entrance gateway is a

curious carving of the Day of Judgment which probably belonged to the earlier church.

## LONDON CITY CHURCHES

by A.E. Daniell, 1896

On the west side of Coleman Street, not far from its southern termination, stands the church of St. Stephen. According to Stow, it was "sometime a synagogue of the Jews," and after having been a parish church, became a chapel to St. Olave Jewry, and was made parochial again in the reign of Edward IV. Newcourt, however, after remarking that he could find no authority for Stow's statement about the Jewish synagogue, explains that the church anciently belonged to the canons of St. Paul's, and was in the year 1182 held of them by the prior and convent of Butley in Suffolk, to whom they had also granted St. Olave Jewry. It was in 1456, he tells us, and thus before the close of the reign of Henry VI, that St. Stephen's was made parochial, and a vicarage ordained and endowed there by Thomas Kemp, then Bishop of London, who arranged matters with the prior and convent of Butley, the parishioners, and the vicar of St. Olave's to whose church St. Stephen's had been a chapel. The patronage remained with the prior and convent till the dissolution of monasteries, but since the reign of Queen Elizabeth the vicarage has been in the gift of the parishioners.

Anthony Munday, the dramatist, the arranger of the city pageants, and the continuator of Stow's survey, who died in his eightieth year on August 10th, 1633, was buried at St. Stephen's, but this monument perished in the destruction of the old church by the Great Fire in 1666.

St. Stephen's, having been consumed by the Fire, was rebuilt by Christopher Wren. The gateway, leading into the churchyard from Coleman Street, is adorned with some curious carving in high relief, measuring about five feet by two and a half feet, representing the Day of Judgment. The Judge is enthroned above; Satan is falling; and the dead are rising from their coffins; while angel forms are hovering about, to marshal them to the tribunal of the Creator.

The east front, abutting on Coleman Street, is embellished with a cornice and pediment, and displays a large central window; the south wall, facing the churchyard, is pierced with five tall and south wall, facing the churchyard, is pierced with five tall and handsome windows. The steeple, which rises at the northwest, consists of a stone tower, lead-covered lantern, and small spire; the whole terminating in a gilded van in the form of a cock. The tower, which is 65 feet high, contained eight bells; the height of the lantern is about twenty feet.

Internally St. Stephen's is a plain building without aisles. It is long and narrow, measuring 75 feet in length by 35 feet in breadth, and is extremely low, the altitude of the ceiling, which is flat in the central part, but coved at the sides, hardly exceeding 24 feet. The oak pulpit is finely carved, and the altar-piece of the same material, is enriched with Corinthian pilasters. The lower parts of the walls are paneled, and there are two inner door-cases on the north, and two on the south side, all handsomely wrought.

Against the south wall is a large and ornate monument of white marble to Henry Vernon, an Oriental merchant, who died at Aleppo in 1694 in his thirty-first year. He was the son of Sir Thomas Vernon, a parishioner.



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