
London—The Early Years

At some point following their marriage, John and Elizabeth moved to London, an expanding city with many opportunities for young preachers. London life would have seemed familiar to Davenport, the city in many ways being a much larger version of Coventry, with a population of more than half a million. Surrounded by a wall, the city had burst from those bounds, with much of the population living in neighborhoods that had grown up outside of its protection. Some of the principal streets were cobbled, and others were paved with a mixture of limestone and flint. Ordinary streets were unpaved, muddy quagmires in bad weather, and in all weather they were usually littered with garbage. Most of the homes were wooden, though brick and stone were beginning to be used for domestic dwellings as well as public buildings. Water was secured from conduits and carried to homes. As in the case of Coventry, there were designated market-places for the sale of various items and designated market days. The sounds of craftspeople manufacturing goods and peddlers hawking their wares would have been familiar. Curfew was rung at nine o'clock in the evening in summer, and at dusk in winter; the gates were closed and entry forbidden till six o'clock in the morning. Urban pageants and processions were similar to those of Coventry, though larger and more frequent.¹

Nothing would have prepared Davenport for the many languages spoken, however. There were inhabitants of the British Isles drawn to the capital who spoke Welsh, Scottish and Irish variants of Gaelic, and Manx. But the importance of the city as a center of international trade brought visitors and residents from most of the countries of Europe, each speaking his or her native language.² There were other features of the city that would have been unfamiliar. The burning of sea coal for heating contributed a distinctive