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"HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS."—SCRIPTURE.

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Biographical.

LIFE OF THE REV. GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

(Concluded.)

MR. WHITEFIELD continued his successful career until he sailed for England, where he arrived in May, 1755.

Applications having been made to him by many persons to preach twice a week in Long Acre chapel, near the theatres, upon being assured the place was licensed, he preached his first sermon there, but met with great opposition. He received a prohibition from Bishop B—; and a number of soldiers, drummers, and other evil disposed persons, were employed to make a noise in the adjoining house or yard; here they made a tremendous uproar, and renewed it whenever Mr. Whitefield preached. These vagabonds were hired by subscription, and supplied with drums, bells, &c., with which they kept up an incessant din from the beginning to the end of the sermon. The mobs were also excited to riot at the very doors of the chapel, insulting both preacher and people as soon as service was finished; they also repeatedly broke the windows with large stones, and severely wounded several of the congregation.

The gentler means which were used to prevent the interruption of religious services at Long Acre chapel, proving utterly ineffectual, and the disturbances continuing with increased violence for several months, Mr. Whitefield's friends advised him to prosecute those notorious offenders against all law and decency; which being known, his life was threatened. At the tabernacle a man came up to him in the pulpit, and three anonymous letters were sent, threatening certain and sudden death, unless he desisted from preaching at the chapel, and from prosecuting the offenders. He persisted, and ultimately obtained protection from the laws of his country.

In connection with the riots at Long Acre, it is proper to mention a circumstance which in the order of time belongs to a subsequent period of his life. Many acts of violence had been offered to his person, and much interruption had been given to his ministerial labours; but his enemies being now convinced that the laws would not permit them to proceed farther in this way, with impunity, determined to try the effect of mockery, and he was burlesqued in a manner the most ludicrous and profane, on the stage of the theatre royal, Drury-lane. Their principal tool was the notorious Sam. Foot, a man well qualified to act the mimic, who having imitated Mr. Whitefield's person

and action with success, and spoken some ludicrous sentences in his manner, was thereby encouraged to write a farce, to be performed at Drury-lane: a piece which, by its horrid blasphemy and impiety, excited the just indignation of every serious person. The impious author, intending to expose Mr. Whitefield to public contempt, made no scruple to treat the very expressions and sacred doctrines of the Bible with profane ridicule. This new attempt upon Mr. Whitefield, doubtless, had its rise in the malice of the play-house people, who not only failed in their attempt to prevent his preaching in Long Acre chapel, but were still more exasperated by his building a chapel of his own in their immediate neighbourhood. They, however, laboured in vain, as their measures gave him, and the cause in which he was engaged, greater notoriety, and thereby brought additional thousands to hear the Gospel.

The following interesting circumstance occurred about the time of the Long Acre riots, and is related in the words of Mr. Whitefield: "A man of good parts, ready wit, and lively imagination, who made it his business, in order to furnish matter for preaching over a bottle, to come and hear, and then carry away scraps of my sermons, having one evening got sufficient to work upon, as he thought, attempted to go out; but being pent in on every side, found his endeavours fruitless. Obligated thus to stay, and looking up to me for fresh matter for ridicule, God was pleased to prick him to the heart. He came to Mr. P—, full of horror, confessing his crimes, and longed to ask my pardon."

Mr. Whitefield again visited Dublin, where his reception was as promising as formerly: his congregations were very large, and many were awakened by his discourses.

On Sunday afternoon, having preached on Oxmantown green, a place much frequented by the Ormond and Liberty boys, as they were called, and where they often fought, he narrowly escaped with his life. While he was preaching, and during his prayer, some stones were thrown at him, which providentially did him no hurt. But when he had closed his services, and endeavoured to return the way he came by the barracks, to his great surprise access was denied, so that he was obliged to walk nearly half a mile over the green, through hundreds of rioters, who perceiving him to be alone, threw showers of stones upon him from every quarter, which made him reel backward and forward, till he was almost breathless and covered with a gore of blood. At length, with the greatest difficulty, he staggered to the door of a minister's house, near the