

burgh. He had no colleague in this charge, and his labours must have been very considerable, as he required to preach a lecture and sermon in the forenoon, and another sermon in the afternoon. As the Church is connected with a large parish, he had many duties to perform in his private intercourse among the people, besides others incidental to a city charge.—While here, he published in 1764, a volume of Theological Dissertations. In the following year he published posthumous letters of Mr. Harvey, entitled “*Aspasio Vindicated*,” with a preface; this was with the view of guarding the people of Scotland against the proselytising efforts of Mr. Wesley and other teachers. In the preface, we find the following passage:—“Of the sincere piety of some of the teachers, yea, even of their sound principles, the publisher would think favorably. But when he reflects, that one is at the head of their societies, who has blended with some precious gospel truths, a medley of Arminian, anti-Arminian, and enthusiastic errors, he thinks it high time to sound an alarm to all who would wish to transmit to posterity the pure faith once delivered to the Saints. If men were brought to believe that right opinion is a slender part of religion, or no part of it at all, (*assertions quoted before from Mr. Wesley*;) there is scarcely any thing so foolish or so wicked, which satan may not prompt them to, by transforming himself into an angel of light.”

In 1767, Dr. Erskine was translated from New to Old Grey Friar's Church, in the same city. The charge was a double one. His colleague was the celebrated Dr. Robertson, the historian, with whom he continued associated during the remainder of his days.* It was

* An anecdote is related concerning these two eminent men, which, as it may serve to illustrate their respective characters as preachers, it may not be improper to notice here. It happened on the forenoon of a Sunday, that Dr. Robertson was expatiating to his people on the excellency of virtue; wishing to recommend it to their affections, he spoke of its transcendental beauty, and winding up his discourse in a lively peroration, he proceeded to say, such was the attractiveness of this heavenly grace, that if she appeared on earth, all men would bend the knee and worship her. Dr. Erskine followed in the afternoon,—what his text was we have not heard; but like Elihu, he felt the matter to be of so much moment, that he was resolved also to give his opinion.—Referring to the communication made on the former

about this time that the unhappy disputes broke out between Great Britain and her American colonies. Dr. Erskine, who had long been on the closest terms of friendship with many of their best Divines, and had taken the deepest interest in their well being, could not be expected to remain silent. He published a discourse, under the title,—“*Shall I go to war with my American brethren?*” His object appears to have been to urge peace and conciliation on his brethren, on both sides of the Atlantic. He deprecated, too, the violent measures of certain of the colonists, as tending to lead them into an alliance (which indeed happened,) with Popish France. He published a second pamphlet for a more conciliatory policy, in opposition to the virulence of a certain class of political writers in Britain. This was addressed to the Freeholders of Great Britain, by one of their number,—which Dr. Erskine was. His biographer has said of this tract, “that when the period arrives for giving a genuine history of the American controversy, there are statements and references in this tract which ought not to be neglected.” In 1776 he published one pamphlet more, arguing the matter with another class of persons who took up scriptural ground. Its title was, “*The equity and wisdom of administration, in the measures that have unhappily occasioned the American revolt, tried by the sacred oracles*—” Other counsels, however, prevailed on both sides the water, and it is needless to speculate about the probable consequences, had his good counsel been followed,—as every one knows of the dreadful scenes of bloodshed which ensued, until Britain saw the wisdom of acknowledging the independence of her colonies.

The next public matter which engaged Dr. Erskine's attention, was the Popish Relief Bill, which began to be broached about this time.—He published a pamphlet opposing this measure, on the most solid grounds,—for, being familiar with Church History, he looked on the Popish faction as dangerous to the civil liberties of

part of the day,—“It has been said,” he proceeded, “that if perfect virtue appeared on earth, all men would worship her; but, ah! my brethren, when she appeared in the human form, sinful men bent the knee in derision, and cried out, away with him,—let him be crucified.” This anecdote is not given by Dr. E's biographer, but it rests on the authority of tradition.