his theological studies, but likewise bestowed upon him the hand of his eldest daughter ; “ and with her the best of all earthly blessings, a sweetly soothing affectionate wife, who was his dear companion, and ministered tenderly to all his wants, for the uncommon space of fifty-eight years.” This marriage must have taken place when he had scarcely attained the twentieth year of his age.

Having now returned to Aberdeenshire, and made some further preparation, he received ordination from Bishop Dunbar, who resided at Peterhead. In November 1742 he fixed his residence at Linshart in the parish of Longside, as minister of a congregation which bis biographer describes as large and respectable.@@1 It is not however to be supposed that his stipend was very ample. The rebel­lion, which ensued in 1745, exposed him to no small an­noyance. The episcopal clergy were very generally disaf­fected to the existing government, and many of them were subjected to useless severities. On returning home one evening, Mr. Skinner “found his house in the possession of a military party ; some of them guarding the door with fixed bayonets, and others searching the several apart­ments, even the bedchamber where Mrs. Skinner was ly­ing-in of her filth child, and little able to bear such a rude unseasonable visit. No lenity was to be looked for from such unfeeling visitors, who pillaged the house of every thing they could carry with them, hardly leaving a change of linen to father, mother, or child in the family. The chapel with all its furniture was destroyed ; and for seve­ral years the congregation could find no place to meet in for public worship but the clergyman’s house, which not being sufficiently large, many of them were obliged to stand in the open air, during divine service.” Of this miserable species of persecution, it is not easy to devise any plausible justification. The episcopalians of Longside, even if we suppose all of them to have been the most de­cided Jacobites, certainly could not convert their chapel to any political or military purpose ; nor is it very obvious how this mode of treatment could have any tendency to increase their attachment to the reigning family. With the view of preventing his flock from being scattered from the true fold, he now prepared a small tract, entitled “ A Preservative against Presbytery,” which was printed in the year 1746.

In the course of the same year, an act of parliament en­joined the episcopal clergy to register their letters of orders before the first day of September ; after which date, it was provided that none should be admitted for registration, ex­cept such as had been obtained from a bishop of the church of England or of Ireland. And another act, passed two years afterwards, declared that no letters of orders, unless such as were granted by bishops of those churches, should after the 29th of September be sufficient to qualify any minister of an episcopalian meeting. From such vexatious and unavailing regulations as these, many hardships must have resulted, and Skinner seems to have experienced his full share. In 1753 he was apprehended under the au­thority of a warrant from the sheriff-substitute of the coun­ty ; nor did he hesitate to make a voluntary confession that he had violated the recent act, by officiating as a cler­gyman to more than four persons, beside the members of his own family. For this offence he was sentenced to six months imprisonment. His wife, with her six children, were in the mean time kindly treated by the good people of Longside. The solitude of his prison was enlivened by

the visits of some faithful friends, to whom he was likewise indebted for a liberal supply of books. His literary ardour did not suffer any abatement ; and he frequently declared that no six months of his life had ever passed with so little interruption to his studies and improvement. In the exer­cise of his poetical talents he found a pleasing recreation, but his attention was chiefly directed to more serious pur­suits.

For several years he had devoted much of his leisure to the study of the Hebrew language ; and during his prison hours he formed the design of his Dissertation on the Shechinah, which appeared amongst his posthumous works. In the year 1757 he published at London “A Dissertation on Jacob’s Prophecy, Genesis xix. 10.” According to his interpretation, this prophecy denotes “ that the *tribeship* should not depart from Judah, nor a *typifer* from between his feet, or from among his descendants, till Shiloh (the Messiah) should come, and till the gathering of the people should be to him.” This explanation, we are informed, was highly approved by Bishop Sherlock, and by other biblical critics of acknowledged eminence. His next work was of a different denomination. Mr. Sievwright, an epis­copal minister of Brechin, published a somewhat curious volume, exposing the principles and practices of his non­juring brethren.@@2 It appeared in 1767, and Mr. Skinner soon afterwards published, but without his name, “ A Let­ter to Norman Sievwright, M.A., in Vindication of the Episcopal Clergy of Scotland from his Charge of Innova­tions in Politics and Religion.” Of his next publication, neither the date nor the precise title is mentioned by his biographer. It however assumed the form of an answer to an Enquiry into the Powers of Ecclesiastics, on the Principles of Scripture and Reason, written by the Rev. Thomas Gordon, minister of Speymouth.

This was followed by a more elaborate work, “ An Ec­clesiastical History of Scotland, from the first appearance of Christianity in that kingdom, to the present time: with remarks on the most important occurrences. In a Series of Letters to a Friend.” Lend. 1788, 2 vols. 8vo. Pre­fixed is a dedication, in Latin verse, to his son the bishop. The value of this work is far from being considerable. It is written in a spirit too sectarian, and in a style too pro­vincial. Many facts are very inaccurately stated. Thus he asserts that with the exception of Dr. Featley, no epis­copalian divine ever sat in the Westminster assembly. According to this ecclesiastical historian, the praise of Archbishop Laud “ is and ever will be in the English church.” A man who could thus bestow commendation on a merciless bigot, is not to be admired for his wis­dom or moderation. Nothing is so apt as bigotry to blind a man’s understanding, and to suppress the best feel­ings of his heart. In the nefarious sentence of death pronounced on the earl of Argyle for adding an explana­tion when he took the test-oath, Mr. Skinner finds no­thing to condemn. According to the same authority, King James’s attachment to popery was acknowledged by his greatest enemies to be the only blemish of his character. The sufferings of the episcopal clergy after the Revolution are commemorated in terms sufficiently tragical ; but the bloody persecution of the presbyterians during the reign of Charles the Second is represented as a very trivial matter ; and it seems to have been the author’s deliberate opin­ion, that they were treated neither better nor worse than they deserved. A very different opinion was entertained

@@@, During the following year, he wrote a Latin elegy on the death of Bishop Rattray, which appeared in a small publication entitled “ A Letter to a Friend : with two Poems sacred to the memory of the late R. R. Dr. Thomas Rattray of Craighall, Bisbop of Edin­burgh.’’ Edinb. 1743, 4to. The letter was also written by Skinner. This elegy is followed by an English poem, written by a different person.

@@@\* Principles, Political and Religious: or, a Preservative against Innovations in Politics and Religion. By Norman Sievwright, Μ. A. a Presbyter of the Communion of the Church of England as by Law established, and Minister to the authorised Episcopal Congregation in Brechin. Edinb. 1767 12mo.