

PREFACE.

AS a full and impartial account of the people called Shakers, has never yet been presented to the publick, although the attention and inquiry of a large portion of the community, has been excited to an unusual degree, by their novel appearance and unexpected increase, the author of the following work, has been prevailed upon to give the world the result of his experience and investigation among them. He is confident, that their rise, tenets, and practices are more singular (the present state of the world, and general information of mankind being taken into consideration) than those of any religious sect which has taken its rise in the christian world since the first promulgation of the gospel.

The following correspondence which took place between the author and the church, when the ensuing publication was nearly finished, will, I doubt not, be accepted as being properly adapted for a prefatory introduction.

To the Church called Shakers.

FRIENDS,

I think proper to give you the following information, viz. since I withdrew from your society, I have written for publication, and have now nearly finished, an account of my life and experience among you; in which I have given a statement of the many conversations we have had respecting your faith, doctrines, and practices, with the most authentick account of the rise of the church that can be obtained.

I feel not, and therefore write not as an enemy; but merely give an impartial statement according to the best of my ability and knowledge; which knowledge, I have spared no pains nor expence to obtain from every credible source of information. I wish to publish nothing but what is strictly the truth; and I have studiously avoided using one word that would have a tendency to misrepresent, or convey a wrong idea.

Notwithstanding, that there may be no room left for undue animadversions, I hereby make you the offer, if you please to accept it, of examining the work, in manuscript, previous to