

**QUAKER QUIDDITIES;
OR, FRIENDS IN
COUNCIL: A COLLOQUY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649297658

Quaker Quiddities; Or, Friends in Council: A Colloquy by James Bunker Congdon

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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JAMES BUNKER CONGDON

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Consider, Q. A. S. M. R. C. S.

QUAKER QUIDDITIES;

OR,

FRIENDS IN COUNCIL:

A Colloquy.

The primal duties shine aloft — like stars;
The charities that soothe and heal and bless
Are scattered at the feet of man — like flowers.

THE EXCURSION.

BOSTON:

CROSBY, NICHOLS, LEE, AND COMPANY,

117, WASHINGTON STREET.

1860.

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BOSTON:

PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON AND SON
23, SCHOOL STREET.

TO THE
LIBRARY OF
CALIFORNIA

EM

Dedicated to the Alumni
OF THE
YEARLY-MEETING SCHOOL,
PROVIDENCE,
BY AN UNDERGRADUATE.

M146565



PREFACE.

THE following pages are given to the public without the sanction of the Meeting for Sufferings. Had the manuscript been submitted to the censorship of that body, it is hardly probable that its publication would have been *suffered*.

The course I have taken being contrary to discipline, I have thought it proper to send out my little book without the writer's name on the titlepage. I have no fear of disownment, should I be known as the offender. My age would prevent that; as, in the eye of the law, I am still an infant: but I am by no means sure that a punishment more in accordance with schoolroom usages would not follow.

I hope no one who reads what I have written will receive an impression that there is a shade of disrespect intended towards the Society of Friends. A member by birthright, my associations with them have always been of the most intimate character. I respect them as a body. I have, from conviction, adopted their princi-

ples ; and many if not most of their usages have, in my opinion, the sanction of experience and sound reason. But, although I am an undergraduate, I am old enough to think and judge for myself. In the colloquy which follows, some of my thoughts and opinions are recorded.

What is contained in the following pages has nothing to do with *prize-essayism*. After it was written, I was surprised to learn that the hundred-guinea offer had produced a baker's dozen of books, each one of which was considered by the writer conclusive as an answer to the question, "Why is Quakerism declining?" As near as I can find out by a cursory examination of these "essays to do" the hundred-guinea job successfully, Quakerism is declining because it is Quakerism, and not Episcopalianism, Methodism, or Mormonism. "Most lame and impotent conclusion!" one is prompted to exclaim, in view of the result of this speculative operation in the article of Quakerism. There is a decrease of the number of names on the rolls of the monthly meetings; and why? Why? because Quakerism is not Mormonism: if it were, the number would increase.

The only questions which have any vitality in them, connected with the admitted fact of the decline of Quakerism, are, "Is it worth saving?" "Can it be saved?"

"How can it be saved?" One thing is sure: it must show its right to a distinctive place in the world's civilization by something more significant and progressive than a formless method in its meetings and a uniform costume. Its negations cannot give it a longer lease of life. It must in some way grapple with the world, and show its potency by helping the world onward. The world is demanding aid from every organization that has for its object the inculcation of moral and religious truth. It is not satisfied, it should not be satisfied, with the plea of self-preservation. It seems to me that Quakerism is dying of isolation. But these questions are too mighty to be mooted in a preface to a pamphlet.

PROVIDENCE, R.I., 5mo. 21, 1880.