



# **Baconianism and the Bible: An Address Delivered Before the Eumenean and Philanthropic Societies of Davidson College, N. C. August 11, 1852 (Classic Reprint)**

*B. M. Palmer*

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Excerpt from Baconianism and the Bible: An Address Delivered Before the Eumenean and Philanthropic Societies of Davidson College, N. C. August 11, 1852

They are not engaged in the discovery, but in the application, of truths. They find science occupied with experiment and hypothesis as instruments to establish some theoretic principle; but the principle, when demonstrated, they embody in some practical invention. With a genius intensely active and utilitarian, they seek to realize the abstract in the concrete. They entice science from her recluse meditations, to plunge her into the activities of the working world. They arrest philosophy in her empyrean flight, soaring with transcendental wing to gaze upon the absolute, that she may work practical reforms upon earth. They stand as godfathers to science, giving her, a fair bride, in productive wedlock with hardy labour. It is science which, with labour's rough hand, tunnels our mountains, spans our vallies, fertilizes our fields, reaps our harvests, moves immense structures of wood and stone like figures on a chess board, weaves our clothing, grinds our bread, bores our wells, empties rivers of water into our cities, sketches the human form with a sunbeam, lights our dwellings, propels our vessels, telegraphs our messages, prints our books, suspends bridges in the air, delicate and graceful as though woven with threads of gossamer: - but where shall the breathless catalogue end? So, too, the most abstract principles, thought out by great minds amidst the haze and mist of metaphysical speculation, are wrought into new forms, and combine to new results, when thrown again into the forge of a practical mind. They henceforth construct great systems of education, remodel political constitutions, work reforms in jurisprudence, and searching downwards, effect organic changes in the social condition of mankind. They tone the oracles delivered from a thousand pulpits, and flash out even amidst the raving and cant of the platform. Knowledge, so to speak, is taken in by absorption, as plants derive their colour from the sun. The plough-boy comes into acquaintance with Liebig and agricultural chemistry, as he pulverizes the guano upon his fields; and the sooty engineer will talk, with scientific precision, of the valves and pistons of the bellowing monster which he guides.

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