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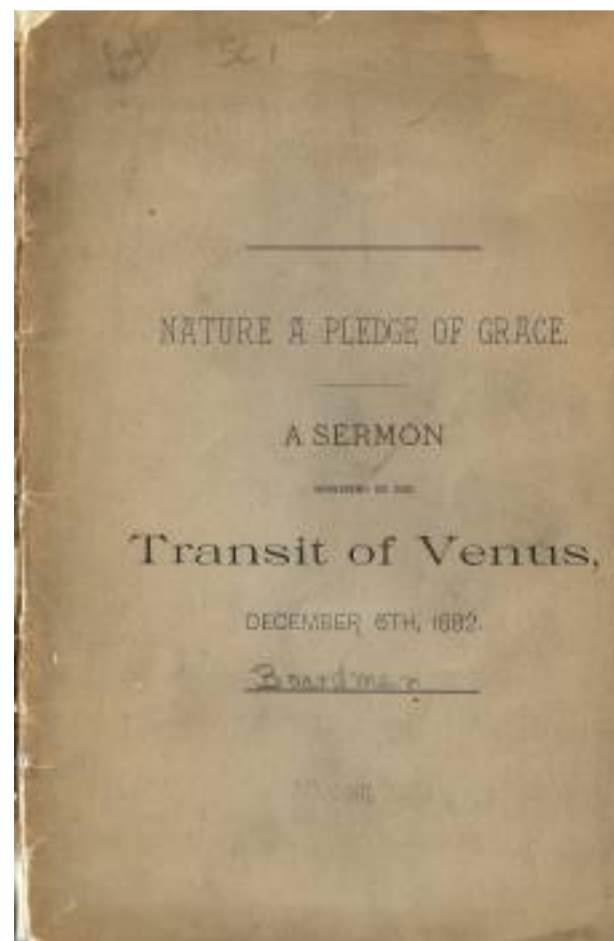
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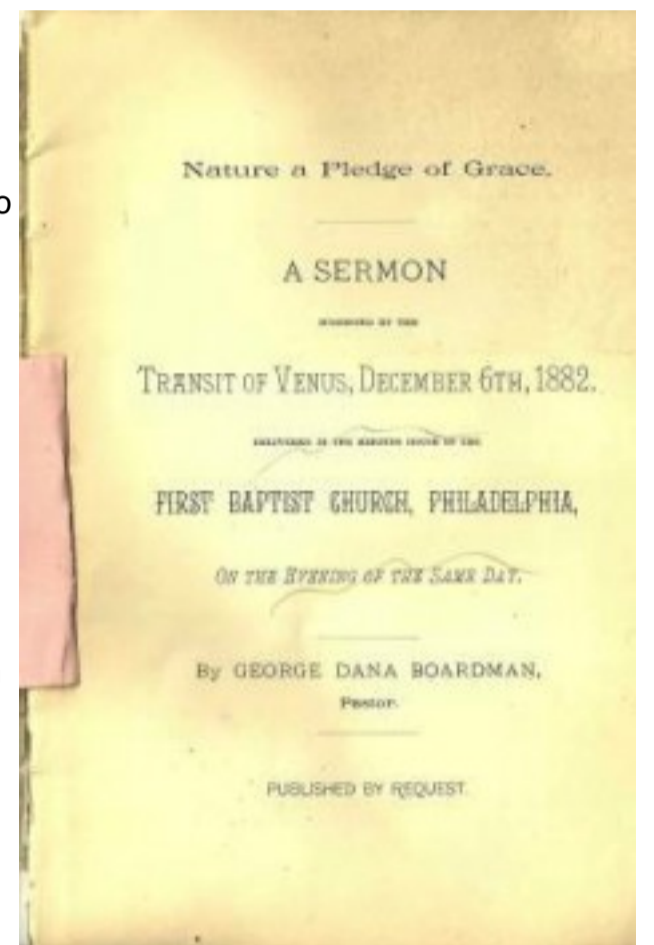
Sermon Suggested by the Transit of Venus



Chuck



On the evening of December 6, 1882, after the transit of Venus had occurred earlier that day, Pastor George Dana Boardman delivered an eloquent **sermon** "to unfold and apply a great moral lesson which the transit of Venus suggests and confirms." On the title page is written:



Nature a Pledge of Grace.  
A SERMON  
SUGGESTED BY THE  
TRANSIT OF VENUS,  
DECEMBER 6th, 1882  
DELIVERED IN THE MEETING  
HOUSE OF THE  
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH,  
PHILADELPHIA,  
ON THE EVENING OF THE  
SAME DAY.

By GEORGE DANA BOARDMAN

PASTOR

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST

Boardman writes that God expresses His commitment to man and His promise through the immutable expressions of nature. The predictable movements of planets "testify to the unchangeableness of nature's laws, that is to say, to the veracity of God's covenant of nature." That man can study those laws of nature and eke out predictions like the transit of Venus confirms the certainty of nature, itself a covenant from God. We cannot break these laws, though they can break us.

Similarly, while natural law is assured, moral law is equally stable. Citing God's covenant with David (Matthew 21:41-45), Boardman asserts God's promise is a covenant as certain as the laws of nature. Predicting a transit of Venus is relatively easy compared to the feat of prophets predicting the birth and life of Jesus centuries beforehand. The latter task had infinitely more factors than the simpler three-body system of sun-Venus-earth, yet the predictions of prophets came to pass. Boardman writes, "His creation...proves that Almighty god has had from the beginning an irreversible plan."

Boardman states, "If the transit of Venus, in exact answer to the predictions of astronomers, proves that astronomy is true, and that you can not resist the God of nature, does not the birth of Jesus Christ, in exact answer to the predictions of prophets, prove, and for an unspeakably stronger reason, that Christianity is true, and that you can not resist the God of Scripture?...Every fulfillment of an astronomical prediction is a fresh witness to the veracity of God's promises." He concludes, "Let [the transit's] celestial eloquence cheer and inspire you."

Not all preachers shared Boardman's modern heliocentric view, as Randall Rosenfeld describes in his blog [Anti-Copernican between transits.](#):

"Staring out at us from the high noon of the Enlightenment is the Oxford trained Rev'd James Hurlly (1703-1783), A.B., incumbent curate of Taunton-St.-James, and curate of Wilton and Trull parishes, staunch anti-Copernican, avocational astronomer, and malappropriator of transit results."

For images of the complete text of Boardman's sermon, see the PDF file (32 MB) [Sermon Suggested by the Transit of Venus-1882](#). If that file is too large, individual images are temporarily at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/nightwise/sets/72157627509297869/>, as of February 2012.

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