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In Memoriam



Rev. Benjamin C. Taylor, D. D.



In Memoriam.

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REV. BENJAMIN C. TAYLOR, D.D.

PASTOR OF THE  
REFORMED (DUTCH) CHURCH OF BERGEN,  
IN NEW JERSEY,  
FROM 1828 TO 1881.

ENTERED INTO REST FEBRUARY 2, 1881.

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## Funeral Services.

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THE obsequies of the Rev. Benjamin C. Taylor, D. D., Senior Pastor of the Bergen Reformed Church, were attended Saturday, February 5th, 1881.

His many relatives and the clergy in goodly numbers assembled at his late residence, 613 Bergen Ave., Jersey City Heights, at 1.15 P. M. The casket containing the remains was laid in the study, and surrounded by the immediate family. He was robed in the gown which he had so often worn in the pulpit. Loving hands had laid appropriate emblems upon the casket-lid, and a silver plate bore the inscription :

BENJAMIN C. TAYLOR.

DIED FEBRUARY 2D, 1881,

AGED 79 YEARS, 11 MONTHS, AND 9 DAYS.

The service at the house consisted of a prayer by Rev. Gustavus Abeel, D. D., of Newark, N. J. It was fervent and impressive.

At the conclusion of the prayer, the procession formed under the conduct of J. J. Phillips, undertaker, in the following order :

1. MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH CLASSIS OF BERGEN.
2. MEMBERS OF GAMMA SIGMA.
3. TRUSTEES OF RUTGERS COLLEGE.
4. CLERGY GENERALLY.
5. OFFICIATING CLERGY.

6.

<i>Pall-Bearers.</i>	Remains, borne by the Deacons of the Bergen Reformed Church.	<i>Pall-Bearers.</i>
REV. E. W. FRENCH, D. D.		REV. T. W. CHAMBERS, D. D.
REV. C. K. IMBRIE, D. D.		REV. LEOPOLD MOHN, D. D.
REV. W. TUNISON, D. D.		REV. W. H. PARMLY, D. D.
REV. F. C. PUTNAM, D. D.		REV. H. H. WAITE.

7. ELDERS OF THE BERGEN REFORMED CHURCH.
8. RELATIVES IN CARRIAGES.
9. RELATIVES WALKING.

Arrived at the church, as the procession passed up the aisle a solemn dirge was softly played on the organ, while the pastor, Rev. Cornelius Brett, read the liturgical sentences.

The officiating clergy entered the pulpit, which was heavily and appropriately draped in black cloth. The pall-bearers occupied the front seats north of the middle aisle, and the other clergymen sat behind them. The family were seated in the pews south of the middle aisle, and the elders and deacons took the consistorial seats. All the other parts of the church were crowded with members of the congregation and other friends.

The choir, composed as follows, were in their place :

A. D. JOSLIN, *Chorister.*  
 MRS. DE CARLO, *Soprano.*  
 MISS LOTTIE CHRISTIE, *Alto.*  
 MR. JOHNSON, *Tenor.*  
 HARRY BRIGHAM, *Organist.*

When all were seated, the choir sang, to the tune "Myers": "Jesus, lover of my soul."

Prayer was offered by the Rev. Thos. E. Vermilye, D. D., senior pastor of the Collegiate Reformed Church, New-York City.

The choir chanted the ninetieth Psalm, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations."

Rev. David D. Demarest, D. D., of the Theological Seminary, New Brunswick, N. J., read the epistle, in First Corinthians, fifteenth chapter.

Rev. J. H. Suydam, of the Park Reformed Church, Jersey City, read Dr. Bethune's triumphant hymn:

"It is not death to die,  
To leave this weary road,  
And with the brotherhood on high  
To be at home with God."

It was sung by the congregation.

The following addresses were then delivered.



## Address by Rev. W. H. Durpee, D. D.

OF THE REFORMED CHURCH, LAFAYETTE, JERSEY CITY.

IT is with no ordinary feelings of sorrow that we have come together to-day. We look in vain for the greeting which so often welcomed us here; we listen in vain for the voice which so often sounded within these walls. The gates of death have closed behind one who was our father and friend. Yet, with the sense of loss, a great peace fills our hearts as we sorrow, "not without hope," over one who wrought for Jesus while earthly life was given, and "fell asleep" in Jesus when earthly life was done. There is a shadow over the heart, but it is like the shadow cast by the summer cloud, whose silver edging tells of the glorious sun still shining. Children, people, friends, associates, all bear their one testimony to the value of that life which God has ended here, but which we believe has only begun in a world more glorious, beyond the grave.

We do not propose to give any sketch in detail of Dr. Taylor's life. That service is intrusted to others, fitted to perform it in the best way by their special knowledge of all the facts. But we speak as one who, during the past twenty years, has been brought into close association with the aged pastor of this church, and who has marked the results of his work in the hearts and lives of many whom he had instructed in the faith of Jesus Christ.

As a *preacher of the gospel*, how faithful was he always in presenting the whole counsel of God! Whatever methods others might follow in an age seeking for novelty, the trumpet of this watchman on the walls of Zion never gave an uncertain sound. He believed in God and God's power and grace in salvation. His own early experience had taught him that man cannot save himself, and from the stand-point he occupied, God was everything in the matter of redemption. If God saved a soul, it was in sovereign love and according to His own electing wisdom. The rescue came to men through their faith; but even that was not of themselves,—it was the "gift of God." He received the Confes-

sions of faith of the church in which he labored, not because they were forced upon him, but because he believed from the heart that they expressed the true doctrine, given in God's word. And thus, preaching to two generations, he could rejoice that God added His blessing to His servant's work, and, by bringing souls into the kingdom of Christ, marked those doctrines as His own.

But it was as a *pastor* that Dr. Taylor excelled. He came to this community half a century ago, and stood almost alone in ministering to the people who were living in the region between Hoboken and Bergen Point. He was eminently fitted for his work by his genial nature, his tact, and his warm sympathy. He identified himself with his flock, and cared for no glory beyond sharing with them the joys and sorrows of life. Like the Shunamite of old, he could say, "I dwell among mine own people." And whatever changes came to this community in the latter half of his ministry, though a score of churches rose, each taking away some of the membership, yet Dr. Taylor sustained to all the families originally connected with his church a relation peculiar and tender. He was always, to them, "the dominie." He had nurtured them in the faith of Christ; he had united them in marriage; he had baptized their children; he had wept and prayed beside their beloved dead. And it is as if one had been taken from the household, to know that Dr. Taylor has passed away.

In other fields of influence, how faithful was he found, discharging with earnest care every duty his Lord placed upon him. In the Classis he was looked upon as a very fountain of ecclesiastical knowledge. We sought his advice and it guided aright. His voice constantly decided debate. In the Board of Education, as a Trustee of Rutgers College, he loved to meet with brethren, and sought to advance his beloved denomination in a true prosperity. But there was no narrow spirit within him confining his affection. While his best energies were put forth to the nearest work, his heart went out to brethren in Christ of every name, and he rejoiced in their success as they, too, labored for the Master. The last meeting to which he went before his death was one of ministers of various denominations. In Jonathan

Edwards's life of Brainerd, the biographer gives one of the remarks made by Brainerd just after his recovery from what his attendants thought a while was death. The dying saint declared that while in this condition he "found an inexpressibly sweet love to those that he looked upon as belonging to Christ; so that it seemed, to use his own words, like a little piece of heaven to have one of them near him." It was a feeling akin to Brainerd's which animated our departed father in Christ. He believed in the communion of saints, and all who loved the Saviour were dear to his heart. And when, leaving all the labors of life and the relations he sustained to others, we come to speak of him as a *Christian man*, how gladly do we bear testimony to his sincerity. It is, alas! too often true of the ministry that they are led to discharge their duties in a merely routine way. They themselves may have little of the feeling which they urge others to gain or to enlarge. Not so with this servant of Jesus Christ. Those who were nearest, those whose unwearied care did so much for his comfort in these last years of age, they know how, in the family circle and in the closet of prayer, the husband, the father, the minister of Jesus Christ sought inspiration for all the duties of life. Day by day and year by year he trained his children for God and usefulness, and we know how God answered his prayers and labors. These children to-day can rise up and call him blessed. Whatever he carried to others, he had sought for himself from his Saviour's hand. And the secret of his long-continued power was to be found just here—that he played no part, but strove to live so close to his Saviour that he might be himself warm in love before he urged on others the infinite worth of the love of Jesus to save them from sin.

And so we cannot give way to overmuch sorrow, as we look at such a record. What more could we desire for ourselves? We know there has been but one perfect life on earth, that for the best of us the poet's words are true —

"Labor with what zeal we may,  
Something still remains undone."

Yet, taking a low comparison, could not this departed servant of God say, with reference to the service he rendered

on earth, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do"? He had been faithful and constant in the ministry for nearly sixty years. When he was at last laid aside from regular work, it was his privilege to intrust it to the hearts and hands of younger brethren in whom he had thorough confidence, and to whom he felt the warmest Christian love. And then the end came slowly, peacefully. Like Simeon in the temple, so he stood with Christ in his heart, a song upon his lips, and heaven desired. Brethren, the end of that man is peace.

"So fades a summer cloud away,  
So sinks the gale when storms are o'er,  
So gently shuts the eye of day,  
So dies a wave along the shore.

"Life's labor done, as sinks the clay,  
Light from its load the spirit flies;  
While heaven and earth combine to say,  
'How blest the righteous when he dies!'"



### Address by Rev. Cornelius Brett.

MORE than six years ago, Dr. Taylor confided to the care of a co-laborer for nearly thirty years certain documents and memoranda concerning his ministry, with the request that, when his spirit should be called away, his friend should speak to the living in his memory. I know you all will share with me the regret that this brother, the Rev. P. D. Van Cleef, D. D., is detained at his home by severe illness, and is not able even to be present at this solemn service.

We have few tears to shed to-day. This is not an hour of heart-break or inconsolable grief. We "sorrow not even as others which have no hope." When the physicians told us, as we stood beside him during the fierce, wild storm of Tuesday

night, "Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day?" we answered, "Yea, we know it; hold ye your peace." As long as we could, we went on with him in his upward way. We seemed to be crossing the Jordan in his company, well knowing that we must needs come back alone without him; and when, at last, the storm was hushed, the morning broke, and "the sweet chariot swung low," to part him for a season from the loved ones *here* and take him to the loved ones *there*, we could only say, "My father! my father! the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." We still stand on the further side of Jordan, looking up into the illuminated sky. Yes, our eyes are bedewed, but our sorrow at the thought that we shall see his face no more is tempered by the consolation that as for him "to live was Christ," so "to die is gain." True, only *this* remains on earth of the father, brother, pastor, friend, but *he* is not here. He "walked with God, and is not found because God took him." While we wait with the casket an hour before we bury him, as Jesus was buried, we may speak calmly and gratefully of his earnest deeds and the living words which he spoke while yet with us in the flesh. It is a *triumphant* hour. The conquest is ended, and a valorous soldier of the cross has won the victory. An heir of an "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away," has gone up to receive his crown. The clear, bright sunlight which floods the winter landscape, the calm of the hushed winds, the snowy mantle of purity which enwraps the earth,—these, and not the blackness, and hardness, and coldness of the winter, are in harmony with the spirit, with which we celebrate the beginning, rather than mourn the ending, of his life.

Benjamin C. Taylor was born in the city of Philadelphia, February 24, 1801. He was sent to the famous school of Dr. Finley, at Basking Ridge, Somerset County, New Jersey, where, in the fourteenth year of his age, he was hopefully converted. A wonderful revival of religion swept over the community, beginning in Dr. Finley's Bible-class. It was marked as the most notable work of grace since Whitefield had ceased his labors, nearly a half-century before. Ten of the converts of that one class became ministers of the

gospel, several within the bounds of our own denomination. Almost immediately after his conversion, the young disciple made a public profession of his faith in the Presbyterian Church of Basking Ridge, and a secret consecration of his life to the Master's service in the ministry of reconciliation accompanied the public vows. He entered Princeton College in the class of 1819, and, upon graduating, began to study theology with Dr. Mason, in New-York City. The illness of Dr. Mason caused the disbandment of his class, and the young student found a congenial home at the seminary in New Brunswick, where Drs. Livingston and Ludlow, of honored memory, were then lecturing. He completed his course in the spring of 1822, and entered at once upon the active duties of his chosen life-work as pastor of the churches of Greenbush and Bloominggrove, in Rensselaer County, N. Y. In both communities there were under the charge of the stripling preacher 290 families. His chosen companion, a daughter of Rev. Dr. J. V. C. Romeyn, of Hackensack, to whom he was united soon after he attained his majority, went with him to share his labors and lighten his toils by her loving sympathy. The call from the church at Aquackanock, in 1825, offered him the care of a congregation worshipping in a single temple, and almost as large as those of Greenbush and Bloominggrove together; and he was induced to accept.

In March, 1828, he was invited to supply the pulpit of the church of Bergen during the illness of their pastor, Rev. John Cornelison. The sickness was unto death. He stood by the death-bed of this faithful servant of the Most High, closed his eyes, and at the Sabbath service announced to the congregation that they were a flock without a shepherd. The impression made by his ministrations was such that a call was, with great unanimity, extended to him, and on the first Sabbath of July he entered upon his life-work in Bergen. The ministrations of his youth in other churches have by no means been forgotten; but Bergen was his home; here he lived, here he has grown gray in the service, here he has died, and here will he be buried. His charge included the whole of what is now Hudson County, from Bergen Woods to Bergen Point. It

was the only church of the denomination covering the ground, and there were only three of other denominations. These were, however, sufficient for the people, as there could not have been more than 8000 people in all this district, now teeming with a cosmopolitan population of nearly 200,000 souls. His great administrative ability and power to persuade men led to the erection of this edifice in the year 1841, and immediately upon its dedication that work of grace began which many of you can remember. The revival continued two years, and resulted in the addition to the church of ninety-three members upon confession of faith. For nearly thirty years this pulpit was the lot in which he stood. At the beginning of his studies the state of his health was such that friends feared he might not live to be ordained; but as the years passed by he became so vigorous that his arduous labors as preacher and pastor were seldom interrupted by sickness. He was for many years a member of the Board of Education of the Reformed Dutch Church. He was elected president of General Synod in 1838, at its session in the city of Albany. Before the separation of the Reformed Church from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, he was a corporate member of that Society, and his only journeys from home were either in attendance upon ecclesiastical meetings or at the annual conventions in behalf of missions. He was a Trustee of Rutgers College from 1857 to 1878. In 1843 he was honored by the degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology, from Hobart College, at Geneva. The rapid increase of population in the county and vicinity demanded the organization of new churches continually, and, as the acknowledged leader in the old Classis of Bergen, and after the division in the South Classis, it was impossible to lengthen the cords of the tabernacle of the congregation without his aid.

Thus, in uninterrupted, efficient, earnest labors, passed the years of his maturity and advancing age. He loved the work, and fain would have kept on the harness to the end; but increasing infirmity at length admonished him that the time had come to place in other hands the sacred trust. We can, my brethren in the ministry, appre-

ciate the struggle of that hour—the intense desire of the spirit, strong as ever and yearning still for souls, contending with the weakness of the body, whose fatigues warned him every Sabbath that it was unsafe to strain to a further tension the mystic silver cord. The departure of his partner of nearly half a century, in the spring of 1868, wore heavily upon him. It seemed harder than ever to work alone. At length he yielded to necessity, and the South Classis of Bergen, in September, 1870, declared him “Pastor Emeritus”; released from all responsibility and service, but still retaining the style and title he loved so well, of “Pastor.” In this connection I may be permitted to give, from Dr. Taylor’s own journal, his history of the announcement to the people of this important proceeding:

*“October 21, 1870. —In the morning Rev. Dr. Van Cleef, by appointment of Classis, preached and announced the action of Classis, declaring me the Emeritus Pastor of my church, and the confirmation of the arrangements made by Consistory for my release from pastoral duty. I followed Dr. Van Cleef’s discourse with remarks of remembrance of the past, and grateful acknowledgments of the kindness and affection of my people, manifested by word and deed, and of the goodness and mercy of the Lord. This will be a memorable day in the history of my church. God bless my people in the future, as in the past.”*

Although Dr. Taylor was relieved from pastoral duty, we still find him performing such service as he was able, from time to time. Among his old acquaintances, his presence seemed necessary to give the nuptial benediction, and his personal reminiscences and fervent prayers over their dead added to the solemnity of many a funeral service. He preached at the installation of his immediate successor, Rev. James L. Amerman, and bade him farewell when about to go forth upon his missionary journey. He welcomed the speaker to this pulpit with a hearty greeting; and, almost until his own voice was inaudible, pronounced upon his people the Apostolic benediction at the Lord’s Table. In May, 1871, he was honored with the appointment as delegate from the Reformed Dutch Church to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in session in Chicago, and undertook the journey to bear fraternal greetings to his brethren. Many who are here to-day will remember his address in this church on the first Sunday in July, 1878, when we met to

commemorate the pastor's jubilee. As one brother said, at the conclusion of the deeply interesting service: "It has seemed like the anointing for his burial."

During the last five years, his life has been ebbing slowly away. I have never seen such a calm, yet steady, march toward the goal of existence. From day to day we could not see that his strength failed him; but comparing this year with last, or even the passing months, we have seen him surely, if slowly,

"Fading, still fading."

One cherished habit after another was abandoned, and the sad discovery made, with each opening season, that some new act of service and ministry must be accepted at the hands of his devoted attendants.

At first, he was seldom absent from the house of God; then he began to tarry at home when the weather was hot or cold; then his presence was the exception, and of late we have missed him altogether. I can hardly realize that I shall never again look down from this pulpit into his eyes, earnestly seeking to gather from sight, when sound failed to reach him, the drift of a discourse.

It was a heavy cross when he was compelled to give up an active share in the meetings of Classis. When he could not stay all day he would come for an hour to report, look upon the faces of the brethren and retire. At last he ceased altogether to attend the meetings, and last October, when Classis met in this church, insisted upon having the brethren entertained at his own house, that he might at least be entered as present at the 105th regular meeting since he was received within its fraternal circle. Thus also did he gradually relinquish the, to him, very delightful sessions of Gamma Sigma, the ministers' club of Jersey City. On the presentation of his resignation, the society, refusing to accept, declared him Member Emeritus. The very last excursion from the comforts of his home he made on the 7th of last December, to meet the society at my house. Since that time we have had only messages from him, couched in such words as these: "Remember me to the brethren"; "Tell all the brethren that I love them." Almost the first

question at every interview was: "Have you seen any of the brethren lately?"

Thus also have we seen him give up the well-loved service at the Lord's Table. At my first communion he distributed the bread. Then he would only make a short address, holding the time-honored cups so pathetically in his hands, as he recalled the many who had partaken from them, who are now drinking wine with their Saviour in the heavenly kingdom. Then he merely offered a brief prayer at the table, and since the March communion of 1879 he has uttered no word beside the benediction. For six months he has not even been present at the memorial feast.

So, also, in his study have his favorite authors been one by one abandoned, and even the passages in the book of books, read over again and again, were shortened. Yet a new book finds its way with the Christmas to his study. He was found reading it just before he was prostrated, and even after they had laid him on the cot from which he never rose, he talked to me of the precious thoughts of McDuff's "In Christo." What grander, nobler thought could the aged disciple store in his memory for the glorious dreams of that last long sleep! Family worship he maintained to the very last. For many years he has not knecled, but he used to *sit* in his study and pray and wrestle, until, too feeble for any longer devotion, he joined his household in the broken accents of "Our Father," etc. For many years before he retired from active service, his tremulousness made writing a labor. The progress of his disease can be traced almost from page to page in the church records and his personal journal. At last, on the 25th of May, 1879, his record ceases with the entry of a sermon heard from the text Rev. xvii. 14: "For he is Lord of Lords and King of Kings." Since that date he has not touched a pen, unless, perhaps, to sign his name. The same slow and steady progress upward was marked, even after he was stricken with the last illness. They laid him on the cot in the study where he had spent the greater part of his time for the last ten years, and there, surrounded by the symbols and products of his life-work, he seemed almost at once to fall into a gentle slumber, from which he awoke only to receive the loving caresses awaiting him. At

length he did not awake, and for more than twenty-four hours in solemn stillness children and grandchildren watched him, often intently gazing to discover if he yet *breathed*. Then the pulse stopped; then he ceased to breathe—this is all that death was to him. *The poor, feeble frame* had worn to a thread that silver cord; it did not snap or break, it simply parted, as though the last particle had been worn by the gentle strain of a spirit not struggling to be free, but just waiting its release; ready to be offered up, having fought the good fight, having finished the course, having kept the faith. Have you ever seen the stars go out in the morning? Not setting, not rudely falling, but simply fading in Aurora's brighter light? So faded his life into the brightness of the better, grander day. He is not here, but he *is* nevertheless. The righteous may, for a little, be lost to our vision, but they shall shine as the stars in heaven.

And now the time has come to sum up his life-work. The numerical computation is made from *his own records*; he had summed up the figures, and written the totals with his own hand. It would not be just to his memory to conduct this service without speaking of statistics on which he loved to dwell. Memory is not accurate concerning events after his record ceased, but we think that after May 25, 1879, he was three times present at the Lord's Supper, and each time pronounced the benediction. We add these services to his own, with the following results:

During his ministry in Bergen, extending through fifty-two and a half years, he officiated at 6219 services and attended 1608 funerals—a grand total of 7820 services rendered by one man to the same congregation. He made 8400 pastoral calls and solemnized 541 marriages; baptized 42 adults and 1010 infants; received into the communion of the church 459 on confession of faith, and 377 by certificate—836 in all. He has had 1032 members under his care. Of the 196 communicants at the time of his installation, not a single man remains: four aged women, like Anna, are still in the Temple, whence all their generation has been translated. Of the couples married at the time of his coming to Bergen, not one remains unbroken. We can hardly count a score now among us who can re-

member when thirteen loaded wagons transported his household goods to the old stone parsonage upon the Square.

In some families, Dr. Taylor has stood by the coffined dead of five generations. In his own handwriting we find the names of fifty-eight ministers whose funerals he attended, among them Bethune, De Witt, Brownlee, Berg, Knox, T. C. Strong, and others. With one exception he was the oldest living graduate of the Theological Seminary at New Brunswick, and but one of his class survives him. What a commentary do we read, between the lines of these facts and figures, upon the transitoriness of human life. "One generation passeth away and another cometh." "The Fathers, where are they, and the prophets, do they live forever?" "What is your life? It is even as a vapor, which appeareth for a little while and then vanisheth away."

It is not for me, dear brethren and friends, to eulogize our father in God, or to analyze his character, by telling you that which you all know of him, or, let us rather say, of the Christ living in him. His life is his eulogy, and a manhood so noble, a service so fully consecrated, needs no encomium from man. I would that some of these older brethren could have spoken of their recollections, and told of the old days when they were comrades in the church militant. He has been a father unto me, and I would that, as a son, I might take my seat there with you in the silence of respectful tribute, rather than stand here with the officiating brethren to speak these poor words of affectionate commemoration. This much let me say before I close: Dr. Taylor used to tell of a certain pastor who, when about to retire from active work, was asked if he had grace to have a colleague; and I can say of him,—yea, verily,—grace came into his heart sufficient for this trial, and fitted him to bear very kindly with the mistakes and indiscretions of his younger colleagues. I bear witness here to-day that in all our intercourse, which was very intimate, I never heard the first word of fault-finding, adverse criticism, jealousy, or interference with my plans. And I verily believe that he said no word of me which he would not cheerfully have said to me. I valued his counsel, and felt strengthened by the oft-repeated assurance that he was praying for me and for my church.

I shall miss his study more than I can tell, as a place of delightful Christian communion and a means of grace. But the prayers of this servant of God for you and for me are ended. Perchance in the years to come the answers may come trooping in upon us as the flying cloud, and as doves to their windows.

Farewell, father in God, farewell! We know it is a hard thing that we ask, but "may a double portion of thy spirit fall on us,"—thy few remaining brethren, thy children, many in the Lord. And may we, cleaving the Jordan with thy mantle, return to our waiting work comforted and strengthened by our gazing after thee in thine ascension to the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We covet not thy crown, but we pray that one like it, starred and gemmed with many souls, may await us there.

Following the addresses, the congregation sang the hymn beginning :

"Asleep in Jesus! Blessed sleep!"

after it had been read by the Rev. Charles H. Stitt, D. D., of the Bayonne Reformed Church.

The closing prayer was offered by Rev. W. H. Campbell, D. D., president of Rutgers College.

The benediction was pronounced by the Rev. Gustavus Abeel, D. D.

At the conclusion of the services, the casket was opened, and as the immense congregation passed slowly before the pulpit, taking leave of a beloved pastor, many a tear was shed, and many a word remembered which he had spoken while yet alive.

When the farewells were over, the procession re-formed, and the remains were reverently carried to their last resting-place, in the cemetery which had been laid out under Dr. Taylor's direction, fifty years ago. The pastor read the burial service of the church, and the aged servant of God was interred by the side of the beloved partner who had preceded him by more than thirteen years.

The solemn services were concluded with the benediction, pronounced by Rev. Leopold Mohn, D. D., of Hoboken, N. J., and the assembly slowly dispersed.

### **Resolutions adopted by the Consistory, etc.**

At a special meeting of the Consistory of the Bergen Reformed Church, held after morning service, February 6, 1881, the following was adopted :

*Whereas*, Rev. P. D. Van Cleef, D. D., had been selected by Dr. Taylor to preach his funeral sermon ; and

*Whereas*, Dr. Van Cleef was prevented by illness from taking part in the funeral services ;

*Resolved*, That he be and hereby is requested to prepare a "Memorial Discourse," and to deliver the same in the Bergen Reformed Church at his earliest convenience.

The Rev. Dr. Van Cleef having accepted the invitation of Consistory, the memorial service was held Sabbath, February 27, 1881. A large congregation was present. The pastor of the church conducted the preliminary services, which were appropriate to the occasion.

At a subsequent meeting of the Consistory, thanks were tendered to Dr. Van Cleef for his deeply interesting and appropriate discourse, and a copy was requested for publication.



## Memorial Sermon,

BY REV. P. D. VAN CLEE, D. D.

### "A SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST."

Romans i: 1.

SERVANT and Minister are interchangeable terms. In speaking of himself and of others as the ministers of the Lord Jesus, the Apostle Paul uses four different words, which, with one exception, are rendered in our version both minister and servant. The one most frequently employed we recognize in our language as having been transferred, rather than translated, and it describes the various ministrations of the deacon's office.

When, again, the Apostle says, "Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ," he uses a word signifying an *under-rower*, and seems to have in view a galley, with oars, in which the sailors pull altogether, under the direction of the strokesman.

When he speaks of the grace given to him of God, that he "should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles," he has in mind the fact that his own hands have ministered to his necessities while preaching the gospel freely, and he employs a peculiar term, which described those citizens of Athens who were chosen by the people to perform important public duties, or to supply the necessities of the State at their own expense.

In the text he applies to himself a common word, which denotes all kinds of servitude—a *bondman* of Jesus Christ. He gloried in his relation to Christ as one purchased with a

price. Redeemed from soul-slavery by the blood of the cross, he rejoiced in that loving bondage to which he had willingly become subjected. He was proud to be a servant of Him who appeared in the form of a servant, and who came, as the Son of Man, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister," and to give his life a ransom for many. A true minister of Jesus Christ is the servant of a king. While employed on earth he is the king's ambassador ;

"The legate of the skies; his theme divine,  
His office sacred, his credentials clear."

After he has finished his work here, he is employed in the palace above, and near the person of his sovereign.

I am to speak of one who esteemed it his highest honor to be called a servant of Jesus Christ. He is now where he has a still more exalted conception of the dignity of the Master's service.

It is under peculiar circumstances that this sacred duty is performed to-day. I might have considered the obligation laid upon me by our departed brother, in the confidence of fraternal love, as canceled by the providence of God, which prevented me from being present on the sad occasion when the service he requested would have been rendered.

Another discourse might also have been deemed unnecessary, after the very impressive and satisfactory addresses of your pastor and Rev. Dr. William R. Duryce, both of whom spoke from personal knowledge and a full heart. But the kind invitation of your Consistory revives the debt I owe to the memory of your late venerated pastor, and I am glad to have the opportunity of fulfilling a promise made to him years ago in the privacy of his study.

It is not necessary to remind you that this memorial discourse cannot have, for many of you, the charm of novelty. Dr. Taylor's history is interwoven with the annals of this church, which have become familiar to most of the congregation by frequent repetition in sermons and addresses on special occasions. He seemed to have the feeling of the Apostle Peter, when he wrote: "I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in

remembrance ; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me. Moreover, I will endeavor that ye may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance." It is somewhat embarrassing to deliver a memorial sermon before those who are already familiar with the facts and events to which it is necessary to refer, that the narrative may be complete and satisfactory. There is, however, one encouraging thought, and that is, that we seldom grow weary of speaking or of hearing about those whom we love.

"We grieve to think our eyes no more  
That form, those features loved, shall trace ;  
But sweet it is from memory's store  
To call each fondly cherished grace,  
And fold it in the heart's embrace.  
No bliss 'mid worldly crowds is bred  
Like musing on the sainted dead."

Benjamin C. Taylor was the fourth son of William Taylor and Mary Alice Gazzam, being one of eleven children. His parents were natives of Cambridge, England, and came to this country immediately after their marriage, in 1794, and settled in Philadelphia, where he was born, February 24, 1801. In early childhood he was sent to boarding-school and placed under the care of thorough English instructors. At the age of twelve years, he became a pupil of the celebrated Dr. Robert Finley, of Basking Ridge, N. J., one of the most successful of the many eminent teachers who have trained American youth. This gentleman was the son of an humble but pious Scotch emigrant. He received a collegiate education under the care of the Rev. Dr. Witherspoon, at Princeton ; and, having graduated at fifteen years of age, was immediately appointed teacher of the grammar school. He subsequently entered the ministry, and, having an enthusiasm for the instruction of youth, received a limited number of boys into his family, and thus laid the foundation for a classical school which attained great eminence, and during twenty years of its existence was believed to be surpassed by no similar institution on this continent. It was Dr. Finley's determination to accomplish what he undertook, and he

aimed to make every pupil, if possible, a good scholar and an exemplary young man. The principles of religion and morality were taught from the Bible, and the boys were trained to habits of subordination. Under such a teacher, a tractable and studious youth like young Taylor could not fail to attain sound scholarship and a thorough discipline. He gave close attention to study, made rapid progress, and at the end of three years, in the fall of 1816, entered the sophomore class at Nassau Hall.

But, meanwhile, he had received, under the pastoral care of his faithful preceptor, a blessing richer than the highest intellectual discipline. In order to counteract the opposition to the use of the Bible in schools, which already appeared in some quarters, Dr. Finley made the word of God prominent as a text-book in his school, encouraged his pupils to form themselves into Bible-classes, and sought in every way to excite in their minds an interest and in their hearts a love for the Holy Scriptures. His efforts were wonderfully successful, and the good seed of the word grew into a glorious harvest of revivals, extending over a period of ten years.

It was during the revival of 1815, one of the most fruitful of the series,—a revival which Dr. Ashbel Green attributed to the study of the Bible as one of its “chief instrumental causes,”—that Mr. Taylor took a decided stand for Christ by a public confession of his faith.

But in this case, as in that of Timothy, and many others, we must go back to a period earlier than his school days to find the beginnings of youthful piety. He had been instructed in the word of God at home. He graduated from the Bible-class of the nursery to the Bible-class at school. From a child he knew the Holy Scriptures. He was born again “by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.” His subsequent religious experience was molded by the plastic power of divine truth. This familiarity with the inspired volume, and this reverence for its teachings in early life, exerted a powerful influence upon his ministerial character, and had an important relation, as we shall see, to the peace and comfort of his declining years.

His parents had devoutly consecrated him to the Lord in his infancy. His mother, especially, with a Hannah’s mater-

nal piety, had devoted him to the work of the ministry, and she followed up that consecration by a course of action which attested her sincerity and earnestness. She was one of a circle of ladies who met statedly to pray for their children and their pastor. She never mailed a letter to her absent boy at school until she had first laid it before her, and on bended knees supplicated God's blessing upon it. The influence of such a mother could never be lost. It was a golden link in the chain that drew her son to the Saviour, and bound him to His service forever.

The religious experience of Mr. Taylor previous to his uniting with the church was very deep and decisive. A short time before the communion Sabbath he was conscious of an unusual sense of grateful obligation to the Lord Jesus Christ as his redeemer. He obtained leave of absence from the school-room for the day, and retired to his private apartment, where he wrote out a form of self-dedication to the Lord, copied from Doddridge, and signed it, accompanying his signature with the following memorandum: "Written by me, and trusting to the God of all grace for His support to enable me to live in the performance; at Basking Ridge, N. J., Aug. 28, 1815." This dedication was subsequently renewed, with expressions of deep solemnity.

In the month of October, 1815, in the 15th year of his age, he was admitted to the communion of the church under the pastoral care of Dr. Finley, his honored preceptor. On his entrance into Princeton College, he took a letter of dismission and joined the First Reformed (Dutch) Church of Philadelphia, under the pastoral care of Rev. Jacob Brodhead, D. D.

In 1819, Mr. Taylor was graduated with honor, and immediately commenced his studies for the ministry under the Rev. John M. Mason, D. D., the Theological Professor of the Associate Reformed Church in the city of New-York. Dr. Mason's health failing soon afterward, he resigned his professorship, and Mr. Taylor entered the Theological Seminary at New Brunswick. He graduated in 1822, with testimonials as "a diligent and faithful student, high in the estimation of his instructors," and received his professorial certificate from Rev. Dr. John H. Livingston, who wrote

these documents in Latin, and, it is said, varied them according to circumstances. On the 31st of May he was examined, and licensed to preach the gospel by the Classis of New Brunswick.

Shortly after his licensure, he went into the northern part of the State of New-York,—then a missionary field,—and visited vacant and destitute congregations within the bounds of the Classes of Rensselaer and Washington. He soon received a call from the united churches of Greenbush and Bloomingrove, and about the same time another from the churches of Waterford and Schaghticoke, the former of which he accepted, and began his labors on the 10th of November following. He was ordained to the ministry, and installed as pastor of these two churches, by the Classis of Rensselaer, December 17, 1822.

But he did not enter upon his work alone. How much of ministerial success is due to the influence of a prudent wife, many a pastor has the happy privilege of knowing. On the 30th of September, Mr. Taylor had been united in marriage with one who accompanied him to his first field of labor, and for forty-six years was to her husband all that is expressed or implied in that word, still redolent of Paradise, a helpmeet.

This excellent lady was the daughter of Rev. J. V. C. Romeyn, one of the four sons of Rev. Thomas Romeyn,—all of whom studied for the ministry,—and was, therefore, of priestly lineage. She was commanding in person, dignified, yet affable, kind, and gentle to all, and enjoyed the respect and affection of the congregation as the wife of the pastor and the mistress of the manse. Mrs. Taylor was also a woman of fine literary taste and mental culture, and frequently employed her talents in improving important events in the history of the church and of her own family by the production of beautiful and appropriate poems. Several of these compositions may be found in the numbers of the *Reformed Dutch Church Magazine*. The death of Mrs. Taylor, which occurred on the 26th of May, 1868, was a severe stroke to her bereaved husband.

The united churches to which Mr. Taylor had been called presented a very large and laborious field; but he per-

formed the duties of his double charge until the summer of 1825,—about two years and a half,—when he found his strength unequal to the work, and resigned, having received a call to the church of Acquackanonck, now Passaic.

Of his ministry at Greenbush and Bloomingrove, the Rev. James R. Talmage, D. D., one of his successors, in a historical discourse speaks as follows: "He immediately began to develop those traits of character which afterward gained for him an honorable place in the ministerial ranks." He entered upon this field under circumstances which put his ministerial qualifications to a severe test. His immediate predecessor was Rev. N. I. Marselus, under whose ministry a powerful revival had been enjoyed, and seventy-four persons were added to the communion. He was, therefore, called to glean after a great spiritual harvest had been gathered in, and could find in the open field but few sheaves. The young converts required the most watchful care, especially after the fervor of feeling had subsided. As is too often the case after a great spiritual excitement, there were backsliders to be reclaimed and stumbling-blocks to be removed by church discipline, which is the most difficult and trying part of pastoral duty, and especially for a young and inexperienced minister. The temporal affairs of the church had been managed with a slack hand, and the people had to be roused to a more vigorous and liberal support of the gospel.

Mr. Taylor was permitted, during his brief ministry, to witness a marked advance in everything that constituted a prosperous church. The debt on the parsonage was removed, and the church edifice repaired and rendered attractive. Meanwhile, the reins of discipline were held with a steady hand, the body of Christ was edified, and fourteen members—a part of them on confession—were added to the church.

About the time he was contemplating a removal from his first charge, overtures were sent to him from the church of Raritan, now the First Church of Somerville; but the letter failed to reach him until after he had decided to accept the call to Acquackanonck. He began his labors in this large and inviting field July 24, 1825, and was installed on the 25th of

September following. He found no Sabbath-school, and immediately organized one, and entered upon his duties with energy and hopefulness. His ministry was attended with a fair measure of success, thirty-eight having been added to the church on confession of their faith. He remained here nearly three years.

One of the most touchingly interesting incidents in the latter part of Dr. Taylor's life was a visit to this old church, in 1875. He was invited to address the Sunday-school which he had organized, on its *fiftieth* anniversary. He found the quiet little village grown to be a beautiful city. The vine which his hand had planted was a "fruitful bough," whose branches ran over the wall, and were laden with rich clusters. Only three of the communicants who first received him as their pastor remained to welcome him on this occasion; but their descendants were there, among the vast numbers who filled the spacious church, and listened, with deep interest and strange emotion, as the venerable father spoke of the years which seemed to them so far away, and of the good men and women who worshiped there half a century before, many of whose names had begun to grow dim on the marble that covered their dust. It was an occasion such as rarely occurs.

The labors of Mr. Taylor in the two fields already mentioned were but skirmishes before the great battle of life. In Bergen, where he finished his course, he fought the good fight and kept the faith for forty-two years in the field, with his armor on, and then, for ten years more, watched the conflict as others led the host, and rejoiced in their success.

The circumstances under which Mr. Taylor was introduced to the Bergen congregation pointed out very clearly the leadings of Providence. As a minister of a neighboring Classis he came to supply the pulpit for a single Sabbath, during the illness of the aged pastor, Rev. John Cornelison, who insisted upon entertaining the visiting preacher at the parsonage. During Saturday night an alarming change took place in the condition of Mr. Cornelison, indicating the speedy approach of death; and Mr. Taylor found it his painful duty, on Sabbath morning, to tell the flock that their shepherd would soon be taken from them. He also laid

aside the sermon he had intended to preach, and selected a subject in harmony with the solemn feeling which the sad announcement awakened. The discourse was a timely and comforting message to the people, and their hearts were tenderly drawn to the preacher.

After the death of the venerable pastor, which occurred on the 20th of March, Mr. Taylor was again invited to preach, and in May following was chosen to be the successor of one who had faithfully served the church for thirty-five years. Instructed by the united voice of the congregation, the Consistory presented a unanimous call, which was accepted, and on the 24th of July he was installed pastor. The sermon was preached by the Rev. James G. Ogilvie; the charge to the pastor was given by Rev. J. V. C. Romeyn, and the charge to the people by Rev. Peter Stryker. The feelings of the young pastor, on entering upon his labors in this important charge, may be gathered from his own language: "The presence, in almost every pew, of one or more of those venerable forms whose hoary heads admonish me of the responsibility I had assumed, prompted the inquiry, How can I presume to teach so many whose age and experience bid me sit at their feet and learn? But, remembering the Saviour's promise, 'Lo, I am with you alway,' I took courage, and said, 'I will trust and not be afraid.'" He followed a man whose ministry had been one of eminent fidelity and power, an impressive preacher, and a devoted pastor, whose course was marked by a "noble zeal for the glory of God and an anxiety for the souls of men." This beloved pastor had so recently died, his name was yet spoken with such tender emotion, his shining and useful life was still so vivid a memory in the hearts of a bereaved people, that his immediate successor found himself placed in circumstances of no little delicacy.

But Mr. Taylor possessed a rare combination of wisdom and love, a cool judgment united with a warm heart, pulpit talents which commanded respect, together with a superior tact in the practical management of affairs, and he soon found himself firmly established in the confidence of his people. While they could not forget the departed pastor, their old friend and spiritual guide, they had a warm place in their

hearts for the one whom the Master had sent to take his place. This is as true to-day of the Bergen Church as it was fifty-three years ago. The Church of God lives. Pastors, active, retired, or translated to heaven, live in the hearts of those who are to be their joy and crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming.

When Mr. Taylor came to Bergen, the Holland language was commonly used in every-day life. It is said that there were but fifteen families in which it was not thus spoken. The people were strongly attached to the mother tongue as well as to the customs of their ancestors. Although he never mastered the language, yet in all other respects he became one with the honest, sincere Dutch people, and came to understand the language of their hearts, which he found a better medium of pastoral intercourse than even the dialect of the fatherland.

The first years of his ministry here were not marked by any special results. The services of the sanctuary were well attended, and God raised up witnesses for the truth. His work was very arduous. His parish included what is now Hudson County, this being the only church of our denomination between English Neighborhood and Bergen Point. The Presbyterians and Episcopalians had each a small organization in Jersey City, and the Methodists had one at the Corners. As the dwellings were separated from the main road by long lanes, the labor of pastoral visitation consumed a large share of a minister's time and strength.

Mr. Taylor also visited and preached at the poor-house and the county jail, and, in connection with Rev. Gustavus Abeel and Rev. Philip Duryee, maintained a service at Hoboken. He found no Sabbath-school connected with the church, but soon established one, at the same time giving much attention to the instruction of the young in catechetical and Bible classes. He was very successful with the youth. Out of one hundred and fifty young persons under instruction in his Bible-class, over seventy were brought into the communion of the church during his ministry, and others were converted elsewhere.

At the time of Mr. Taylor's settlement in Bergen, a movement for the organization of new churches began. The

Classis of Bergen then covered the territory now occupied by the four Classes of Newark, Passaic, Bergen, and South Bergen. The church of Bergen Neck, now Bayonne, was organized in 1829. In 1833 Mr. Taylor drew up the petition for the organization of the First Church of Newark. Then followed others, until where there was one Reformed church there are now eighteen, and instead of three or four places of worship of all denominations, we have eighty-four. The territory which, in 1828, contained one Classis, with thirteen congregations, some of them feeble, and seven ministers, now comprises four Classes, with fifty-five churches and sixty-eight ministers. The pastor of the mother church took an active part in the formation of many of these new congregations, and the installation of their pastors. He dismissed members from his own church to aid in the organization of at least twelve of them.

Notwithstanding this drain upon her membership, the old church of Bergen retained her vigor, and her children multiplied and grew. When the demand came for more room, your pastor was exceedingly anxious that the church should act wisely, liberally, and promptly. There was much earnest prayer mingled with the effort when the people resolved to rise up and build. God poured out His spirit in approval of the undertaking. As the workmen laid up the walls, the Divine Architect was preparing living stones. The pastor's heart was cheered as he saw both the material structure and the spiritual temple rising. God wrought with his people as they worked for Him, and at the communion service held in the unfinished building, fifty persons were received on confession of their faith, which number was afterward increased to eighty-nine. This revival of 1841, and the erection at the same time of a new, large, and substantial church edifice,—one of the finest then in the State,—marked a bright and happy era in the ministry of Mr. Taylor. Although no other revivals of great extent have occurred, yet the hearts of pastor and people have been encouraged from time to time by accessions which indicated a steady and healthy growth.

The history of a church such as this presents little that is new or startling. Like a great tree, it stands and grows,

refreshing the weary who stop to rest beneath its shade, and yielding its fruit all the year round for the hungry who will come and gather it freely. The records of a permanent pastorate contain little of romance. Each day brings its duties, each Sabbath its solemn responsibilities. The pastor mingles in scenes of sunshine and shadow. He goes from the wedding to the funeral, from the study to the pulpit, from the mansions of the rich to the humble dwellings of the poor, trying, in the Apostolic sense, to be all things to all men, if by any means he may save some. And so the years pass away in a ceaseless round of the same duties. A minister's life and labors have comparatively little to interest the world, but they are most intensely interesting to himself and to those who can sympathize with him.

Statistics are generally dry, and to many people uninteresting; yet figures may have a deep significance. Reflect upon the fact that Dr. Taylor has rendered, during his ministry in this one congregation, 6,219 public religious services, besides attending 1,608 funerals, and making 8,400 pastoral visits for religious conversation and prayer; that he has solemnized 541 marriages, baptized 1,052 infants and adults, received to the communion of the church 459 persons on confession and 377 by certificate—836 in all. These labors cannot be estimated in their value by the array of figures in which they are summed up. There is no arithmetical calculation by which the results of sermons preached or prayers offered can be computed. A pastorate covering so many years—during which the dead of five generations have been followed to the grave—must include within its scope causes and effects which eternity alone can unfold. A pastor who lives and labors among the same people until those who first welcomed him have nearly all passed into the other world, must have accomplished something which bears a close relation to the welfare of many immortal souls.

The active pastorate of Dr. Taylor closed in the autumn of 1870, after forty-two years of service, when, by the action of the Classis, he was declared Emeritus Pastor. The proceedings of the church on that occasion were most delicate, respectful, and considerate. The contract has been fulfilled, both in the letter and in the spirit. For more than

ten years he has enjoyed the honorable title, dwelling among his people, maintaining the most cordial, and even affectionate relations with his successive colleagues, attending the services of the sanctuary until prevented by the infirmities of age, performing, when invited, such duties as his health would permit, being present at the meetings of Classis as often as possible, and mingling in social intercourse with his ministerial brethren, for whom he ever manifested a warm regard.

The Classis held its regular session last October—the one hundred and fifth since he became a member—in the Bergen church. The members were entertained at his house, and, before returning to the church, assembled in the parlor, where a brief meeting of tender interest was held, reminding us of the parting of the Apostle and the Elders of Ephesus. The ministers and elders of the Classis, after an interchange of affectionate greetings with the venerable father, bade him farewell, “sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake that they should see his face no more,” where for so many years he had been recognized as a leader in counsel and in action.

The fiftieth anniversary of Dr. Taylor’s settlement in Bergen, fitly termed the “Pastor’s Jubilee,” was, by the well-directed efforts of the Consistory and the ladies of the congregation, rendered an occasion of great interest and pleasure, not only to himself and the whole church, but to a wide circle of friends; a sacred festival, the memory of which might be handed down with profit to succeeding generations.

On Sabbath morning, July 7, 1878, the pastor, Rev. Cornelius Brett, instead of preaching an original sermon, read the discourse delivered by Dr. Taylor, on entering upon his duties, just fifty years before. The text was I. Thess. ii. 13. On Monday afternoon, in the church and before a large congregation, addressés of congratulation were made by clergymen representing the neighboring churches of various denominations, the South Classis of Bergen and other Classes, and the Gamma Sigma, a ministerial association of Jersey City. Rev. W. H. Campbell, D. D., president of Rutgers College, and Rev. Prof. Demarest, D. D., of the Theological

Seminary, brought the greetings of those institutions. The venerable Dr. G. Abecl, who welcomed his friend to the Classis fifty years ago, was present and spoke eloquently. Dr. Taylor was also addressed by his son and grandson, who conveyed—the former in a beautiful poem—the congratulations of his family and kindred. All the arrangements, including decorations and the social entertainment in the evening, were in keeping with the spirit of the occasion, as a pastor's jubilee. The whole was beautifully suggestive of a golden sky before a glorious sunset.

Dr. Taylor's labors as a pastor were vastly augmented as the quiet old hamlet of Bergen became, in the lapse of years, the center of a mixed population, and the rural parish was transformed into a city charge. This whole region has passed through a remarkable change, physical, political, and moral. Cities have grown up in every direction. From a hill in this vicinity one can survey eight large municipalities. Railroads crossing the continent, and connecting by steamers with the Eastern hemisphere, bring their loaded trains through our crowded streets. The once dreamy shores of Harsimus, Paulus Hook, and Communipaw have become the scenes of busy manufacturing and noisy traffic, and their stillness has been disturbed by the din of foundries and the scream of steam-whistles. The family groups who used to sit at their cottage doors on a summer's evening, and watch the white sails as they came up through the Narrows and spread over the quiet waters of the bay, are gone to their other home, and strangers possess their heritage. Dr. Taylor has witnessed all these revolutions, and the amount and character of his work have been affected by them. As the boundaries of his parish narrowed, his labor became intensified. The cause of education and philanthropy presented its claims. He was for six years the Superintendent of Schools in Bergen. His presence was sought on every great occasion of public interest. The acknowledged patriarch of the churches in this county, and held in high esteem by all denominations, his name was first spoken in connection with every public celebration requiring the services of the clergy. He was an integral part of this community. Everybody knew him. When

death came to him an old landmark was removed, as if one of the high promontories of this granite ridge had yielded to the force of powder, and fallen from its place.

In the church at large, Dr. Taylor has exerted a wide and varied influence, and rendered to all her institutions most valuable service. When the attention of the church had just been awakened to the importance of aiding young men in preparing for the ministry, he preached a stirring sermon on behalf of the Education Society of the Classis of Bergen, which was published by order of the society, and gave a fresh impulse to the cause throughout the denomination.

He was a warm and loyal friend of our Theological Seminary, frequently serving on its Board of Superintendents, and raising funds for its endowment.

In 1857 he was elected a Trustee of Rutgers College, and rendered efficient service to that institution for twenty years. "He was always in his place," said President Campbell, "wise in council, and entering heartily into all efforts for the welfare of the College." He secured for it eleven scholarships of \$500 each, and twenty-two of \$100 each, besides other donations for the endowment fund, for the library, and for other purposes. All this, of course, he could not have done but for the liberal coöperation of the Bergen congregation.

For five or six years he served gratuitously as Secretary of the Board of Domestic Missions for the Western Department, not only conducting its correspondence, but visiting churches in its behalf, and making a tour of inspection among the feeble organizations of the West.

He was also deeply interested in the work of Foreign Missions, as every faithful pastor and every true lover of the Saviour must be. He pleaded earnestly for the heathen, and gave his influence in every way for the encouragement of our missions, both before and after we had separated, in 1857, from the American Board, of which he had been a corporate member since 1843. He continued for several years to attend and participate in the annual meetings of that honored society, even after our own Board had begun to

conduct its missions independently. He was always warmly welcomed as a representative of the Reformed Dutch Church, and a reminder of the many happy years of coöperation between it and the American Board. On account of the singular appropriateness and spiritual power of his public prayers, he was often selected to lead the devotions of the vast assemblages which gathered at the anniversaries of the Board. He was also appointed, at the special session in March, 1856, one of the committee, with Drs. Bethune, Bacon, Riddle, and others, to whom was referred the important report of the Deputation to India.

In the General Synod, of which body he was elected President in 1838, as also in the lower courts of the Church, Dr. Taylor was always an active and practical worker. He never consumed time for the mere pleasure of debate, but was ever ready for any service, however arduous. Hence his name is connected with most of the important labors which have marked the progress of the denomination. In 1871, he was honored with the appointment of corresponding delegate to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, convened at Chicago. In 1843, the Trustees of Hobart College, Geneva, N. Y., conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology.

The published works of Dr. Taylor are: "A Sermon on behalf of Ministerial Education," preached in 1828; "The School of the Prophets," a discourse delivered in 1839 before the Board of Superintendents of the Theological Seminary; "Annals of the Classis and Township of Bergen"; "A Discourse at the 200th Anniversary of the Reformed Dutch Church of Bergen"; funeral addresses and numerous articles for the press.

Dr. Taylor was, with one exception, the oldest living graduate of our Theological Seminary. That exception is Rev. Staats Van Santvoord, D. D., who graduated in 1816, and passed his 90th birthday during the last year.

Of the students of Dr. Livingston, who died in 1825, about eight survive, none of them, however, in the active ministry. "The fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever?"

It would not be proper to close this discourse without attempting to present a few of the prominent features in Dr. Taylor's character as a man and a minister, a servant of Jesus Christ. An intimate friendship of more than thirty-one years will not prevent me, I trust, from giving a faithful portrait.

Dr. Taylor was preëminently a Bible Christian. I have referred to this point in speaking of his early life, but I wish to emphasize it. He held the Scriptures in most profound veneration. He loved to speak of his mother's Bible, brought from England, so constantly used that it had been bound and rebound until the margin on the printed page had almost disappeared. At an anniversary of the Hudson County Bible Society, in 1875, he held up this little volume, and related a story connected with it which so deeply impressed the audience that he was requested to write it out for publication. At a subsequent anniversary, he repeated this narrative by request in response to an address of the President, Hon. B. F. Randolph, who presented him with a beautifully framed certificate of Life Directorship in the parent society, on behalf of friends who wished to testify their appreciation of his faithful labors in the cause of Bible distribution.

In his old age he found new meaning and fresh satisfaction in the statutes of the Lord. They were the rejoicing of his heart. He read the Bible through regularly in course. I found him one day just beginning it for the third perusal during one year. He spoke of the comfort he derived from the biographies of the patriarchs, as illustrating the covenant faithfulness of God. He sought Christ where Christ told His disciples they would find Him,—in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. He who sees an atoning Saviour in Hebrews will find Him in Leviticus. The Gospels and Epistles strike their roots down into the soil of the Old Testament. He believed "all Scripture" to have been given by inspiration, and he found by experience that it was all "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." The testimony of such a Christian—of a minister of God, whose life-work rises before us like a splendid finished structure, with its founda-

tion of truth, its walls of usefulness, and its dome of purity — ought to be worth something to the young men of this age. When tempted to skepticism by the subtlety of writers who profess to be wiser than the Scriptures which Jesus commanded his disciples to search and believe, and who present to the young reader the unripe fruits of science, saying, "Eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil," remember the example of those who have lived noble and useful lives, and grown ripe for heaven through the sanctifying power of the Scriptures, applied by the Holy Spirit, their divine author.

Consider, also, the value of the life and ministry of such a man during fifty years of the formative period of a community like this. With this whole region for his parish, and everybody willing to hear him, he might have scattered the seeds of infidelity far and wide. Had he thus sown tares instead of wheat, how different might have been the moral aspect of the harvest-field in which his successors labor!

The character and influence of the first religious teachers of a new settlement abide. They seldom entirely die out. Bergen has enjoyed a succession of godly, orthodox ministers. The lives of three of them, while in active service, covered a period of one hundred and twenty years. During Dr. Taylor's early ministry, he had for his co-laborers Dr. Barry, in the Episcopal church; Dr. Johnstone, in the Presbyterian; Mr. Talmage, in the Reformed; and as other churches sprung up, they were supplied with pastors who preached the Gospel "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." Thus the foundations of society were laid in the cement of evangelical truth. That form of doctrinal belief commonly known, and often abused, as Calvinistic, although more properly designated as Pauline and Christian, was the prevailing Protestantism of this whole community; and Dr. Taylor, during his ministry of fifty years, was one of its faithful expounders. "Calvinism," says Froude, "made men like William the Silent, Knox, Milton, Bunyan,—men possessed of all the qualities which give nobility and grandeur to human nature,—unalterably just where duty required them to be stern, but with the tenderness of a woman in their hearts,—

frank, true, cheerful, humorous,—as unlike sour fanatics as it is possible to imagine any one, and able, in some way, to sound the key-note to which every brave and faithful heart in Europe instinctively vibrated.” Such was the system of doctrinal and practical religion which Dr. Taylor preached, and which his good people believed and practiced.

Being eminently Biblical as a sermonizer, Dr. Taylor could not fail to be impressive as a preacher. That he was so, those who heard him in the vigor of his physical and mental powers will heartily attest. His thoughts were clear, and his language simple, unostentatious, and rich in Scriptural allusions. He divided his sermons after the old fashion, and announced his heads distinctly. His discourses were frequently textual. He seldom indulged in the metaphysical or philosophical style, and never aimed at what is termed the sensational in his preaching. His voice was clear and penetrating, and, when the occasion demanded, highly pathetic. In the latter years of his life it was tremulous, owing to a weakened nervous system; but even this quality, which he sometimes lamented, not seldom added force to his words. In his early ministry, he wrote and committed his sermons to memory, but did not neglect to cultivate his talent for extemporaneous speaking. Later in life he preached from an analysis, and toward the close of his ministry generally had a written sermon before him. On one occasion, at least, he found the value of extempore talent. He had committed his sermon with unusual care, and, feeling sure that he was master of it, he left the manuscript at home. In the pulpit, both text and sermon escaped his memory, and left a void. He could not recall a single word or the faintest clue to a thought. In vain he turned over the leaves of the Bible, in the hope that he would find the text. While the hymn was being sung, his eye fell upon a passage which immediately opened up a train of thought, and he rose with trepidation and preached from it, after begging the indulgence and the prayers of his people. The result was a very deep impression and the conversion of several persons. It was in the early part of his ministry, and the incident gave him great encouragement to rely upon the help of the Holy Spirit.

Dr. Taylor cherished a most exalted estimate of the Christian ministry,—its divine origin and authority, its sacredness, and its necessity to the welfare and salvation of the world. He magnified his office as God's minister and ambassador.

“He bore his great commission in his look,  
But sweetly tempered awe, and softened all he spoke;  
He preached the joys of heaven and pains of hell,  
And warned the sinner with becoming zeal,  
But on eternal mercy loved to dwell.”

He held in high appreciation the duties and responsibilities of the pastoral office. He lived for his people. He loved them, sympathized with them, served them as the servant of Jesus Christ, and their servant for Christ's sake. He sought their salvation. He diligently attended to know the state of his flock. He was acquainted with his people in their joys and sorrows, and was able to speak a word in season to him that was weary and sad. His people adhered to him. Few ever left his parish from disaffection, while many clung to him when it might have been their duty to leave and become helpers of feeble churches. Thus life-long friendships, endeared by sympathy in common joys and sorrows, have come down from generation to generation.

Dr. Taylor had a profound conviction of the reality of his own call to the ministry. He never seemed to doubt that he was the servant of Jesus Christ, called to be the herald of the Gospel. He was ambitious, not of empty honor, but of that honor which springs from acting well one's part in life. He loved to speak of what he had done in lengthening the cords and strengthening the stakes of Zion; but he did not take the glory to himself; he gave it to the Master who had deigned to employ him as His servant. He seemed thankful whenever he was made the instrument of advancing the kingdom of Christ. When his vigor abated, he was glad to see his younger brethren enter into his labors. He said, “They must increase, but I must decrease.” No, faithful servant of God! the eye may become dim, the voice feeble, the hand palsied, but with thee there is no decrease. “The

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path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

A beautiful feature in Dr. Taylor's character was his love of the brethren in the ministry, and it shone out more and more as the time approached when he should depart. His constant message was, "Give my love to the brethren." He met with them whenever it was possible for him to do so. He never lost his interest in their work, or in the welfare of their churches, of whatever name. In our meetings for discussion each speaker would take his seat close to the venerable man, accommodating the voice to his dull ear. He was never happier than when his turn came to extend to his brethren the hospitalities of his table. He did not exact attention even in his old age, but his spirit was so gentle, and his words so loving, that he commanded not attention only, but also respect and affection. According to the manner in which we suppose diocesan episcopacy to have arisen in the church, he was really the Bishop of the Reformed Church in Hudson County, but he ever regarded the parity of the ministry. In the Classis he always took a leading part, not that he wished to have the preëminence, but that he was eager to do his whole duty. Some ministers have no taste for ecclesiastical affairs, and always take a back seat in classes and synods. He had both a talent and a fondness for serving in the house of the Lord, and consequently was in his appropriate place when at the front.

Dr. Taylor had his faults and his weaknesses. He made mistakes. He was neither infallible in judgment nor sinless in heart or life. I remember, when delivering the charge to me at my installation, with what startling emphasis he uttered the question, "Who are you?" and then proceeded to speak of the ambassador of God as a sinful man, needing the blood of Christ for his own salvation. I may echo his own words, and speak of him as he would speak of himself, as a sinner saved by grace, counted worthy through the righteousness of Christ to be put into the ministry. The Christian precedes the minister. The man comes before his office. First "a servant of Jesus Christ"—then "called to be an Apostle." He has laid down his commission and received his crown, not simply as

a minister of the Gospel who had fought a good fight and finished his course, but as a man and a believer who loved the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A ministerial career which, for its duration in years, its almost uninterrupted activity, and the interesting period which it covers in the history of the church and of the human race, can be the privilege of comparatively few, is ended. Hundreds who started with him, in the possession of vigorous health, have one by one dropped out of the ranks of the living, while he, who began with a small stock of physical strength, has, with the exception of a few months of illness, spent almost fifty years in active labor. The workmen die, the work goes on. Our beloved friend has closed a rounded, completed life of service, and passed away from this world. A good name, a spotless reputation, the blessed memory of the just remain.

Dr. Taylor was beautifully ripening, during the latter part of his life, for heaven. In a conversation on a sick-bed a few years ago, he said to me, "My first waking thoughts are with God and with Christ, and I often fall asleep while engaged in mental prayer." At another time he spoke of the preciousness of God's promises. He said, "I am watching and waiting for the Master. My trust is in the everlasting covenant."

It was a great joy to him that he could leave children and grandchildren to carry on the work to which he had given his life. But he has not ceased to be a servant of Jesus Christ. The Master lives forever, "and his servants shall serve him." *Emeritus* now in a higher sense—his earthly service is ended, and his heavenly work begun. So glorious is the employment of the glorified servant that, compared with the toil of earth, it is called rest. He rests from his labors, and his works do follow him :

"As your guide,  
He in the heavenward path hath firmly walked,  
Bearing your joys and sorrows in his breast,  
And on his prayers. He at your household hearths  
Hath spoke his Master's message; while your babes,  
Listening, imbibed, as blossoms drink the dew;  
And when your dead were buried from your sight,  
Was he not there?"

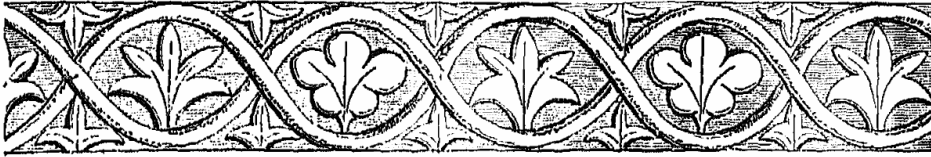
Yes, and you have laid him to sleep near the place he loved so well. Devout men carried him to his burial. It was as he wished.

“Servant of God, well done!  
Rest from thy loved employ;  
The battle fought, the victory won,  
Enter thy Master’s joy.”

I know how imperfect this picture of a beloved pastor must appear to those who knew him also as a father, at home, at the table, at the family altar, in the brightness of domestic joy, and in the shadow of domestic sorrow; in the happy hours of childhood, amid the dreams of youth, and under the growing weight of earthly cares. To this church he was a pastor; to his family, both a pastor and a parent; to the loved ones left behind and to those gone before, he was, and is, and ever shall be, more than to all the world besides.

“So glorious let thy pastors shine,  
That by their speaking lives the world may learn,  
First, filial duty; then divine;  
That sons to parents, all to Thee, may turn.”





## Memorial Resolutions

BY THE CONSISTORY OF THE BERGEN REFORMED CHURCH.

AT a meeting of the Consistory of the Bergen Reformed Church, held on the evening of February 2, 1881, the following minute was adopted :

"The fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever?"

After a long and honored life, our Pastor Emeritus, the Rev. Benjamin C. Taylor, has entered into rest.

We bear testimony most cordially and gratefully to his faithful service, extending through an active pastorate of more than forty-two years. He was with our fathers, as he has been with us. He came to Bergen in the prime of his young manhood; he gave to the church the strength and energy of his manly vigor, as well as the ripeness and judgment of maturity. Until he had fulfilled his three score years and ten he remained, amid increasing infirmities, a valiant soldier at his post, and then, retiring from active service, he tarried with us in the feebleness of old age; and, finding the strength which gave him four score years' labor and sorrow, he waited for the "consolation of Israel."

He has wept with our households in their sorrows, and has gladdened our festivals with his genial presence. In more than one family he has stood by the coffined dead of five generations. He has preached the everlasting gospel with power and acceptance, and unto many souls his words have been as the opening of heaven's windows. By his enterprise

our Sabbath-school was organized ; to his energy and determination we owe the substantial edifice in which we are worshipping.

When he could render no further service, he continued to pray that the church he loved so well might flourish as the garden of the Lord. The title "Emeritus," accorded to him by his brethren of the Classis, was indeed "well deserved." We seem to hear the plaudit which greeted him, as his spirit swept through the golden gate: "Well done, good and faithful servant ; enter into the joy of thy Lord."

To his bereaved family we offer our heartfelt sympathy, as we accept their invitation to attend the funeral in a body.

It was further resolved that the church be appropriately draped in mourning, until after the next communion season.

Attest :                      CORNELIUS BRETT, *Pres.*  
CHARLES L. D. WASHBURNE, *Clerk.*



### **Resolutions of the South Classis of Bergen.**

At the regular spring session of the South Classis of Bergen, held in the First Reformed Church, Jersey City, April 19th, 1881, the death of Rev. Dr. Taylor having been announced, a committee was appointed to adopt a minute expressing the sentiment of the Classis. The committee presented the following report, which was unanimously adopted :

The Rev. B. C. Taylor, D. D., having entered the Classis of Bergen in 1828, has long been regarded as the patriarch among our pastors. His co-laborers, in the beginning of his ministry here, had all passed away. His memory of men and events, always clear and accurate, extended over a period of half a century, and furnished rich stores of infor-

mation for his younger brethren. He was deeply concerned for the prosperity of the churches, and the growth of vital religion. He was a diligent and faithful pastor in his own parish, while earnestly engaged in efforts to multiply new enterprises, and extend the bounds of our denomination.

As a member of the Classis, he was punctual in his attendance, familiar with the routine of business, wise in counsel, strict in his construction of constitutional requirements, careful to follow in the footsteps of the fathers, firm in his adherence to the truth, conscientious in his observance of the customs and usages of the church, intolerant of every tendency to laxness in doctrine or church government, and a warm friend and supporter of our educational and benevolent institutions.

He was beloved as a brother and revered as a father, and when it pleased God to lay him aside from active duty, the Classis felt, as it declared him *emeritus*, that there was a vacancy in the ranks of its ministry which could not be filled.

We are thankful that the Great Head of the Church has spared him so long in the possession of his mental faculties, and in the ripeness of his piety, to encourage us by his prayers, his sympathies, and his testimony to the faithfulness of his Saviour and ours.

His good name and his fruitful labors will never be forgotten. We who knew him will ever cherish his memory with affectionate regard, and by this record we wish to transmit to those who shall come after us the example of one who, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, was faithful unto death.

P. D. VAN CLEEF,  
W. R. DURYEE,  
CHAS. G. ENDICOTT,  
*Committee.*



### Minute of Gamma Sigma, adopted March 8th, 1881.

Our oldest fellow-member, the Rev. Benjamin C. Taylor, D. D., departed this life, after some years of increasing physical infirmity, on the second day of February, 1881, in the eightieth year of his age. He was a member of this Association from its incipency. Notwithstanding the pressure of constantly growing bodily weakness, Dr. Taylor's mental powers were in full vigor until his last moments, and up to the last year or two he was a constant attendant upon our meetings. For nearly fifty-three years he has continued Pastor and Pastor Emeritus over the church among whom he died, and his long ministerial life presents a beautiful illustration of a faithful, consistent, affectionate, and successful pastorate—a bright example to us, his younger associates in the ministry. By the ministers in all denominations of the church of Christ to whom he was personally known, he was greatly esteemed and beloved. But to the members of Gamma Sigma, among whom he so constantly appeared, and who had so many opportunities to discover the best qualities of his mind and heart, he was especially endeared. We cannot forget the hearty pleasure which the Society's meetings always afforded him. The lively interest which he took in our discussions, ever placing himself near the speaker, because unwilling to lose a word of what each one, in his turn, uttered; the affectionate kindness of the gentle voice and trembling hand with which he, to the last, always personally greeted us; his constant words of cheer to every one of us; the marked delight with which he always proffered to us the hospitalities of his house; and his sympathizing, earnest prayer for our individual welfare and for the success of our ministry, will always be themes for our pleasant recollection. It is a most grateful incident in the history of our Association, that the very last occasion when he ventured to leave his own doors was the meeting with his brethren of Gamma Sigma, at the house of his beloved successor in the pastorate, Rev. Cornelius Brett, on December 7, 1880.

When the time for his departure came, he quietly, painlessly slept in Jesus, in the blessed hope of the resurrection of the just. May the mantle of his painstaking solicitude to fulfill faithfully his duties in the Christian ministry, and of his loving-kindness to his brethren in Christ, fall upon each of us, and fit us more fully to serve our Heavenly Master in the sacred duties of our calling.

C. K. IMBRIE,  
W. H. PARMLY,  
P. D. VAN CLEEF,  
*Committee.*



### **Resolutions of the Pastors' Association, New-York City.**

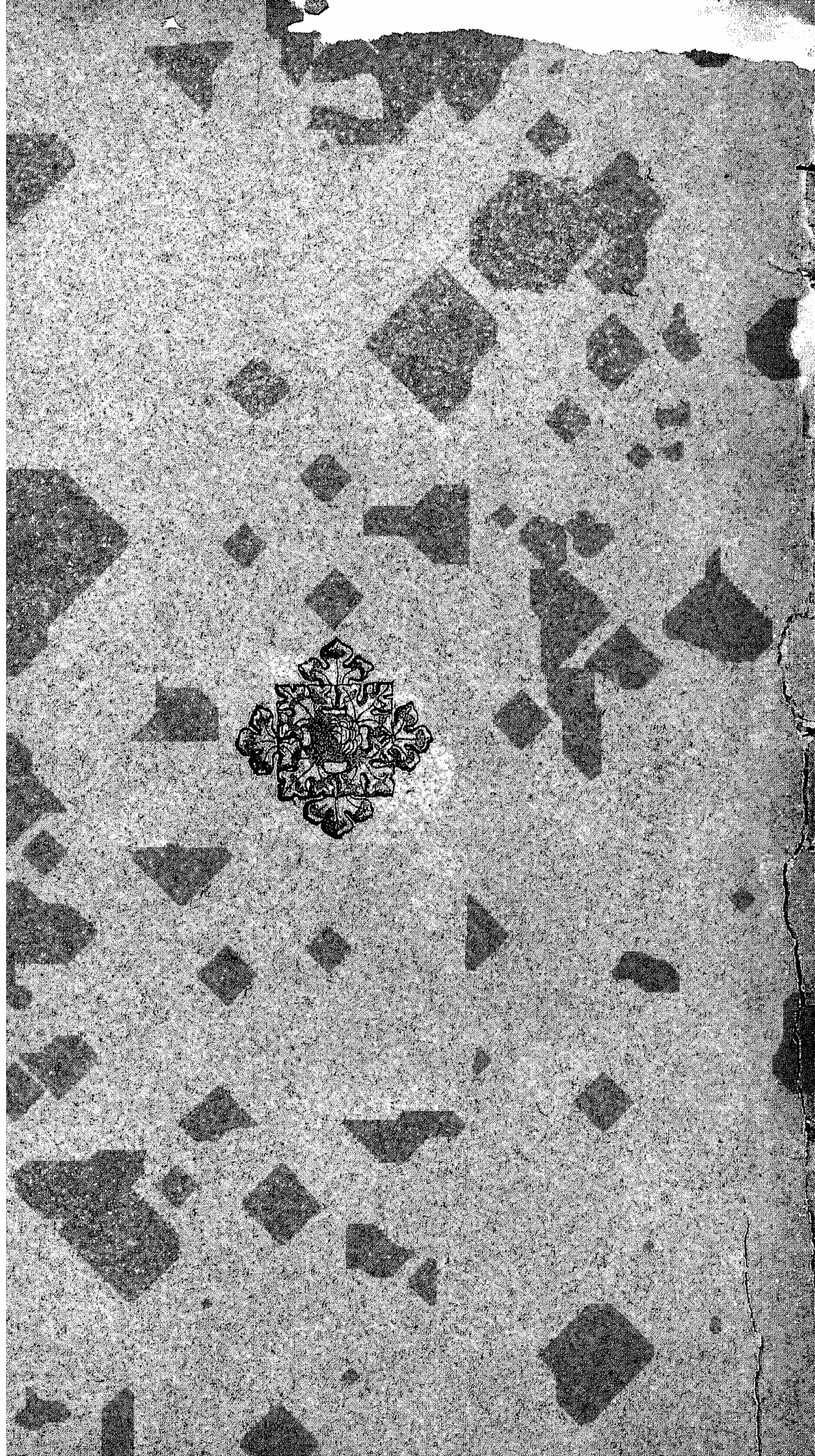
The Pastors' Association of the Reformed Church, New-York, by its Committee for that purpose, hereby records its tribute, with so many others in and out of our own church, to the memory of the late Rev. Benjamin C. Taylor, D. D. His death leaves but very few among the ministry of the Reformed Church in a like venerable old age. Now that he has followed the footsteps of his generation, and "fallen on sleep," we cannot allow him to pass away without expressing, as ministers of different ages, our love and veneration for one who, during his whole long life, so ably and so faithfully served his God and Saviour in every position and trust, with all the gifts which distinguished him. Known to all of us,—to some of us from our youth up,—what he leaves behind him is, with all, the memory of a cor-

dial and fatherly kindness, and of a character pervaded and refined in all its parts by grace; nor can we esteem it as other than a privilege to have been permitted to hear him pray. Leaving the mantle of his ministry upon younger shoulders of two generations, when his own trembling hand could hold it no longer, he has at length gone up to the well-earned rest. We, from the midst of whom he has gone, and who have known him as a man of the purest piety, the most eminent devotion and usefulness, can only dismiss his departed form with something of the feeling of the words of Elisha.

A. G. VERMILYE,  
LEOPOLD MOHN,  
*Committee.*

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