

Ephesus, watered as it was by the tears of the great Apostle, and washed by the blood of the Saviour, should yet have fallen, left its first love, degenerated into formality, worldliness and idolatry, and perished! Whether these Elders to whom Paul gave charge fulfilled not their commission, and neglected the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers, or whether it was the congregation itself that, through lapse of time, grew heedless and self-secure, we inquire not; sufficient that Ephesus fell away, departed from the faith, and in the course of centuries became a wreck, its church and city gone, a Mahomedan mosque occupying its site, and of the faith and love once celebrated by the Apostle no vestige remains; still, think not this message and these tears in vain. Nay, no bread cast on the waters or breath to Heaven is ever in vain; the converts of Ephesus were saved, her saints were gathered into Jesus' bosom, and her little ones perished not, although her Church and religion subsequently did; and now Ephesus contains a pillar, a monument of Paul's tears, and of Timothy's ministry, warning succeeding Churches against apostacy from the faith, and against declension in love. My friends, I do not take this text to-day without cause. It is 25 years this Sabbath since I commenced my ministry in Pictou. Is it not proper, after an expiry of a quarter of a century, to take a slight review and make a brief record of the past? Twenty-five years comprise a generation, and form, in every man's life, no inconsiderable portion of his history; but in the case of a ministry conducted in these colonies, must have had its lights and shades, its cloud and sunshine, yet that, through the help of God, I continue to this day, is my grateful testimony. Twenty-five years, call your mind back, you that were then there, and glory in your attachment to our worship in the little round Church, endeared to us by so many associations, then under debt; to the square pews in which sat the Crichtons, Crerar, Beck, Thoms Harper, and others since gone to their Fathers, the old Church with its packed people in the galleries, and its sitters upon the pulpit stairs. Do you remember—who does? the first sermon preached on the second Sabbath of Jan., 1849, after a long vacancy here, in which,

but for the visits of Rev. Dr. McGillivray, and *the constant keeping up of the Sabbath School on the part of a faithful few*, there had been no congregation and no people to worship to, for I trace that Sabbath School attendance as one of the bonds of preservation to the Church, proving that, notwithstanding a vacancy, if the young continue to meet, there will be a nucleus of a Church. On all hands, it was admitted that my entrance among you was seasonable, it was your time of extremity when few and far between were services, and none to visit the sick or break the bread of communion. The keynote of my ministry was struck in John iii. 16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," and the strain has been evangelical since. Round that as a centre has converged these many years' teaching. What a multiplicity of topics has in this period engaged our attention! Yet ever the one central theme, "salvation through Jesus Christ." Still, I trust that the Apostle's subjects have been distinctly handled, "repentance towards God and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ," without which the offers of mercy must ever be made in vain. The Law of God has been preached, as the standard of right and wrong, which reveals sin and condemns the sinner, that he may betake himself to Christ for justification and life, and the Gospel has been proclaimed as the all-sufficient remedy—with what success, God knoweth.

Nevertheless, it is no small ground of consolation that we have built upon no false foundation, and another thought, that like Paul here, we have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God, the blessing and the curse, warning and entreaty, with that result in the case of many, God knoweth. Some hearers might like that certain duties would be but slightly touched upon, and certain sins not condemned, that this false system would be spared, and a general truce with error prevail, but not so did He whom we are setting up as our model. You know how sharply he rebuked sin, and how he charged ministers to contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints; for the fence once down, well he knew the property would be in danger. Ac-